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TEMPERANCE IN THE AGE OF FEELING: SENSIBILITY, PEDAGOGY, AND POETRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Sarah Hattie Maitland
University of Rhode Island, sarah_maitland@my.uri.edu

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TEMPERANCE IN THE AGE OF FEELING: SENSIBILITY, PEDAGOGY, AND
POETRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

SARAH HATTIE MAITLAND

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OF

Sarah Hattie Maitland

APPROVED:

Dissertation Committee:

Major Professor J. Jennifer Jones

Stephen Barber

Wendy Roworth

Nasser Zawia

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

TEMPERANCE IN THE AGE OF FEELING: SENSIBILITY, PEDAGOGY, AND POETRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

SARAH HATTIE MAITLAND

British Romanticism has traditionally been understood as participating in a narrative of progressive secularism. “Temperance in the Age of Feeling” seeks to challenge this narrative by examining the influence of temperance on Romantic conceptualizations of the relationship between sensation, thought, and feeling. I begin my argument by investigating Romantic notions of temperance as influenced by Book II of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. I claim that Romantic temperance differs from classical temperance because Romantic temperance is concerned with balancing mental faculties while classical temperance is concerned with moderating passions. Next I consider how temperance influenced Romantic theories of the relationship between the senses and the mind. Drawing on the study of neuro-Romanticism, I argue that Romantic medicine and Romantic poetry—most particularly Wordsworth’s poetry—shared a concern with the possible negative repercussions of sensory overstimulation. In my final chapter I engage with the overlap between temperance in Romantic theories of education, religious sermons from the period, and Wordsworth’s poetry. By looking at education theory with religious sermons and poetry I show the ways religious thought on temperance influenced many of the educational ideas and aesthetic ideals that continue to govern modern pedagogy. The three chapters are united by their preoccupation with the ways that typically religious ideals of

temperance are woven into the ideas that shaped education, poetry, and mental health at the moment they were first becoming recognizably “modern.”

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Catherine “Kay” Maitland. Thank you for always believing I could do better. You are one of the hardest working women I have ever known and I miss you every day.

PREFACE TO
TEMPERANCE IN THE AGE OF FEELING

Romanticists with ties to a variety of critical movements in the field have been united in the alacrity with which they have eluded the issue of Romantic religiosity. For example, in his introduction to *Romanticism: An Anthology* (2012), Duncan Wu writes of the Romantics:

It is not just their capacity for optimism that distinguishes them, but the kind of belief to which they clung. Where earlier generations looked to an afterlife, the Romantics tended to reject formalized religion . . .

Instead they thought they could create through their writing, a promised land in which property was of no consequence and people would live in harmony. Wordsworth is famous for having said he had no need of a redeemer, when he wrote “Tintern Abbey” he had little need of God, at least in the generally accepted sense. For him mankind is capable of redemption through an act of self-realization. (xxxix)

In the section above, Wu defines Romanticism against religious belief with little attention given to defending the assertion. It is, Wu argues, a defining feature of Romanticism that the Romantics believed not in religion but in literature. In his introduction to *Romanticism*, Wu carefully considers the influence of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the rise of the media, the state of the Monarchy, and sexual politics on the Romantic period. Given his careful resistance to master narratives of the period, such a quick dismissal of the influence of religion is surprising. I do not point out his dismissal to undercut the contribution Wu makes to

the field. His anthology beautifully complicates accepted interpretations of the period by arguing for a greater diversity of authors and more attention to the ways the concept of Romanticism itself resists definition. I point out the way Wu bypasses religion in his introduction because it is largely indicative of attitudes in the field. Whether it is Paul de Man's notion of demystification or M.H. Abrams' theory of assimilation, one of the few points on which most Romanticists have historically agreed is that the Romantic period participates in a movement away from a religious understanding of the world toward a secularity more commensurate with modernity.

This view of Romanticism as playing a crucial role in our march toward secular modernity often obscures that Romanticism was a minority movement. Many authors of the period such as Hannah Moore and Maria Edgeworth did not participate in the radical politics or the radical poetics we now think of as indicative of the Romantic period. Narrativizing the Romantic period from the present magnifies the risk of normalizing those elements of Romanticism that more closely align with modern sensibilities.

Recently, however, there has been a movement in Romantic studies to complicate the narrative of secular modernity by more thoroughly historicizing the role of religion in the Romantic period. It is from one such project that I take my departure. Colin Jager's book, *The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era* (2007) offers a way to re-think progressivist narratives that posit a "religious" past against a "secular" modernity. Jager uses the presence and importance of the argument from design in Romantic literature as a means through which to critique the role the Romantic period is often cast as playing in narratives of secular

modernity. But *The Book of God* does not simply provide a history of the changing concept or value of “intelligent design” during the Romantic period; Jager’s book illustrates how that concept has come to be woven into modernity. Jager examines “how religion finds ways to creatively appropriate the institutional transformations that characterize modernity” (39). Published just two years after *Tammy Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District*¹ (2005), Jager’s critique is significant in a way he could not foresee when he began his research. Jager’s work re-frames arguments for adding “intelligent design” to public school science curricula by showing how the argument from design was never really subverted.

In the final chapter, “Religion Three Ways,” Colin Jager offers three definitions of religion to nuance our understanding of religion’s potential role in modernity. Jager’s first definition, “religion as belief” (202), situates religion internally as a set of beliefs on whose acceptance salvation hangs. Jager problematizes this definition by showing that it divides religion (a set of beliefs) from piety (devotion to belief) and facilitates the evaluation of religious precepts on the basis of truth-value. The division of belief from devotion to belief is advantageous for scholars as it allows for an objective study of an internal phenomenon but it also positions religion against reason. Religion becomes the object of study and reason. Jager follows the ramifications of this divide through linguistic derivation. Drawing from John Montag, Jager shows that the division between revelation and reason is rooted in the changing

¹ *Tammy Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District* was the first challenge brought before the courts against a school system on the topic of intelligent design. The case was brought by a group of parents who objected to Dover Area School District’s addition of intelligent design to their science curriculum. Although the court ruled against the teaching of intelligent design on the grounds that it is not science the debate has continued in school systems across the United States.

conceptualization of the words.² Montag argues that Aquinas understood “revelation” as a process; he contrasts this meaning with the modern understanding of “revelation” as a disclosure of hidden meaning or truth. Montag claims the division between these two understandings of revelation is between “having” and “being” (204). Aquinas’ revelation is a process of being while modern understandings of revelation “conceive of it as having content” (204).

Jager’s second definition, “religion as ideology” (206), positions religion inside the narrative of modern secular progressivism. Jager argues that once one accepts religion as belief it becomes possible to critique it as a “false consciousness” (206). If religion is false consciousness, as Marx contends, then the job of modernity is to liberate those that labor under its yoke. Jager complicates the conceptualization of religion as false consciousness by showing how dependent it is on the assumption that one is looking at it from the perspective of an objective, non-historically contingent “true” consciousness.

Jager’s third definition, “religion as discipline” (210), posits religion as engagement in a practice. To elucidate this definition, Jager draws on two analogic sources: Wordsworth’s “Nuns fret not at their Convent’s narrow room” (re-printed below) and a section from Saba Mahmood’s “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the

² Jager gets to revelation by way of Montag’s analysis of the changing understanding of “natural” and “supernatural.” Montag contrasts contemporary understandings of “natural” and “supernatural” with their Thomistic meanings. Whereas “natural” in contemporary usage refers to physical matter and “supernatural” refers to that which violates natural laws, for Aquinas “natural” refers to “the kind of thing a thing is” (204). “Supernatural” events, for Aquinas, are events that expand our understanding of nature by showing us that “natural things are open to a realm outside themselves” (204). Revelation, for Aquinas, is about perspective.

Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival” (211, 214).

Wordsworth’s poem, Jager argues, utilizes analogy to forge connections between the work of a nun, hermit, a student, a weaver, a bee, and a poet.

Nuns fret not at their Convent’s narrow room;
And Hermits are contented with their Cells;
And Students with their pensive Citadels:
Maids at the Wheel, the Weaver at his Loom,
Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,
Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells:
In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
In sundry moods, ‘twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet’s scanty plot of ground:
Pleas’d if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find short solace there, as I have found. (*Wordsworth: The
Major Works* 286)

Jager challenges the simplistic reading of this poem as shaping an understanding of freedom “realized through constraint rather than over against it” (211) by explicating the analogy. In Jager’s reading the analogy buckles under the pressure of dissimilitude. While the poetic voice takes temporary solace in the constraint of the sonnet, Jager argues, the nun experiences her vocation as an imperative that brings

with it permanent constraint. In the absence of an organic analogy the poem relies on the subtle logic of substitution to participate in a narrative of secular modernism. In this narrative, Jager claims, religious discipline transforms into the optional pastime of sonnet writing. Jager's assertion is not groundbreaking; Wordsworth's poetry has long been read as participating in a narrative of secular modernism. However, Jager follows his reading by inverting the implications of his conclusion:

In the case of Wordsworth's poem, the very act of transforming discipline into a modern form aligns the rules of the sonnet with instinct, disposition, and confinement, thereby sketching a meeting ground between writer and reader that is neither idea nor belief but an affective and bodily posture. On this reading, life devoted to God is little different, in its form, from a life of learning or spinning or weaving—in short, an activity or vocation demanding certain skills and certain dispositions. (214)

Instead of delegitimizing religious discipline by transforming it into sonnet writing, Jager concludes, "Nun's fret" highlights the characteristics sonnets share with discipline. For Jager "Nun's fret" is a site of convergence between different kinds of work—the work of faith, study, production, writing, and reading. This convergence of types of work replaces the narrative of succession from the simplistic reading with which he began. My interest in Jager's reading is twofold. First, Jager's argument complicates our understanding of the Romantic Period as participating in a narrative of secular modernity; and, second, Jager's reading of "Nun's fret" argues for a conceptual convergence between a life of religious devotion, writing and reading on

the ground of a “model of subjectivity produced through discipline and training” (215).

Jager’s second analogic example further clarifies his meaning. Jager draws this example from Saba Mahmood’s “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent.” Jager paraphrases Mahmood:

A virtuoso pianist . . . can achieve excellence only by submitting herself to a rigorous program of drills, lessons, and exercises; the freedom of expertise, accordingly, is not the freedom of an autonomous will but rather the freedom of mastery—the mastery of a certain set of habits, skills, dispositions, or bodily postures. (*The Book of God* 214)

In this analogy Mahmood navigates the difference between two perceptions of freedom: the freedom of autonomous will and the freedom of mastery. The freedom of mastery, Mahmood suggests, comes only through self-discipline. If one desires to play the piano with expertise, one must practice—practice being the acquisition of a set of habits through repetition. In Mahmood’s analogy those habits are both physical—the postures and positions of play—and mental—the purposeful and repeated submission of oneself. The two kinds of mastery, mastery over the instrument and mastery over the self, have a cyclical relationship. As Mahmood’s pianist submits herself to practice her musical skills improve; as her musical skills improve so too does her mastery over herself.

Jager’s reading of “Nuns fret” and his gloss of Mahmood’s musical analogy yoke together practices of religious discipline with practices of art. In his reading both kinds of discipline hinge on habit formation through voluntary practices of

submission. My dissertation is an attempt to continue the discussion Jager begins in his book by examining the ways temperance—the religious virtue concerned with habit formation—figures in the poetry and prose of the Romantic period. My goals are twofold: to argue that temperance informs Romantic conceptualizations of the relationship between sensibility and the self, and, on a larger scale, to provide the conditions of possibility to critique contemporary ideas about what the study of the Humanities can accomplish.

I begin my argument by tracing Romantic notions of temperance through the influence of Book II of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. In so doing I complicate current understandings of Spenser's influence on the Romantic period and develop a period-specific theory of temperance. Next I consider how temperance influenced Romantic thought on the interaction between the senses and the mind by examining the budding field of Romantic neurology³ and representations of madness in Romantic poetry. In my final chapter I continue my study by engaging with temperance in Romantic theories of education and sermons from the period. By pairing education theory with religious sermons, I show the ways that religious thought on temperance influenced many of the educational ideas that continue to govern modern pedagogy. The three chapters are united by their preoccupation with the ways that typically religious ideals of temperance are woven into the ideas that shaped education, poetry, and mental health at the moment they were first becoming recognizably “modern.”

³ I say here the “budding field” of Romantic neurology and although accurate I should clarify that even as a “budding” field the ideas about the mind I discuss are only circulating among a small group of intellectuals during the period.

Religion is a particularly slippery term; historically contingent, subjective, deeply personal, and yet undeniably political, any definition of “religion” is understandably difficult to pin down. Although certainly associated with British Anglicanism during the romantic period, when I discuss “religion” within the province of this project I refer not to specific doctrine but to a practice. Temperance lends itself to understanding religion as a practice. Temperance is not a set of principles, a belief, or an ideology; temperance is a practice through which one becomes.

Although we now associate temperance with abstinence from alcohol, until the 1830’s it meant no such thing. In fact, temperance was not associated with teetotalism until 1832 when Joseph Livesey and six other men signed a pledge of total abstinence from alcohol in Preston, England. Prior to that pledge, temperance was associated with moderation in reference to self-control or command, including the physical appetites and emotional and mental faculties.⁴

My interest in the term is in this sense: moderation, balance, and self-control. Classical in origin, temperance was the word chosen to translate classical concepts of sound-mindedness, self-control, and moderation from Plato and Aristotle during the Medieval period. Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues identified by Plato in *The Republic* and one of the seven virtues adopted by the Catholic Church. For Thomas Aquinas it was the virtue from which all others flowed. Because temperance

⁴ Annemarie McAllister, a cultural historian at the University of Lancashire, has published widely on the temperance movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century. She has observed that the British and American temperance movements developed simultaneously but that the focus in Britain was more on “moral suasion” and less on legislation. The difference may be owing to the history of temperance in Britain. Although my argument will not take part in a discussion of teetotalism, I will argue that Wordsworth’s poetic theory emphasizes temperance as a moral faculty essential to self-formation in the Romantic period.

is the virtue through which self-discipline is learned and maintained, for Aquinas, all other virtues that require moderation such as chastity and meekness are part of temperance. Aquinas also believed that temperance allowed for a deeper and more sustained enjoyment of wholesome pleasures because it preserved the relationship between sensual experience and reason.

By way of Tyndale and Wycliffe, temperance was added to the English translations of the Old and New Testaments to replace the Latin *modestia* in previous versions. Modestia and temperantia differ in their connotations. Modestia can refer to propriety while temperantia refers to balance, moderation, and self-restraint (Fairbank). When temperantia replaces modestia in 2 Peter, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness” (King James Bible, 2 Peter 1.5-6) the substitution prioritizes self-discipline over adherence to a specific social order. This change is especially important for how it figures in the listing of attributes. The attributes are layered as they build upon each other. Situated between knowledge and patience, temperance is positioned between thought, feeling, and sensation (where patience is understood as endurance of feeling and sensations).

Religious conceptualizations of temperance during the Romantic period pick up on the connection between temperance and feeling. Poet and Sermonist Richard Graves claims that the intemperate man is “under the tyranny of his sensual appetites; which he has so far indulged as to have lost all relish for every other enjoyment . . . his understanding is clouded, and his imagination extinguished. . . he has lost all taste for the common enjoyments and innocent amusements, of life” (“Sermons on the

Following Subjects” 117-118). Graves’ concern here is in the relationship between sensual enjoyment and sensibility. Sensibility decreases in inverse correlation to sensual enjoyment—or at least certain kinds of sensual enjoyment.

Graves’ concern for the affects of sensual enjoyment on the vitality of the imagination might seem odd but during the Romantic period the imagination was of paramount importance. Coleridge defines the imagination in his “*Biographia Literaria*” (1815-1817) as the capacity of the human mind to create; Coleridge writes, “the primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM . . . the secondary I consider as . . . differing only in degree, and in its mode of operation an echo of the former . . . it dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create . . . it struggles to idealize and to unify” (313). This definition carefully marks out the role and the import of the imagination. The imagination, for Coleridge, is the operative faculty through which man understands the world. As the “repetition” of the act of creation inside the mind of man the imagination is also the faculty that connects mankind to the creative power of divinity. By connecting the imagination to the divine act of creation, Coleridge claims for the human imagination the power not only to understand the world but also to change the world. The secondary imagination, although less powerful than the primary, is still capable of transformation. The secondary imagination goes beyond the role Coleridge claims for fancy; the secondary imagination transforms and re-creates. Protecting and even increasing imaginative capacity, then, is a moral concern and anything that

“extinguishes” (“Sermons on the Following Subjects” 117-118) it—in Graves’ words—would be a danger to humanity.

Wordsworth expresses a concern similar to Graves’ in the 1802 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth is concerned that “a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of torpor” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599). Wordsworth is referring to what he sees as an increasingly voracious appetite for sensational entertainment. Like Graves, Wordsworth believes that feeding this appetite with more and more intense sensation lessens one’s ability to feel. By the same logic temperance expands one’s ability to feel by increasing sensitivity to subtle stimuli.

This work of increasing sensibility is intrinsic to the Romantic project. Wordsworth’s poetry is especially pedagogic in the sense that it seeks to engage readers in the development of habits of mind that increase sensitivity to common, everyday pleasures. Wordsworth 1799 *Prelude* begins with a reflection on the role of the river Derwent that illustrates my point.

For this, didst thou,
O Derwent, travelling over the green plains
Near my ‘sweet birthplace’, didst thou, beauteous stream,
Make ceaseless music through the night and day,
Which with its steady cadence tempering
Our human waywardness, composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me

Among the fretful dwellings of mankind

A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm

Which nature breathes among the fields and groves? (1-15)

In this passage the Derwent both shapes thought and serves as a model for the way that poetry can shape thought. The Derwent shapes the Poet's thought by imbuing it with an echo of the river's own steadiness. Through its "ceaseless music" and "steady cadence" the river curbs human tendencies toward waywardness. The steadiness of the river shapes the poet to such a degree that tumult of later life cannot undo its lessons.

In fact, the Poet's very thoughts were "composed" by the river's cadence.

"Composed" has double meaning in this passage. In addition to meaning that the river forms the Poet's patterns of thought while still in infancy, it also means that those thoughts are composed, or tranquil. "Composed" is also a play on the composition of the poetry. The River, then, is responsible not only for imbuing the poet with a calm that continues with him throughout life but also for forming him into one who can compose. Far from limiting the Poet's passionate engagement in feeling, the calm of the river makes him sensitive even in less favorable circumstances to subtle stimuli like the "breath" of nature.

Wordsworth ends the 1850 *Prelude* with a statement of pedagogic intent. He writes, "What we have loved / Others will love, and we will teach them how" (XIV.448-49). For Wordsworth poetry was both an expression of feeling and a lesson in how to feel. The poetry and prose I examine in this dissertation takes up this issue of how to feel. Often the answers to that question are seemingly contradictory because they suggest that feeling more means needing less to instigate feeling. Instead of an

ever-increasing pursuit of stimuli to inspire feeling the Romantic poetry I study seeks to re-form the associations of the mind so that every river, every breeze, and every person one encounters elicit feeling.

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CHAPTER ONE

TOWARD A DEFINITION OF ROMANTIC TEMPERANCE: IMAGINATION, MEMORY, AND MEDIATION

Critics have characteristically understood British Romanticism as a reaction to and rejection of the Enlightenment's prioritization of reason as the ultimate humanizing mental faculty. One feature of this reaction is the Romantic period's renewed interest in the power of the imagination and its conviction that this power could produce real social and political change. For this reason temperance—a virtue typically associated with the suppression or restraint of feeling—is not a concept commonly associated with the Romantic period. However, in this chapter I will argue that it is because of this preoccupation with the power of the imagination that a uniquely Romantic form of temperance becomes important during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Heavily influenced by Spenser's depiction of temperance in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Romantic temperance concerns the balance of the mind between imagination and memory.

ROMANTIC TEMPERANCE

Mentions of temperance abound in Romantic poetry and prose. The words temperance or temperate appear twenty-four times in Wordsworth's collected letters, at least fifteen times in *The Prelude*, and even more often in *The Excursion*.¹ Only two uses of the word in his letters are inconsistent with temperance as balance.

Wordsworth uses the word once in reference to alcohol, in his 1820 letter to Lord Lonsdale, and in that letter Wordsworth specifies his meaning by saying “temperate in

¹ There are fewer examples in Coleridge's writing but still a significant number. I found thirteen separate instances in his poetry and prose.

respect to drinking.” And once he uses “temperate” to describe the pleasing weather. In all other cases the word denotes a state of mind.²

The most compelling instance of the word “temperance” in Wordsworth’s letters is in his March 1804 letter to Thomas De Quincy. In the letter he counseled,

I am anxious to hear . . . that you have not been seduced into unworthy pleasures or pursuits . . . I need not say to you that there is no true dignity but in virtue and temperance . . . and that the best safeguard of all these is the cultivation of pure pleasures, namely, those of the intellect and affections . . . I speak in simplicity and tender apprehension³ as one lover of Nature and Virtue speaking to another . . . love Nature and Books; seek these and you will be happy; for virtuous friendship, and love, and knowledge of mankind, must inevitably accompany these. (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1878–1805* 454)

In the above quotation Wordsworth connects several concepts that are integral to an understanding of Romantic temperance. He draws a bridge between intellect, affection, temperance, nature, and books. Wordsworth counsels De Quincy to cultivate the pleasures of intellect and affection in order to safeguard virtue and temperance.

² I have omitted the uses of the word in *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* from my count when it has a different meaning.

³ Earlier in this letter Wordsworth alludes to a letter De Quincy sent him in praise of *Lyrical Ballads*, his own reticence in responding due to various circumstances, and—most importantly—De Quincy’s recent matriculation at Oxford. Wordsworth’s concern for De Quincy is closely tied to his own university experience at Cambridge where he said men’s manners were “frantic and dissolute.” Since it is unlikely Wordsworth intended to indicate mental illness by his use of “frantic,” it is most likely meant to indicate an intense level of excitement, specified as “ungovernable” by the *OED*.

His assertion that the best way to develop temperance is to cultivate pleasure is at odds with a conventional understanding of temperance as a suppression of passion or feeling (*Oxford English Dictionary* “Temperance”). We might ask: what do the pleasures of intellect and affection have to do with temperance? In addition, for those familiar with classical temperance the juxtaposition of nature and books might seem curious. Nowhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics* does Aristotle (384–322 BC) discuss the importance of nature or books to temperance, although he does discuss the importance of temperance to happiness. In fact, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle separates the moral virtues from the intellectual virtues and identifies moral virtue not as a capacity but as a state of character (29). In this letter Wordsworth conflates intellectual and moral virtues and suggests that they have a cyclical relationship of practice and production.⁴

I point out this discrepancy between classical temperance and Wordsworth’s use of the word in his letter to De Quincy to help establish the terms of my project. Although temperance is integral to the Romantic period, the temperance of the Romantic period is different from classical temperance. Aristotle’s temperance is the mean point between two extremes. For example, in his discussion of the proper management of anger and meekness—two feelings he identifies as opposites—Aristotle calls the desired emotional balance or temperate state the “mean state” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 145). Both extremes that influence the mean state—anger and meekness—have the potential to be vices. Virtue exists only in the middle point

⁴ Wordsworth tells De Quincy to “love Nature and Books; seek these and you will be happy; for virtuous friendship, and love, and knowledge of mankind, must inevitably accompany these.” To seek is to take action, but it is cyclical as well because that action produces and is produced by love.

between anger and meekness. The cultivation of pleasure does not factor into Aristotle's definition of temperance. Classical temperance is this balance between and regulation of emotions, impulses, and desires regardless of their intensity.

My aim in this chapter is not to align Romanticism with emotional moderation and argue for an as-of-yet unexplored moralistically conservative Romanticism or to prove that the Romantics were not invested in idealism or preoccupied with the power of the imagination. On the contrary, my goal is to explore the ways that temperance works in Romantic prose and poetry. In so doing I argue that for the Romantics the term "temperance" meant something quite different from Classical temperance, something far more in keeping with what we have come to understand as the Romantic imagination.

Although, like classical temperance, Romantic temperance is concerned with balance and regulation, instead of mediating between opposing emotions or desires Romantic temperance mediates between faculties of mind. In the letter I quoted previously, Wordsworth tells De Quincy that the best way to "safeguard" temperance is "the cultivation of pure pleasures, namely, those of the intellect and affections" (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1878–1805* 454). He goes on to write, "love Nature and Books; seek these and you will be happy; for virtuous friendship, and love, and knowledge of mankind, must inevitably accompany these" (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1878–1805* 454). Wordsworth makes two claims in these lines. First, that pleasures of the intellect and affection encourage temperance and, second, that a love of nature and books will inevitably lead to the development of these pleasures. In his first claim he poses the pleasures of intellect and affection as

two different kinds of pleasure. Wordsworth does not define either kind of pleasure for De Quincy but in his 1802 “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” he writes that his poetic aim is to explore the mind under the influence of pleasures of affection. Among these pleasures he includes those that tie self to society such as maternal passion and the mind at the moment of death “cleaving in solitude to life and society” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 598–99). The meaning of “intellectual pleasures” is more obscure. “Intellectual pleasures” encompass the pleasures of thought that Wordsworth values equally with feeling. In the “Preface” he stresses the importance of “habits of meditation” and contemplation. These habits of thought are positioned cyclically with the pleasures of feeling so that they produce and are produced by them (598). It is between these two kinds of pleasure—intellect and affection, or thought and feeling—that I situate Romantic temperance.

TEMPERANCE AND ROMANTIC SPENSERIANISM

Temperance as positioned between thought and feeling derives from Book II of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, in which Spenser portrays temperance as a mental space existing between memory and imagination, fed by both and responsible for negotiating between them. Because Spenser is so important to an understanding of Romantic temperance I begin with a discussion of the influence of Spenser on the Romantic period, drawing heavily from Greg Kucich the foremost critic on Romantic Spenserianism. From there I move to a critical history of temperance in Book II of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* in preparation to define Romantic temperance as a unique concept. I then conclude by examining the way it operates in Romantic poetry.

In *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (1991), Greg Kucich attributes the Romantic popularity of Spenser to three causes: first, a fascination with Renaissance texts arising from the perceived relationship between the Renaissance and Romantic poetry; second, a desire to avoid a comparison between Romantic poetry and Milton's epic; and, third, a particular connection to Spenser inspired by the themes of *The Faerie Queene* that speak more directly to Romantic concerns than *Paradise Lost*.⁵ Kucich's first claim is a commonplace in the field; Romantic poets felt a kinship to the Renaissance through which they attempted to circumnavigate more complicated and, often, frustrated feelings about Enlightenment philosophy. Kucich, like many other critics, defines the Romantic period by its emphasis on imagination against the Enlightenment's prioritization of reason. He argues that the Romantics were especially interested in Spenser because Enlightenment critiques of *The Faerie Queene* attacked Spenser for lacking the very quality that the Romantics found undesirable in Enlightenment literature: an abundance of judgment.

In his second point Kucich argues that Milton was considered the preeminent poet,⁶ so much so that feelings of inadequacy threatened to inhibit Romantic poets and

⁵ Although Kucich's second and third point may seem similar, in his second point he argues that Romantic poets feared their work would be inferior when compared to *Paradise Lost* while in his third point he argues that *The Faerie Queene* is thematically Romantic.

⁶ Although Kucich accounts for Blake's critique of Milton, saying somewhat fancifully that Blake "imagined Milton wandering in eternity waiting for someone to redeem the errors of his epic" he does not discuss Wordsworth's critique of Milton (68). Although many of Wordsworth's books are housed at the Dove Cottage Library, so few contain notes that a study of them is not advantageous or necessary. Wordsworth's copy of *Paradise Lost* is a notable exception. The poet wrote in and marked his copy of *Paradise Lost*. The extent of Wordsworth's commentary is out of character even when compared to other books he annotated. Bishop C. Hunt published a transcript of Wordsworth's annotations in the 1969 *Bulletin of the New York Public*

stop them from composing epic poetry.⁷ Since epic poetry was considered the height of poetic accomplishment the Romantics needed a way to engage with its past without bringing to bear comparison with Milton's great accomplishment. Kucich claims that Spenser presented an appealing alternative because although he also wrote epic, his epic was "incomplete and problematic" (13). Kucich argues that because *The Faerie*

Library. Wordsworth wrote commentary on thirteen passages, as Hunt has observed the distribution of his commentary was as follows: Wordsworth commented on two passages in Book III, one in Book VI, two in Book VII, one in IX, one in X, five in XI, and one in XII. The majority of the written commentary is corrective and addresses both plot and style. Of these corrective comments several identify inconsistencies in plot or narrative logic—Hunt argues this is indicative of Wordsworth's close reading of Milton. Wordsworth's corrective commentary and those sections he marked reveal a significant difference in his reading of *Paradise Lost* when compared to Blake's or Shelley's. Certainly Wordsworth did not seem to be preoccupied by the Miltonic Satan and he certainly did not seem to be consumed by the same awe Keats felt of Milton himself. Keats wrote, "the thousand melancholies and magnificences of this Page—leaves no room for anything to be said thereon, but, 'so it is'" (84). The tone of Keats's marginalia differs drastically from Wordsworth's. Although influenced by Milton's epic, Wordsworth's comments on Milton's work do not portray a mind in awe of genius. Where Keats expresses reverence, Wordsworth critiques Milton as one would a contemporary. Wordsworth's comments illustrate his love of *Paradise Lost* through his capacity for close, critical reading. His marginalia also show the distinct differences between his own style and Milton's. Wordsworth's critique is unsurprising given his own poetic pursuits but it is revealing of his poetic theory. In most of the corrective comments Wordsworth advocates for the addition of simple picturesque images where Milton has utilized sublime imagery.

⁷ Romanticism has traditionally understood the relationship between Milton and his Romantic inheritors as one of failure because the epics the Romantics intended to write were never fully realized. In *The Romantic Legacy of Paradise Lost* Jonathan Shears claims that this is true of Wordsworth ("The Recluse"), Coleridge ("Wanderings of Cain"), Keats (the incomplete "Hyperion" poems), Shelley ("Triumph of Life"), and Byron ("Don Juan"). I would add that although true in all cases the comparison between Wordsworth's work and Milton's is perhaps most often employed because of the strong influence of *Paradise Lost* on *The Prelude*, a work that was only ever meant to be a predecessor to his real (unfinished) epic "The Recluse." The comparison is not a particularly productive one as the basis for an analysis of Romantic poetry because it tends toward an evaluative reading instead of a critical reading. Readings of Romantic poetry that take negative comparison with *Paradise Lost* as their central focus run the risk of occluding analysis of Romantic contributions to poetics. Comparative readings are, however, very useful in an analysis of influences on Romantic poetry—the task Shears and Kucich undertake.

Queene was brilliant and yet still flawed it freed Romantics from the burden of the past while simultaneously offering them a rich poetic tradition from which to draw inspiration and on which to improve.

In his third claim Kucich argues that Romantic-era readers consider Spenser a poet of thought and theory as well as imagination—a significant change from Enlightenment readers.⁸ What Enlightenment readers—and we will later see some contemporary Spenserians—read as inconsistencies in Spenser’s allegory, Romantic readers read as an exploration of the inevitable conflict of duality. Kucich claims that Romantic readers recognized the “dramatic center of Spenser’s allegorical world: the mind’s particular division between real and ideal experience” (96). By this Kucich does not mean a Platonic ideal; instead he refers to the power of the imagination versus lived experience.

That the Romantics struggled with the relationship between imagination and reality is not a new supposition; new historicists have long grappled with the relationship between the Romantic imagination and the social and political realities of the period.⁹ Unlike new historicists, however, Kucich argues that the Romantic poets

⁸ Although Kucich claims that Enlightenment readers also saw Spenser as less intimidating than Milton, he also argues that they found flaw in his moralism, didacticism, and the fanciful nature of his allegory (14-15).

⁹ In *Wordsworth’s Great period Poems* Marjorie Levinson argues that Wordsworth’s poetry in particular uses the power of the imagination to mask the absence of the historical moment that the poetry attempts to conceal. She is interested not in how the poem is a product of its historical moment but in how the poem engages in erasure of that moment in order to offer a more cohesive and comforting narrative—one of an autonomy and power of the mind. Instead of the disunity and psychic damage of the historical moment the poet offers a narrative of the growth of his own mind—replacing disturbing external events with internal growth and cohesion. This narrative of the mind focuses on the powers of cognition and imagination that the poet can control instead of the violence and uncertainty of events that he cannot control. In this

were aware of the tension between the imagination and reality so much so that it became the central theme in their admiration of Spenser as well as their own poetic endeavors. Romantic awareness of the dual pull of imagination and reality radically divides Kucich's work from that of the New Historicists by shifting the focus of study from the mind of the poet to the theorization of mind in Romantic poetry.

Kucich elaborates on the theorization of mind in Romantic poetry in what is perhaps his boldest claim—that Spenserian duality “condition[ed] Romanticism’s overall poetics of self-analysis” (102). Kucich’s claim diverges from the history of criticism on Romantic Spenserianism. Prior claims for Spenser’s influence on the Romantic period focused either on Spenser’s morality or the richness of his imagination and poetics. Kucich agrees that Spenser was valued for his moral poetry and his poetics; he argues, however, that the feature of Spenser’s poetry that was most influential was his psychological complexity and not his moral didacticism (102). For

way, Levinson undertakes to read Wordsworth with a kind of psychoanalytic historicism. Levinson argues that “the extreme disinterest evinced by [the] works indicates their resumption of . . . problematic themes at the level of image and metaphysics, precisely because they were deadlocked at the practical level” (5). The critic must look beyond—or, rather, into—the poem at the level of image in order to see the history the poem attempts to elide. This method of looking for the history in the absence of it leads to a construction of the historical moment *from* the poem and results, interestingly, in an aggressively allegorical reading. Levinson’s method depends upon her ability to identify by absence, to read the allegory “where the signified is indicated by an identifiably absent signifier” (9). She contends that this is only possible through the kind of historical remove that McGann argues for in *The Romantic Ideology*. By acknowledging ideological difference and distance between critic and poet, the critic can then articulate what Wordsworth and his own contemporaries could only obfuscate. The relationship between poet and history here is a convoluted one. Unlike McGann, Levinson does not blame the critic—wholly—for the confusion between present ideologies and Romantic ideologies; instead she blames the poet who has attempted to construct a misleading narrative of ideological cohesion to mask ideological dissolution. The poet is represented as an unreliable historian who can only be read properly by reading against the claims of his work.

the Romantics, Kucich argues, Spenser's poetry portrayed the workings of the mind. Because Kucich is arguing against a critical tradition, the majority of his argument is given over to proving that the Romantics valued and adopted Spenserian duality. He does not spend a great deal of time examining duality in Spenser; instead Kucich does the important work of tracing Spenser's influence by looking at reactions to Spenser during the Romantic period as well as representations of Spenserian duality in Romantic texts. I will focus my argument on duality in one particular passage in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*: the Castle of Alma.

Understanding this passage is essential to understanding both duality in Spenser's epic and the way it influenced Romantic poetics of self-analysis because it is the moment in Spenser's text where the duality of the mind is analogized. Spenser's analogy compares the faculties of mind to rooms; Memory lives in one room and Imagination lives in another. Between these two rooms is a third room where the Self resides and mediates between Imagination and Memory. In Book II of *The Faerie Queene* this act of mediation between Memory and Imagination is temperance; instead of defining temperance as the median between extremes as Aristotle does, Spenser defines temperance as the mediation between the dual faculties of memory and imagination through which the self is created.

THE FAERIE QUEEN: BOOK II CRITICAL HISTORY

Of all the representations of Spenserian duality in *The Faerie Queene*, the Castle of Alma has been the most often overlooked. While it is certainly true that Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* has a long critical history, Book II is less often addressed than Books I and III, and the Castle of Alma is often overlooked even by critics who

take up Book II. The most important debates in the critical history of Book II center on its relationship to the *Nicomachean Ethics* or its coherence as a narrative.

The debate centered around Aristotle's influence on *The Faerie Queene* has a long critical history. Beginning in 1906 with J.J. Jusserand's article, "Spenser's Twelve Private Moral Vertues as Aristotle has Devised" in *Moral Philology*, the debate has mostly hinged on an attempt to match Spenser's knights to corresponding virtues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Overall the attempt has met with mixed results. The vast number of studies find that the correlation is not exact, but few have found anything less than compelling similarities, suggesting some influence. Although Spenser does not duplicate Aristotle's virtues in his allegory, he certainly draws from Aristotle's definitions. At times Spenser collapses two virtues into one knight; at other times he separates out aspects of virtues into more than one allegorical figure. Despite the loose relationship between Aristotle's definitions of the virtues and Spenser's definitions, attempts to find more exact matches persevere in Spenserian criticism. Perhaps the precise degree and way Spenser's definitions of the virtues overlaps with Aristotle's has remained an issue for scholars because Spenser claims Aristotle as a source in his introductory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh: "I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised . . . So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest . . . But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history" (15–16). The wording of his claim may account for the emphasis most scholars have put on

matching Aristotle's virtues to Spenser's text. Spenser specifically claims that his virtues are derived from Aristotle's twelve virtues, a difficult feat considering the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not include a list of twelve specific virtues.

Critics account for this discrepancy in several ways. Lilian Winstanley and James Lyndon Shanley argue that Spenser's Temperance is a combination of Aristotelian ideas of temperance and continence,¹⁰ while Viola Blackburn Hulbert argues instead for the influence of a Christian theory of temperance developed by early church fathers. Although arguments for early Christian influence are undoubtedly persuasive, the texts from which they draw share Aristotle's *Ethics* as a common source, significantly undercutting the argument against Aristotelian influence. For example, Thomas Aquinas adopted many of Aristotle's definitions in *The Summa Theologica*. These arguments do raise an important question of methodology, however. Attempts to trace an absolute correspondence between the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Faerie Queene* are bound to fail because Spenser's virtues will undoubtedly reflect the Christian influences of his period, regardless of his reliance on Aristotle as a source. In addition, this strain of Spenser criticism has contributed to a surprisingly common consensus among Spenserians that echoes Enlightenment critique of Spenser: that his poem is fragmented, inconsistent, and that it lacks the narrative brilliance of *Paradise Lost*.

¹⁰ This argument had become so widely accepted that those responsible for it are hardly ever cited when referenced.

This critique of Spenser's narrative cohesion is so pervasive that it is its own subset of Spenser criticism. The three most important critics of Spenser, Paul Alpers,¹¹ Northrop Frye, and A.C. Hamilton participate in this debate. In *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene* (1967) Alpers claims that because *The Faerie Queene* lacks narrative cohesion the poetry can only be examined through its relationship to the reader. Alpers' argument is two-fold: first, *The Faerie Queene* pursues and engages its reader on the surface level—the level of reaction¹²—and, second, in so doing it removes the impetus to understand the allegory in favor of responding to it. Alpers claims:

Spenser's attention is focused on the reader's mind and feelings and not on what is happening within his fictions. His poetic motive in any given stanza is to elicit a response—to evoke, modify, or complicate feelings and attitudes. His stanzas, then, are modes of address by the poet to the reader. (5)

Alpers' argument suggests that the only meaning in the poem is the exchange between author and reader it facilitates. Such an assertion is common enough as an acknowledgement that meaning can only ever be understood as part of the reading

¹¹ Alpers, perhaps best known for *What Is Pastoral?*, died in May of 2013. *The Spenser Review* dedicated their Fall 2013 issue (44.2) to him. The retrospective includes work by Sukanta Chaudhuri, Andrew Escobedo, Paul J. Hecht, James Nohrnberg, Syrithe Pugh, and Christopher Warley. Warley's article in particular is an excellent resource. Warley reminds us that Alpers helped pioneer "slow reading" and said of pastoral poetry that "there is no way to become a believer short of reading [it]," a sentiment that beautifully echoes Romantic feeling (123). Although I disagree with his reading of *The Faerie Queene* I would be remiss if I did not recognize that his interest in reader response I discuss above was an academic as well as an ethical commitment.

¹² By surface Alpers means an analysis of the allegory as it is presented by stanza opposed to a "depth" reading like Frank Kermode's or Alastair Folwer's. Kermode and Fowler examine iconology and arithmology in *The Faerie Queene*.

experience, but Alpers' argument is much more aggressive. Alpers argues that Spenser's text is logically incoherent because Spenser sacrifices narrative for the sake of instigating reader response.¹³ He goes on to critique the narrative structure for being inconsistent and illogical and to claim that, because the narrative structure is immaterial to the meaning of *The Faerie Queene*, each stanza is isolated and can be experienced independently from its relationship to the rest of the poem.

Although Northrop Frye¹⁴ also prizes the imagination and is interested in the response of readers and narrative cohesion, his approach to *The Faerie Queene* differs drastically. Frye argues that *The Faerie Queene*'s narrative cohesion is tied to the moment in which it was written because it relies on "axioms and assumptions" Spenser would have shared with his readers ("The Structure of Imagery in *The Faerie Queene*" 56). Frye goes on to analyze the narrative according to the concept of the "four levels of existence" he argues would have been recognizable to Spenser's readers (62). Frye's prioritization of narrative cohesion brought heavy criticism from

¹³ A.C. Hamilton wrote an excellent—if somewhat personally invested—review of Alpers book for ELH, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Dec., 1986). In his review he explains in detail the ramifications of Alper's argument, including the way it would drastically limit the scope of future Spenser scholarship if scholars heeded its call to abandon narrative.

¹⁴ Northrop Frye is best known in Romantic circles for his groundbreaking work on Blake *Fearful Symmetry*. His *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) is better known in wider circles and began with his interest in Spenser. In his introduction to *Anatomy of Criticism* he explains, "After completing a study of William Blake (*Fearful Symmetry*, 1947), I determined to apply the principles of literary symbolism and Biblical typology which I had learned from Blake to another poet, preferably one who had taken these principles from the critical theories of his own day, instead of working them out by himself as Blake did. I therefore began a study of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, only to discover that in my beginning was my end. The introduction to Spenser became an introduction to the theory of allegory, and that theory obstinately adhered to a much larger theoretical structure" (vii). Unlike Alpers who focused on Spenser and Milton for much of his career, Frye wrote extensively in several different periods.

Alpers. Alpers criticized Frye, saying, “It seems to me both a wonder and a warning when a man as intelligent as Frye has to describe Spenser’s poem so inaccurately in order to persuade himself or his reader that it is aesthetically coherent” (123). For Alpers, Frye’s reading of another layer of symbolism in addition to the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* is at best wishful thinking and at worst purposeful delusion driven by Frye’s desire to see sense where there is none. But Alpers is not only critiquing Frye, he is also critiquing anyone else who insists on cohesion in *The Faerie Queene*. Just as Hamilton will prove to be concerned that Alpers’ resistance to reading narrative will destroy the future of Spenserian criticism, Alpers is concerned that the refusal to admit that there is no cohesion will destroy its future.

Finally, A.C. Hamilton argues that the nature of allegory requires both the surface pleasure Alpers champions and the cultivation of critical distance that Frye performs. Hamilton goes on to argue against consistency is a valid concern because, like Alpers’ pleasure, it is dependent on the perception of readers. If readers follow Alpers’ advice and ignore narrative action, Hamilton asserts, they will miss most of the resolution the poem offers because the resolution almost exclusively takes place in moments of narrative action. Hamilton claims a more important place for allegory than either Alpers or Frye allow. Hamilton’s reading of allegory works on the level of immediate pleasure *and* the level of critical reading. Interestingly, although Hamilton argues against critical readings on the basis of cohesion his work as the editor of the *Spenser Encyclopedia*¹⁵ suggests it is still a concern for him.

¹⁵ The *Spenser Encyclopedia* is a large collection of entries on themes, allegorical figures, books, historical influences, and allusions. At 858 pages its size alone makes

The debate over Aristotelian influence and the debate over narrative coherence share an important similarity: Spenserians invested in both debates are thinking about faithfulness to a particular model. Those critics involved in the debate over Aristotelian influence are concerned with how well or poorly Spenser reflects Aristotle's ethics. Few critics have considered Spenser's changes to Aristotle's ethical models as transformative; instead critics have considered these changes to be the result of Spenser's faulty or inexact understanding of Aristotle. Similarly, the debate around narrative cohesion interrogates Spenser's faithfulness to allegory. With the notable exception of A.C. Hamilton, critics engaged in the debate over narrative cohesion consider the narrative as successful or not based on its cohesion. This tendency toward evaluative readings is the reason Book II has garnered little critical attention comparatively and the reason that attention has focused almost entirely on the ways Book II fails as a narrative and as a representation of temperance.

More than the meaning of the text is at stake in the debate over how to read *The Faerie Queene*—these critics debate the very nature of the text. Of course the text is an allegory and allegory comes with its own set of reading requirements,¹⁶ but *The Faerie Queene* thwarts many of them. Unlike its allegorical predecessor *Piers Plowman* or its descendent *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Faerie Queene* thwarts attempts to pin down its allegory to one static meaning. Spenserian criticism that prioritizes narrative cohesion assumes the success or failure of the poem hinges on its

an argument for the desire to pin down *The Faerie Queene* into some kind of cohesive whole.

¹⁶ Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* takes up the problem of allegorical form. I have not included a review of it here because few would argue that it bears directly on *The Faerie Queene* for the reasons I discuss above.

faithfulness to conventional allegorical structure. In the face of *The Faerie Queene's* narrative inconsistency, it is no wonder that critics often focus on how to read the text instead of constructing readings of the text.

The dismissal of allegory as too simplistic to deserve much critical attention has a long history. Paul de Man examines the dismissal of allegory as it applies to Romanticism in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" (1969). In his essay de Man carefully considers the motivations behind the movement from allegory to symbol as the predominant form of figural language during the Romantic period. De Man attributes the predominance of the symbol to the Romantic desire for subject/object unity. He says, "the valorization of the symbol at the expense of allegory coincides with the growth of an aesthetic that refuses to distinguish between experience and the representation of this experience" ("The Rhetoric of Temporality" 188). Symbols associate images with that which is beyond the ability of the senses to perceive but their effectiveness is dependent on the slippage between the image and the thing it represents. When the subject is associated with the symbol, and the symbol with the suprasensory, a-temporal object that it represents, the subject and object collapse and the subject shares in the characteristics of the object-symbol. Through this slippage, de Man argues, the symbol attempts to transcend temporality and collapse the distance between subject and object.

Unlike his contemporaries, de Man argues that the Romantic period is characterized not by the transcendence of symbol but by the temporality of allegory. In part de Man's argument is based on a reclassification. He argues that because the landscapes so important to Romantic poets were derived from a typology instead of a

specific locale, the poems are more like the allegories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than they are locodescriptive. More importantly, because the typology changes over time with lived experience the poet is reminded of temporality and cannot hold on to the unifying power of symbol. In this way de Man complicates allegory; instead of a mechanical representation, he understands allegory to reinforce an awareness of the difference between the ideal and lived experience. By reinforcing an awareness of the difference between ideal and real, allegory creates the conditions for an analysis¹⁷ of the self over time.¹⁸ De Man's rendering of allegory presents an alternative to engaging with temperance in *The Faerie Queene* as didactic and self-consuming¹⁹ and a more complex way of thinking about the relationship between Spenserian temperance and the Romantics.

The two texts in Spenserian criticism that most nearly escape this critique by taking the connections between allegory and temperance seriously are Lauren Silberman's "*The Faerie Queene*: Book II and the Limitations of Temperance" (1987) and Jeff Dolven's *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (2007). Although both Silberman and Dolven are still concerned with narrative cohesion, they come the

¹⁷ By highlighting the differences between the ideal and lived experience and differences in the self over time allegory creates the conditions—the distance—needed for critical reading.

¹⁸ This last point—allegory as creating the conditions for self-analysis—comes primarily during his discussion of *A Shumber Did My Spirit Seal*. De Man writes, "the fundamental structure of allegory reappears here in the tendency of the language toward narrative, the spreading out along the axis of an imaginary time in order to give duration to what is, in fact, simultaneous within the subject" (225).

¹⁹ Here I am referring to Stanley Fish's 1972 book *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature*. In his book Fish develops a theory of dialectical didacticism in which a text engages a reader in a search for a truth that often contradicts the reader's pre-conceived truths. In so doing the text leads the reader through a process of conversion but also robs itself of purpose. Once the text has succeeding in converting the reader to its own truth it loses its value.

closest to addressing the problem of temperance in *The Faerie Queene* without dismissing it as a narrative flaw. Instead, Silberman and Dolven approach the problem of reading in *The Faerie Queene* as inherent in allegorical form.

Like Alpers, Frye, and Hamilton, Silberman is concerned about the lack of cohesion in *The Faerie Queene*. Unlike these critics, Silberman sees this lack of cohesion as Spenser's attempt to illustrate the inadequacy of temperance as a framework for mediating between sensuous experience and the individual. Book II, she argues, positions temperance as a kind of critical distance, one that eschews engagement for impassivity. Her argument is not far from A.C. Hamilton's assertion that allegory requires we step back from the initial pleasure that results from reading to consider the meaning behind the narrative, except that Silberman is interested in how reading works inside the text. Silberman claims that the narrative instructs Guyon—the knight of Temperance—in a lesson that is ultimately impossible to learn because the real intent is to discredit temperance as a "moral standard in order to put in question the actual relationship between ethical principle and moral action and to examine allegory itself as a methodology" (9). To support her claim Silberman isolates and analyzes moments in the text when, she argues, the mediating power of temperance fails. Although her approach is not unique her conclusions certainly are. Silberman reads these failures of temperance as failures of reading.

Like Hamilton, Silberman adopts the parallel between reading allegory and temperance. Like reading allegory, temperance requires a cultivated distance from immediate experience. However, Silberman neglects two important ideas in her reading. The first is A.C. Hamilton's agreement with Alpers that engagement is

essential. In fact, Hamilton asserts that we cannot really have disengagement without first having engagement. For Silberman's argument this means that what she sees as inevitable failures of temperance can also easily be read as part of a learning curve. The lack of critical distance she argues is the failure of temperance is also a prerequisite for its success because to learn to create distance Guyon must first collapse distance. In fact, in attempts to create critical distance there is an inherent risk of collapse. The risk of collapse is as much a marker of success as it is a condition for failure. The second thing Silberman neglects is the way Guyon's stay at the Castle of Alma takes up reading as its direct subject. She pays close attention to what she calls moments of failed reading in the poem—moments in which she claims Guyon fails to learn lessons essential to temperance—but she does not comment on Guyon's actual reading in the castle and the role it must play in any theory of reading in *The Faerie Queene*.

Jeff Dolven's reading of Book II also avoids Alma's castle, instead focusing on the ways that allegorical figures serve as examples to each other and to the reader. Unlike Silberman, Dolven argues that Guyon can and does read allegory. When Guyon fails to read Amavia's allegorical role he puts himself at risk for absorption into the drama of her experience. Although he cannot save her, Amavia's death brings with it the critical distance he needs to understand the interaction as the teaching moment it is (156). Dolven argues that the instruction functions on two levels—Guyon learns critical distance from Amavia's death and the reader learns critical reading from Guyon's slip into Amavia's pain. Dolven goes on to argue that what is at stake in *The*

Faerie Queene is "the degree of proper detachment" (156). Dolven concludes of Guyon that,

What he learns in particular—what springs him from the cycle of destructive sympathy—is how to recognize examples, how to frame and excerpt the world like a text, to recognize the natural boundaries around its lessons and treat them with the proper respect. (163)

For Dolven, Guyon's sympathy is destructive because it consumes him and makes it impossible for him to judge or act wisely. Only by learning to distance himself from the narrative can Guyon control his role in it. Guyon extracts himself from the narrative by learning to read with an eye toward allegory. Silberman claims that temperance mediating between sensuous experience and self results in disassociation between mind and body; Dolven argues that the mediating power of temperance cultivates boundaries between self and experience. Dolven's argument about allegory is similar to de Man's claims for Romantic allegory in *The Rhetoric of Temporality* but Dolven does not follow them through to the conclusion of Guyon's training. Like de Man, Dolven is interested in the way allegory highlights the difference between real and ideal. Dolven's argument hinges on moments in the text in which Guyon is confronted with immediate action and either collapses into the narrative by transgressing the boundaries between self and experience or resists collapse by reading the world like an allegory. In the Castle, Alma teaches Guyon to apply the same principles to his own interiority.

TRAINING IN TEMPERANCE: IMAGINATION AND MEMORY IN THE CASTLE OF ALMA

In Alma's castle Guyon learns that true temperance is a mental labor of negotiation between faculties of the mind. It requires imagining the future, remembering the past, and mediating the present. Guyon learns this through a brief interaction with Alma and her three counselors: Phantastes, or imagination; the unnamed counselor who mediates the present; and Eumnestes, or memory. The first and last counselors combine wisdom of the past with an imagining of the future: "The first of them could things to come foresee . . . The third things past could keepe in memoree" (II.IX.49.1, 3). The middle counselor balances between imagination and memory, drawing from both to mediate the demands of the present. Unlike Red Crosse who is tutored at length in the House of Holiness, Guyon receives a tour of the rooms each counselor inhabits and then remains in Eumnestes' room to read his collection of books at length. In fact, none of Alma's counselors ever give direct instruction to Guyon. This lack of direct instruction sets the Castle of Alma apart in *The Faerie Queene*. Typically when a knight arrives at the allegorical home of his virtue, the allegorical figures that reside there intervene in his quest through direct instruction. In Book I, for example, the knight of Holiness is instructed by the inhabitants of The House of Holiness: Fidelia (faith), Speranza (hope), and Charissa (charity). His instruction is part of a lengthy, hands-on process whereby he is cleansed from his sins and prepared to defeat the dragon and complete his mission. In contrast, the Castle of Alma offers Guyon little by way of didactic instruction. Instead, the instruction he receives is in keeping with Spenser's conceptualization of temperance because it teaches that reflection is the center of temperance.

The three rooms in the Castle of Alma are representations of what is internal to Alma's counselors. Phantastes, the allegorical figure for imagination, lives in a room with painting all over the walls in "sundry colours" of all kinds of fantastic creatures as well as the common sights, described as "some daily scenes" which include "fooles, louers, children, Dames" (II.IX.50.6, 8). The real is mixed in with images Guyon cannot even identify. He describes them as "infinite shapes of things dispersed thin" (II.IX.50.2). The images and colors represent the productive powers of the imagination. The imagination can conjure both the familiar and the fantastic, and is its own faculty separate from memory.

In addition to the colors and images, the room is also full of flies. One might think that flies so abundant that they "encombred all mens eares and eyes" might get top billing in a description of the room, but it is the images on the walls that first capture Guyon's attention (II.IX.51.3). By holding back the flies the reader becomes aware of his or her own imagination as he or she revises his or her mental picture to include such a pervasive detail. Holding back the image of the flies also indicates that they are less important than the images on the wall. The meaning of the flies is explicitly stated in the following lines:

All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,
Deuices, dreames, opinions vnsound,
Shewes, visions, sooth-sayes, and prophesies;

And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies. (II.IX.51.6-9)

Ashley Cross examines the significance of flies in Romantic poetry in the recent *European Romantic Review* article "To 'buzz lamenting doings in the air': Romantic

Flies, Insect Poets, and Authorial Sensibility” (2014). Cross claims that flies—in the tradition of *Titus Andronicus*—serve as both a measure of sensibility and a reminder of authorial craft. When Marcus Andronicus kills a fly at the dinner table Titus reprimands him for hurting something so defenseless and inoffensive, using the fly as a symbol to represent the powerlessness of Lavinia and himself, but when his brother changes the symbolic value of the fly to Aaron—the Moor who facilitated Lavinia’s brutal rape—Titus praises Marcus and even stabs the dead fly as well. Titus’ demand first that Marcus have compassion on the fly and then for retribution shows a sensibility out of control. Titus’ feelings are so raw that he cannot help but associate even the treatment of a fly with his own pain. Cross argues that Titus’ shift from compassion to retribution reminds the audience of the significance of language and context to interpretation and that in so doing the fly becomes a symbol for the author as well.

As a symbol for the author, the fly highlights the power of authorship as well as its ephemerality. The author has the power to draw out the emotions of the audience by controlling symbolic value. When the fly represents Lavinia the author inspires compassion; when the fly represents Aaron the author inspires repugnance. The feeling is dependent on the symbolic value of the image. The fly represents the ephemerality of authorship, Cross claims, both because of its dependence on an engaged audience and the predominance of cheap printing mediums like newspaper that literally expire in days. As part of his allegory, Spenser’s flies, like Cross’, are heavily symbolic. Although Spenser’s flies pre-date Romantic printing concerns, they do address another kind of ephemerality intrinsic to authorship: the creative impulse.

The images on the walls of the room representing the imaginative faculty represent realized creative visions. They bring together the real and the imagined ideal in a profusion of sensory delight. The flies are also allegorical figures for the imagination but they are creative impulses that have not been realized. Unlike the images on the walls of the room of imagination, the flies are “idle” because they have led to no resulting creation. The flies remind the reader that the power of the imagination is useless at best and potentially dangerous at worst if one is incapable of distinguishing between what is imagined and what is real. It is capable of conjuring scenes of beauty and pathos but, if left unchecked, its power can inhibit the senses.²⁰ The room of imagination is not only every beautiful thing one could imagine it is also all that is ugly and nightmarish.

For Spenser the imaginative power can both be productive and destructive and it requires a balancing force: memory. Like Phantastes, Eumnestes—Memory—has its own internal space. The internal space of memory is unsurprisingly old but sturdy. Spenser does not describe the room in much detail; the focus is on its purpose. Like his room, Eumnestes is old but his mind is still sharp. His mind is full of “liuely vigour” and “forse” (II.IX.55.7, 8). He is capable of “infinite remembrance” and is responsible for keeping a physical record of all “things foregone” (II.IX.56.1, 2). The room of memory is an exhaustive repository of history. Guyon treats Eumnestes with reverence because he preserves the lived experience of generations. This lived experience is valuable because it provides an opportunity for Guyon to better

²⁰ The flies can literally blot out sound and vision. In my second chapter I will discuss the way the imagination figured in discussions of insanity in the Romantic period; the flies here work similarly. They have the potential to disrupt any other imaginative vision if they are allowed to dominate the mind.

understand the world. When Guyon sees the books—particularly the history book of Faerie Land—he looks at it “greedily” and “burning . . . with feruent fire,” and begs leave to read it (II.IX.60.3, 6). Guyon’s reaction seems out of character for temperance but his desire has to be fervent to balance the power of the imagination. *The Faerie Queene*’s version of the dual pull of temperance is less about finding a median between desires, emotions, or pleasures²¹ and more about balancing the faculties of the mind.

Balance is represented by an unnamed figure in Book II and is the middle room between imagination and memory and the second room Guyon visits after Phantastes’. I quote it at length for the purpose of my analysis:

Thence [Alma] brought them to the second roome, whose wals
Were painted faire with memorable gestes,
Of famous Wisards, and with picturals
Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
Of commen wealthes, of states, of pollicy,

²¹ In the *Ethics* Aristotle discusses temperance mostly in terms of the consumption of food and wine. However, his related discussion of the nature of virtue—as I mentioned before, most especially continence—and the process of self-mastery is closely tied to his understanding of temperance. Aristotle places temperance at the center of virtue, calling it the virtue from which all other virtues spring. Aristotle defines virtue as “the regulation of feelings and actions” (84). This definition of virtue comprises two key parts. First, Aristotle’s definition of virtue does not insist on the absence of characteristics or dispositions that are antagonistic to virtue; in fact, this definition of virtue insists on the presence of antagonistic tendencies. To regulate—meaning to control, order, or normalize—there must be the possibility of indocility, disorder, or aberration. Regulation is not the same as eradication; regulation is a working between—a negotiation or mediation of conflicting desires, tendencies, or impulses. For Aristotle this includes physical appetites like lust and hunger and their extreme opposites, as well as emotions like anger and apathy. It does not include imagination and memory, which are not really opposites of the same desire or faculty so much as individual faculties that balance each other.

Of lawes, of iudgements, and of decretals;
All artes, all science, all Philosophy,
And all that in the world was aye thought wittily.

Of those that roome was full, and them among
There sate a man of ripe and perfect age,
Who did them meditate all his life long,
That through continuall practise and vsage,
He now was growne right wise, and wondrous sage.
Great pleasure had those stranger knights, to see
His goodly reason, and graue personage,
That his disciples both desir'd to bee;

But *Alma* thence them led to th'hindmost roome of three. (II.IX.53-54)

Like the spaces inhabited by Phantastes and Eumnestes, mediation is its own internal space as well. Unlike the spaces inhabited by Phantastes and Eumnestes, the middle room is both beautiful and functional. Like Phantastes' room there are paintings on the wall but these paintings include the magical, political, religious,²² juridical, monarchical, aesthetic, scientific, and philosophical. In short, the middle room includes all the various systems of judgment, thought, and knowledge. Taken together they represent an enormous amount of potential strain on the mind. As with Bahktin's

²² Decretals are official letters from the Pope sent to communicate changes in ecclesiastical law.

peasant,²³ the demands of these diverse systems could create a crisis in the mind of any individual responsible to them. The last three things listed, “All artes, all science, all Philosophy,” would be especially taxing. The room represents some figures from each category but it includes all art, all science, and all philosophy, much of which would conflict with each other. The room is full of these representations and the unnamed man in the room is responsible for mediating between them.

There are two conditions that make it possible to mediate between these disparate systems: first, “continuall practise and vsage” and, second, the placement of mediation between imagination and memory. The first of these is consistent with Aristotle’s habit-based temperance. Aristotle claims that temperance is cultivated through “separate acts of working” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 100), which, together, produce habits of the mind. In other words, when a man engages repeatedly in “bad” acts—meaning acts that arise from an extreme emotion or desire like anger—he produces bad habits and is the cause of his own dissolution. The acts that lead to habit are, for Aristotle, a matter of choice; however the habits that these choices form resist choice. Once a habit of mind begins to develop through the repetition of separate similar acts, the likelihood of additional similar acts increases. In other words, the more one feels a particular emotion without attempting to control it the more likely the

²³ In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin gives the example of a peasant who speaks several different languages including the language of prayer, the language of song, the language of his family, and the official language, but does not realize that the ideologies attached to the languages he speaks are contradictory. When he becomes aware of the contradictions the languages enter critical interanimation and he is forced to choose where he stands among the languages. The critical interanimation of language precedes the struggle to make ideologies fit together; it may be the catalyst for the struggle because it reveals that they don’t fit together perfectly and that adjustments in meaning and acceptance must be made in order for cohesion to be achieved.

mind is to default to that emotion under similar circumstances. Similarly, when a man engages in “good” acts, positive habits are formed and these habits increase the likelihood of future positive acts by creating a kind of mental tendency toward them. This tendency toward virtue is most important in moments that preclude specific preparation. For example, Aristotle reasons that in moments when danger is anticipated one can prepare to act with courage but when danger is unforeseen and sudden a calculated response is not possible (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 112). When a calculated response is not possible, Aristotle argues that a man will act according to whatever habit he has developed through his actions in similar situations in the past. In other words, his reflex reaction will be virtuous if he has cultivated virtue by separate reflexive prior works. Like Aristotle’s temperate man, the allegorical figure that inhabits the space for mediation has developed the habit of temperance through long practice in thinking temperately.²⁴

²⁴ The “Occasion” episode is clearest example of the creation of emotional habits in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*. In Guyon’s conflict with Occasion, Guyon learns that because one cannot control provocation one must prepare to control one’s reaction to provocation prior to a conflict. When Guyon sees Furor in the distance dragging a Squire behind him and followed by an old hag (Occasion), he hastens to the aid of the Squire and throws Occasion to the ground. Guyon is about to kill Furor when the Palmer stops him and draws his attention to Occasion, explaining that Furor cannot be contained until Occasion is overcome. The Squire explains to Guyon that he was tricked by his best friend into believing his fiancée was unfaithful. Believing that he has seen his fiancée with a groom, the Squire kills her and when he finds that what he actually saw was his fiancée’s maid Pyrene and his own friend Philemon he kills Philemon and pursues Pyrene with the intent to kill her as well. It is in his pursuit of Pyrene that the Squire is overcome by Furor and Occasion and bound by them. In the telling of his story the Squire poses an important question; he asks, “what man can shun the hap, / That hidden lyes vnwares him to surpryse” (2.4.17). This question is essential to the Occasion episode and is answered by both Guyon and the Palmer. Guyon tells the Squire, “sore haue ye beene diseasd; / But all your hurst may soone through temperance be easd” (2.4.33). Disease here carries two meanings, because of Philomon’s manipulation the Squire has been put out of ease, but he is also diseased in

The second condition that enables mediation between the disparate systems, the room's position as a middle space between imagination and memory, is a unique characteristic of Spenserian temperance. Here Spenser is playing with *tempus*, the root of temperance. Imagination shapes the future, memory chronicles the past, and both inform the present. Like the allegorical function of narrative in Paul de Man's reading of "A Slumber did my Spirit Seal," Spenser's allegorical figuring of temperance insists on a self shaped by temporality. The mental space of the present is between the past and the future, but that is not the only relationship they bear to each other. By putting mediation between imagination and memory Spenser suggests that any present incarnation of self is formed by the imagination and memory. The internal spaces of imagination and memory both turn inward toward the present, coming together to form a potentially chaotic present state of mind. For Spenser, then, temperance is the process of mediating between these two mental faculties and, in so doing, creating a self that is formed by both.

TEMPERANCE AND THE ROMANTIC IMAGINATION

Like imagination in *The Faerie Queene*, the Romantic imagination is a powerful, productive faculty with its own mental space. Also like imagination in *The Faerie Queene*, Romantic imagination was often characterized as working with and

the sense that he has corrupted his character by allowing intemperance in his actions. The Palmer echoes this second meaning when he moralizes, "most wretched man, / That to affections does the bridle lend; / In the beginning they are weake and wan, / But soon with suffrance grow to fearfull end" (2.4.34). The Squire locates the source of his problem in the moment he was tricked—the first meaning of diseased; the Palmer locates the source far earlier citing his tendency to give free rein to intemperance. Because the Squire allowed his baser desires to rule his character, creating bad habits, he was not prepared to act within the ethical mean in the moment of crisis and became a victim to his own passions.

defined against reason. Percy Bysshe Shelley most completely theorizes the relationship between the power of the imagination and reason in *A Defense of Poetry* (1821)²⁵. Shelley claims, “According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action which are called Reason and Imagination, the former may be considered as the mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity” (674). Reason focuses on relationships between thoughts while Imagination has productive power. It takes what reason comprehends and adds to it something particular to the individual mind. Although imagination uses the same thoughts as Reason in its creative process, the product is more than the sum of those thoughts.

Shelley defines poetry as the “expression of imagination,” generally speaking, and poets as capable of seeing the future in the present. Shelley distinguishes this ability to see the future in the present from prophecy. Poets prefigure; they do not prophesy.²⁶ Prefiguration does not foretell the future. Prefiguration is a pre-imagining based in the present where the imagination moves forward from the present conceptually. Spivak explains the difference between prefiguration and prediction as “negatively, in the intending subject’s apparent lack of precision, in the figure; positively, it is the figure’s immense range in time and space” (“Terror: A Speech

²⁵ *A Defense of Poetry* was written in 1821 but first published posthumously in 1840.

²⁶ The distinction between prefiguration and prophecy is an important one. Many other poets have suggested that poets are like prophets, perhaps most notably Sydney, but Shelley resists that model. In so doing he moves away from an older model of poet-prophet that sought to legitimate the work of poetry by lending it a quasi-religious power.

After 9-11” 87). While prophecy is a foretelling that encloses, solidifies, and narrows the future, prefiguration multiplies possibilities. To prefigure is to imagine beforehand but without any kind of surety. Not to be confused with obscure prophecy or a prophecy with unclear meaning, prefiguration’s lack of precision is not in the subject’s ability to read the future but in their figuration of the future as non-definitive.

Prefiguration is also not limited to a specific future time and place as is prophecy. For Spivak, prefiguration is an ethical act because imagination precludes knowledge—we do not need to imagine that which we already definitively know. In other words, prefiguration suspends knowing in favor of imagining. In *The Statesman’s Manual* Coleridge articulates the dangers of prophecy in a way that helps shed light on the ethical value of prefiguration. Coleridge blames a number of factors for the French Revolution and among them he includes “an assumption of prophetic power” (45). Coleridge argues that this assumption of prophetic power allowed men to construct governments like “machines, every moment of which might be foreseen” and to do so with “remorseless arrogance” (45). He contends that because those constructing the government believed they could see every outcome, they carried out their plans without consideration for the cost to the rights and lives of men (45). Prefiguration refuses the surety of prophecy; while prophecy has a determined end that all action is then bent to bring about, prefiguration is an exercise in imagining relationships between present and future.

Spivak argues for training in the Humanities because of the ethical value of prefiguration: training the imagination to imagine the other before drawing conclusions based on “knowledge.” Because prefiguration necessitates a forward

imagining, it is very important to Shelley that poets do not imbue their poetry with “[their] own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of [their] place and time” (682). Prefiguration is a productive power; Shelley’s imagination has the power to produce without being tied to only that which is already real or true.

Because the Romantics saw the productive power of the imagination as extremely influential, the Romantics were also concerned with its possible detrimental effects. In fact, the imagination was considered so powerful that there was a lot of concern over how it was formed and stimulated. Romantic historian John Brewer claims that literature was evaluated by its capacity to support mainstream morality, as the “intellectual ally and emotional support of the official supernatural” (Brewer 282).²⁷ This relationship between literature and morality is apparent in the educational theories and practices of the period.²⁸ Literature, as Alan Richardson argues in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice 1780-1832* (1994), was employed as a part of an ideology-producing educational strategy. Especially when employed to teach the poor, literature was expected to reinforce commonly held moral and religious beliefs. The “official supernatural” is, of course, Anglicanism but also a less tightly defined but still socially accepted Christianity. As such, some (Hannah More, John Hartcliffe, Richard Graves, Maria Edgeworth, et al.) viewed poetry that inflamed the senses or ignited the imagination with suspicion. This suspicion of sensual poetry runs contrary to much of what we think about the Romantic period, the moment when imagination became prioritized as the highest

²⁷ By “official supernatural” Brewer indicates that literature was expected to support a kind of general Christian spirituality separate from the church. Literature was not expected to indoctrinate but it was expected to edify.

²⁸ I address educational theories in more depth in my third chapter.

human faculty (Brewer 283). Brewer does not argue that the imagination was any less important in the Romantic period than is widely accepted; he argues that the importance of pleasures associated with the imagination gave rise to an effort to distinguish between imaginative pleasure that gratified the appetites and imaginative pleasure that edified the mind. Part of the distinction between the two kinds of pleasure, Brewer claims, was that edifying imaginative pleasure heightened sensibility to the real as well as the imagined. For example, imaginative pleasure increased one's sensibility when confronted with actual poverty while pleasure that gratified the appetites allowed readers to experience compassion for imagined poverty without any lasting changes to their thoughts and feelings.

Wordsworth's theory of the imagination addresses the creation of new patterns of thought and feeling. In the 1802 "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" he describes the purpose of poetry.

The end of poetry is to produce excitement in a co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But, if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering

and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling.

(*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 609)

Wordsworth identifies excitement of the mind as the aim of poetry but he considers exciting the mind a delicate and potentially dangerous process. For poetry to be successful it has to incite new patterns of thought and feeling while simultaneously producing more than an ordinary amount of pleasure. If poetry can produce this pleasure it can create the conditions for new patterns of thought and feeling to develop into habits of mind. However, if the excitation comes without the over abundance of pleasure it is potentially dangerous. Excitement disrupts the regular order of feeling and thought but if the disruption is associated with something painful it can cause damage by taking the disruption beyond “proper bounds.” Wordsworth suggests the inclusion of something “regular” to ensure that the disruption is pleasurable instead of painful. By “regular” Wordsworth means the regularity of meter, which provides order. He uses the word co-presence, suggesting that the two things must exist alongside each other simultaneously. Words that might inspire painful associations are set to meter, affecting the reader simultaneously with disruption and regularity. It is this combination of disruption and regularity that “temper[s]” passions. Passion is distinctly different from pleasure. Good poetry produces an “over-balance” of pleasure but it tempers passion. Pleasure is a sensual response to sense stimulus while passion is an active desire. While for poetry to be successful it must create an “overbalance” of pleasure, it also needs to regulate the passions so as not to disturb the mind into a state of pain. This is accomplished by an “intertexture” of “ordinary feeling” with the excitement. By combining the ordinary and the extraordinary, the mind is balanced

between: the ordinary allows the reader to connect ideas with the extraordinary feelings the poetry incites.

Wordsworth's poetic theory is deeply concerned with balancing between past and present, order and chaos, imagination and reality. Often Wordsworth's description of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" eclipses his more reflective theory of how poetry is produced. Wordsworth describes the mental process of writing poetry in the following excerpt from the 1802 *Preface*.

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on. (611)

Wordsworth's description is full of the contrasting of balancing faculties. Poetry may be the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" but it does not arise from the moment of spontaneity. Its root is an exchange between imagination and memory—the heart of Romantic temperance. Poetry is the result of recollecting feeling when the mind is tranquil and imagining it into a current moment. The process Wordsworth describes here is an ongoing act of practicing Romantic temperance. Like in the *Castle of Alma*, creative work is fed by memory and created by the imagination. Earlier in the *Preface* he explains the end goal of that act:

For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representations of all our past feelings . . . till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated. (598)

For Wordsworth, feeling is controlled by thought but thought is a product of past feeling. Although our thoughts are capable of controlling our feelings, the thought that would accomplish this is the product of past feeling. This means that if feeling is allowed to become corrupt it will produce thought incapable of regulating future feelings. Likewise, if feelings are not regulated they will not produce future thoughts capable of directing future feeling. The relationship between thought and past feeling is symbiotic but the only way to attain this relationship is through this practice that produces “habits of mind.” Like Spenser’s middle room these two faculties come together to temper each other and create imaginative work—in this case poetry. The more often this practice is disregarded the less capable the mind becomes to engage in it, similar to the way that the will is compromised by the development of bad habits, or vices. When the mind engages in contemplation of thought and feeling, particularly a kind of self-analysis where thoughts and feelings are compared in their relation to each other to reveal priorities and desires, the mind is actually trained to associate feeling

with thought, preparing the self to react in specific ways in moments of intense emotion. Wordsworth asserts that one can develop not only habits of action but also habits of feeling.

Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" are two examples of the balancing of memory and imagination. In both poems the poetic voice is positioned to remember a past experience closely tied to the environment in which he finds himself and, in that moment of remembrance, exercises his imagination.

Again, Romantic temperance is characterized by the mediation of feeling or imagination by the rational faculty. In the case of Wordsworth's poetic theory, feelings felt in any one moment are shaped by thoughts that have in turn been shaped by past feelings: they continuously temper each other, keeping the mind in balance. Thought is generated by the remembrance of feeling, and remembrance becomes not a reliving of a past moment—because remembering generates an emotion "similar" to the emotion being remembered, not the exact emotion—but a present moment of self-creation (*1802 Preface* 611).

This mediation between memory and imagination is enacted in "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" as the poetic voice shuttles between his imagination and his memory. The poem is positioned right away between past and present when the poetic voice begins by explaining that he had been to the setting of the poem five years before. In the twenty-three lines of the first stanza Wordsworth

uses the word “again” four times.²⁹ The entirety of the first stanza is given over to memory as the poetic voice remembers this previous visit and, through remembering a previous time, contemplates a prior self. As is often the case for Wordsworth, in *Tintern Abbey* nature is the repository of memory. It is by and through looking at the changes around him that Wordsworth remembers the changes he has undergone.

From there, instead of moving from past to the present moment, Wordsworth turns from remembering his past to a memory of remembering and imagining.

Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me,
As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration: (24-31)

In these lines Wordsworth recalls an act of Romantic temperance. When oppressed by the reality of everyday life in “lonely rooms” and in “the din / of towns and cities,” Wordsworth imagines this beloved scene until it tempers his feelings of oppression

²⁹ Wordsworth uses the word “again” in lines 1, 4, 9, and 15. Each usage focusing on a sense memory: “again I hear / These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs” (1-2), “Once again / Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs” (4-5), “The day is come when I again repose / Here” (9-10), and “Once again I see / These hedge-rows” (15-16). First Wordsworth remembers what he heard, then what he saw, what he felt, and finally what he saw again. Smell is the only sense entirely omitted from Wordsworth’s reminiscence. It is worth noting for the credence it might lend to theories that Wordsworth suffered from anosmia.

and restores his mind to tranquility. Lines 29-31 trace a pattern through the body as if the sensations induced by this remembrance move in the blood through the circulatory system to the organs of heart and mind. Like the blood, the sensations restore the functions of the organs—the feeling heart (metaphorically) and thinking mind.

“Tranquil restoration” suggests a restoration of peace that frees the poetic voice from those feelings of weariness resulting from the busy loneliness of the city. Through the mediation between reality and the imagination Wordsworth even attains to a state of “harmony” (49). Although memory is associated with the rational mind in Spenser’s temperance, for Wordsworth memory is never exact. Wordsworth “cannot paint what then [he] was” when he attempts to recall the feelings he experienced as a younger man; the past is lost and can only ever be created in a present moment. When Wordsworth remembers—tempering reality with the imagination and the imagination with reality—he undergoes a present moment of self-formation (76-77).

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd though[t,]
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
I came among these hills; (59-68)

Although it is impossible to remember with any fidelity exactly what was, in attempting to remember the mind is rejuvenated with new thought. This new thought is reflexive because it acknowledges the change from the past highlighted by the present moment, and it also acknowledges the relationship between the present moment and a not yet experienced future. In addition, Wordsworth classifies the change he experiences as one of increased thoughtfulness: For I have learned / To look on nature, not as in the hour / Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes / The still, sad music of humanity (88-91). Although thoughtless pleasure has been lost, “abundant recompense” is found in the development of a more acute sensitivity born from a more complete control over the mind. This more complete control will function, in Wordsworth's formation of thought, to generate future feelings, ever more sensitive to sensation. In this way Wordsworth's poetry illustrates a uniquely Romantic temperance, one that tempers imagination and reality, keeping the mind in balance and facilitating imaginative production.

In “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison” Coleridge also explores the relationship between memory, imagination, and reality. In the poem the poet is confined to the garden-bower due to a temporarily disabling accident while his friends walk about the countryside. Although at first the poet mourns the loss of the views of the landscape and the pleasure of companionship, he quickly finds consolation in the pleasures of his imagination.

The poet mourns the loss of “Beauties and Feelings, such as would have been / Most sweet to my remembrance even when age / Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness!” (3-5). But as he reflects on the views and pleasures he has lost he begins to

live them even in his stationary state. He imagines the places his friends will go and what they—especially Charles—will see and feel once there. The poet begins by reflecting on how valued his memories of this experience—walking in nature with his friends—would have been when he became old and no longer able to see such views. In “Tintern Abbey” the poetic voice imagines a past act of temperance, in “This Lime-Tree Bower” the poetic voice images a future act of temperance when the bleak reality of old age will be tempered by imagining the pleasurable experiences of his younger years. As the poem progresses, though it becomes apparent that in this moment of temporary blindness to the scenes he wishes he could see, the poet also enacts a current moment of Romantic temperance because he can imagine them with clarity, as if he was there. His memory and imagination temper his less appealing reality, alleviating his feelings of distress and replacing them with pleasure. The replacement of a present view³⁰ with a remembered view and a present interaction with an imagined interaction allows the poet to feel “a delight” in his heart (43). In fact, the imagined vistas “soothe” the poet even as he remains aware of his continued confinement to the lime-tree bower (47). The poet exclaims “Henceforth I shall know / That Nature ne’er deserts the wise and pure; / No plot so narrow, be but Nature there, / No waste so vacant, but may well employ / Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart / Awake to love and Beauty!” (59-61). The poet recognizes the power of the imagination to produce its own beauty. Most importantly, by engaging “each faculty to sense” he can improve his state of mind. The realization of the power of the

³⁰ Of course because the composition of this poem is likely taking place removed even from the moment the poetic voice inhabits there is no “present” view for the poet. However, the poem hinges on this removal from the inaccessible view of the moment he inhabits and the view he conjures through memory and imagination.

imagination leads him to reflect, “and sometimes / ‘Tis well to be bereft of promised good, / That we may lift the Soul, and contemplate / With lively joy the joys we cannot share” (64-67). Even though at first he mourned the loss of the pleasant day out in nature with his friends, he now sees the importance of his realization: even though he cannot change the circumstances of reality, he can control his state of mind through consciously mediating between his imagination and his reality.

Both poems exhibit the negotiation between memory and the imagination that is the mark of Romantic temperance. Like Spenser’s version of the virtue, Romantic temperance in these poems generates imaginative scenes that combine the real and imagined without collapsing them. More than a matter of morality, Romantic temperance is the process through which poetry is produced. It requires the kind of close observation of lived experience that the Romantics prized, combined with the dynamic power of the imagination that marks the period as separate and distinct from what came before and what comes after.

CHAPTER TWO

SENSIBILITY AND THE SUBLIME: THE COMPOSURE OF THE ROMANTIC MIND

In my first chapter I argue for a definition of Romantic temperance based on balancing the faculties of memory and imagination. This definition deviates from other understandings of temperance because its primary concern is consciousness instead of desire or action. Instead of a median between two extreme desires or actions, Romantic temperance calls for a balance between the imagined and the real where the imagination—what might be—and memory—what has been—feed and form the temperate self. In this chapter I will further my argument that this peculiarly Romantic kind of temperance was influential in the period by examining the way the Romantics conceptualized the relationship between the senses and the mind. First I argue that increased interest during the Romantic period in the senses, the nervous system, and the mind produced a concept of the mind as a system that needed to be managed. Next I argue that the Romantic preoccupation with the sublime and the beautiful as products of sensory experience produced the conditions for the aesthetic to help in this management of the mind. Finally, throughout my argument I show that management of the mind took the form of an examination of and concern with temperance in two ways, first, correcting the negative and mentally debilitating effects of indulging the senses and, second, the correction and prevention of mental derangements due to an imbalance between imagination and the real through the adoption of temperance.

THE ROMANTIC MIND

During the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries advancements in science changed the way the Romantics thought about the relationship between the body and the mind. Prior to the Romantic period physicians followed a Galenic model in which the brain was mechanistic and dualistic. Galen, the Greek physician and philosopher,¹ is responsible for the movement from the heart to the brain as the primary organ of the body,² but his sense of how the nervous system worked in conjunction with the brain was outwardly mechanistic. Literary critic and theorist George Rousseau³ explains that Galen imagined the nervous system as a system of hollow tubes that carried “animal spirits” (“‘Originated Neurology’: Nerves, Spirits and Fibers, 1969-2004” 1) throughout the body, controlling movement and sensation. The role of the brain in his system is limited: it is the “animal spirits” separate from but residing in the brain that affect the body. His system also divides faculties into localized centers, locating what he calls “functions of the soul” in different organs of

¹ Galen was a Greek philosopher, physician, and surgeon who lived between 131 C.E. and 201 C.E. Galen’s theories on the circulatory system of the body influenced medicine until they were contested in 1628. Galen was the first western physician to posit that the brain controls the body.

² Alan Richardson argues that it was not until the Romantic period that the brain became the organ of thought. Galen’s theory suggests otherwise, but that appearance is misleading. Although Galen named the brain as the primary seat of reason, he also attributed the functions of the brain to the portion of the soul that resided inside of it. Like physicians before him, Galen believed that the soul was the source of reason.

³ George Rousseau’s *Nervous Acts* is a collection of essays first published between 1969 and 1993 but not collected until 2004. It is simultaneously the beginning of neuro-Romanticism and its own example of the cognitive process as it moves over a period of thirty-five years from the early inception of cognitive science’s influence on Romantic literature to a reflection on the field as it stands in 2004. Rousseau traces the history of the nervous system and the imagination from the ancients to its height in the Romantic period. He moves between periods without insisting on complete continuity of ideas; instead showing that Romantic concepts of the mind and the imagination—although unique—are rooted in earlier configurations.

the body: reason in the brain, passions in the heart, and appetite in the liver. Although Galen argued that the brain, heart, and liver contributed to the health of the overall body, his dualistic theory attributed the functions of thought, passion, and appetite to the soul. The soul was the active part of the system, reducing the role of the brain to a passive receiver.

Although the nearly 1,600 years between Galen and the Romantics saw changes in the understanding of the nervous system, it was not until the late-eighteenth century that the causal relationship between the nerves and brain shifted to an inward model that credited the brain as the active processor of sensory data. In *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001), Alan Richardson⁴ catalogues the points of general scientific advancement and agreement that influenced the Romantic concept of the brain. Richardson includes among these points of agreement, that the Romantic period “locat[ed] the mind in the brain” and considered the brain “a biological rather than mechanistic conception of physiological and mental functioning” (*British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* 6). Unlike the Galenic model, the Romantic mind is anti-dualistic. In Galen’s theory the cognitive functions of the mind could be spread throughout the body because there is no biological component to them: the soul is responsible for active processes like feeling and thinking. The Romantic’s concept of the mind attributes the faculties of reason and imagination—and the experience of passion and desire—to the biological function of the brain. The movement of the mind to the brain and the change from a dualistic to an

⁴ Romantic critic and theorist Alan Richard was the first to use the term Neuro-Romanticism.

anti-dualistic model⁵ created the conditions for a greater sense of interiority. It also radically changed the relationship between sensory experience and the mind. Because sensory stimuli feed the mind by providing it with the material to produce feeling and thought, the degree to which the mind is fed is dependent on the amount of stimulation and individual sensibility.⁶ The Romantic preoccupation with the relationship between sensory stimuli and sensibility, then, is about how much “food” one can get from sensory stimuli.

For Wordsworth superior minds require less stimulation to produce feeling and thought. In his 1802 “Preface to the Lyrical Ballads” he writes:

For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavor to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged.

(*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599).

In this passage Wordsworth justifies his choice to take common occurrences as his subject in *Lyrical Ballads* and to write about them in common language. Instead of provoking his reader’s feelings by narrating great events, Wordsworth’s project is to

⁵ In the science of the mind dualism refers to the theory that mind and matter are ontologically separate categories. This theory is different than the duality I discuss in “Toward a Definition of Romantic Temperance.” That duality refers to self-consciousness.

⁶ By sensory stimuli I mean the excitation of the senses from outer forces and by sensibility I mean the mind’s capacity for response to sensory stimuli.

produce in his reader's the capacity to feel strongly about common events. His project is reinvigoration; by increasing the capacity for the mind to be excited without uncommon provocation he trains his readers to be stimulated by common occurrences in the world around them. He connects the beauty and dignity of the mind to its sensibility when he says that minds that possess the capability to be excited without extreme stimuli are "elevated" above others. For the sensible mind every observation and interaction is a significant source of stimulation; the mind that finds stimulation in everyday events is constantly engaged in feeling and thinking. Just after this passage Wordsworth goes on to discuss the kinds of minds that are not constantly engaged because their senses have been dulled by too much stimuli. He writes:

For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of the occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599)

In this critique Wordsworth assigns a violent agency to particular aspects of his contemporary world that were “unknown to former times.” These changes include the ready availability of national news, most probably in the forms of newspapers; the increasing number of city-dwellers; the repetitiveness of menial work; and contemporary plays and literature. Wordsworth assigns agency to these elements of modern life by assigning them the power to act and affect an end; he says that they “are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind.” His diction gives these elements of modern life an insidiousness, as if they were purposefully acting on the mind of men. The words “blunt” and “reduce” suggest that these “causes” are undermining and lessening the natural powers of the mind. “Savage torpor” appears to be an oxymoron: “savage” suggests extreme violence while “torpor” is inactivity. The combination of the two words together makes apparent the violence of inactivity on the mind. The “torpor” is savage because the faculties of the mind are active by nature. Inactivity is unnatural and violent to the mind. The combination of the two words also reminds readers of Wordsworth’s prior claim that “one being is elevated above another” in as much as he possesses the capacity to be stimulated by everyday encounters. Those whose minds have lost this ability and who have fallen into “torpor” are, for Wordsworth, savaged and savage.

The elements of modern life to which Wordsworth assigns this ability to savage the mind are those that provide an overabundance of stimulation to the sense, whether real or fictional. He makes no distinction between the effects of news and

novel because for him they are both dulling the powers of the mind.⁷ Wordsworth calls contemporary novels “frantic,” German Tragedies “sickly” and “stupid,” and poetry “idle” and “extravagant.” While certainly not condemning all of his contemporaries, Wordsworth’s critique is far reaching. The language he uses mirrors his more general critique of all modern practices that encourage mental lassitude but adds an additional connotation of mental illness. During the Romantic period “frantic” exclusively meant insane or the properties associated with it, while “sickly” and “stupid” both referred to an unhealthful state of mind (Oxford English Dictionary). He uses the words “frantic,” “sickly,” and “stupid” as adjectives to describe the literature but the whole focus of the passage in the “Preface” describes the effects of contemporary culture on the mind: this suggests that in the case of these literary texts their corruption imparts corruption.

Wordsworth’s critique of contemporary life and literature as detrimental to the mind due to excess stimulation, and his defense of his project as producing or enlarging sensibility, presents a concept of the mind as trainable. This concept of the mind is in keeping with scientific understanding of the relationship between the mind and the nervous system during the Romantic period. When the concept of the brain as a passive receiver changed to a concept of the brain as an active processor the nerves took up the space of the receiver. This new role for the nerves coincided with scientific discoveries that proved that the nerves worked in the body as a system. In

⁷ One minor but important distinction he makes is that literature is following the tendency of lived experience instead of the other way around. He does not claim that novels, plays, and poetry have created a world where violent amounts of stimulation are required to engage the mind, as some critics of imaginative literature do. Instead he claims the opposite: the fault literature bears is that instead of keeping itself apart from the corrupting influence of the world it has followed the trend toward more and more extreme stimulation.

“Originated Neurology” (2004), George S. Rousseau traces the conceptual origins of the nervous system and the way its design was perceived from antiquity to the Romantic period. Although not unified by any one specific argument, Rousseau takes the reader through the scientific advancements pertaining to the nerves and shows how the increasing recognition of the nerves as a system that connects the body and the mind also gave rise to a concept of the mind as a system. During the Romantic period, Rousseau claims, the nerves added plasticity to the mind that allowed for education and aesthetics to play a significant role in its shaping. Rousseau argues, “if nerves were not wholly adequate now, they could be educated to perform better . . . In this sense, they were more plastic than all other parts of the body, organs, solids, and fluids . . . plasticity was in their nature, . . . learning to be shaped by its experience rather than being hard-wired from birth with no possibility for alteration” (50).⁸ As the receivers and communicators of sensory stimulation, the nerves had to be sensitive without being overly sensitive. How and how much the nerves were excited by sensory stimuli determined the input the brain would use to produce feeling and thought. If the nerves were not adequately sensitive they could be trained into more keen sensitivity, and if they were too sensitive they could be trained to be less so. This concept of nervous plasticity is what makes Wordsworth’s poetic project possible. It is also what makes the imagination such an important mental faculty. It is the

⁸ The “emotional brain” Rousseau references here is the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is now considered the gate of emotion because it controls emotional response by sending impulses to the brain that determine how the brain experiences emotion. For more information see Joseph LeDoux’s “The Emotional Brain, Fear, and the Amygdala” in *Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology*, Vol. 23, Nos. 4/5 Oct. 2003. LeDoux provides an excellent historical review of early-twentieth century research on the emotional functions of the brain.

imagination that falls into a state of “torpor” (1802 “Preface to the Lyrical Ballads” *Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599) when bombarded with more and more stimulation, and it is the imagination that is re-trained by Wordsworth’s project of making the common poetic.

TEMPERANCE AND THE ROMANTIC IMAGINATION

In this section I will argue, first, that the Romantics conceptualized the imagination as a mental faculty influenced by and capable of influencing sensual experience and, second, that Burke’s theory of the sublime and the beautiful produced the conditions for the aesthetic to assist in the shaping of the mind. By arguing that the sublime and beautiful are the means through which the nerves are exercised and strengthened and that the source of the sublime must be removed enough not to present a real danger to the self, Burke’s theory creates the conditions for the aesthetic to serve in the healthful excitation and relaxation of the sense and resulting strengthening of the mind.

In the second essay in his collection *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility*, entitled “Science and the Discovery of the Imagination,” (1969) Rousseau constructs an intellectual history of the imagination. He argues that man “discovered” (86) his imagination in the late seventeenth century. Rousseau claims that the Romantics are the first to aggregate to the imagination the power to affect the body and that the Romantics believed that a diseased imagination could infect the whole of the mind.⁹ His first point, that in the Romantic period the

⁹ There is one major point on which Rousseau and I differ. Rousseau claims that the Romantics romanticize the idea of the diseased brain, “endow[ing] [it] with an aura of glory” (101) and although I agree that Romantic poetry and prose explores the

imagination was conceived of as strong enough to influence our sensual experience is evidenced in Wordsworth's "Goody Blake and Harry Gill." In the poem Goody Blake, an old and very poor woman, collects sticks for firewood from a hedge belonging to Harry Gill. Harry Gill begrudges her the sticks and lies in wait until he catches her taking them. He grasps her with the intent to take vengeance and she cries, "'God! who art never out of hearing, / Oh may he never more be warm!'" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 99-100). But it is not God in the poem who hears her; Harry hears her curse and it impresses on him so much that he immediately lets her go. The poetic voice tells us, "You Harry heard what she had said, / And icy-cold he turned away" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 102-3). Harry Gill is affected by Goody Blake's curse when he hears it because it forces him to face his own cold-heartedness. For the rest of his life he experiences that cold-heartedness as literal cold. It takes hold of his imagination and is transferred to his sensual experience.

In *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001) Alan Richardson argues that Wordsworth's work is marked by this strong connection between the body and mind (71). Richardson claims that Wordsworth "acknowledges throughout the role played by the body and its organs in the formation and continual reformation of an active subject of perception" (73). Richardson's argument is that Wordsworth, more than any of the other Romantic poets, grounds feeling and thought in the

functioning of the diseased brain including melancholy and mania I do not think the Romantics glorified the diseased brain, or at least not uniformly. Certainly Romantic authors differ in the degree to which they glorify madness. At times there are differences in the treatment of madness within the poetry of one author. Much of the literature I will discuss later in this chapter is concerned with illustrating the diseased brain to show the dissolution that results from allowing oneself to indulge the passions but not all Romantic poetry dealing with madness can support that claim.

sensational experiences of the body. Because feeling and thought are grounded in sensual experience the formation of a subject hinges on sensibility. During the Romantic period there was a proliferation of theories hypothesizing which pursuits or sensations could increase sensibility, including theories of the sublime and beautiful.

The Romantic preoccupation with the sublime and the beautiful as products of sensory experience produced the conditions for the aesthetic to assist in the shaping of the mind. In *The Neural Sublime* (2010),¹⁰ Alan Richardson argues that the Romantic sublime is, in fact, the Romantic sublimes. Richardson's argument is both modest and revolutionary: he claims that Romantic theories of the sublime compete and coexist instead of supplanting each other. It is modest because it does not attempt to refute the long-standing critical tradition of interpreting key moments of Romantic poetry as in dialogue with Kant's sublime. On the other hand, it is revolutionary because it

¹⁰ Richardson's *The Neural Sublime* takes up the issue of sensation in the experience of the sublime. He argues against reading differing theories of the sublime as part of a narrative that culminates in Kant's theory. He goes on to say that thinking of the sublime as competing theories instead of as a linear narrative allows for an embodied sublime separate from Kant's theory that so completely severs body and mind. Because the Kantian sublime hinges on the moment when reason triumphs over bodily experience, Richardson argues, it prioritizes reason over imagination. Richardson theorizes that an embodied sublime—he calls it the neural sublime—was more common to the Romantic period. The neural sublime is the triumph of passion over reason instead of reason over the senses. Richardson's neural sublime draws its tenets predominantly from Edmund Burke, who is also invested in examining how feeling is elicited or moderated. The neural sublime is strongly related to Richardson's argument in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* that the nerves are plastic. In *The Neural Sublime* he argues that the “sublime functions like the rush of an aerobic workout, toning the nerves and buffing up the sensory organs” (27). Although he never articulates the connection specifically, in his second book on neurology and the Romantics, Richardson shows that aesthetic experience trains the nerves, an argument that is essential to my own that the Romantic preoccupation with the sublime and the beautiful as products of sensory experience produced the conditions for the aesthetic to play a large role in the management of the mind.

challenges the long-held assumption that key moments of the sublime in Romantic poetry are in dialogue with Kant's sublime. Burke's sublime in particular is important to Richardson's critical readings of the Romantic period because Burke's sublime does not insist on transcendence. In Burke's sublime, Richardson argues, there is no rapture; as a result of the "stretching and subsequent relaxation" of the nerves, the Burkean sublime roots the mind in the body (*The Neural Sublime* 26). If the phenomena of the sublime are the ultimate expressions of the mind/body connection it allows Richardson—and, he argues, the Romantics—to claim them as a testament to the mind's ability to conceptualize feeling instead of as a triumph of reason over feeling.

In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke claims that just as the body cannot remain healthy in a constant state of lassitude, so too the nerves must be exercised (164). Burke compares the nerves to muscles; he theorizes that just like physical labor is necessary to maintain a strong body even when painful or unpleasant, so too is the exercise of the nerves essential to maintaining a strong mind. The nerves are exercised through the experience of pain and terror induced, for Burke, by stimulation that exceeds the perceptive bounds of the senses. But Burke's sublime is the exercise of the nerves in pain and terror only in as much as the pain is not "noxious," "violent," or of a "present destruction of the person" (165). For any sensual experience to truly be sublime it must be removed enough from the one who experiences it that there is no real bodily danger. Because of this necessary remove, art becomes a perfect vehicle for the sublime. Burke's sublime is overwhelming without being injurious; it solidifies the connection between the body

and mind by stretching the mind's capacity to safely experience the passions. However, the same passions that instigate the sublime's stretching of the mind also present real and immediate risk. If the neural sublime does not allow for a disconnect between the passions and the mind, there is nothing to stop the passions from adversely affecting the imaginative faculty. Burke's sublime is a careful balance—enough stimuli to stretch the nerves and keep them from a state of lassitude without overstretching the nerves and causing damage to the mind. One might argue that the passions associated with the sublime are not those that are likely to damage the imagination, but the primary passions Burke lists are exactly those passions that the physicians of the period most often cite as the cause of mental derangement: shock and fear.¹¹ And, in fact, complete relaxation will hurt the nerves as well. Burke writes, “in this languid inaction state, the nerves are more liable to the most horrid convulsions, than when they are sufficiently braced and strengthened Melancholy, dejection, despair, and often self-murder, is the consequence of the gloomy view we take of things in this relaxed state of body” (164). In the case of the sublime and beautiful in poetry, the poet who wishes to exercise the nerves of their reader must beware of the dual problems of too much and not enough stimulation. To further complicate the matter, the stretching of the nerves also serves as a kind of conditioning and, like with any muscle, working the nerves makes them stronger. This strengthening is the kind of fortification and strengthening Pinel and Haslam insist must be part of education if the mind is to be prepared to experience the passions that accompany the vicissitudes of life. If the poet is to strengthen the mind of the reader

¹¹ The third most commonly reported cause, anger, has no place in the sublime that I have found.

they would need to shuttle between the sublime and the beautiful, exciting and relaxing the nerves through the application of balanced forces of passion and pulling the mind toward a middle, temperate space where passion can safely be experienced without the risk of damaging the imagination.

MADNESS AND FEELING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Romantic concern for balancing reason with imagination is most visible in the medical texts dealing with insanity. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries there is a proliferation of books about insanity written and published. Foucault, of course, traces some of this proliferation in our most famous account of the rising concern with mental health, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1964). Foucault's text moves from the Middle Ages to Modernity with its main focus on the changing motivations for confinement beginning with leprosy. Foucault argues that hospitals were left empty when leprosy declined and that these hospitals were filled over time, first as work houses for the poor and then as asylums for those who were identified as suffering from mental disorders. His narrative of confinement speaks of marginality—the movement of those who cannot function within an increasingly narrow definition of “normal.”¹² My work

¹² It is important to note, however, that in his creation of a seemingly seamless narrative Foucault sometimes attributes to one period what belongs to another. He cites Pinel in a section where his discussion seems to be about the seventeenth century although Pinel did not publish until 1794. In the very same paragraph he identifies Pinel with the nineteenth century as well (Foucault 38-39). Some of the discrepancy in Foucault's timeline might be because he is less interested in any one period and more interested in a narrative across periods.

with these medical texts will center on how they theorize madness as an embodied experience and the result of the effects of sensory stimulation on the mind.¹³

It is during the Romantic period that doctors stop thinking of madness as a result of an imbalance in the body connected to the humors or as a physical defect in the brain like a lesion or ulcer. In “A Treatise on Insanity: In Which are Contained the Principles of a New and More Practical Nosology of Maniacal Disorders Than Has Yet Been Offered to the Public” (1806), Philippe Pinel, a prominent physician who pioneered the humane treatment for madness, theorizes that “derangement of the understanding is generally considered an effect of an organic lesion of the brain, consequently as incurable; a supposition that is, in a great number of instances, contrary to anatomical fact” (3). Although Pinel says that his peers typically attribute madness to biological causes, many of his contemporaries were actually in agreement that biological causes were not the most common reason for mental derangement. Autopsies performed to study the brain were not uncommon in asylums, although the procedure would not be standardized for a number of years, and most of the doctors I discuss in this chapter who performed them became convinced that biological causes for madness were unlikely due to the lack of defect in the postmortem brains they examined.¹⁴ The movement from biological causes to non-biological causes changed

¹³ It is important to understand that during the Romantic period there was no separation between psychology and medicine. Doctors who worked in asylums were just as concerned with examining and theorizing the brain as doctors who worked in hospitals and colleges.

¹⁴ The one exception is Charles Bell (*Idea of a New Anatomy of the Brain*, 1811). His dissension from the general agreement may be a result of his lack of experience with the insane. Bell was a surgeon and worked primarily at hospitals and universities, including the Royal Hospital Haslar. He was never a surgeon at any of the facilities where patients with mental disorders were treated and may not have been involved in

the way Pinel and his contemporaries conceived of prevention and of cures. As Pinel observes, if madness is the result of a defect in the brain it is most likely hereditary and probably incurable.¹⁵ In his work he reviews some of the various physical cures administered to patients in an attempt to repair biological madness, including primarily anti-inflammatory geared bloodletting and bathing. Pinel condemns these kinds of “cures” as barbaric and ineffective.¹⁶ If the problem is not in the body then derangement cannot be treated through the body. Pinel’s refutation of biological causes for mental derangement opens up the possibility for a cure that would target the mind instead of the body.¹⁷

The shift from biological cause to emotional surplus changes madness from a disease of the body to a disease of the mind.¹⁸ The most common cause attributed to this new sensual madness by those that studied it was too much feeling—or passion—

a large enough number of autopsies on the insane. Although there was no division between researchers and patient care physicians they certainly had differing levels of experience with autopsy.

¹⁵ Most cases of biological damage that Pinel and others found during autopsy could clearly be linked to an injury.

¹⁶ Pinel objects to physical cures most of which were anti-inflammatory. He writes, “it is on the other hand to be lamented that regular physicians have indulged in a blind routine of inefficient treatment” (Pinel 4).

¹⁷ In *Madness and Civilization* Foucault dates this shift from impossible to cure to curable a bit earlier. He writes, “in the literature of the early seventeenth century [madness] occupies, by preference a median place . . . displaced in the economy of narrative and dramatic structures, it authorizes the manifestation of truth and the return of reason” (32).

¹⁸ The majority of medical texts on madness published during the Romantic period include a categorization of the various species of madness such as melancholy, mania, and derangement. Although almost all the varieties of madness have distinct manifestations they are attributed to similar causes—an overabundance of feeling, indulgence of the passions, or both. Because my argument and interest lies in the causes attributed to the state of mind and not the classification system of species, I will refer to “madness” throughout this chapter as a general for mental disorder. This choice is not without precedent in the period, the majority of the texts I will discuss also use madness as an overall designation for any species of mental disorder.

of almost any variety. They considered the passions as dangerous in as much as they have the potential to swamp the brain with sensory impressions. As an active processor instead of a passive receiver, the brain was responsible for interpreting sensory data and forming thoughts and ideas using those impressions.¹⁹ Like with any processor, too much sensory data to interpret could cause a system failure. In “An Essay on Diseases Incidental to Literary and Sedentary Persons with Proper Rules for Preventing Their Fatal Consequences and Instructions for Their Cure” (1769), S.A. Tissot imagines the brain as a machine. Tissot claims that too much “violent labor” of the mind wears at the parts of it and causes it to become “callous,” lessening the capacity for “forming ideas” (34). Tissot does not revert back to the brain as a mechanical receiver—the brain is engaged in the labor of thinking, but like all organs of the body it is subject to fatigue. Overstimulation in the form of too much sensory excitation can result in brain exhaustion. In Tissot’s theory the brain and sense stimuli depend on each other and work together, but he warns that like a machine the brain can become worn if overworked (38).

¹⁹ Charles Bell theorized the relationship between the brain and the senses. Bell indicates that it is by divine design that the external excitement is necessary to “rouse our faculties” but that once roused the mind can exercise the organs in the service of memory and imagination (13). Bell claims that the mind relies on the senses for stimulation because if it could excite thoughts and ideas independent from the external world it would be autonomous and man would not have to interact with nature or with each other, making him singular opposed to part of a whole. His theory of the mind has a strong relationship to the fall of mankind. He claims that it is essential for man to experience passion and reason as a result of his bodily interaction with good and evil in order to become intelligent and be accountable for his own actions (16). One of the most interesting things about Bell’s theory, I think, is that it brings divine influence into brain science just at the moment it seems to be left. But instead of the soul connecting the body to the divine, as it had before, biological design connects the body to the divine.

The machine-brain is not the same as the receiver-brain. In Tissot's conception of the brain as a machine it is actively engaged in processing sensual experience and producing feeling and thought informed by that experience. A problem only occurs when sensual experience is greater than what the mind can process. The collapse of the brain-machine he fears is like the danger of collapse from the sublime when it is not tempered by shuttling between it and the beautiful.²⁰

Brain exhaustion from an overload of sensory stimulation brings sensibility to the forefront of scientific study. In "A Treatise on Insanity," Philippe Pinel theorizes

²⁰ Few of the remaining texts from Wordsworth's personal library, now preserved at Dove Cottage, contain his written notes. Wordsworth's copy of *Paradise Lost* is a notable exception. Bishop C. Hunt published a transcript of Wordsworth's annotations in the 1969 Bulletin of the New York Public Library. Wordsworth wrote commentary on thirteen passages, as Hunt has observed the distribution of his commentary was as follows: Wordsworth commented on two passages in Book III, one in Book VI, two in Book VII, one in IX, one in X, five in XI, and one in XII. Of these corrective comments several identify inconsistencies in plot or narrative logic—Hunt argues his comments are indicative of Wordsworth's close reading of Milton. The rest of the written comments are also corrective but they take up issues of style. I was fortunate enough to make my own transcription from Wordsworth's original markings. In one particularly important comment Wordsworth writes, "This part of the picture might have been improved by a simple introduction of some of the most interesting rural images of an extensive prospect viewed at daybreak such as Hamlets cottages & woods with reaches of a river, all lifting themselves here & there thro the morning vapour. The three last verses are inimitably picturesque. It has been said of poets as their highest praise that they exhausted worlds and then imagined new, that existence saw them spurn her bounded reign &c. But how much of the most valuable part of the poet's province how much of the real excellence of Imagination consists in the capacity of exploring the world really existing & thence selecting objects beautiful or great as the occasion may require. Who is there that does not peruse this description of so familiar an appearance with far more pleasure than the preceeding [sic] account of the sea of Jasper or liquid pearl, the palace gate embellished with diamond and with gold, or the golden stairs which were occasionally let down from heaven." In every case of stylistic correction Wordsworth argues for the sublime passages of *Paradise Lost* to be softened by descriptions of the beautiful.

that “paroxysms of madness are generally no more than irascible²¹ emotions prolonged beyond their ordinary limits; and the true character of such paroxysms depends, perhaps more frequently upon various influence of the passions, than upon any derangement of the ideas, or upon any whimsical singularities of the judging faculty” (19). In Pinel’s definition of madness emotions prolonged past the mind’s ability to cope with them replaces corrupted reason as the most likely cause of mental derangement.²² Pinel’s view was not uncommon in the period. For example in *The Borderers*, Wordsworth attributes Rivers’ derangement to overindulgence. Wordsworth writes, “having indulged a habit, dangerous in a man who has fallen, in dallying with moral calculations, he becomes an empiric—and a daring and unfeeling empiric” (*The Borderers* 65). Rivers does not live by any moral philosophy; he uses reason to justify his bad behavior. In fact, Wordsworth articulates the purpose of his play as “shew[ing] the dangerous use which may be made of reason” (67). In Rivers we see that reason alone is detrimental because it can be used to equivocate as easily as it can be used to determine what is ethical. What is most important is the relationship between passion and the imagination that shapes our own realities. It is the combination of imagination and reason that would stop Rivers from justifying his behavior. If the imagination becomes corrupt through overindulgence then reason can be used to justify any course of action within that scope of the mental derangement.

²¹ It is unlikely that Pinel is referencing Plato’s division of the soul. Plato designated the irascible soul as the part that housed appetites and passions. By 1806, when this work was published, the tripartite soul had fallen out of favor as I showed earlier in my review of the movement from Galen who also divided the soul into three parts. The Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of irascible as “arising from anger or hot-tempered passion” is the most likely definition for this period.

In an article titled “A Treatise on Diseases of the Nervous System. Part the First: Comprising Convulsive and Maniacal Affections” (1822) in *The Medico-chirurgical Review*, A.C. Prichard writes, “our author avers that he knows of no disease of the nervous system in which the reasoning or the intellectual faculty is perverted . . . It is a common remark that lunatics reason correctly from false premises” (124). Prichard explains that many patients still reason adequately within their delusions and, in fact, many of their inappropriate behaviors are appropriate when considered inside of their delusions. Madness is produced, he argues, not by the reasoning faculty but by a deranged imagination that provides the reasoning faculty with a false set of parameters with which to operate.

It should not be surprising that causes for madness in the Romantic period would be attributed to emotion with more frequency than to reason. It is in keeping with the movement away from Enlightenment philosophy that marked the period on the whole. Still, even if not surprising, the ramifications of this shift are significant. If emotion and not reason is the contributing factor in cases of madness it becomes possible to prevent and cure madness by learning to moderate emotion and by controlling sensory stimulation.

In *Observations on Insanity: With Practical Remarks on the Disease, and an Account of the Morbid Appearances on Dissection* (1798) John Haslam, physician and apothecary to Bethlehem Hospital, claims that in the majority of his case studies madness results from excess emotion. Haslam begins almost every one of his case studies with a review of the causes of the patient’s condition. In the overwhelming majority of the case studies he begins with the claim that the patient’s mental

derangement has been brought about by too much of some emotion—most commonly but not limited to shock, grief, anger, or desire. The narratives in these accounts suggest that the reason the patient has gone mad is because his or her feelings became unmanageable.²³ Joanne Baillie also attributes madness to extreme shock or fear, saying that, “instances of intellect being destroyed” by the experience of those kinds of extreme passions are “more numerous” than any other cause (*Plays on the Passions* 72). Pinel argues that “the known tendency to mental derangement at those periods of life which are most exposed to the influence of strong passions agrees with the uniform experience of hospital observations and practice” (113). Pinel creates a catalogue of confined individuals that shows that confinement is more likely between the ages of twenty and forty than at other time of life. He determines that this increase in confinement is because between the ages of twenty and forty people are more likely to experience strong passions that could become unmanageable. Although Haslam typically uses the word “emotion” and Pinel more often relies on “passion,” both men

²³ It is important to consider the theory that prolonged emotions triggers madness in conversations with Foucault’s work on the rise of the asylum. Foucault indicates that the confinement of those deemed mad marks the moment when “unreason” became a social problem akin to poverty, illness, and inability to integrate into society (64). On one hand I agree that confinement on the basis of madness was certainly motivated at least in part by a narrowing of social spaces for those who could not or would not conform to the ever more dominant concept of normality. On the other hand I think it is essential to think about the differences between Foucault’s “unreason” and the untenable emotion that it was believed caused madness during the Romantic period. Pinel often attributes mental derangement to the violence of the French Revolution especially as it affected those who were neither very rich nor very poor. In these accounts it seems less like confinement is the result of the narrowing “normal” and more like it is the result of larger social dissolution. In other words, madness is not a product of a faulty faculty but the product of acute sensibility in a cruel world. In other cases the responsibility lies with the patient for purposefully seeking out sensory stimulation and refusing to curb their passions.

attribute them to the same experiences such as loss, disappointment in love, desire, and other various forms of excitement.

For Haslam and Pinel, feelings became unmanageable for one of two reasons: either because of too much sensory stimulation as I discussed above, or because of too much sensibility. In other words, in addition to an excess of feeling, overly acute sensibility is also responsible for mental derangement. Haslam and Pinel both indicate that mental derangement is due not just to the degree of the stimuli but also the sensibility of the patient. Pinel argues that “the feelings of individuals endowed with acute sensibility may experience so violent a shock that all the functions of the mind are in danger of being suspended in their exercises or totally abolished” (166). The intensity of the sensation and the sensibility of the patient are both contributing factors to mental derangement; the health of the mind is dependent on a balance in the system. This is one of the dangers of locating sensory experience in the brain instead of in the “outward organs” such as the hands and fingers (Bell 11). It means that what we experience through the outward organs affects the brain by way of the nerves. In other words, external excitement lives in the mind and is responsible for providing the material with which thought is formed (Bell 11). Pinel’s description emphasizes this delicate balance between the functions of the mind and sensibility. Only through sensory excitation can the functions of the mind be stimulated; however, overload the mind and all functions may cease.

If the brain is overloading with stimulation and its functions are affected, the most likely faculty to become deranged is the imagination. I have shown above that reason is not the faculty in danger because it can remain functional even when a

patient is suffering from madness. Pinel writes, “of all the powers of the human mind that of the imagination appears to be the most subject to injury” (Pinel 73) and Prichard quotes physician Richard Mead (1673-1754) as saying that the “disease [madness] consists entirely in the strength of the imagination” (277). Even those in disagreement with the idea that madness was the product of a deranged imagination concede that professions and pursuits that put strain on the imagination are more likely to produce madness than those that do not, including Haslam who argues that the derangement does not exist entirely in the imagination but does so only partially. Pinel and Tissot are the most vocal about the dangers of imaginative pursuits. Pinel argues, “it is well known that certain professions conduce more than others to insanity, which are chiefly those in which the imagination is unceasingly or ardently engaged and not moderated in its excitement by exertion of those functions of understanding which are more susceptible of satiety and fatigue” (Pinel 113-4). Here Pinel says that if an imaginative pursuit also calls on “functions of understanding” that tire or become satisfied, then the likelihood of insanity is reduced. Engaging a secondary function of understanding is important because, Pinel argues, the imagination never gets tired and is never satisfied. Consequently, left to its own devices the imagination will continue in excitement until it becomes deranged.²⁴ In *The Borderers* Wordsworth offers a metaphor in Rivers’ character study that helps us think about the relationship between passion and imagination. He writes, “but when our malignant passions operate, the original causes which called them forth are soon supplanted, yet when we account for the effect we forget the immediate impulse and the whole is attributed to the force

²⁴ Pinel says of one patient, “his imagination was greatly heated” (69). Again this puts us in mind of a machine that overheats as it is used beyond its limit.

from which the first motion was received. The vessel keeps sailing on, and we attribute her progress in the voyage to the ropes which first towed her out of harbor” (68). The ropes that tow our imagination are the passions—the sensory stimulation that provides us the raw material to make meaning of the world. Once the passions are operative, Wordsworth argues, whatever originally instigated them ceases to control them as they begin to work on our minds.

The pursuits that engage the imagination, judging from Pinel’s case studies, include the arts and the sciences of invention. Tissot’s interest is in the former. In his treatise “On Diseases Incidental to Literary and Sedentary Persons” he relates the story of two men made ill by engaging in imaginative scholarly pursuits. He says, “Malbranche was seized with dreadful palpitations in reading Descartes’ *Man*; and there is still living at Paris a professor of rhetoric who fainted away whilst he was perusing some of the sublime passages of Homer” (Tissot 20). Tissot warns repeatedly of the dangers of allowing the imagination to be excited without rest. His examples suggest that with improper and irresponsible care the imaginative power—a voracious and dominating power for Tissot—can become monstrous and destructive to the other faculties.

The emphasis on taming the imagination does not reduce its significance in the period, if anything it increases it. The imagination is so strong and is such an important faculty that it can infect the mind with delusions so real they can fool reason. Even if reason continues to function as it should, if the imagination is deranged reason cannot fix it. Making imagination, when excited by unchecked

passion, the cause of madness makes it the most powerful and dangerous of the mental faculties.

Although reason cannot bring a deranged imagination back in check, temperance can because temperance addresses and moderates the passions that excite the imagination. In *Nosologie Methodique* (1771) physician and botanist Francois Boissier de Sauvages warns, “the distraction of our minds is the result of our blind surrender to our desires, our incapacity to control or moderate our passions” (12). Wordsworth expresses a similar sentiment in his character study of Rivers in *The Borderers*. Wordsworth writes that Rivers’ appetite “from being exhausted becomes unnatural” (Wordsworth 65). The continued satiation of his appetite causes it to grow beyond the bounds of reason. Like de Sauvages, in Rivers Wordsworth shows the possible danger in unmediated gratification. If the cause of uncontrollable appetite is surrender to passion, an excess, the cure is learning to moderate passion and bring imagination under a control that will allow it to function robustly without damaging the rest of the faculties. Pinel is an advocate for treating insanity by moderating the passions. He may have derived his ideas from works on classical temperance; although we have no indication of his reading practices outside of those in his own field he mentions in his treatise, he does allude to the “ancients.” Pinel shares a story about a friend whose passion for glory drove him to madness. He recounts how his experience with his friend “enhanced [his] admiration of the judicious precepts of the ancients, and made [him] regret that [he] had it not then in [his] power to put them in practice” (Pinel 52). Pinel also alludes to “the doctrine in ethics of balancing the passions of

men by others of equal or superior force,” a description that calls to mind Aristotle’s theory of temperance as the median between two equal forces (229).

Both Pinel and Haslam recommend temperance as a way to manage the mind and cure madness. Haslam points out that we are so ruled by habit that even after madness has taken hold many patients continue in the day-to-day habits they had prior to their derangement. Haslam says he had hoped that simply bringing the patients into a system of regularity would alleviate their mental disorders but found that in the case of habit, thought does not precede action and so any effort to produce ordered thought through ordered action was ineffective. Instead of bringing patients into a system of regularity in their actions, Haslam recommends “superinducing different habits of thinking” (130). To superinduce different habits of thinking is to displace the current habits of thought with new ones. Haslam shifts his focus from regulating or managing action to managing thought as the best way to bring the mental faculties back into balance and cure mental derangement. Pinel agrees, mourning the inefficient treatments used by doctors in the past: “it is . . . to be lamented that regular physicians have indulged in a blind routine of inefficient treatment, and have allowed themselves . . . to be diverted from the more important management of the mind” (Pinel 4-5). Pinel uses some of the same descriptors for the physicians as he and others have used to describe patients. Here the physicians have indulged and are blind and diverted because they continue to attempt cures that address the body instead of the mind. Treating the body alone cannot cure madness caused by too much feeling because feeling is in the mind. Pinel uses the language of temperance, “management of the mind,” to describe the preferred treatment. Later Pinel advocates for treating madness

at the level of habits of thought when he says, “it is not to be wondered at that proper attention to mental and corporeal regimen seldom fails to effect a cure” (Pinel 159).

Pinel advocates both a corporeal and a mental regimen to cure madness. I will discuss the corporeal regimen more below, but the mental regimen suggests the kind of superinducing Haslam discusses. A regimen is simultaneously a set of practices and an act of governance. As a set of precisely repeated practices it creates habit, as an act of governance it brings the mind and body into control. It is this dual effect that is intrinsic to temperance, temperance being both the development of habit over time through regulating thoughts and actions, and self-governance. Pinel’s “moral treatment,” a theory he pioneered, is a “moral regiment” for the treatment of insanity that attempts to affect both ends of temperance (5). Pinel advocated for environment control to remove the patient from excess stimulation.²⁵ He talks specifically about quiet walks in nature and other daily activities that would reduce the sensory stimuli patients experience in order to control their emotions.²⁶ Even when patients become violent Pinel suggests meeting that violence with unshakeable calm and patience in order to persuade the patient to adopt the same. By removing environmental stimuli, the “moral treatment” reduces the sensory stimulation available to the patient in order to calm the patient’s mind.

²⁵ Pinel and others who adopted the moral treatment still used strait jackets but they were often employed to decrease sensory input, not to restrain. Prior to the moral treatment, as Foucault tells us, patients were often chained and shackled for long periods of time without release.

²⁶ This is compared to the city of Paris where Pinel worked. Nature, of course, has plenty of sensory stimuli but Pinel considered nature to be within normal or “natural” limits and so more likely to encourage the patient to bring their own passions into normal parameters.

The patient's environment is especially important in cases where mental derangement results from acute sensibility, not just because it is even more important to control the environment but also because the environment outside of the hospital is even more destructive to the patient. Pinel says that patients who suffer acute sensibility are more prone to relapse: “the acute sensibility which generally characterizes the temperaments of maniacs, and which renders them susceptible of the liveliest emotions both of pleasure and pain, renders them likewise liable to relapse. But this consideration ought to operate upon such as are subject to this complaint as an additional inducement to subdue their passions by the dictates of wisdom, and to fortify their minds by the precepts of enlightened morality” (Pinel 38). Because Pinel is writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution, life outside of the hospital would have been especially tumultuous. Those with acute sensibility, he suggests, would have a difficult time retaining any balance they gained while hospitalized. For these individuals it would be even more important to resist excitation. For this reason Pinel admonishes patients with more acute sensibility to control their passion and fortify their minds. To fortify is to make strong but it is also to shore up against attack and to “give oneself . . . endurance for some effort” (Oxford English Dictionary “Fortify”). Pinel’s admonishment suggests that those with more acute sensibility have an obligation to prepare their minds against what will be for them a hostile world full of a continuous flow of too much stimulation. The relationship between the two sentences is if/then: if acute sensibility makes one more likely to relapse into insanity, then controlling the passions will fortify the mind and prevent relapse.

Although acute sensibility makes a person more inclined to insanity because sensory stimulation excites the imagination and the imagination becomes deranged from the glut of stimuli, Pinel and Haslam both claim that acute sensibility does not make insanity inevitable. Both physicians blame insufficient education and indulgence—in youth especially—for the inability to control passions later in life. This critique does not seem to be limited to a particular class. Pinel provides examples from an array of social classes; madness can result in any case where there is insufficient education and indulgence. Pinel provides an example of an “only son of a weak and indulgent mother” who encouraged him in “the gratification of every caprice and passion” (151). Pinel goes on to say that this young man was already prone to “an untutored and violent temper” but that his education exacerbated his natural tendencies instead of teaching him to control his natural inclination to extreme passions, it shaped him into a vicious and uncontrolled man. Haslam does not provide a case study but he does say that “the greatest number of these moral causes may, perhaps, be traced to the errors of education; which often plant in the youthful mind those seeds of madness,”²⁷ and that “it should be as much the object of teachers of youth to subjugate the passions as to discipline the intellect . . . The tender mind should be prepared to expect the natural and certain effects of causes”²⁸ (Haslam 101). When Haslam says “tender

²⁷ When Haslam says “moral cause” he means those causes that arise from the mind opposed to injury.

²⁸ The syntax of Haslam’s “effects of causes” may seem particularly strange. It is likely that Haslam is drawing on either Thomas Reid’s or John Locke’s theory of cause and effect. Hume’s more obscure relationship between cause and effect was a favorite with physician John Brown (1797)—a contemporary of Haslam’s—but Haslam seems to indicate here that cause and effect have a natural and, perhaps even, predictable relationship. Hume’s cause and effect theory suggests that we can only trace the relationship between cause and effect through experience which would mean

mind” he is referring to minds that are especially sensitive to sensory stimuli.

Education becomes training to prepare these minds for the barrage of sense stimuli and the tumultuous emotions of life. If the mind is not prepared to control passions and anticipate the experience of them then, for Haslam and Pinel, education has failed to produce a mind that can survive in the world—or in other words, a temperate mind.

FEELING AND MADNESS IN ROMANTIC POETRY

In this last section I will examine instances of tender-mindedness in Wordsworth’s “The Ruined Cottage.” I will not argue that madness resulting from tender-mindedness is treated through temperance in the ways that the physicians I discussed recommend. Instead in this poem temperance operates at the level of the narrative as the poetic voice mediates the experiences for the reader. In *Wordsworth’s Poetry: 1787-1814* (1964) Geoffrey Hartman writes that “The Ruined Cottage” “tends to become a story about the relation of teller to tale” (139). Hartman argues that Wordsworth conceives his “myth of nature,” at least in part, in “The Ruined Cottage,” and that at its core the poem is about the growth of the mind as it becomes independent of and then co-creator with nature. It is in this relationship that Hartman locates the tension in the poem, between nature and man as distinct centers. The poem also gets its tension from shuttling between the beautiful and the sublime; at its core this poem is about the pull of the twin powers toward excitation (read “madness”) and laxness (read “madness”).

that it would be impossible to teach how to anticipate it. Although a minor point, the wording of Haslam’s argument suggests that effects can be anticipated by teaching their relationship to particular causes. It is possible to prepare oneself for feelings in relation to outcomes that have not yet occurred if one knows that the preceding event is likely.

More often than not critics have taken “I see things around me [] / Things which you cannot see” (129-130) as the operative lines of “The Ruined Cottage.” I propose that we look instead to the balance between those lines and these later ones, “enough to sorrow have you given, / The purpose of wisdom asks no more” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 508-9). The narrative of “The Ruined Cottage” balances between the responsibility to feel compassion for Margaret and the responsibility to care for the self by enjoying the pleasures of nature even when it is a reminder of past pains. The balance works on three different levels with the three different poetic figures: Margaret, Armytage, and the Traveler. Margaret’s narrative is one of imbalance. The poem has come under fire more than once for its perceived insensitivity to Margaret’s plight. De Quincey famously said that the Peddler “would have done better to give Margaret some cash rather than mere sympathy” (*Wordsworth: The Sense of History* 322). But De Quincey’s response, regardless of how much it is in sympathy with modern sensibilities, circumvents the poem. In “The Ruined Cottage” Margaret’s suffering is only ostensibly the topic. The real focus of the poem is the Traveler’s reaction to Armytage’s narrative of Margaret’s suffering. Unlike Wordsworth’s other poems that deal directly with the suffering of the marginal poor like “The Last of the Flock” and “The Mad Mother,” “The Ruined Cottage” pulls the attention of the reader away from Margaret’s suffering to focus instead on the Traveler as he hears about Margaret’s suffering.

To better understand the turn away from Margaret’s suffering to the Traveler I turn to Joanna Baillie’s introduction to *Plays of the Passions* (1798). Baillie’s introduction is a defense of the subject matter of her plays. Like Wordsworth she is

vulnerable to attack because her plays could read as capitalizing on the pains of hardship and vice for the purpose of entertainment. Baillie defends her choice, saying, “God almighty has implanted it [the fascination with the extreme passions of others] within us, as well as all our other propensities and passions, for wise and good purposes. It is our best and most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the propensities and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others we know ourselves” (74). Baillie claims that our interest in the suffering of others has little to do with *schadenfreude*. Instead, when we watch others experience pain or give way to their passions, we are in a position to reflect critically on ourselves. “Examine” demands more than passive enjoyment; it is cognitive work that Baillie asks of her readers. Like Burke, Baillie sees the passions as universal to the human condition—we all feel the same things, she argues, just to differing degrees. And because we feel the same things, seeing that passion become out of control in another will teach us to moderate it in ourselves.²⁹

Telling Margaret’s story—and more importantly, thinking about Margaret’s story—illustrates the consequences of allowing non-moderated passions to take hold

²⁹ Later in her introduction Baillie argues specifically that by seeing passion rage in another person we will learn the signs of danger in ourselves. She writes, “We cannot, it is true, amidst its wild uproar, listen to the voice of reason, and save ourselves from destruction; but we can foresee its coming, we can mark its rising signs, we can know the situation that will most expose us to its rage, and we can shelter our heads from the coming blast. To change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing these visitations of the soul, whose causes and efforts we are aware of, every one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful. Above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all the misery that ensues” (*Plays of the Passions* 94).

over the mind and infect the imagination. Through Margaret's story the Traveler learns to be the master of his own passions. The Traveler does not allow the pain of Margaret's story to overtake him.³⁰ This does not mean that Margaret is a means to an end for the Traveler. His feeling for her is genuine and at times he is in danger of being overcome by it in the poem. But the Traveler resists collapsing into Margaret's story and in so doing he learns to assert boundaries between self and other and self and experience.

Throughout Armytage's tale Margaret becomes more and more despondent until her imagination overcomes all other mental faculties as she entertains the fantasy that her husband is still coming home. Nature outside her cottage mimics the state of her mind because, like her mind, she allows it to fall into disrepair: as Margaret's mind becomes disordered so too does her garden. She has ceased to take pleasure in nature and instead experiences only pain. In addition, she stops taking part in useful activities and withdraws from her life except as it pertains to her desire for her husband's return. Margaret's despair is so extreme she claims it had wrought a physical change in her—something Wordsworth,³¹ Pinel, and Haslam all argue is possible.

And so I waste my time: for I am changed;

³⁰ It is interesting to note that one of the reasons the insane must be confined away from society according to Pinel is because madness is catching. Direct, prolonged exposure to someone suffering from a deranged imagination can result in a kind of pandemic of the passions. Literature provides a way to learn from those who have allowed their passions to compromise their minds without the danger of infecting the reader. This put a new spin on Burke's insistence that something cannot be sublime if it presents a real danger.

³¹ Wordsworth makes this argument in the note about Goody Blake and Harry Gill in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. He writes, "the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 612).

And to myself," she said, "have done much wrong,
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping I have walked; my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are, and I could never die. (*Wordsworth: The Major Works*
352-7)

The wrong she has done to herself remains undefined but the rest of the passage suggests that it is in her surrender to her passions that she has erred. The change that has come over her body is in its capacity to experience grief but there is no corresponding fortitude in her mind. Her nerves have been stretched and stretched without any relaxation and she has suffered beyond what her mind can bear to process. By Burke's definition Margaret's experience is not sublime—the pain and terror she feels can and does damage her. However, the stretching of her nerves is the same kind of nervous stretching that occurs in the Burkean sublime; the difference is not in the quality of pain the nerves experience but in the degree of pain.

As a character one degree removed from the narrative, however, Armytage's experience does have the potential to be sublime. Margaret is contrasted with Armytage as his state of mind waxes and wanes throughout the story. At times he is despondent; he says, "But often on the cottage do I muse / As on a picture, till my wiser mind / Sinks, yielding to the foolishness of grief" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 117-119). Yet each time he is in danger of surrendering to his narrative-induced despair he resists and even chastises himself for the lapse.

'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.

At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful, while this multitude of flies
Fills all the air with happy melody,
Why should a tear be in an old man's eye?
Why should we thus with an untoward mind
And in the weakness of humanity
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,
From natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
And feeding on disquiet this disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts? (*Wordsworth: The
Major Works* 187-98)

Here Armytage pulls back from his narrative to temper his sad recollections with the beauty of nature. The last six lines are a question: why should we refuse the solace nature offers and pursue instead our feelings of sadness? In this moment of recollecting past sorrow there is a readily available source of present joy. I see no indication in these lines that Armytage is suggesting there is never time for sorrow, just that now is not the time. "Deepest noon," he claims, is time for peace; that is not to say that there is no time for sorrow. An "untoward mind" means both an unprepared and unmanageable mind; if he surrenders to passion instead of moderating and managing it he shows his mind is unprepared for the stretching motion of the sublime. The "weakness of humanity" is the tendency to give in to passion even when the nerves require relaxation.

Even when Armytage continues with Margaret's story he resists falling prey to his passions again. Instead he tells the story remembering how he once experienced despair at seeing Margaret in pain. When Armytage concludes his story he has found balance. The pain becomes a step removed from him, not doing violence to him at each new recollection as trauma would, but instead providing him with the pleasurable pain of the sublime—a pain that attests to the growth of the mind.

Finally, the Traveler is two steps removed from the narrative and so is the most likely to access Margaret's story as sublime. We find, however, that he struggles in doing so. It is not until Armytage teaches him by twice calling him back to pleasure that the Traveler is able to experience Margaret's story as other than uncontrolled passion. After Armytage pauses in his narrative the Traveler forgets it but only so long as Armytage distracts him. The moment the Traveler is alone in nature his mind returns to Margaret's pain so much so that he begs for the rest of the story. The Traveler explains that his care for Margaret is not just because her story is tragic; it is in the way Armytage relates the narrative and "the things of which he spake / seemed present" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 211-12). Armytage's narrative style—the way he makes the story real and then pulls back only to insist on pausing for pleasure—affects the excitation and relaxation of the nerves.

This vacillation between pain and pleasure as Armytage tells Margaret's story and then stops to insist on recognizing the beauty of nature has an effect similar to the thematic turns of "Tintern Abbey." Hartman argues that "Tintern Abbey" has a "vacillating calculus of gain and loss, of hope and doubt" (27). He links the thematic

vacillations to the metrical structure,³² which he compares to a wave—lengthening and pulling back but never quite reaching a climax. I believe that a similar principle is at work in “The Ruined Cottage.” Margaret’s story builds but never reaches a climax and by denying a climax the Traveler—and the reader—are denied surrender to the passions the story incites.

Armytage facilitates the experience of the dual powers of the sublime and beautiful by the design of his narrative. Remember that Haslam put forth the plan of “superinducing different habits of thinking” to prevent and cure madness; Armytage’s narrative does precisely that (130). It conducts the stretching of the nerves while simultaneously teaching how to fortify the mind by relaxing them in the enjoyment of pure pleasure. At the conclusion of the poem an “unworthy eye” is synonymous with an intemperate eye. The intemperate eye cannot perceive the dual forces of the beautiful and sublime that must vacillate in a healthy formation of the self: the tragedy of Margaret’s story and the beauty of nature left behind (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 511).

³² Wordsworth spoke about metrical structure as a way to control affective response in the “Preface to Lyrical Ballads”: “The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed when in an unexcited or a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 609). Although he goes on after this passage to specifically talk about metrics, I think his theory here is also deeply connected to his investment in common language—another regular, familiar element of his poetry that controls the reader’s passionate response.

CHAPTER THREE

TEMPERANCE AND THE RE-TRAINING OF THE SENSES IN
WORDSWORTH'S *LYRICAL BALLADS*

Theories of education proliferated in the Romantic period. In *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice 1780-1832* (1994) Alan Richardson claims that “in its wider sense of mental growth, education might be taken as defining the Romantic ethos” (6). Richardson defends his claim through an exhaustive survey of educational texts that were influential during the Romantic period and rigorous readings of their methodologies. Among these texts he includes John Locke’s *Some Thoughts on Education* (1693); Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile* (1762); Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787); Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth’s *Practical Education* (1798); Hannah More’s *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799); Andrew Bell’s *The Madras School, or Elements of Tuition* (1808); and John Lancaster’s *Improvements in Education* (1808). Richardson’s research characterizes the Romantic period as engaged in a complex dialogue about education. The discussions took place at local and national levels and issues of class, gender, and religion influenced the theories. At times highly stratified, extremely coercive, and deeply religious, Romantic education was also revolutionary and liberationist. A new widespread availability of the printed word helped usher in an overall movement toward literacy for all classes. However, education was still very much designed to limit class mobility. Although educational theories aimed at the middle class like Locke’s, Rousseau’s, and the Edgeworth’s are predominantly secular Sunday Schools

took up the majority of the responsibility to educate the poor. These religious schools took the Bible as their primary text. Because of the involvement of religious groups in educational efforts there was often an overlap between education and indoctrination. This overlap allowed for more movement than we often recognize between religious values and educational ideals at the moment when education was becoming institutionalized for the first time in English history. Drawing on Richardson's work in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism 1780-1832* I will begin this chapter by discussing elements of Locke's, Rousseau's, and most especially the Edgeworth's educational theories that pertain to the inculcation of moral and social values. I will then examine sermons on temperance to establish the religious significance of the term during the Romantic period. Finally I will conclude by reading Wordsworth's educational theory and instances of temperance in his poetry and prose together with primary and secondary texts that address the English "Poor Laws."

EDUCATION IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Although not Romantics, Locke's and Rousseau's writings on education influenced educational theories during the Romantic period. In *Some Thoughts* Locke lays out an educational theory that is at once permissive and coercive. Locke advocates for the teaching of reasoning skills over rote memorization of moralisms, play as an essential element of intellectual development, and fostering love instead of administering corporeal punishment. However, Locke's theories are purposed toward practical application. He prefers teaching reasoning over rote memorization because reasoning skills—when based on specific moral principles chosen by the teacher—are more likely to foster habits than memorization; he advocates for genuine affection

between parent and child because it is more likely to cultivate lasting obedience. Long after the child has ceased to be motivated by fear of a parent, Locke argues, the child will be obedient out of love (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism 1780-1832* 48).

Both Locke and Rousseau advocate for systems that eschew heavy-handed discipline for surveillance. In *Some Thoughts on Education* and *Émile* every aspect of the child's development is watched over and engineered. Although both texts recommend free play as part of proper childhood development it is only ever within a tightly controlled environment. The Lockean and Rousseauian systems are intent on producing an autonomous (male) subject but only after every prescribed precept has been instilled in him through a tightly designed program of behavioral and cognitive control. The first-generation Romantics objected to Locke's and Rousseau's theories because in them contrived experiences supplant genuine experiences (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism* 51). Both systems of education require the teacher to contrive encounters for their pupils—who are made to believe the encounters are chance—in order to achieve specific didactic purposes. By designing the seemingly adventitious experiences of everyday life, all elements of a child's formation are tightly controlled (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism* 50).

Even though Locke's and Rousseau's methods were heavily critiqued during the Romantic period the control they advocated, Richardson argues, remained a feature of Romantic educational theory. The Edgeworth's *Practical Education* dispensed with Locke and Rousseau's method of contriving experiences but retained their tight environmental control. Where Locke and Rousseau take pains to make the educational environment appear natural, the Edgeworth's instructions run more to the

arrangement of the nursery and the kinds of objects best fitted for play. However the Edgeworths are similar to Locke and Rousseau in their insistence that children be continuously monitored (*Practical Education* 13). The Edgeworth's watchfulness takes two forms; they recommend constant vigilance against undesirable traits and monitoring the progress of desirable traits as they are instilled in the child through instruction. Monitoring the degree to which the child retains his lessons is essential for the Edgeworths because their system of education requires that only one principle is taught at a time (*Practical Education* 68). In the Edgeworth's system the adoption of each principle is carefully monitored because the system is dependent on associations. Like Locke, the Edgeworths believe that the mind is a tabula rasa and that from infancy a child's mind makes associations that will later form his thoughts. The Edgeworths argue:

What the man of reason cannot do for himself after his associations are strongly formed, might have been easily accomplished in his early education. He might have been taught the same general principles, but with different habits. By early associating the pleasures of sympathy, and praise, and affection with all generous and benevolent actions, his parents might have joined these ideas so forcibly in his mind, that the one set of ideas should never recur without the other. Whenever the words benevolence or generosity were pronounced, the feelings of habitual pleasure would recur; and he would independently of reason, desire from association to be generous. (*Practical Education* 202)

The kind of education the Edgeworths describe prioritizes habit formation over reason. Although the man of reason has been taught the principle it is not infixed in him. In Edgeworth's system the principle is not learned it is instilled. The man educated by Edgeworth's system is trained into associating the principle with pleasures so much so that they cannot be divided. This educational strategy takes positive reinforcement to a coercive level. By associating praise and affection with good deeds, the Edgeworths claim that a child can be trained to immediately and unreflectively associate pleasure with socially desirable actions. Through repetitive association the child would learn to react like Pavlov's dog.¹ By associating benevolence and generosity with pleasure at the level of conditioning, even the words themselves would generate pleasure. The association aims to remove critical thinking from ethical action. The relationship between association and action is interesting; here the action arises from a desire to prolong and produce pleasure. Because generosity is associated unreflectively with pleasure, acting generously is of immediate emotional benefit to the actant. The pleasure, however, is simultaneously distanced from the act of generosity. It is not the generosity that produces pleasure, it is the association between generosity and pleasure continuing to recur. Of course for the Edgeworth's system to work the way they

¹ The Edgeworth's educational philosophy and Pavlov's experiment differ in that Pavlov began from an observation of unconditioned response. Dogs naturally salivate when presented with food for physiological reasons. The similarity between Pavlov's dog and the Edgeworth's child lies in the purposeful association of stimuli. Pavlov took a neutral stimulus—one unconnected with the unconditioned stimulus (food)—and forced an association through repeatedly linking the neutral stimulus to the unconditioned stimulus. Eventually the dog learned to associate the neutral stimulus and the unconditioned stimulus until both neutral and unconditioned stimuli created the unconditioned response (salivation). In other words, Pavlov rang the bell when he fed his dog; after repeatedly associating the bell with the food, he found that the dog would salivate just from hearing the bell.

imagine it they would have to maintain absolute control over all of the child's associations.

One of the Edgeworth's primary methods to control associations, Richardson explains, is to control figurative language (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism* 56). Although they recognize the impossibility of dispensing with figurative language altogether—most especially in representing thought and feeling—the Edgeworths advise maintaining as much control over linguistic associations as possible. They claim that those who “wish to argue accurately . . . when they are obliged to describe their feelings or thoughts by metaphoric expressions . . . will prefer the simplest . . . [words] with which the fewest extraneous associations are connected” (*Practical Education* 170). Because the Edgeworth's educational theories are based on controlling associations figurative language is problematic. The value of language in the passage above is measured by its accuracy. Language is valuable in as much as it does the work of accurately communicating thought or feeling. Language loses its value as it becomes less precise because the speaker loses control over the associations the listener makes. If the parent or teacher does not have complete control over the associations the child makes, then they might engineer sub-rational habits unintentionally. For the Edgeworths the impreciseness of figurative language might mean the difference between a child who associates generosity with pleasure and one who associates generosity with something less motivating.

Even though the Edgeworths have concerns with the ambiguity of figurative language they consider the arts important to childhood education.² Their interest in literature resides in its ability to foster socially acceptable taste and a sympathetic imagination (*Practical Education* 181). To create a socially acceptable taste children must only be exposed to artistic and literary works that “those who have determined the national standard” consider best (172). Here the arts lay the groundwork for nationalism and social conformity. The Edgeworths proceed to advise parents and teachers to model the evaluation of the arts on the basis of their socially accepted value. They say that parents should ask who painted or wrote a print or poem prior to offering an opinion on its worth so that children learn by example to judge according to socially accepted values instead of their own taste (172).

The Edgeworthian system accomplishes the other purpose of the arts, the cultivation of a “sympathetic imagination,” through the association of ideas (*Practical Education* 181). They provide two examples to illustrate their theory. In the first, a painter depicts two girls laughing so realistically that everyone who sees the painting feels its infectiousness and cannot help but laugh. The other example is from Plutarch; when Porcia and Brutus part Porcia is composed, but when she sees a painting of Hector and Andromache’s parting she begins to cry. Although they call the reactions in both the first and second examples sympathy, only the second example results from the “sympathetic imagination” (181). Bodily sympathy, for the Edgeworths, does not

² In a later volume entitled *Readings on Poetry* (1816) the Edgeworths address the best methods of teaching poetry to children. They expound on excerpts from a number of poems including selections from poems by Pope, Milton, and Gray. Their readings, dealing primarily with context and rhetorical devices, claim singular meanings for each selection.

involve the imagination; the first example is an uncultivated physical response. The viewer, according to the Edgeworths, does not laugh because they feel affinity with the girls in the painting; they laugh as one yawns upon seeing another yawn. In the second example, Porcia is moved because of the connection she imagines between Andromache and herself; she feels that they are united in their love and concern for their husbands.

There is also an element of class to the Edgeworth's division between bodily sympathy and sympathetic imagination.³ The Edgeworth's bodily sympathy is universal—it is like an echo of emotion and requires no particular training. To have a sympathetic imagination one must be trained. The painting prompts an outpouring of sympathy because Porcia is familiar with Andromache's story. She would likely feel nothing in response to the painting if she could not identify the painting as Andromache and Hector's parting and did not know that Hector's death was imminent. Porcia can associate her own fear and pain with that of Andromache because she has the cultural knowledge to draw upon. The imaginative work in this example of the "sympathetic imagination" occurs in Porcia's using that knowledge to imagine a connection between Andromache and herself. By imagining herself as similar to Andromache Porcia expands her understanding and experience of her own emotions while simultaneously acknowledging the depth of someone else's.

³ The Edgeworths agree that the educated and uneducated may have the same capacity for imagination but argue that the uneducated have fewer associations upon which to call. Because they conceive of the imagination as different combinations of images and associations often drawn from literature and art, if one is not familiar with literature and art one has fewer possible imaginative combinations to draw from (*Practical Education* 183).

It would be irresponsible to characterize the Edgeworth's sympathetic imagination as a predecessor to what Spivak calls "imagining the other."⁴ The end of the sympathetic imagination is pleasure for the subject. The Edgeworths claim, "no happiness can be enjoyed in society without the social virtues . . . [and] on our sympathy with our fellow creatures depend many of our social virtues" (*Practical Education* 253-4). Sympathy is desirable because of its relationship to social virtues. As with the association between generosity and pleasure I discussed previously⁵ the end of virtue, for the Edgeworths, is pleasure. The sympathy is almost incidental. To be happy requires a certain level of peaceful coexistence and honest affection. The Edgeworth's educational system trains the imagination to make sympathetic connections between self and other to affect this end. However, that the Edgeworths make a connection between imagination and social virtues is significant. Although their educational theories are heavily influenced by rationalist ideas, the imagination has an important place in fitting a child for inclusion in society. The Edgeworths take care to reiterate that imagination and sympathy must be governed by reason but imagination is still the faculty that connects self to other and creates the conditions for social felicity.

⁴ In "Terror: A Speech After 9-11" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that we must be "trained into imagining the other" (3). Imagining the other suspends the construction of the other as an object that can be known in favor of listening to the other. In Spivak's ethical imagining the other is as the self—complex, changeable, and fathomless.

⁵ The Edgeworths claim that forging associations early on between benevolent actions and pleasure would solidify the connection between the two in the mind of the child so much so that later in life any mention of generosity would produce pleasure. By forging this association one could ensure a generous subject because the resulting pleasure would motivate them to generosity.

While educational theories aimed at the middle class advocated training habits of mind in order to produce a rational, autonomous subject fit for inclusion in society, education designed for the poor aimed to produce a more moral, competent, and complacent workforce. In *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850* (1976) Thomas Walter Laqueur argues that “most men had . . . [an] external, instrumental motive in supporting education; they hoped that it would make the lower orders more virtuous, more loyal, more firmly attached to the church, more moral, easier to control, and perhaps healthier and more productive as well” (130). Laqueur provides an excellent history of the rise of Sunday Schools during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. He contends that the debate about education took a turn during this time period; instead of arguing about whether or not to educate the poor the debate in the Romantic period turned to who should have control over their education and what they should be taught (Laqueur 128-9).⁶

Sunday School curricula combined secular and religious studies including reading, writing and, sometimes, basic math (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism* 66). Far from the school “displac[ing] the church . . . as the principal cite for regulating social relations of power and domination” (Richardson 39) for many of the working poor the school and the church became synonymous. Most Sunday Schools took the Bible as their primary text but many also utilized primers that included poetry and prose (*Religion and Respectability* 113-16). The materials included in the primers

⁶ Sunday Schools accomplished much of the work of educating the poor during the Romantic period and no widespread secular institutional system existed until the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Laqueur’s research shows that 200,000 students were formally enrolled in Sunday Schools in 1800, 450,000 in 1818, and 1,400,000 in 1833. Instead of lessening over the Romantic period enrollments grew right up to the Education Act of 1870.

varied but, when included, the poetry was often associated directly or indirectly with religious topics; it was typical to include sections from *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Paradise Lost*, and the *Book of Martyrs* (*Religion and Respectability* 206). These texts were used to support the social order by emphasizing the importance of hierarchical structures, the moral responsibility of each person in the hierarchy to fulfill their role, and the characterization of mortal life as transient and necessarily painful or difficult.

England's motivations for educating the poor were deeply rooted in the changes brought about by industrialization and the fears associated with the French Revolution. In *The Statesman's Manual* (1832) Coleridge constructs an argument for the education of the poor based on what he claims were the mistakes that led to the French Revolution. Coleridge attributes the French Revolution to the convergence of three major factors: the education and power available to the rising industrial class, the insensibility and indulgence of the ruling class, and the irreligiosity of the then-prevalent philosophies.

Coleridge forges a connection between the three factors by linking them to scriptural prophecy. Immediately after condemning these three failings of French society Coleridge quotes at length from Isaiah, chapter forty-seven. In this chapter Isaiah prophecies the destruction of Babylon and Chalda⁷ for reasons that match the accusations Coleridge has just lodged against France. By putting his accusations alongside Isaiah's, Coleridge makes France a mirror for the Biblical Babylon. He follows the lengthy quotation by insinuating that England is in the same danger. His

⁷ Chalda^e was a part of southern Babylon. Although Isaiah specifies Babylon and Chalda^e in chapter forty-seven the two terms are often used interchangeably.

insinuation is indirect; instead of extolling the faults of England⁸ as he did with France, he uses second person to include England with France and Babylon. Coleridge writes,

There is a grace that would enable us to take up vipers, and the evil thing shall not hurt us: a spiritual alchemy which can transmute poisons into panacæa. We are counseled by our Lord himself to make unto ourselves friends of the mammon of Unrighteousness:⁹ and in this age of sharp contrasts and grotesque combinations it would be a wise method of sympathizing with the tone and spirit of the Times, if we elevated even our daily news-papers and political journals into comments on the Bible. (47-48)

Although he begins the quoted passage with the claim that it is a condemnation of France, by switching to second person he includes England in Isaiah's censure. The passage is rife with Biblical allusions. He alludes to Mark when he names snake handling and transmutation of poisons; these are the miracles promised to those who believe the testimony of the Apostles. Coleridge also references the parable of the unjust steward in Luke, chapter sixteen when he says "we" are counseled to make ourselves friends to the "mammon of Unrighteousness." In this parable the steward

⁸ The first and second of these factors were certainly concerns in England as well as in France. The increasing population of industrial towns and cities, availability and popularity of political tracts like Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791), beginnings of labor unions, and public displays of discontent like the Bread Riots contributed to a potentially volatile environment.

⁹ Coleridge is referencing the parable of the unjust steward in Luke, chapter sixteen. In this parable the steward wastes the riches of his master. The steward goes to the debtors who owe his master and collects partial payments of the debts they owe in hopes that when his master dismisses him the debtors will welcome him into their homes.

wastes the riches of his master. The steward goes to the debtors who owe his master and collects partial payments of the debts they owe in hopes that when his master dismisses him the debtors will welcome him into their homes. Taken together these two allusions provide a solution to the problem of social upheaval and moral degradation that Coleridge wrestles with in *The Statesman's Manual*. First, Coleridge suggests, to escape the fate of France England must have faith because it is upon faith that miracle-enabling grace is contingent. Second, England must make friends where it would typically make enemies. In the parable the unjust servant is wise because he seeks out those who have reason to hate him—as a steward he would be the debt collector—and makes them his friends and allies. When he reduces their debts he makes them indebted to him for his kindness instead of to his master for money. Coleridge proffers faith as the answer to his second and third causes of the French Revolution (the insensibility and indulgence of the ruling class, and the irreligiosity of the then-prevalent philosophies). He applies the parable as the solution to his first cause (the education and power available to the rising industrial class). Instead of attempting to stop the poor from accessing the newspapers and political journals that could incite them to riot, Coleridge suggests turning those publications to friendly purposes by making them into Bible commentaries.

Coleridge argues that the type of literature the poor have access to is bad for the health of their minds and that it makes them “proud” (49). He employs a metaphor comparing aesthetic taste to sensual taste to articulate the relationship between reading and the health of the mind.

It would require the intrepid accuracy of a Colquhoun¹⁰ to venture at the precise number of the vast company only, whose heads and hearts are dieted at the two public ordinaries of Literature, and the circulating libraries and the periodical press. But what is the result? Does the inward man thrive on this regimen? Alas! if the average health of the consumer may be judged of by the articles of the largest consumption; if the secretions may be conjectured from the ingredients of the dishes that are found best suited to their palates; from all that I have seen, either of the banquet or the guests I shall utter my Profaccia with a desponding sigh. From a popular philosophy and a philosophic populace, Good Sense deliver us! (50-51).

In this passage food takes the place of literature, the stomach takes the place of the mind, and secretions (waste) take the place of ideas and actions. The daily meals (ordinaries) of the poor have been circulating libraries and periodical presses—two sources that would not come with any regulation or interpretation to control or direct their reading. The metaphor suggests that this reading changes the mind the way food changes the body. Food contributes to determining the health of the body. It can change the shape and composition of the body and affect its performance. It certainly affects the secretions of the body. Like food, Coleridge suggests, literature shapes the mind and affects its production of thought, feeling, and, by extension, action.

¹⁰ Coleridge may be referring here to Patrick Colquhoun's 1806 "A Treatise on Indigence." In his treatise Colquhoun argues that the poor are a necessary part of any economy. Coleridge argued against Colquhoun's conclusions (McCloskey 24).

The metaphor allows Coleridge to bemoan what he calls the “reading public” while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of reading. Food is essential to life. To live one must eat even if the available food is less nourishing than one would prefer. Likewise the connection Coleridge makes between the literary diet and the literal diet of the poor allows Coleridge to imply that literature is essential to feed the mind. It also positions him to offer his solution to the problem of the reading public; instead of endeavoring to take away the knowledge the poor currently have access to Coleridge argues for more knowledge through a more thorough education.

Coleridge argues that basic literacy is only a partial education because the real end of education is shaping the faculties of mind and the habits. He writes, “much less can [literacy] be held to constitute Education, which consists in educating the faculties, and forming the habits” (53). Coleridge’s use of “educing” suggests a different view of education. Instead of indoctrination or inculcation, “educing” suggests drawing out something already present in proto-form. Even though Coleridge claims that literature is essential to education it is not the purpose of education. The purpose of education is to expand the faculties of the mind—reason and imagination both.

RELIGIOUS TEMPERANCE

In “Sermons on the Following Subjects” (1799) Richard Graves¹¹ similarly

¹¹ Reverend Richard Graves (1715-1804) was a minister, and a Fellow at All Souls College—although his Fellowship was revoked when he married, as was customary. He wrote prolifically and was the author of the novel *The spiritual Quixote*, 3 volumes (1773); many published sermons and essays including, *The love of order: a poetical essay* (1773); *A letter from a father to his son at the university* (1787); *The reveries of solitude: consisting of essays in prose* (1793); and the poems “On Calumny” (1776); “The Banks of the Wye” (1776); “A College Life” (1780); and “On Caprice” (1780). He is not to be confused with the clergyman Richard Graves (1763-1829), author of *Graves on the Pentateuch*.

yokes together aesthetic and sensual taste and their relationship to habit. He warns that the intemperate man is “under the tyranny of his sensual appetites; which he has so far indulged as to have lost all relish for every other enjoyment . . . his understanding is clouded, and his imagination extinguished . . . he has lost all taste for the common enjoyments and innocent amusements, of life” (117-118). Graves’ concern here is in the relationship between sensual enjoyment and sensibility. Sensibility decreases in inverse correlation to sensual enjoyment—or at least certain kinds of sensual enjoyment. The sensual appetites, for Graves, are the appetites of the flesh. He makes a distinction between dangerous sensual appetites and “common” and “innocent amusement.” The latter include familial affection, intellectual enjoyment, and the pleasures of the imagination. It is for these pleasures that the intemperate man has lost “relish.” The language of taste weighs heavy in Graves’ sermon. Taken together the words “appetite,” “relish,” and “taste” bring to mind taste as a sense. But these words accomplish double purpose; when combined with the faculties of understanding and imagination they also figure for aesthetic taste.¹² The language Graves uses to discuss

¹² Wordsworth utilizes this same doubling of language in the 1802 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* when he critiques the use of traditional poetic expressions. Wordsworth critiques poets for “think[ing] that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulg[ing] in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 597). Like Graves, Wordsworth uses the language of sensual and aesthetic taste. Inflated poetic language is an indulgence; it is “food” for fickle tastes and appetites. Through the connection between these two types of taste Wordsworth also accuses the poet of complicity in the degradation of those appetites; he claims that the poets create the appetites that they satisfy. Later in the “Preface” Wordsworth discusses the ills of the “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation” (599) that he says is becoming common due to the increasing availability of daily news and the faster pace of city life.

the aesthetic aspect of intemperance—“clouded” understanding and “extinguished” imagination—suggest obfuscation. To understand is to see clearly and imagination is often linked to light (*A Defense of Poetry* 673). It is the connection between these two kinds of taste—sensual and aesthetic—that characterizes temperance.

Because sensitivity of the mind is the hallmark of temperance, and sensitivity and stimuli are in direct proportion, the kind and amount of stimuli one enjoys is a moral concern. In “A Compleat Treatise of Moral and Intellectual Virtues ” (1722) John Hartcliffe specifically warns against the effects of intemperance on the senses in the two acts of consumption he deems most dangerous: feasting and reading romances. There is no distinction in Hartcliffe’s writing between the feeding of the body and the feeding of the mind. Consuming too much food or food that is too rich will result in illnesses of the body, including a de-sensitivity of taste that makes simple fare unpalatable. Likewise, too much emotional stimulation or stimuli that are too turbulent result in illnesses of the mind, including warped reason and a hardened heart or lessened ability to feel. Hartcliffe writes:

There hath, for some hundred years, passed a sort of writing, which we call Romances, . . . which books are the greatest fomenters of Folly, Lust, and Idleness, that have appeared upon the stage of Human Madness For this reason, some moralists have resolved, that young persons must not be suffered to look into lascivious books, and some priced of poetry; because, tho' they are fittest to learn virtue, by precepts of morality, yet they are most apt, by the arts made use of in these discourses, to be drawn into vice, being set forth in the most

charming postures, and in the most taking colors. (124)

Hartcliffe is concerned that the disproportionate excitement of Romance will, as Graves puts it, lessen “relish” for more common pleasures. He claims that Romances incite “folly, lust, and idleness,” presumably as a result of this gap between Romance and reality. Readers become accustomed to the adventure and danger in Romances, making common experience less appealing and increasing the reader’s desire to seek out more violent stimuli. Hartcliffe admits that although he is arguing against reading Romance because of its possible detrimental affect, it is possible for Romance to promote morality as well. For Hartcliffe, if Romances were read as moral lessons they could ultimately teach virtue; but because depictions of vice are by their very nature seductive, he believes that the depictions of vice in Romance will seduce readers and keep them from recognizing the moral lesson. Like Graves, Hartcliffe yokes together sensual and aesthetic taste—in this case intemperance in aesthetic taste leads to intemperance in sensual taste. The fantastical nature of Romance leads to an over abundance of sense stimuli which results in an increased desire for even more stimuli.¹³

¹³ Warnings against the affect of too much stimuli on the imagination abound in the eighteenth century. In addition to the sermons quoted above, Nathaniel Wanley, Vicar of Trinity Parish, discusses it in *The Wonders of the Little World* (1774). *The Wonders* is an index of stories illustrating the dangers of various kinds of intemperance, including the corruption of the imagination to a degree that it becomes a danger to the health of the body. In *Theological, Philosophical, and Moral Essays*, Reverend Edward Barry (1790) advocates for temperance on the basis of its ability to “place the mind, for the most part, in a calm and reasonable posture and renders it of course, less liable to the boisterous attack of the passions” (198). And in “The Ensign of Peace” a whole section is given over to a description of how one might die from an over-excited mind.

Conversely, in these sermons temperance increases the acuteness of the senses, steadies the mind, preserves the body, and increases enjoyment from common experiences. According to Hartcliffe, temperance “enables and prepares us for all moral good . . . [being] that which preserves our Wits entire, and all whatsoever fits us for prudent or regular actions” (115). Hartcliffe’s description of temperance is a prerequisite for moral action as well as moral enjoyments. That temperance enables and prepares suggests a cycle of past and present production. Temperance enables “us” for moral good in the present but only after preparing “us” for it in the past. Considering Hartcliffe’s earlier emphasis in this sermon on the relationship between intemperance and a lack of enjoyment in everyday pleasures, here “regular actions” are actions that take place regularly and actions that are themselves moderate. In “Theological, Philosophical, and Moral Essays” (1795), Reverend Edward Barry argues that temperance “stir[s] up the mind to industrious and commendable pursuits” (198). Intemperance stirs the passions; temperance stirs the mind. Both Hartcliffe and Barry emphasize the relationship between temperance and action. Like a kind of mental conditioning, temperance keeps the mind in shape.¹⁴

The concerns Graves, Hartcliffe, and Barry articulate in their sermons about intemperance are drawn from Biblical conceptualizations of the affects of sin on the heart and mind of man. Both the Old and New Testaments repeatedly warn against the hardening of the heart and mind due to intemperance. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 19

¹⁴ This description of the mind as “fit” or “unfit” is reminiscent of Burke’s theory of the role of the nerves in the experience of the sublime and beautiful. Burke compares the nerves to muscles; he theorizes that just like physical labor is necessary to maintain a strong body even when painful or unpleasant, so too is the exercise of the nerves essential to maintaining a strong mind.

says that the Gentiles “being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness” (King James Bible). In this moment Paul is counseling the Ephesians on how to be worthy disciples. He connects keen sensibility with good discipleship. The figurative language that frames encounters with the divine shapes the relationship between sensibility and discipleship. In the Old and New Testaments the voice of God is often described as “small,” “still,” and as a “whisper.” For example, the description of the encounter between God and Elijah at Horeb is described as follows: “And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but the Lord was not in the wind*: and after the wind an earthquake; *but the Lord was not in the earthquake*: And after the earthquake a fire; *but the Lord was not in the fire*: and after the fire a still small voice” (King James Bible 1 Kings 19.11-12). The progression of violent stimuli to subtle stimuli is a test of Elijah’s devotion and worthiness. Elijah proves his worthiness by being attuned to the “still small voice” of God instead of being distracted or overwhelmed by the display of power. In Ephesians Paul contrasts disciples of Christ with the Gentiles based on this mental and emotional sensitivity. The Gentiles are alienated from God because of the “vanity of their mind[s]” and “blindness of their heart[s]” (King James Bible Ephesians 4.17,18). Religious concepts of intemperance affect the mind and the heart—thought and feeling—making the subject unfit to hear the voice of God or feel the subtle stirrings of his love. The relationship between intemperance and insensibility is cyclical. At first intemperance causes insensibility but once the cycle has begun, as with the Gentiles, intemperance becomes the by-product of the failure of feeling as well.

WORDSWORTHIAN TEMPERANCE

In the 1802 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth identifies increasing the sensitivity of the mind as the purpose of his poetry. He writes,

For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavor to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged.

(*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599)

Wordsworth claims a role for literature that is educative and moral. The work is educational because it can “produce or enlarge” the capability of the mind to be stimulated without recourse to extreme, excessive, or profuse stimuli. It answers the ends of education as defined by Coleridge. Coleridge claims that the end of true education is in “educing the faculties, and forming the habits” (*The Statesman’s Manual* 53). Coleridge argues that literacy is only part of this educational work to form the mind. Wordsworth claims the ability to increase sensibility as the province of literature. Wordsworth argues that this work is necessary because changes in living conditions are endangering the sensitivity of the mind. He argues, “a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of torpor” (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 599). Wordsworth’s concern

echoes Richard Graves' sermon on temperance where he cautioned that the intemperate man's "understanding is clouded, and his imagination extinguished . . . he has lost all taste for the common enjoyments and innocent amusements, of life" ("Sermons on the Following Subjects" 117-18). Graves and Wordsworth are similarly concerned with the effect saturating the senses has on one's ability to feel subtler stimuli. But there are also some important differences in the ways that Graves and Wordsworth think about the problem of sensibility. Graves is primarily concerned with bodily pleasures while Wordsworth applies the same theory—that too much stimulation results in a dulled ability to feel stimulation—to pleasures of the mind. In addition, Graves' solution is to moderate sensual pleasure while Wordsworth argues for an overabundance of certain kinds of pleasures. Wordsworth says of poetry, "The end of poetry is to produce excitement in a co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 609). It is not in pleasure Wordsworth locates the problem but in pleasure driven by a craving for sensationalism.

Poetry should excite the mind and incite pleasure but it does so through inducing a state where "ideas and feelings do not . . . succeed each other in accustomed order" (*Wordsworth: The Major Works* 609). Like the Edgeworth's theory of education, Wordsworth's poetry creates associations between stimuli, thought, and feeling. In Wordsworth's theory poetry has the capacity to re-train the mind to feel deeply in response to subtle, everyday stimuli by associating that stimuli with pleasure.

Wordsworth expressed repeated concerns that formal education of his period addressed only the "mechanical" part of human nature to the neglect of feeling. In *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* Alan Richardson claims that for Wordsworth

“the function of poetry . . . is not didactic yet is fundamentally pedagogic” (262). Richardson explains, “didactic poetry could not, in fact, perform the educative function which Wordsworth wished his own writing to exemplify . . . rather than conveying or embodying one sort of doctrine or another, poetry rightly performs its work of “educing” through the very process of its reception, bringing the reader’s imagination into responsive activity and thus stimulating, fostering, and refining it” (263). This claim comes in the epilogue to Richardson’s book, so Richardson does not explore how Wordsworth’s poetry attempts to accomplish this goal. My aim in the remainder of this chapter is to continue the conversation Richardson began by examining Wordsworth’s educational theory in his poetry and prose.

Wordsworth said of his own education that it was “wanting in power to connect together the heart and the intellect, so as to produce that intelligent feeling or moral power, by which heaven is first gained and then enjoyed” (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1821-1828* 312). Here Wordsworth articulates the strong relationship between thought and emotion that he prioritizes in his poetry. Education, for Wordsworth, has a moral element; he calls the product of thought and feeling “intelligent feeling or moral power.” Wordsworth yokes attainment and enjoyment together and makes “moral power” the condition for both. The relationships between thought and feeling, and attainment and enjoyment that he constructs are mutually dependent. Without the connection between thought and feeling one does not meet the conditions for or have the capacity to enjoy salvation.¹⁵

¹⁵ Whether Wordsworth is speaking of heaven literally or figuratively is unclear. By using the term he capitalizes on the connotations of salvation.

Wordsworth's critique of education and his emphasis on the necessary connection between thought and feeling is further explored in his 1808 letter to the Reverend Wrangham, in which Wordsworth critiques the Reverend's recommendation of exclusively religious books for the education of the poor: "you like all other clergymen, may confine yourself too exclusively to that concern which you justly deem the most important, but which by being exclusively considered can never be thoroughly understood" (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1806-1811* 246). Although Wordsworth agrees that religious education is crucial, he also argues that an exclusively religious education is insufficient. Because salvation requires a connection between thinking and feeling, any education that addresses them separately, or one to the exclusion of the other, will fail in its purpose. An effective education must re-train the mind to react with thought and feeling until the two become inextricably linked. Only then will one have the "moral power" necessary to attain and enjoy heaven.

Morality is a complicated idea in Wordsworth's poetry. For Wordsworth what is "moral" is produced by and produces feeling. For this reason, no one theory of justice can govern action; what constitutes correct action is likely to change with every new permutation of feeling. In *Wordsworth Ethics* (2012), Adam Potkay observes that "ethics, for Wordsworth, is about concrete relations, not about abstract theories" (31-2). Potkay argues that it is the unknowability of the other that spurs ethical responsibility in Wordsworth's poetry and while I agree that these encounters are often sites of ethical generation, it is important to note that most encounters in *Lyrical Ballads* result

in non-action.¹⁶ Instead of spurring the reader to do, these poems incite the reader to feel.¹⁷

That's not to say that *Lyrical Ballads* imposes self over other by fabricating unity through over-identification, but that through the use of subtle stimuli the poems re-train the reader to respond to the other with feelings of compassion. For example, in "The Last of the Flock," "The Female Vagrant," and "The Mad Mother" the poetic voice gives over the narrative to the marginal figure. In all three poems the poetic voice speaks briefly and only to bring the marginal figure to the attention of the reader or to ask for the cause of the suffering the poetic voice witnesses. None of the poems offer any moralizing conclusion or reflection to direct the feelings of the reader. The pains of the marginal subject are the focus in these poems without extrapolation upon what should be learned by and through reading about them.

Although pedagogic in the sense that they train the reader, the poems resist didacticism. On the whole, *Lyrical Ballads*, as Richardson asserts, attempts to instill morality without moralizing, train without constricting the imagination, and teach without utilizing didacticism. Wordsworth articulates his resistance to moralizing and didacticism in the fragment *Essay on Morals* (1798) when he says, "I think publications in which we formally and systematically lay down rules for the actions of Men cannot be too long delayed. I shall scarcely express myself too strongly when I

¹⁶ In fact, Wordsworth has often been criticized by scholars for the lack of action-oriented response to the tragedy in his poetry.

¹⁷ This is not unusual; almost all literature is in the business of provoking feeling. What differs in *Lyrical Ballads* is that the reader is asked to feel about people and situations that would elicit little or no emotion in real life whereas much literature uses extreme situations of danger, joy, and passion to stir the reader.

say that I consider such books as Mr. Godwyn's, Mr. Paley's & those of the whole tribe of authors of that class as impotent in all their intended good purpose; to which I wish I could add that they were equally impotent to all the bad ones" (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* 103). It is not the purpose of Mr. Godwyn's and Mr. Paley's books that Wordsworth objects to, it is the method. Wordsworth contends that systematically "lay[ing] down" rules of conduct is an ineffective method of teaching a reader. But he goes beyond saying that it is ineffective, he also claims that it is damaging. The passage that follows the quote above illuminates some of his reasons for this claim:

Now I know of no book or system of moral philosophy written with sufficient power to melt into our affections, to incorporate itself with the blood and vital juices of our mind, and thence to have any influence worth our notice in forming those habits of which I am speaking. Perhaps by the plan which these authors pursue this effect is rendered unattainable. Can it be imagined by any man who has deeply examined his own heart that an old habit will be foregone, or a new one formed, by a series of propositions, which presenting no image to the mind can convey no feeling which has any connection with the supposed archetype or fountain of the proposition existing in human life? These moralists attempt to strip the mind of all its old clothing when their object ought to be to furnish it with new. All this is the consequence of an undue value set upon that faculty which we call reason . . . these bold and naked reasonings are impotent over our habits, they cannot

form them; from the same cause they are equally powerless in regulating our judgments concerning the value of men and things. They contain no picture of human life; they describe nothing. (103)

Mr. Godwyn's and Mr. Paley's methods suggest that change is accomplished through reasoning—a process of recognition and instruction that simply explains what is wrong and tells what is right. However, Wordsworth prioritizes imagination over reason because habit is sub-rational. Recognizing that change is desirable is not the same as changing. To change a habit you must replace it with a new habit, one that becomes as deeply ingrained as the last—a concept he expresses through the use of the words “melt” and “incorporate.” In order to form new habits, Wordsworth argues that they need to be formed sub-rationally as well, or at least in the language of sub-rationality. For Wordsworth, new habits are formed when the mind is provided with new associations through images tied to real life. These images elicit feeling and become incorporated into the thought/feeling cycle. Images, pictures, and descriptions are important to Wordsworth's concept of how habits are formed—a process whereby these images that become associated with the reader's feelings are the forces that shape the reader. Although sub-rational, Wordsworth's concept of habit-formation allows for self-analysis and intent. One cannot reason oneself into change but one can imagine oneself into it. His argument takes up the same position as Hartcliffe's warning against Romances for a very different end. If imaginative literature is a danger because it can so pervasively influence feeling, then it is the most appropriate kind of literature to re-train the senses and assist in the formation of a temperate

reader. Likewise, if instructive literature is no danger because it does not inspire emotion, it is completely unfitted to the work of re-formation.¹⁸

Wordsworth's theory of habit formation reverses the typical roles of teaching and training. J. Jennifer Jones comments on the tension between teaching and training in her discussion of Kant's *Lectures on Pedagogy* in the introduction to "Romantic Training: Education and the Sublime" (2010), a collection in the Praxis Series of *Romantic Circles*. Jones writes:

The most notable site of struggle in this text occurs around the concept of training. Kant defines training as the precondition of the more complex work of instruction. Training is defined as "the discipline that merely prevents errors" and the latter as guidance in the "exercise of that which one has learned" (446). Put another way, "*Training* is . . . merely negative . . . the action by means of which man's tendency to savagery is taken away. *Instruction* . . . is the positive part of education" (438; my emphasis). Likewise, training is associated with the disciplinary and mechanical, whereas instruction is associated with imagination and freedom" (6).

Jones goes on to complicate this relationship between training and teaching—or instruction—through a nuanced reading of *Lectures on Pedagogy* that shows that even

¹⁸ Wordsworth goes on in *Essay on Morals* to say, "can it be imagined by any man who has deeply examined his own heart that an old habit will be foregone, or a new one formed, by a series of propositions, which presenting no image to the mind can convey no feeling which has any connection with the supposed archetype or fountain of the proposition existing in human life?" (103). His emphasis here on the importance of image to the mind reinforces the important role of poetry in the re-formation of the mind.

though Kant values instruction over training, both are necessary to realize the full potential of humanity. Unlike Kant, Wordsworth prioritizes training as the higher of the two methodologies and the one that allows for more freedom and imagination. Mechanization is a complicated concept in Wordsworth's writing. Whereas we think of the mechanical as that which is without thought and often even life, for Wordsworth the mechanical is the immediate and, therefore, sometimes most full of life. For example, the heart pumps blood mechanically, repetitively and without thought, but the mechanization of the heart is the ultimate sign of life; if the heart ceased to be mechanized, if thought was required to support its motion the body would die. Similarly with most mechanical functions of the body, unmechanize them and life ceases. The immediacy of habit, its mechanization, is a sign of life. Wordsworth's oft-quoted "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling"¹⁹ is itself a mechanical response, one that is made possible by training. Only through thinking "long and deeply" does it become possible to experience the immediate, mechanical reaction of emotion in a way that would produce valuable poetry. In other words, anyone can feel, but only those who have trained themselves through reflection that connects thought and feeling to common, daily life can feel the valuable, powerful, and immediate emotion that is necessary for the composition of "good" poetry.

Jones then turns to discuss Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Terror: A Speech After 9-11" (2010) for its Romantic-era based theory of pedagogy. I would similarly like to address Spivak's "Terror: A Speech After 9-11" and the way Spivak thinks

¹⁹ "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced . . . but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply" (598).

closely and carefully about training as an ethical mode of education. Spivak argues that we must be, “trained into imagining the other” (3). She says that it is only through this imagination, an exercise that suspends the construction of the other as an object that can be known in favor of listening to the other. Suspension of knowledge means also suspension of judgment. In Spivak’s ethical imagining the other is as the self—complex, changeable, and fathomless. Imagining the other maintains Kant’s second formulation of the categorical imperative (that humanity is an end in itself and not to be treated as a means to an end) while dismissing entirely the first formulation of the categorical imperative (that all humanity be ruled by the same principles of reason). Spivak’s ethical imagining of the other requires that it not be undertaken to establish judgment or acquittal, and not as a means to the end of judgment or knowledge. In other words, really imagining the other cannot obtain the end of knowing or judging the other. For Spivak, the ethical is the interruption of the epistemological—of knowing. Spivak’s ethical imagination is a trained skill. She qualifies her use of the word “training” with the phrase “the exercise of the educative power” (4). It is education, particularly an education in the Humanities and even more particularly in reading, that provides the conditions of possibility for the eruption of the ethical.

TEMPERANCE IN LYRICAL BALLADS

Temperance in *Lyrical Ballads* is deeply concerned with the ethical imagining of the other, most especially the poor and disenfranchised. Wordsworth’s depiction of the poor was heavily influenced by the political and social changes in the legal and moral understanding of obligations owed to the poor in England. Due to enclosure, industrialization, and England’s almost continuous state of war the Romantic period

saw a rise in concern about poverty. During the Romantic period the “Poor Relief Act” of 1601, instituted by Elizabeth I, governed relief practices. The “Poor Relief Act” was a parish-based system that included both in-door and out-door relief.²⁰ The “Poor Law Amendment Act” of 1834 sought to do away with out-door relief and to unify the care for the poor into a national system. Although the “Poor Law Amendment Act” was instituted after *Lyrical Ballads* was published the theory by which it was shaped was written and circulated during the time Wordsworth was writing *Lyrical Ballads*.

Jeremy Bentham’s 1797 taxonomy “Cases Calling for Relief” included in *The Annals of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts*, and Thomas Malthus’ 1798 “An Essay on the Principle of Population” both called for a shift in the way the poor of England were treated and perceived. Both of these works supported the movement from a parish-based system of relief to a nationally organized and instituted system while also arguing against personal sympathy for the poor. Local attempts to assist the poor were cast as counter productive because they did not result in a decreasing population of those in need.

Malthus claims that the natural consequences of poverty including disease and starvation are necessary to cull the population and alleviate the burden of poverty on the larger society. Attempts to alleviate these natural consequences make poverty bearable and in so doing not only sustain the number living off of charity but also threaten to increase it by making begging more appealing than work. Malthus argues that to make poverty unappealing and motivate the poor to sustain themselves natural consequences must not be mediated by local assistance and that any assistance

²⁰ Meaning that the system included workhouses for those found guilty of crimes and parish-provided assistance that did not require residence at a workhouse.

provided through national organization must make poverty even more painful. He suggests doing so through the organization of poor houses that would provide the only available relief to the poor and that would be made miserable in every possible way.

Tim Fulford's "Apocalyptic Economics and Prophetic Politics: Radical and Romantic Responses to Malthus and Burke" (2001) examines the ways Malthus used Burkean rhetoric of the apocalyptic sublime to align concepts of the English poor with the French Revolutionaries. Fulford beautifully shows how the rhetoric of the apocalyptic sublime is adapted by Burke from Milton's *Paradise Lost* through his appropriation of the images of Sin and Death, and then by Malthus who casts the poor as radical, lawless, and threatening. Fulford then discusses the Romantic resistance to Malthus' rhetoric. Hazlitt, Coleridge, and Southey spoke out against Malthus' attack on the poor and, Fulford argues, so too did Wordsworth.

Fulford argues that the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* indirectly contends with "An Essay on the Principle of Population." As Fulford observes, one of the prevailing accusations against Romantic poetry is that it uses the imagination, and I would add nature and the pastoral, as a means of retreat from the political, but as a response to Malthus' essay, *Lyrical Ballads* is highly political. It intervenes, through the medium of poetry, in a discussion taking place through political discourse. This intervention through poetry claims a place for poetry and the poet in political discourse. In addition, the significance of Wordsworth "common language" pastoral poetry, when taken together with Malthus' adoption of the rhetoric of the apocalyptic sublime is even more striking because it attempts to empower the rural poor by claiming a place in the discussion for their language. *Lyrical Ballads* combats the

stigmatization of the poor by altering the participants and the terms of the discussion but without taking up a defense of the poor on the ground of whether or not they are deserving of assistance or compassion.

Wordsworth's resistance to the deserving/non-deserving binary sets him apart from many of his contemporaries who argued that appropriate sympathy for the poor was dependent on whether or not they were culpable for their situation. Determining such culpability was a major effort during the Romantic period. One such effort was Bentham's taxonomy "Cases Calling for Relief" that I mention above. Bentham's taxonomy included a thorough list of pauper categories intended to help in inventorying the poor. It included demographic data such as marital status and age as well as types of handicaps both physical and mental. The insert requested *Annals* readers complete the tables provided for those receiving in-door and out-door relief (marked in different color ink to differentiate between them). Bentham's "Cases Calling for Relief" was a census of the poor that attempted to map the causes of poverty not for the purpose of alleviation but for the purpose of comprehending and managing them. It was ultimately unsuccessful because he received too few completed inserts but his theories were still instrumental in the "Poor Law Amendment Act" of 1834 (Boehnen 288).

Bentham's main contribution was his doctrine of utilitarianism that advocated two principles essential to the "Poor Law Amendment Act": first, that man is motivated only through and by pain and pleasure; and second, that what is moral is that which produces the most happiness for the most people. Bentham's commitment to the first principle caused him, like Malthus, to advocate for the widespread

establishment of workhouses with purposefully deplorable conditions. His commitment to the second principle explains his zeal for the division of the deserving from the undeserving poor. Only by dividing out those who do not deserve happiness and are the causes of stress on society could one know how to best maximize the happiness of society.

Representations of poverty in *Lyrical Ballads* resist the kind of classification that Bentham advocated. Instead of demographics and binaries, “The Last of the Flock,” “The Female Vagrant,” “Simon Lee,” and “The Thorn” insist on narratives that offer opportunities for sympathy without making decisions on issues of culpability. These poems engage the reader in an imaginative work to “educate” the faculties of the mind and increase sensibility when faced with the everyday pains of the poor and marginalized.

In “The ‘Preface’ to *Lyrical Ballads*: Poetics, Poor Laws, and the Bold Experiments of 1797-1802” (1997), Scott Boehnen articulates the ways that Wordsworth’s refusal of culpability as a consideration in poverty relief is a political statement. Boehnen supports his argument with contemporary reviews and responses to *Lyrical Ballads* that show readers were engaged with the poems at the level of a politics of poverty relief (291). That readers engaged with Wordsworth’s poetry as political complicates New Historicist formations of *Lyrical Ballads* as participating in an occlusion of politics through a turn to the pastoral. Instead, the pastoral becomes the site of political conflict because part of the argument was whether or not parish-based (rural) methods of poverty relief were socially beneficial. Boehnen further argues that *Lyrical Ballads* attempts to displace Bentham’s pleasure/pain binary by

substituting an array of complex feeling including sympathy. He calls Wordsworth's poetic theory a "poetics of sympathy" and contends that it attempts to provide motivation for readers to change their habits in regard to the relief of the rural poor by sidestepping issues of culpability (306).

Wordsworth attempts to increase reader's sensibility to the marginal poor in several ways. One of these ways is to create the feeling that the reader has an encounter with the marginal poor by implicating the reader in the narrative.

Wordsworth implicates the reader in the narrative through the use of two techniques. In "The Thorn" Wordsworth uses address and tense to shift the relationship between reader and text until the reader becomes part of the text. In "The Mad Mother," "The Last of the Flock," and "The Female Vagrant," the poetic voice begins as an observer relating an experience with the marginal figure but then slips into the background of the narrative. Slipping into the background of the narrative allows the marginal figure to appear to tell his or her own story, giving the reader the impression of an unmediated encounter.

The first five stanzas of "The Thorn" are addressed directly to the reader. By way of subtle tense changes the poem revises the reader's position in relation to the scene. The poem moves from a second person address in conditional simple tense (you would) to a second person present simple tense (you are). The second person conditional simple tense creates a sense of intimacy as the poetic voice imagines the reader into the poem as a potential co-observer. In the first two stanzas the poetic voice tells the reader what he or she *would* say if he or she were present to view the scene. Second person conditional present tense allows the poetic voice to direct the

reader's interpretation of the poem's primary symbol—the thorn—by narrating the reader's imagined reactions.

But the second person conditional simple tense also creates distance by rendering the sentence structure a reminder of absence. The distance serves to temper what would otherwise be too painful an image. The thorn is “old,” “grey,” “knotted,” “forlorn,” and “wretched” (1, 4, 8, 9). The moss that clings to the thorn is imbued with malevolence; the moss “creep[s]” to “clasp” the thorn so close that the poetic voice claims if the reader were there he or she would be positive that the moss meant to “drag it to the ground” and “bury it . . . forever” (20, 22). The dual effect of second person conditional simple tense allows the poetic voice to direct reader interpretation while maintaining a distance from the image that renders it less painful or suffocating.

However, in the third stanza of “The Thorn,” the poetic voice switches the conditional simple tense for second person simple present tense and collapses the distance. The change in tense coincides with a drawing away from the primary symbol; while the first two stanzas describe the thorn, in the third stanzas the poetic voice and reader look together at the beautiful area surrounding the thorn. Suddenly the reader goes from potential co-observer to observer. The poetic voice narrates the experience of the reader as if in real time thus increasing the impact of the “beauteous” heap of moss that is at once “vermillion,” “olive-green and scarlet-bright,” “green, red, and pearly white” (44, 46, 48) and drawing the reader deeper into the narrative through an overabundance of pleasure.

Like “The Thorn,” “The Mad Mother,” “The Last of the Flock,” and “The Female Vagrant,” take the form of an observation. These poems are all told from the

perspective of a poetic voice who observes the scene. Often these observers are without characterization themselves and serve as vehicles for the stories of the marginal poor. In “The Mad Mother,” “The Last of the Flock,” and “The Female Vagrant,” the poetic voice slips into the background almost immediately and sometimes repeatedly, leaving the reader to focus on their own imaginative encounter with the marginal figure. In “The Last of the Flock” the poetic voice speaks in the first sixteen lines of the one hundred-line poem and his lines serve only to introduce us to the shepherd who dominates the remainder of the poem. In “The Female Vagrant” the poetic voice speaks even less, only one line in two hundred and seventy and that line is in parentheses, “(The Woman thus her artless story told)” (2). The poetic voice in “The Mad Mother” is present in the first stanza to give a description of the Mother who then speaks directly for the rest of the poem. In each of these cases the poetic voice serves as an introduction to the marginal figure. Although the marginal figure begins as an observed object, in each case the figure quickly become the active subject in the poem.

Although it is impossible to have an unmediated encounter with the marginal poor in any of these poems, the withdrawal of the poetic voice as a mediating influence gives the impression of an unmediated encounter. In “The Last of the Flock” and “The Mad Mother” the impression of an unmediated encounter is accomplished through the use of direct quotation from the marginal figure. Because the poem is mostly in the form of direct quotation it suggests to the reader that he or she is able to access the “real” or “true” encounter without it being interpreted by the poetic voice. While these encounters simulate “true” encounters they do not offer “Truth.” Instead

they offer the story as told by the marginal figure, validating their language and experience in the process.

Another way Wordsworth attempts to increase the sensibility of his readers to the common pains of the marginal poor is to displace judgment while emphasizing unknowability. In "The Thorn" the reader cannot know if Martha Ray killed her child or not. The poetic voice presents the reader with a series of possibilities gleaned from the community but each one is presented as nothing more than gossip. All the poetic voice knows for certain is that Stephen Hill promised to marry Martha Ray and married another woman instead, and Martha Ray was pregnant at one time. The poetic voice emphasizes that we cannot know what happened to the baby or why Martha Ray continues to go sit by the thorn and cry. The poetic voice tells the reader, "I cannot tell; I wish I could / For the true reason no one knows" (89-90). Although the poetic voice "longs to know," knowing is out of reach. Not only can the poetic voice not access the truth of Martha Ray's past, he also cannot access her feelings in relation to their shared environment. The poetic voice asks "But what's the thorn? and what's the pond? / And what's the hill of moss to her?" (210-11). Those landmarks have received the most vivid and imaginative attention in poem but neither the poetic voice nor the reader can know what she sees in them or what their significance is to her. The poetic voice can only imagine, and the imagination of the poetic voice is contrasted with those who provide the vicious gossip he reports and who insist she should be "to public justice brought" (233).

Even the poetic voice's imagination is contrasted with those who imagine Martha Ray's guilt. The poetic voice's primary concern is not whether Martha Ray is

guilty of killing her child but why she is so miserable. While true that one could certainly contribute to the other, those who want to arrest her believe they know the reason for her misery is her guilt. The poetic voice refuses imagining based on a pre-formed conclusion. The poem elicits the reader's imagination by posing questions that prioritize Martha Ray's feelings over the salacious aspects of her story.

Wordsworth employs a similar strategy in "Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman," but he makes the responsibility of the reader to imagine the marginal figure more overt. The subtitle of the poem is "With an Incident in which he was Concerned" but Wordsworth delays relating any particular incident until the last two stanzas of the poem. Instead, each prior stanza is the introduction of a possible incident that is left unexplained. We are told that *Simon Lee* has "upon his back, No doubt, a burthen weighty" but not what the burden is; we are told "he has but one eye left," but not the story of how he lost the other; and we are told that "Few months of life has he in store, / As he to you will tell" but we are not told why nor are we permitted to hear *Simon Lee's* own assertion (5-6, 15, 65-6). Each aborted story draws the reader's interest without recourse to salacious details or harrowing anxiety by delaying the relating of the promised "incident" of the subtitle. Instead each story resists schadenfreude and appeals to sympathy by creating increased interest in the common experience of a particular marginal figure. After eight stanzas of aborted stories, the poetic voice interjects with an address to the reader, saying:

My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And I'm afraid that you expect

Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind

Such stores as silent thought can bring,

O gentle reader! you would find

A tale in every thing.

What more I have to say is short,

I hope you'll kindly take it;

It is no tale; but should you think,

Perhaps a tale you'll make it. (69-80)

The reader expects a tale for an understandable reason: one was promised in the subtitle. Regardless of how legitimately the reader might expect a tale, the poetic voice insists otherwise. Instead of being provided with a tale the reader is asked to consider the role he has played in the narrative—a passive role of patient waiting—and the active capacity of his own mind to create a tale of its own. If the reader finds no tale present in his own mind, “silent thought” is recommended to generate one. In essence, the poetic voice has furnished the reader with several beginnings and asked the reader to imagine the multiplicity of narrative possibilities. The address to the reader here switches the subject of the poem from the “truth” about Simon Lee to the workings of the reader's own mind by asking the reader to consider his mind, how it has or has not worked and how it might work. It also bolsters the imagination by furnishing the reader with open-ended narratives.

However, that is not the only thing the poetic voice asks of the reader. In the last three stanzas of the poem the poetic voice does, finally, relate an incident. In these last stanzas the poetic voice explains that he happened upon Simon Lee while Simon Lee was attempting to chop the root of a rotted tree. The poetic voice takes the ax and accomplishes the task for the old woodsman. The final lesson is in *Simon Lee's* reaction.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oftner left me mourning. (97-104)

The relation of this incident does not undermine the interpretive opportunity offered by the previous resistance to completing the tale. Instead it requires further imaginative work. In addition to asking the reader to analyze the workings of his own mind by imagining the endings to the aborted stories in prior stanzas, the poetic voice asks the reader to turn his attention to himself in relation to Simon Lee by considering the poetic voice, his actions and his feelings. To make sense of the poem the reader must ask why gratitude would cause the poetic voice to mourn and to interpret these feelings into a kind of moral lesson that implicates the larger world instead of Simon Lee: there is so little good done in the world that common acts of decency cause a

disproportionate amount of gratitude in the recipient. The play on words in the subtitle becomes apparent only when the reader engages in this complex analysis. The “he” of the subtitle (“With an Incident in which he was Concerned”) could be either Simon Lee or the poetic voice, Simon Lee because he is “concerned” meaning involved and the poetic voice because he is “concerned” meaning dismayed. The work the reader is asked to do prompts not only consideration of the text but also consideration of and concern for the world outside the text, the reader himself, and his own thoughts in relation to both text and world with an emphasis on the responsibilities of Christian charity.

It is at the intersection of Christian charity and the ethical imagination where we find temperance. As a habit of delaying judgment to provide a space for an eruption of feeling, temperance governs both practices. These poems take as their primary object teaching the reader this habit of imagining and feeling. By implicating the reader in the narrative, attempting to reduce the distance between the marginal poor and the reader, and emphasizing unknowability, the poems create the conditions for a more ethical response to the marginal poor. In this project Wordsworth was deeply influenced by the politics and religious and educational rhetoric of his time. But he also deviates from other educational theories by thinking about the ways that the mind can be re-formed (and reformed) once associations have already become solidified. For Wordsworth, the most effective tool in re-forming the mind is poetry because it can engage the imagination of the reader in a way that forges new associations and builds new habits.

AFTERWORD

In 2009 a team of Stanford researchers published a report in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on the cognitive capabilities of information technology multitaskers. They found that those who regularly engage in “over-saturation” of media” have difficulty filtering memories, distractions from their environment, and distractions from their own minds. The researchers came to the conclusion that “people who are regularly bombarded with several streams of electronic information do not pay attention, control their memory or switch form one job to another as well as those who prefer to complete one task at a time” (Nass et al.). They could not determine if there was a genetic component to the tendency toward technology multitasking; however, they left open the possibility that those who engage in more than one media stream at a time are actively training their brains to be incapable of activities that require more sustained attention.

In 2012 the *Pew Research Center* conducted a survey that showed a widespread belief among educators that students’ use of digital technology has reduced their ability to engage in more sustained cognitive activities. Although the study is subjective and provides no hard data, it is a good measure of the overall impressions that govern the choices teachers make in the classroom. Many teachers who participated in the study commented that they felt pressure to cater their curriculum and teaching style to their students’ lowered attention spans. Dr. Dimitri Christakis, Director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children’s Hospital, commented on the study, saying that “students saturated by entertainment media [are] experiencing a ‘supernatural’ stimulation that teachers

might have to keep up with or simulate” because excessive exposure to technology “makes reality by comparison uninteresting” (“Technology Changing How Students Learn, Teachers Say”).¹

It seems like researchers and teachers agree that students’ use of technology is problematic but there seems to be little agreement on what to do about the problem. Some, like Dr. Christakis, believe that education must evolve in order to meet students’ increased need for stimulation. Many institutions of higher education are paying close attention to the “NMC (New Media Consortium) Horizon Report” for its predictions of which technologies will change higher education in the next one to five years. The report consistently advocates for more faculty training on technology in the classroom and more flexibility for students’ use of technology inside and outside of the classroom.

Others contend that more technology is not a viable solution to the problem of too much technology. Studies in “Generation Y and Learning” in the *Ashridge Journal* argues that students need to spend more time on single-focus learning. This year’s “The Leap: Vision for Learning” report (2015) from the *Association of American Colleges and Universities* found that because “the ground has shifted for Americans in virtually every important sphere of life [and] . . .the world is being dramatically reshaped by scientific and technological innovations” (6) the three most important skills for students to learn at college are those typically laid claim to by the Humanities: “inquiry and analysis,” “critical and creative thinking,” and “written and

¹ Dr. Christakis studies the effects of technology stimulation on mice.

oral communication” (7). Still others claim an even more essential role for the Humanities. For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak the Humanities are nothing less than the best training ground for ethical engagement through the practices of imagination.

While the capacity of the Humanities to do *something* about what is being portrayed as a crisis of thought and imagination seems to be generally acknowledged,² the amount of money invested in the Humanities at the college level reflects a different story. While the government provides 70 to 75% of the funding for the sciences, it only provide 20 to 30% of the funding for the Humanities (The Heart of the Matter 40).

I raise the argument surrounding the purpose, value, and support of the Humanities to gesture toward what I hope will be the future of my work. To say the Humanities are under attack is, perhaps, hyperbole, but to say that they suffer from neglect is not. My hope is that by examining the claims we have made for the Humanities in the past we might avoid the mistake of slipping into a nostalgia—one that claims people used to be able to think, concentrate, read—that only ever positions the Humanities as no longer relevant however much we wish they were. Examining the historical why and what of claims made on behalf of the Humanities will, I hope, help us to better imagine and defend their future.

² A flurry of publications in 2013 (“The Heart of the Matter,” “Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?,” “It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success,” and “STEAM: The Integration of the Arts and Sciences,” among others) shared general consensus that the Humanities excelled in preparing student for ethical and innovative thinking. “The Heart of the Matter,” for example, describes the Humanities as “a source of national memory and civic vigor, cultural understanding and communication, individual fulfillment and the ideals we hold in common” (9).

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