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After Time: Romanticism and Anachronism

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by

Michael Anthony Nicholson

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

After Time: Romanticism and Anachronism

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Before, during, and after the long Romantic era, Europe experimented with new technological modes of measuring and telling time with clock and calendar: Thomas Tompion, the "Father of English Watchmaking," manufactured thousands of timepieces in the 1700s, Britain erased eleven days from the calendar in the 1750s, France turned back the hands of time to Year One in the 1790s, and the British Railway Clearing House adopted Greenwich Mean Time in the 1840s. At the same moment, English poets from a broad range of backgrounds were developing new poetic strategies of anachronism (in its literal, etymological sense of "against time") to contest the increasing dominance of what I call "imperial time": the new clock-based, machine-regulated, and strictly standardized temporality used to enforce a forward-moving narrative of empire. My research highlights the central role of poetry in asserting a new

chronopolitics that enacts powerfully untimely rhythms in order to reform entrenched cultural and economic institutions.

Historical and historicist works from the eighteenth century to the present portray anachronism as the sign of error and backwardness. "After Time" alternatively argues that intentional anachronism is neither the emblem of indefensible inaccuracy nor the mark of cultural primitivism. Rather than opposing anachronism to history, my dissertation historicizes anachronism. Revising instead of abandoning history, the poems of Mary Leapor, Elizabeth Benger, Joanna Southcott, and Lucy Aikin build alternative feminist traditions out of the new imperialist teleologies that tied tropes of chronological progress to the Garden of Eden and the feminization of culture. By comparison, both new transatlantic anthologies of fugitive pieces and the more urbane occasional verses of Horace Walpole and Lord Byron defy this new time program by variously relating ephemeral scraps and fading inks to a series of fleeting figures: juvenile poetasters, fugitive slaves, and queer cosmopolitans. The works of William Wordsworth and John Clare, by contrast, connect an increasingly obsolete sense of local, agrarian time with circular and belated lyric temporalities. Finally, the epics and odes of William Blake, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley move *after* time—beyond anachronism and toward timelessness—in order to explore the ethical and aesthetic possibilities of eternity. Taken together, these writers offer us new ways of understanding the power of poetic form to reshape time's binds.

The dissertation of Michael Anthony Nicholson is approved.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

As clocks to weight their nimble motion owe,
The wheels above urged by the load below:
Me emptiness, and dulness could inspire,
And were my elasticity, and fire.

—Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* (1743)

Old customs! Oh! I love the sound,
  However simple they may be:
Whate'er with time hath sanction found,
  Is welcome, and is dear to me.
Pride grows above simplicity,
  And spurns them from her haughty mind,
And soon the poet's song will be
  The only refuge they can find.

—John Clare, *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827)

Alexander Pope and his eighteenth-century contemporaries were preoccupied with "clocks" and timepieces. John Clare and his Romantic brethren were captivated by "Old customs" and anachronisms.[1] Why this difference? Before, during, and after the long Romantic era (1750-1850), Britain progressively instituted and exported a new technological program of "imperial time." In the wake of Thomas Tompion (the so-called Father of English Clockmaking) and the seventeenth-century incorporation of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, time

[1] John Clare's 1827 *Shepherd's Calendar* anachronistically takes the title of Edmund Spenser's 1579 *Shepheardes Calender*, a work which similarly foregrounds the seasonal time and agricultural rhythms of the English countryside.

became fairly disciplined and standardized: by the 1770s, clocks organized life and labor, the calendar was fixed, the marine chronometer (the so-called sea clock) governed navigation, and periodicals circulated daily. By the time that the British Railway Clearing House adopted Greenwich Mean Time in the 1840s, English time—derived from the heart of the British Empire in London—was already on its way towards becoming global time. By the 1850s, the solidification of this mechanized time program was complete; Big Ben towered over London, the trains arrived on schedule, and Victorian industrialists and imperialists spread the gospel that Britain's economic supremacy was a product of the empire's efficient arrangements of time. Moreover, in accord with these developments, the ubiquity of literary anachronism that Marjorie Garber and Reinhart Koselleck identify with the early modern period disappears by the eighteenth century following the rise of Enlightenment historicism.[2]

Building on Johannes Fabian's comment that, "If it is true that Time belongs to the political economy of relations between individuals, classes and nations, then . . . there is a 'Politics of Time,'" this dissertation argues that the oxymoronic project of historicizing anachronism reveals the vital role of poetry's idiosyncratic temporal structures in contesting this

[2] Marjorie Garber, *Profiling Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 203, 207, 212, and Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, [1979] 2004), 9-11, 15-21. Koselleck argues that during the early sixteenth century neither anachronism nor "[t]emporal difference" were "at all apparent." According to Koselleck, the period 1500 to 1800 saw a "temporalization [*Verzeitlichung*] of history, at the end of which there is the peculiar form of acceleration which characterizes modernity." In Koselleck's view, "the philosophy of historical process which first detached early modernity from its past" was tied to an increasing cultural emphasis on the "limited" futures of "prognosis" and prediction over more temporally unrestrained "presentiments" of "prophecy." Other critics such as Peter Burke alternatively trace the roots of "the sense of history" to the "sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries." Burke's account emphasizes that a "sense of history" requires a "sense of anachronism" that was absent during the Middle Ages: "Medieval men lacked a sense of the past being different in quality from the present." Burke, however, also qualifies his claim that a sense of anachronism begins to emerge during the Renaissance: "at the beginning of the nineteenth century, historians rediscovered the sense of anachronism, which became more acute for some of them than it had been for any Renaissance historian." See *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), 2, 143.

new time program.[3] During the long Romantic era, anachronism again became pervasive in poetry. By 1770, the concept of "anachronism" long derided by eighteenth-century historians and literary critics had again come into fashion.[4] To be sure, various critiques of anachronism as error increasingly appeared in an array of sources from Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774) to William Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* (1825). Yet works such as William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18), and John Clare's asylum verse (1837-64) collectively took the poetic license necessary to imagine more sustainable (if imperfect) forms of protest such as stasis, endurance, delay, and departure. The era's landmark poetic works broadcast their age's most destabilizing temporal upheavals: Britain's adoption of the Gregorian Calendar (1750-52), France's implementation of the Republican Calendar (1793-1805), chemists' development of indelible ink, and geologists' discovery of deep time. Across diverse backgrounds and periods, Romantic poets differently draw on these temporal disruptions to actively challenge the new model of imperial time as inherently abstract, commercial, reproductive, industrial, and xenophobic. Taken together, these writers' works slip time's binds and discover the grounds of an uneven but dynamic poetics of anachronism.

"After Time: Romanticism and Anachronism" provides an account of these alternative temporalities that is itself timely in light of the recent turn toward time in the environmental humanities, gender and sexuality studies, critical theory, and science and technology studies.[5]

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[3] Johannes Fabian, *Time and The Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), x.

[4] A Google Ngram search for the term "anachronism" discovers that the word "anachronism" appears in print much more commonly from 1770 onward.

[5] See, for example, Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds*: *Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), Timothy Morton's *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*

This dissertation draws literary studies into this emergent interdisciplinary field more explicitly by shedding new light on how the disparate theoretical frameworks of scholars such as Sharon Cameron ("lyric time"), Jack Halberstam ("queer time"), and Rob Nixon ("slow violence"), participate in a cross-disciplinary conversation about anachronism that considers climate, poverty, desire, poetics, and domesticity.[6] Moreover, my work on poetic untimeliness contends that E. P. Thompson's classic Marxist inquiries into the temporality of capitalism and Johannes Fabian's aforementioned analyses of colonial, anthropological time are equally relevant to the long Romantic era, which simultaneously is (and is not) contiguous with our present moment.[7]

The particular form of historical poetics that "After Time" practices also draws on the important scholarship of Stuart Sherman, Benedict Anderson, Mary A. Favret, and Jerome Christensen on the complex relationships between history, horology, and literary form from 1700 to 1900. Sherman's brilliant study of the relationship between new forms of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prose and timekeeping provides the starting point for my study of Romantic poetry's rejection of empire's clocks and calendars.[8] In contrast to Cameron, who connects the lyric to a lack of development—a "resistance . . . to the rigors and exactions of sequence and

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(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), and Jonathan Crary's *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (New York: Verso, 2013).

[6] See Sharon Cameron, *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), and Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[7] See E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (1967): 56-97. See also Fabian's description of the temporal links between anthropology and colonialism in *Time and the Other,* 17.

[8] See Mary Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Jerome Christensen, *Romanticism at the End of History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, [1983] 2006). On historical poetics, see Yopie Prins, "What Is Historical Poetics?" *MLQ* 77, no. 1 (2016): 13-40, and Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 13. "After Time" attempts to historicize the poetics of anachronism, arguing for anachronistic poetics as a subcategory of historical poetics.

progression"—Sherman argues that "whereas clocks count time, narratives *re*count it."[9] Sherman's account of the chronometric inventions of Christiaan Huygens (especially the pendulum clock of 1656) and their prose counterparts begins the trajectory whose end point Anderson describes.[10] Anderson's later account of the synchronizing forces of nationalism, newspapers, and nineteenth-century novels traces the demise of what Walter Benjamin describes as Messianic time, and the adoption of what Benjamin also calls "homogenous, empty time."[11]

While Sherman and Anderson focus on diurnal and simultaneous forms of national time, Favret's alternative account of "modern wartime" offers a glimpse of the temporal developments that inspired the Romantic poets who sought to rewrite the terms of imperial time. Favret's description of wartime's dilated and multiple temporalities (home and abroad) focuses on how "distant war unsettled basic temporal experiences of the British population."[12] As Favret's research suggests, Romantic critics have long been aware of the rise of anachronism. "After Time" therefore expands on and revises Anne Janowitz and Jonathan Sachs's inquiries into the temporalities of the Romantic ruin, and Christensen's astute though brief discussion of anachronism in *Romanticism at the End of History* (2000), especially his suggestion that "The

[9] Cameron, *Lyric Time*, 14, and Sherman, *Telling Time*, x. Sherman here qualifies this statement with the claim that "Narrative possesses a temporal elasticity, a freedom from concurrency with 'real time,' and even from chronological sequence . . . A story will not, by and large, work well as a clock. Yet narratives, like clocks, tell time in the larger sense of articulating its local forms and meanings . . . A given narrative will inevitably, by the particulars of its form, absorb and register some of the temporalities at work in the world that surround its making." According to Sherman, the novel provides a "newly combined enactment of current time consciousness."

[10] See Sherman, *Telling Time*, 2.

[11] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), 26, 265, and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24, 26. For Anderson, the "idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history."

[12] Favret, *War at A Distance*, 9, 11. Favret describes "modern wartime" as "the experience of war mediated, of time and times unmoored, of feeling intensified but also adrift."

Romantic Movement sounds along its dim and perilous way as the willful commission of anachronism after anachronism linked by bold analogy."[13]

The archives of Romantic literature confirm Christensen's claim; the profusion of the term "anachronism" in works published from 1750 to 1850 provides empirical evidence that the Romantic poets increasingly debated what Mark Salber Phillips and Peter Burke describe as the idea that "sensitivity to anachronism" is the mark of cultural "prescience" and "modernity."[14] "After Time" attempts to reconfigure familiar accounts of anachronism's returning formal and ethical force during the long Romantic period by exploring the literary, critical, and etymological history of attacks on (and defenses of) various forms of anachronism. Besides distancing and distinguishing Romantic anachronism from nostalgia, misunderstanding, backwardness, and memory, my aim is to revise contemporary accounts of Romantic poetry and historiography, which simultaneously tend to oppose anachronism and historicism, antiquity and modernity, and neglect their intertwined histories and afterlives. As this introduction will show, attending to the full (and overlapping) literary histories of Romantic anachronism from the late eighteenth century to the present allows us some surprising visions: an anti-Romantic Samuel Taylor Coleridge, an anatopic Washington Irving, an arcane, footnoting Thomas Moore, and a paranoid, prefatory Lord Byron.[15]

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[13] Christensen, *End of History*, 41. On the Romantic ruin, see Anne Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), and Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination, 1789-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[14] Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 5, and P. Burke, *Sense of the Past*, 2, 143.

[15] James Chandler defines anatopism as a "new conception of anachronism, now understood as a measurable form of dislocation." See *England in 1819*: *The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 107-08.

Anachronism took on many attitudes in the period. Notably, the Romantic poets had subtler and richer definitions of anachronism than we do. From the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century anachronism was the umbrella word for untimeliness that organized terms such as "prochronism" ["too early"] and "parachronism" ["too late"]).[16] The *OED* traces the first definition of anachronism—"An error in computing time, or fixing dates; the erroneous reference of an event, circumstance, or custom to a wrong date" (sense 1)—to the English orientalist John Gregory's 1649 *Posthuma*, a collection of the deceased author's work that includes "a short Account of the *Autor's* [*sic*] life; and Elegies on his much-lamented Death."[17] While this definition of anachronism can be traced back to the mid seventeenth century, it was the language of John Dryden's 1697 formulation of anachronism as a "false computation of times" that commonly appeared in Romantic-era reprintings of Johnson's *Dictionary*, which followed Johnson's definition of the term as "an error computing the time of any great event."[18]

This dissertation not only stakes a claim for the centrality of poetic anachronism during the Romantic era, but also questions the easy association of timeliness with modernity. It bears noting by way of preface, however, that the archives of anachronism unexpectedly reveal that Romantic poets at times disparaged anachronism in the voice of Enlightenment historians; moreover, the poets of generations prior to the eighteenth century often defended anachronism. John Dryden's analysis of a Virgilian anachronism (the rendering of Dido and Aeneas contemporaries) in the Dedication to the *Aeneid* presents one of the earliest and most striking examples of what I call the "defense of anachronism" topos:

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[16] These more expansive Romantic-era definitions of the word "anachronism" better reflect the breadth of the term's literal, etymological sense of ana, "against," and chronos, "time."

[17] John Gregorie, *Gregorii* Posthuma*: Or, Certain Learned Tracts* . . . (London: J. G., 1649), title page.

[18] John Dryden, Dedication to the *Aeneid*, in *The Works of John Dryden, Poems: The Works of Virgil in English, 1697*, ed. William Frost (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1987), 5:300, and *Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language in Miniature*, ed. Joseph Hamilton, 9th ed. (London: T. N. Longman, 1798), 10.

> And sure a Poet is as much priviledg'd to lye, as an Ambassador . . . This naturally leads me to the defence of the Famous Anachronism, in making *Æneas* and *Dido* Contemporaries. For 'tis certain that the Heroe liv'd almost two hundred years before the Building of Carthage . . . he [Virgil] might make this Anachronism, by superseding the mechanick Rules of Poetry. . . a Man may be an admirable Poet, without being an exact Chronologer.[19]

In this passage Dryden practices exactly the anachronism that Christensen identifies. Dryden's Dedication effectively shows us that what has come to be understood as Romantic anachronism often appears outside the period 1750 to 1850. His argument that Virgil's suspensions of the "mechanick" rules of time are fundamentally acceptable in verse—as a result of poetic license—proleptically sketches the defensive Romantic posture that would allow anachronism to flourish after the eighteenth century. According to Dryden, if poetic anachronism produces "the greatest Beauties," it ought to be licensed.[20] It was no small matter therefore that Virgil's anachronistic portrayal of Dido and Aeneas (a nod to Dryden's Dedication) was included in several Romantic-era dictionaries as the definitive example of the term anachronism.[21] As a result, the Romantic poets would have read Jonathan Swift's placement of Dryden and Virgil next to each other on the bookshelf in *The Battle of The Books* (1704) as a legible (but also ironic since Swift loathed Dryden) sign of Dryden's advocacy of anachronism. As Dryden's Dedication, Pope's imitations and translations of Horace, and William Shakespeare's incessant anachronisms make clear, Romantic poets were not the first generation to engage anachronism. Rather than making an

[19] Dryden, Dedication to the *Aeneid*, in *The Works of Dryden*, 5:299-301.

[20] Dryden, Dedication to the *Aeneid*, in *The Works of Dryden*, 5:301.

[21] See, for example, the entry for "anachronism" in Romantic-era reprintings of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* such as *A Dictionary of the English Language* . . . (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 1:n.p.

exceptionalist claim about Romantic poetry, "After Time" instead seeks to trace the intensification of anachronism in the wake of Enlightenment historicism, and its connection to diverse new forms of ethics.

By the Romantic period Dryden's definition of "anachronism" was but one of many. While James Chandler's account of Romantic historicism rightly points out that "Anachronism is not, like the term 'the spirit of the age,' a coinage of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries," his care to avoid anachronism causes him to miss what *was* new about Romantic anachronism.[22] The *OED* traces the modern idea of anachronism as "Anything done or existing out of date; *hence*, anything which was proper to a former age, but is, or, if it existed, would be, out of harmony with the present; also called a *practical anachronism*" (sense 2) to a work of Romantic literature, Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual* (1816): "Without this ['an *Idea'*], Experience itself is but a cyclops walking backwards, under the fascination of the Past: and we are indebted to a lucky coincidence of outward circumstances and contingencies, least of all things to be calculated on in times like the present, if this one-eyed Experience does not seduce its worshipper into practical anachronisms."[23] What this passage makes clear is that Coleridge and his peers were themselves not always on the side of Romantic anachronism. Here Coleridge deftly coins a new form of "practical anachronism" only to deride it as the product of a seductive but ultimately delusional and monstrous "one-eyed Experience."

Coleridge separates anachronism from idealism and connects untimeliness to backwardness. His *Statesman's Manual* surprisingly flies in the face of Christensen's attempt to redeem the utopian ethics of Romantic anachronism through the idealistic spirit of the

[22] See Chandler, *England in 1819*, 107.

[23] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual: Or, the Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight . . .* (London: Gale and Fenner, Richardson, and Hatchard, 1816), 52-53.

Biographia Literaria (the selected passage from *The Statesman's Manual* was reprinted in the *Biographia*), and Jerome J. McGann's critical association of *The Statesman's Manual* with the idea that "Errors, superstitions, and old-fashioned or positively anachronistic ideas and attitudes should . . . be no cause for alarm."[24] The *OED*'s first recorded appearance of anachronism as "Anything done or existing out of date" thus suggests a significant literary problem: the appearance of a Coleridge who arguably echoes the rhetoric of one of the foremost opponents of Romantic anachronism, Thomas Love Peacock. In fact, the savage satire on anachronism that Peacock conducted in *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820) likely draws on this selection from Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual*. In *Four Ages*, Peacock derides the Lake School as a poetic movement "constructed on what Mr. Coleridge calls a new principle . . . a modern-antique compound of frippery and barbarism. A poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community . . . The march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backward."[25] Remarkably, Peacock's anachronistic "backward" marching "crab" ends up echoing the rhetoric of *The Statesman's Manual*, particularly Coleridge's critique of "practical anachronism" as a "cyclops walking backward."[26]

If the powerful ethics of the poetic anachronisms that "After Time" describes are at times not universally apparent in the writings of Coleridge and his peers, it is because during the early nineteenth century, Romantic poets were still working to disentangle anachronism from error. To be sure, many of the greatest Romantic writers were also influential literary critics, and even

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[24] See Christensen, *End of History*, 12-13, and Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 6.

[25] Thomas Love Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry* in *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock* (London: Richard Bentley, [1820] 1875), 3:335.

[26] Peacock, *Four Ages of Poetry*, in *The Works of Peacock*, 3:334, 336. According to Peacock, it is the forced anachronisms of "unpoetical times" that render poetry obsolete: "We know too that there are no Dryads in Hyde-park nor Naiads in the Regent's canal."

those who were not were deeply imbricated in the vicious periodical culture of negative reviews. Present-day polemics for and against history and anachronism alike tend to lose sight of the role that the barbs of the Romantic era's foremost literary critics played in helping to shape the period's remarkable aesthetics of anachronism.

Romantic poets clearly anticipated and responded to their critics. Despite these important caveats, it is also worth emphasizing that critics such as Peacock were not battling chimeras. As the chapters of "After Time" will make clear, the Romantic poets did often engage with anachronism in politically and ethically liberating ways. The premodern, "mediaeval," and Messianic conception of time as a "simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present"—which Anderson describes as outmoded by the Romantic period—is precisely what I argue that these poets were in the main reactivating from 1750 to 1850.[27] As they redefined the term anachronism in more comprehensive and expansive ways, Coleridge and his peers collectively conducted the necessary critical project of recuperating—and also at times rejecting—the poetics of anachronism that scholars such as Cameron and Christensen would join around two centuries later. As any student of Romanticism will recognize, it is temporal experimentation that provides this period of literary history its generative force. In direct contradiction of how he riddles *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* with archaism, Coleridge states in *Biographia Literaria*, "If I am not misinformed, pedantry consists in the use of words unsuitable to the time, place, and company."[28] Coleridge masterfully employs the subjective mood to rewrite the definition of pedantry; here it is "pedantry" that is characterized by the "use of words unsuitable to the time." In this passage, Coleridge puts his earlier anti-anachronism lexicon to a different purpose:

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[27] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

[28] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria: Or, Biographical Sketches of My Life and Opinions*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 7:170.

satirizing the formal and intellectual pettiness of his critical contemporaries. Yet this brilliant parody refashions the same selection as does Peacock's: August Wilhelm von Schlegel's critique of anachronism in *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1815), which states "in the present day, art has became [*sic*] a pedantic antiquity slop-shop. This is because we live in a learned and critical, but by no means poetical age."[29] Coleridge transforms into a caricature of fact-finding antiquarians the same account of poetry as a "pedantic antiquity slop-shop" that Peacock cites to praise them.

The long Romantic-era war between anachronism and historicism in which Coleridge, Peacock, and Schlegel enlisted thus parallels the battle between poets and their antagonists: historians, literary critics, and at times even poets themselves writing in other genres. The complexity of Romantic authorship is such that the period's foremost writers often attempt to have it both ways. At different times, and in different genres, the same Romantic writers either denigrate or champion anachronism. When Thomas Moore—no stranger to anachronism as the author of *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817)—writes *The History of Ireland* (1835), for example, he condemns James Macpherson for taking the "license of anachronism" to create "rude and spurious productions." In a subsequent footnote, Moore reprints Gibbon's "detection of the anachronism of Macpherson."[30] As the paratext of Moore's work shows, the poetic frauds and forgeries of Macpherson, which were exposed by fastidious eighteenth-century critics such as Edmond Malone, Samuel Johnson, and Thomas Warton, ushered in a new literary detection craze.[31] Although, as Garber and John T. Lynch point out, "The mixing of time periods . . .

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[29] Augustus Wilhelm von Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. John Black (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1815), 2:121.

[30] Thomas Moore, *The History of Ireland* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, et. al, 1835), 1:142.

[31] Susan Stewart illuminates the connections between anachronism, forgery, and authenticity during the Romantic period through the "concept of 'distressed genres,'" which emphasizes "the nostalgia for authenticity and

would probably not have bothered an Elizabethan audience"—since in the early modern period "Anachronism abounded, and no one cared"—by the late eighteenth century, the everyman was effectively an antiquarian.[32] As Nicholas Halmi (drawing upon the work of Koselleck) stresses, by 1750 "the universalist premises of Renaissance classicism, deriving from a fundamentally unhistorical understanding of antiquity, could no longer be sustained."[33]

The apocryphal poems of Thomas Chatterton and Macpherson were watersheds that drove ever more Romantic readers to debunk poetic anachronism; by the late eighteenth century, criticism of anachronism—whether through the prosody, orthography, antiquated diction, or historical situation of a text—had become a national pastime in Britain.[34] In this period, anachronism became intertwined with forgery, authenticity, and detection because it was deemed incorrect and in defiance of historical and temporal accuracy.[35] The gravitational pull of this new

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subjectivity inherent in [the] Romantic relation to time." According to Stewart, "the distressed genre's hope to *enter* time, to re-create, is the first step in a move to *transcend* time that will be the paradigm for literary idealism from Romanticism through modernism." Moreover, the distressed genre suggests that representation itself is anachronistic: "it is the task of the representation to bring forward as a 'making present"; "Anachronism prompts a representation of time that is necessarily a portrayal." See *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23, 69, 6-7.

[32] Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Random House, 2004), 362, and John T. Lynch, *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 110.

[33] Nicholas Halmi, "Romanticism, the Temporalization of History, and the Historicization of Form," *MLQ* 74, no. 3 (2013): 377.

[34] On the detection of anachronism through versification, see Lynch, *Deception and Detection*, 119. In *A Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris: With an Answer to the Objections of the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esquire* (London: Henry Mortlock and John Hartley, 1699), 2, the English classicist Richard Bentley debunked the epistles of Phalaris as an anachronistic forgery. Bentley's argument begins and ends with chronological attack: "I have first produc'd the *Chronological* proofs, that *Phalaris* is spurious, then I consider the *Language*, then the *Matter* of the Epistles; and I conclude all with the Argument taken from their *Late Appearance* in the World: and all these are rank'd in their natural order." Moreover, the debates between the ancients and moderns that raged throughout the neoclassical period continually foregrounded discussions of the past's existence in the present, and the present's reflections on the past. Those on the side of the ancients often represented their literary predecessors as contemporaries rather than as superseded precursors.

[35] The Romantic poets that this dissertation studies therefore avoid the break with the past that Bruno Latour identifies with the temporal myths of passing, distance, and progression that define modernity: "The moderns have a peculiar propensity for understanding time that passes as if it were really abolishing the past behind it . . . They do not feel that they are removed from the Middle Ages by a certain number of centuries, but that they are separated by

cult of accuracy was so strong that even the most anachronistic Romantic poets such as Lord Byron felt compelled to accompany their poems with exhaustive explanatory paratexts. In his preface to *Cain*, Byron perfects the defensive position that he had first attempted in his preface to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. His preface to *Cain* not only accounts for the scriptural sources that he had read on his topic, but also seeks to inoculate him from any charges of anachronism that might stem from his work's theological subject: "It is to be recollected that my present subject has nothing to do with the New Testament, to which no reference can here be made without anachronism."[36] As a literary critic, Byron tries to disclaim anachronism in a poem that practices it; *Cain*, a work that translates biblical myth into new temporal contexts, ostensibly has "nothing to do with the New Testament."

As Byron's preface suggests—and as Moore's reference to Gibbon's historical powers of "detection" proves—the attacks on anachronism that made much of Romanticism's untimely ethics possible were commonly tied to the formal structure of the footnote.[37] By the Romantic era, even poetical romances increasingly included footnotes in order to inoculate themselves against anticipated historical objections. Although footnotes served many purposes in the poetry of the period, they helped to make defending against and warding off anachronism a formal feature of the Romantic poem. In fact, even the most cursory search through Romantic print

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Copernican revolutions, epistemological breaks, epistemic ruptures so radical that nothing of that past survives in them—nothing of that past ought to survive in them." See *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 68.

[36] Lord Byron, Preface to *Cain*, in *Byron's Works: Complete in One Volume* (London: John Murray, 1837), 318.

[37] For an alternative reading of Romanticism as continuous with the Enlightenment, see Clifford Siskin and William Warner, "If This Is Enlightenment Then What Is Romanticism?" *European Romantic Review* 22, no. 3 (2011): 281, 286-87. According to Siskin and Warner, the Romantic is an afterlife of the Enlightenment, "something that comes after," since the "relationship of the Romantic period to Enlightenment is that of an eventuality to an event: Romanticism took shape as a contingent possibility, a coming to terms with what had just happened in the terms that event had platformed—that is, had turned into a platform."

reveals that the term anachronism was much more likely to appear in the editorial apparatus of any given literary or historical work than in the body of the text itself.

Notably therefore, anachronism was as much a poetic term as a critical one. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to find the term anachronism in more than a few isolated and unremarkable poetic lines, the term appears hundreds of times in histories, literary prefaces, reviews, treatises, and footnotes to poems. By the 1770s, even a critic par excellence such as Warton could lament the corrective force that modern criticism exerts on poetic license: "As knowledge and learning encrease, poetry begins to deal less in imagination."[38] Taken together, the profusion of critical works dedicated to detecting anachronisms can be said to have generated new forms of Romantic reading. The era's readers now were avidly searching for anachronisms that they could correct by posting letters to the editors of widely circulated journals. As Morton Paley points out, in Coleridge's 1814 annotated copy of Robert Southey's *Joan of Arc*, Coleridge wrote: "How grossly unnatural an anachronism thus to transmogrify the fanatic votary of the Virgin into a Tom Paine in Petticoats."[39] Here anachronism can be understood as the translation of an ancient figure into a modern era. Coleridge's splenetic objection to Southey's anachronism exemplifies the new discourse of the period's critical landscape. By 1814, widely circulated works such as *The Gentleman's Magazine* were reprinting epistles whose purpose was to emend anachronisms that had appeared in previous issues; for example, the misdating of Wat Tyler's medieval peasant rebellion and the periodical's "spurious" attribution of an antique American watch to Robert Bruce. The preface to *British and Irish Public Characters of 1798* went even further, openly informing its readers that corrections of "trifling anachronism[s]" will "be

[38] Thomas Warton, *The History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh Century to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1774), 1:468, qtd. in Halmi, "Historicization of Form," 375.

[39] Robert Southey, *Joan of Arc* (1814), in the Berg Collection, p. 110, qtd. in Morton Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 100.

thankfully received and punctually attended to in a future edition."[40] This new textual contract solicited paranoid readers to assert their intellectual superiority by playing a literary game of refusing to be duped.

One of the greatest of these newly trained historicist readers was Hazlitt. The literary biography of Washington Irving that appeared in Hazlitt's magnum opus, *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), set the standard for the discourse of anti-anachronism:

> Mr. Irvine's [*sic*] writings are literary *anachronisms*. He comes to England for the first time; and being on the spot, fancies himself in the midst of those characters and manners which he had read of in the Spectator and other approved authors, and which were the only idea he had hitherto formed of the parent country. Instead of looking round to see what *we are*, he sets to work to describe us as *we were*—at second hand. He has Parson Adams, or Sir Roger de Coverley in his "*mind's eye*"; and he makes a village curate, or a country 'squire in Yorkshire or Hampshire sit to these admired models for their portraits in the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is a very flattering mode of turning fiction into history, or history into fiction; and we should scarcely know ourselves again in the softened and altered likeness, but that it bears the date of 1820, and issues from the press in Albemarle-street.[41]

Hazlitt's ironic chiasmic complaint that Irving turns "fiction into history, or history into fiction" connects anachronism and anatopism: the transatlantic American writer is derivative because he cannot write first hand about England's present. According to Hazlitt's critical coordination of

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[40] *The Gentleman's Magazine: And Historical Chronicle* (London: John Nicols, 1785), 55:688, 875, and *British and Irish Public Characters of 1798* (Dublin, 1799), x.

[41] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*, 2nd ed. (London: Henry Colburn, 1825), 405-06.

spatial and temporal otherness, Irving is out of time because he is out of place. The precise poetics of dating that Hazlitt employs—"it bears the date of 1820"—relegates Irving to what Hazlitt later calls "the natural and pardonable error we speak of, by the tempting bait of European popularity."[42] According to Hazlitt's critique, Irving's desire for literary fame in nineteenth-century Europe is in temporal tension with his representations of the eighteenth-century England that he has read about in "the Spectator." Moreover, the phrase "describe us as *we were*—at second hand," which possibly invokes the development and refinement of the clock's second hand during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, further associates his American "fancies" with the past English age of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator* (1711-12).

The fact that Peacock and Schlegel were able to identify the Romantic period—a period that we now acknowledge to be a landmark moment for lyric poetry written in English—as an "unpoetical" age made influential works like Shelley's "Defence of Poetry" possible. In spite of Shelley's utopian claims in "Defence," it remains a mistake to assert that Romantic poets naively transcended the familiar idea of untimeliness as error. The truth of this fact is revealed by the abundance of derogatory modifiers that weigh down the term anachronism in the literature of the long Romantic era: "violent anachronism," "flagrant anachronism," "fatal anachronism," "gross anachronism," "glaring anachronism," "notorious anachronism," "shocking anachronism," "pitiful anachronism," "strange anachronism," "absurd anachronism," "unaccountable anachronism," "monstrous anachronism," "fallen into anachronism," and "willful anachronism." From 1750 to 1850 (as before and after), one could be guilty of, suspected of, charged with, or censured for an anachronism. Moreover, one still "committed" anachronism, and it remained the case that poets regularly asked their readers and critics for forgiveness for their sins of ill timing.

[42] Hazlitt, *Spirit of the Age*, 407.

In the face of these significant antagonistic pressures on anachronism, and the dating pressure of what Chandler calls "Romantic historicism," the chronological defiance of Shelley and his peers looms as a landmark moment in the literary history of untimeliness.[43] It was Shelley after all who, anticipating our present-day critical moves, crafted perhaps the quintessential defense of Romanticism through anachronism: "Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which *futurity casts upon the present*; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (emphasis mine).[44]

"After Time" proceeds in five parts, which respectively study secondary, occasional, circular, outdated, and timeless poetic forms. Chapter one considers how Mary Leapor, Elizabeth Benger, Joanna Southcott, and Lucy Aikin assert what I call women's "superior secondariness." To counter a Romantic cultural imaginary that depicted man as primary (universal and originary) and woman as secondary (derivative and dependent), these poets posited the secondary not as inferior or less, but as a necessary, often highly desirable, condition of women's belatedness. This tradition developed a distinctive feminist poetics of improvement to express women's ascendency as the sex that comes second in time, whether as a refined Eve in relation to a rudimentary Adam, or as the revisionary woman poet in relation to the originary masculine classics. Considered en masse, their rewritings of original sin, human origins, Edenic nature, and

[43] Chandler has influentially described "Romantic historicism" as the self-awareness of the present's historicity. According to Chandler, the French Revolution partially produced this cultural phenomenon in England. See *England in 1819*, especially 100-02.

[44] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry; Or, Remarks Suggested by an Essay Entitled 'The Four Ages of Poetry,'" in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, [1821] 2002), 535.

imperial progress reimagined the temporal trope of secondariness (often used to deride women's verse as inferior in the period) into a feminist position of power.

By comparison, Chapter two argues that in their earliest works, Horace Walpole and Lord Byron built a queer temporality of fugitive time out of the occasional pieces and sporadic readers that Samuel Johnson first theorized in the *Harleian Miscellany*. These poets aligned several forms of fugitive print—loose scraps, detached fragments, fading inks, and fugacious pigments—and fugitive figures—runaway slaves, political exiles, queer aristocrats, and juvenile poets (often themselves). Walpole and Byron redeem both carefree and imperiled fugitive lives by engaging two antithetical discourses of disappearance: languid, idle ease, and sudden, active flight. This discontinuous Romantic poetics becomes increasingly racially coded as it crosses the Atlantic. Fugitive pieces linked Old World flights of fancy and New World runaway slave advertisements, collected works and secure colonial property, and literary selections and sugar cane extracts. In their surprising affirmations of an intermittent occasional time that allies abolitionist accounts of disabled bodies, asylums for poetic pieces, miscellaneous fugitives, and irregular amateurs, fugitive poets moved beyond their era's straight narrative of imperial progress.

Chapter three, by contrast, investigates William Wordsworth's emphasis on the lyric poem's temporal dynamism. His *Lyrical Ballads* contains several critically neglected short lyrics that embrace the poetics of erasure and avoid the monumentality of elegiac poetry so often associated with the volume. One such poem, "Rural Architecture," focuses on the turbulent local history of the ancient Cumbrian custom of stone giant-building in order to revise eighteenth-century theories of rustic design. Such expressly rural "local lyrics" figure cyclical temporalities of rebuilding by portraying corporeal emblems of regional resistance that analogize both

England's past conquest of Cumbria and present rule of a global empire. To apprehend the secret histories of poems such as *Michael: A Pastoral*, readers must marshal Cumbrian culture, dialect, ecology, poetics, and tradition. Wordsworth's protoconservationist lyrics revel in their peripheral status, associating inaccessible mountain landscapes with ostensibly obscure verses. When properly understood, however, these regional riddles encode a biodegradable poetic economy whose evanescent "spots of time" question both the growing exploitation of the Lake District's natural resources and the new imperial narratives of industrialization, urbanization, colonization, and domestic tourism.

Chapter four contends that John Clare's ecopoetic "I"s unexpectedly enact lyric anachronism through space. Clare's untimely rhythms reanimate the eighteenth-century landscapes of Stephen Duck and revise the nineteenth-century foundations of the critical narratives of containment and immediacy that would dominate the lyric criticism of the twentieth century. During the historical moment when imperial Britain saw itself as an enclosed archipelago of enclosed estates, Clare's works present semi-literate speakers whose irrepressible, time-traveling energies are not easily recognized by any of today's theories of lyric. Such spectral "I"s stem from the poet's sense that he had become as obsolete as the unenclosed common greens of his childhood. Ultimately confined to various asylums for mental illness, Clare crafts a laboring-class sublime that imagines impoverished Britons touring pastoral America. The author of *The Shepherd's Calendar* felt a further sense of exile from his time as a result of his industrial moment's neglect of the eighteenth-century peasant poet. Clare's intense struggles against the historical, poetic, and personal pressures of enclosure positioned him as out of sync with the chronologies and concerns of modernity. His poetic voices resurrect early ecologies and unsettle our critical certainties about lyric subjectivity and address.

"After Time" concludes with a brief coda on the remarkable forms of poetic timelessness that John Keats, William Blake, and Percy Bysshe Shelley would imagine. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Blake's *Jerusalem*, and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, ironically confirm both the transhistorical nature of poetry and the impossibility of poetic timelessness; their speakers simultaneously represent utopian prophets who bridge historical divides and political legislators who must situate themselves outside historical time in order to oppose the nineteenth-century obsession with timekeeping. Unsatisfied with momentarily interrupting the sublime progress of time from a domestic convention to a global imperial standard, Keats, Blake, and Shelley's works embrace infinity in order to transcend time itself. Proleptically undermining the New Critical notion of poetic timelessness as a purely aesthetic concept, Blake and Shelley's utopian epics directly connect timelessness to a limitless, universal ethics of possibility that moves beyond anachronism. Keats's unfading lyric lovers accordingly address the irony that the term "timelessness" implies through the plurality of its meaning: the complete absence of time, and the idea of eternity. The historical contingency that all three of these so-called timeless poems appeared in 1820, however, invites us to redefine Romanticism itself as a simultaneously timeless and time-bound, unhistorical and historical, idea.

While Keats, Shelley, Blake, and their male predecessors variously sought to escape, recycle, spatialize, or surpass time, my first chapter begins with an investigation of how and why Romantic women poets such as Lucy Aikin chose to carefully revise (rather than completely abandon) imperial time. Unlike their male contemporaries who ultimately turned to the timeless no place of utopia to flee from empire's chronological boundaries, Aikin and other women poets

chose to remain within history, stressing the alternative power of domesticity to restructure imperial time as feminist.[45]

[45] See "utopia," *OED Online*, accessed April 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/220784, which traces the etymology of the term to the ancient Greek "οὐ not" and "τόπος place."

CHAPTER ONE

Sacred Progress: Women and Superior Secondariness in Romantic Poetry

> The *rights* of humanity have been thus confined to the male line from Adam downwards. Rousseau would carry his male aristocracy still further . . . What opinion are we to form of a system of education, when the author says of his heroine, "that with her, doing things well, is but a *secondary* concern; her principal concern is to do them *neatly*." Secondary, in fact, are all her virtues and qualities, for respecting religion, he makes her parents thus address her, accustomed to submission – "Your husband will instruct you in *good time*."
>
> —Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

Long before the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, cross-cultural feminist dialogues about the Bible were developing between privileged and laboring-class women poets. To clarify any possible confusion that might result from the anachronism of referring to literature written before the nineteenth century as feminist (the *OED* traces the term to 1852), it is important to examine Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, the text that Romantic critics have been trained to think marks the origin of modern feminism.[1] In

[1] Despite the fact that the *OED* traces the first appearance of the term feminist to 1852, literary critics have commonly described earlier works as feminist. See, for example, Moira Ferguson's *First Feminists: British Women Writers, 1578-1799* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Alice Brown's *The Eighteenth-Century Feminist Mind* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987); and Audrey Bilger's *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998). On the formation of a feminist public sphere during the Romantic period, see Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 1-12.

Vindication, Wollstonecraft strongly critiques Rousseau's *Emile,* and particularly his portrayal of a female protagonist, Sophie, as always inessential, forever secondary.

Wollstonecraft's well-known feminist arguments for gender equality rely implicitly upon her critiques of patrilineal descent, "from Adam downwards," and a Romantic culture that represented man as "primary" (universal, originary, and essential) and woman as "secondary" (derivative, dependent, and merely competent).[2] Yet while it is fully understandable that the wealth of scholarship on the rise of feminism has celebrated her call for a revolution in manners that would raise women to equality, the era contains several neglected feminist voices that rewrote as superior the secondariness that patriarchal culture frequently attributed to women's minds and bodies. One such voice, Mary Montague's, asserts a preference for the "Virtues of the secondary kind" that Wollstonecraft assumed dispossessed women of their rights.[3] Montague's alternative metaphysical doctrine of superior secondariness points to a powerful irony within Romantic women's writing: feminist poets frequently posited the secondary not as inferior, but as a necessary, often highly desirable, condition of women's belatedness. This chapter focuses on the unexpectedly pervasive and provocative impact of a feminist theology of superior secondariness from 1686 to 1810. While this doctrine developed in a tradition that includes Sarah Fyge Egerton's *Female Advocate* (1686), Mary Chudleigh's *Ladies Defence* (1701), Anne Finch's "Nocturnal Reverie" (1713), my discussion focuses on its long Romantic-era culmination in Mary Leapor's "Man the Monarch" (1751), Mary Montague's *Original Essay on Woman* (1771), Mary Scott's *Female Advocate* (1774), Elizabeth Benger's *Female Geniad*

[2] As Bonnie Smith says, women "have traditionally been characterized as derivative, secondary, and merely competent." See *The Gender of History*: *Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 15.

[3] Mary Seymour Montague, *An Original Essay on Woman* (London: A. Bridgman, 1771), 4. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to page numbers. Since the biographical details are lacking in the case of Montague, it is possible that her name is a pseudonym for a known author (possibly for a male writer, which would alter our understanding her work's sexual politics).

(1791), Joanna Southcott's *Strange Effects of Faith* (1801), and Lucy Aikin's *Epistles on Women* (1810).[4] All of these works revise the Genesis creation myth in order to advocate feminist progress, and particularly the untimely power of women's superior secondariness.[5] While earlier writers in this tradition redeveloped masculine satirical models of classical imitation, later poets increasingly turned to the progress poem to undermine the Romantic fetishization of originality. This study does not aim merely to chronicle the literary history of these particular poems, but more importantly to argue that they collectively articulate a progressive feminist spirituality that distinctively expresses women's ascendency as the sex that comes second in time—whether as Eve in relation to Adam, or as the revisionary woman poet in relation to the masculine classics.

Although women writers rethought almost all of their culture's most familiar texts (one thinks of Katherine Phillips and the feminization of the early modern ideal of Platonic love), the story of Adam and Eve uniquely facilitated the development of this tradition.[6] This is perhaps because, as Leslie Brisman reminds us, the Bible encompasses, authorizes, and invites revision: "The Yahweh who changes His mind, who repeatedly repents of the evil He had intended to mankind or to Israel, has much in common with a Jesus, for example, who hears and accepts the

[4] Patricia Meyer Spacks, Ann Messenger, Richard Greene, Moira Ferguson, Margaret Anne Doody, Harriet Guest, Paula R. Backscheider, Felicity Nussbaum, Mellor, and Donna Landry have all examined poetic examples of Genesis revision, but there is no comprehensive study. To be sure, with allusion often merely implicit, tracing who read whom is frequently impossible. Still, the collective impulse to revise Genesis is striking.

[5] According to the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, eds. Watson E. Mills, et al. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990), the Genesis creation myth is comprised of two narratives. The Priestly (P) narrative "understands the creation of male and female to be in the image of God." By contrast, the Yahwist (J) narrative "knows the creation of *'ādām,* (human being) from the earth (*'ādāmâ*) first. Seeing the loneliness of man, Yahweh creates woman from the man's rib." See *Mercer Dictionary*, 274.

[6] On the importance of Genesis revision to women's poetry, see Donna Landry, "The Traffic in Women Poets," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 32, no. 2 (1991): 189. Alicia Suskin Ostriker argues that feminist retellings of the Bible "revitalize it and make it sacred." See *Feminist Revision and the Bible* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 31, and *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 13, 212.

Syrophenician woman who corrects him."[7] Of course, Genesis revision was by no means a new cultural practice. The era's most prominent critics often identified John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) as the greatest poem written in English. Genesis revision was also vital to the paradigmatic utopian projects of Giacomo Casanova, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.[8]

Yet although Egerton, Benger, and their contemporaries assumed the secondary position of the reviser, their works are not reducible to mere responses or reactions. These feminist poets contested the "primary" Genesis creation myth that ostensibly aligned femininity with the pejorative definitions of the term "secondary" that the *OED* lists as follows: "Belonging to the second class in respect of dignity or importance . . . of minor importance"; "not original, derivative" (senses 1a, 3a). In order to protest the supposed inferiority of the second sex, this tradition favored an alternative and progressive definition of secondary: "With reference to temporal sequence: Pertaining to a second period or condition of things . . . not primitive" (sense 5). This idea of secondariness as maturer consideration is captured by the idiom "upon second thought," a phrase that occurs in more than a hundred entries in the *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* database, where they relate mostly to moral and intellectual improvement.

Taken together, these subversive theological transformations of Genesis reveal that from the Restoration to the Romantic era, the foremost issue that confronted the feminist poet was not

[7] Leslie Brisman, "Biblical Revisionism," *New Literary History* 29, no. 2 (1998): 277. Mary Hays's *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* (1798), which focuses on the revisionary nature of the New Testament, anticipates Brisman's argument. On women and biblical exegesis, see Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, "Recovering Women's Voices in the History of Biblical Interpretation," in *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, eds. de Groot and Taylor (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 2.

[8] Ana M. Acosta, *Reading Genesis in the Long Eighteenth Century: From Milton to Shelley* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 9. On the Genesis myth's importance to seventeeth-century thought, see Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2. From the eighteenth century to the Romantic era, feminist revisions of Genesis were influenced by biblical scholars who argued that "scripture was a composite text." See Acosta, *Reading Genesis*, 9. On radical translations of the Bible and Wollstonecraft's "feminist rereadings" of the Fall, see William Richey, "A More Godlike Portion: Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminist Rereadings of the Fall," *English Language Notes* 32, no. 2 (1994): 28.

the anxiety of influence that Harold Bloom identifies with largely patriarchal literary traditions, but rather an anxiety of revision.[9] As Adrienne Rich famously puts it, revisionary mythmaking and irreverent "re-naming" are the feminist poet's quintessential acts of survival in a patriarchal society; after all, even Sappho reworked Homer.[10] The present chapter's reconstruction of this important tradition of women poets practices feminist literary history in a twenty-first century moment in which this approach has become less common. By tracing the ordering function of superior secondariness in Romantic poetry, my research returns to Romantic literary form in order to renew the older brand of feminist literary history that Virginia Woolf inaugurated (but found difficult to unearth alone) in *Room of One's Own* (1929) and that culminated (but did not conclude) in the important feminist literary histories that make this argument possible: diverse works by scholars such as Paula R. Backscheider, Adriana Craciun, Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Donna Landry, Roger Lonsdale, Anne K. Mellor, and Susan Staves.[11] Attending to the formal force of superior secondariness from during the long Romantic era allows us to revive—and just as importantly, to historicize—the modern feminist project of mapping the traditions of women's writing.

In the process, this project also engages many of the landmark arguments of twentieth-century feminist theory, most notably Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, which associates Eve's secondariness with ephemerality and stasis, and Julia Kristeva's "women's time," which identifies the second sex with cyclicality and eternity. In contrast to de Beauvoir and Kristeva,

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[9] See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[10] Adrienne Rich, "When we Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision," *College English* 34, no. 1 (1972): 23, 18. To be sure, however, the revisionary feminist poetics that Rich associates with "seeing with fresh eyes" strongly and uniquely emerged during the Romantic era.

[11] See Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, eds. Susan Gubar and Mark Hussey (New York: Harcourt, 2005), and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).

Romantic women poets reconceived the secondariness so commonly associated with women's bodies as progressive, improving, and imminent rather than recursive, fleeting, or timeless. Collectively, their poems crafted a feminist theology of untimeliness that radically reshapes our sense of the origins and ends of feminism, feminist theory, and feminist literary history.

I. "What Oft Was Not Thought": Feminism, Revision, and the Verse Satire

Notably, this poetics of dissent did not simply reject the era's expected misogynist tropes, but instead reappropriated the dominant political, moral, and aesthetic theories of the day. In order to overturn the sexual contract, women poets appropriated the aesthetic theories of imitation and translation exemplified by the poetry of John Wilmot (Earl of Rochester), John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Jonathan Swift. In order to rethink the biblical origins of patriarchal politics, Egerton, Chudleigh, Finch, and Leapor first turned to the dominant aesthetic structures of Restoration and Augustan satire. In *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), for example, Pope memorably argues:

> Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
> To copy Nature is to copy them .
> . . . . . .
> True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;[12]

This idea that the eighteenth century's greatest masculine writers were indebted to the ancients—even weighed down by their influence—provided the basis for a new revisionary poetics of "what oft was not thought."

[12] Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, in *Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1711] 1993), 22, 27. All subsequent citations to this poem refer to the Oxford edition.

Yet, at the same time that their persuasive arguments for women's superior secondariness drew upon Pope's argument that modern men of letters were inherently secondary—inferior—to classical writers such as Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Ovid, and Virgil, these feminist poets also had to undo the long established tradition of misogynist satire that includes Robert Gould's *Love Given O're: A Satyr against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, &c. of Women* (1682), Richard Ames's *Folly of Love* (1691), and the anonymous *Female Monster* (1705).[13] Felicity Nussbaum throws into relief the central role that Eve played in these satires, which regularly represented the first woman as monstrous, aberrant, primitive, and deformed.[14] Janet Todd further points out that the era's reactionary satirists commonly depicted Eve—and, by metaphorical extension the woman writer—as "crooked from the crookedness of the fatal rib," marked both by savage sexual power and the defect of physical weakness.[15]

Women writers who sought to transform Eve's derivative body into an object of feminist affirmation had to combat the influence of these tropes of inferiority. It is not surprising therefore that one of the first accounts of Genesis to emphasize the strength of Eve's secondary position directly responds not only to Milton, but also to Gould. The title of Sarah Fyge Egerton's *Female Advocate*: *Or, An Answer to a Late Satyr Against the Pride, Lust and Inconstancy, &c. of Woman*

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[13] Lord Byron's "To --------" (1807), which begins, "OH! well I know your subtle sex, / Frail daughters of the feeble Eve," reveals that this inferiority trope persisted in the Romantic era. See *Poems on Various Occasions* (Newark: S. & J. Ridge, 1807), 41. These claims of defect equally were applied to women preachers. Samuel Johnson, for example, famously quips in the *Life* that "'a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all.'" See James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* . . . , London: Charles Dilly, 1791), 1:251.

[14] Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 108, and *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10-11, 30.

[15] Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660-1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 34. On women, abjection, and the bible, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 11, 95, 121, 126. Besides remembering that American law still classifies pregnancy as a disability, here we might also recall classical medicine's many representations of women as disabled, particularly Aristotle's claim that women are defective men.

(1686) explicitly marks her satire as secondary, as an "Answer" to Gould's poem.[16] The poem itself, meanwhile, begins with a pointed critique of originality. Egerton's satire of Adam critiques the etymological connection that obtained in her age between primacy and primary appearance: "When Heaven survey'd the Works that it had done, / Saw Male and Female, but found Man alone, / A barren Sex, and insignificant."[17] God's precipitous creation of Adam results not in perfection but in an incomplete body:

> Though Man had Being first, yet methinks She
>
> In Nature should have the Supremacy;
>
> For Man was form'd out of dull senceless Earth;
>
> But Woman she had a far nobler Birth:
>
> For when the Dust was purify'd by Heaven,
>
> Made into Man, and Life unto it given,
>
> Then the Almighty and All-wise God said,
>
> That Woman of that Species should be made.[18]

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[16] On Gould and misogynist satire, see Nussbaum, *English Satires on Women*, 28-34. Egerton's satire revises the Elizabethan-era defenses of Eve that Richard L. Greaves investigates in *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 254-55. Almond and Greaves demonstrate that the works of Jane Anger, Barnabe Rich, Mary Tattlewell, Joan Hit-him-home, Nicholas Gibbens, William Shakespeare, Esther Sowernam, William Austin, Joseph Swetnam, and Samuel Purchas variously contended that "Eve's perfection" was the result of her "origin in Paradise," superior moral disposition, or creation from "superior matter." See Almond, *Adam and Eve*, 152-54.

[17] Sarah Fyge Egerton, *The Female Advocate*, *Or*, *An Answer to a Late Satyr against the Pride, Lust and Inconstancy, &c. of Woman* (London: John Taylor, 1686), lines 17-19. The *OED*'s definition of the term "primacy" connects "being first" to "authority": "The state or position of being first in order, rank, importance, or authority" (sense 1a).

[18] Egerton, *Female Advocate*, lines 24-31. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to line numbers. Egerton posits the greater perfection of Eve's secondary body, which purifies Adam's animate rib rather than the "senceless Earth." According to Almond, Eve's early modern defenders also portrayed her as the superior product of "God's final creative act." See *Adam and Eve*, 152-54. Heinrich Agrippa argued that since Adam's rib formed Eve, she was "not made of clay or dyste, as the man was, but of a matter purified and lyvely." See Agrippa, *Treatise of the Nobilitie and Excellencie of Womankynde*, trans. David Clapam (London, 1542), 25, 27.

Egerton ironically associates the supremacy of Eve's birth with the birthright of the masculine aristocrat. Eve's "nobler" origins satirize primogeniture—the cultural guarantee that an aristocrat's first son will be ascendant, privileged, and propertied. Toward this end, Egerton employs the satirical rhetoric of correction—"Though," "yet," and "but"—to argue that to be primary is to be punished. Her satire rhymes "She" and "Supremacy" in a counteractive couplet that formally reconceives marriage; "Man," by contrast, remains singular—repeated, but unrhymed.

The energies of poems such as *The Female Advocate* initiated the tradition of women's superior secondariness that would continue to prove "Womans [*sic*] Creation good, / And not inferior, when right understood" (17-35). The satires of Egerton and her peers motivated Mary Chudleigh to reimagine the poetic dialogue. In Chudleigh's, *The Ladies Defence: Or, The Bride-Woman's Counsellor Answer'd* (1701), the speeches of a solitary woman named Melissa transform the androcentric theologies of an unnamed parson and an aptly named pair of noblemen, Sir John Brute and Sir William Loveall.[19] Here the satiric form of the dialogue facilitates a dynamic exchange; each argument begins with the assertion of a specious claim by a man and ends with its amendment by Melissa. Sir John's misogynous rant on "the Trouble of a Wife," for example, is followed by Melissa's extended feminist defense of women's education. Chudleigh gives her feminist speaker the final word. The debate culminates in Melissa's representation of the afterlife as a domestic sphere in which women will live "regardless" of men "In glorious Bodies . . . / And with inlightened [*sic*] Minds."[20]

[19] Chudleigh's Brute alludes to the abusive character who launches Sir John Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife* (1697) with a famous comic monologue against wives in general and his wife in particular.

[20] Mary Chudleigh, *The Ladies Defence: Or*, *The Bride-Woman's Counsellor Answer'd* (London, 1701), 2, 23. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to page numbers.

The Ladies Defence develops a feminist argument out of misogynist discourse. The poem's many patriarchal voices equate Eve with Lucifer, define women as derivative, and justify the subjection of women as a fitting punishment for Eve's original sin. Nevertheless, Melissa continues to rebel. Her conversational counterpoints, which reveal the fallacious reasoning of the patriarchal dogma that Eve was "guilty first" (24), finally exasperate the parson: "How dare you treat me with so much neglect? / My sacred Function calls for more Respect" (14). Ironically, *The Ladies Defence* portrays a defensive parson. After Melissa repeatedly refutes the parson, he attempts to discount the possibility of a theological dialogue between a man of the cloth and a laywoman; in his view, the idea of a dissenting woman is heretical, disrespectful, and dangerous. Melissa counters that in deriding Eve and her descendants, the parson "the Creator with his Work upbraid[s]" (14). Such superior counter-arguments advance the unexpected claim that the patriarchal dimensions of Christian theology need to be rewritten because they are un-Christian.

Chudleigh's speaker represents the educated Eve that Mary Astell had imagined in *Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (1694-97), a treatise that exhorts women to "quit the Chat of insignificant people for an ingenious Conversation" and form an intellectual community "which will be the introducing you into such a *Paradise* as your Mother *Eve* forfeited, where you shall feast on Pleasures, that do not like those of the World, disappoint your expectations."[21] Melissa's informed defiance confirms that learning could supply women a second, salutary apple. While Astell recovers the forbidden fruit as an accessible source of mental rather than physical nourishment, Chudleigh envisions her speaker as intellectually experiencing the bodily "pleasures" denied to a knowledge-seeking Eve who ostensibly fell first.

[21] Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, [1694-97] 2002), 74. On Astell and women's education, see Marla J. Selvidge, *Notorious Voices: Feminist Biblical Interpretation, 1500-1920* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 134.

In contrast to Chudleigh's presentation of an enlightened Eve, Anne Finch's "Nocturnal Reverie" (1713) reclaims the darkness that defines the Fall. Finch's nighttime scene transforms eighteenth-century England into an Eden in which man's rule over the animals is suspended while he sleeps: "Their shortliv'd Jubilee the Creatures keep, / Which but endures, whilst Tyrant-*Man* do's sleep."[22] Finch experiments with the traditional association of Adam's sleep and Eve's creation; man's rest produces a joyful activity that alludes to Leviticus's account of the "year of jubilee" that freed debtors and slaves every fifty years.[23] "Nocturnal Reverie" proceeds to connect the liberated world of the animals to the independent soul of woman:

> When a sedate Content the Spirit Feels,
>
> And no fierce Light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
>
> But silent Musings urge the Mind to seek
>
> Something, too high for Syllables to speak
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Finding the Elements of Rage disarm'd,
>
> O'er all below a solemn Quiet grown,
>
> Joys in th'inferiour World, and thinks it like her Own. (39-47)

[22] Anne Kingsmill Finch, "A Nocturnal Reverie," in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, eds. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard (Oxford: Blackwell, [1713] 2004), 34. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to line numbers. Echoing Egerton's *Female Advocate*, Finch's "Adam Pos'd" (1709), characterizes Adam in primitive terms: "Cloath'd only in a rude, unpolish'd Skin." It is important to note that these critiques of masculine primitivism are deeply problematic in terms of race; in many ways, they parallel the racial rhetoric that Wollstonecraft used in her depictions of married women as slaves.

[23] According to the *OED*, the term "jubilee" refers to a "year of emancipation and restoration, which according to the institution in Lev. xxv was to be kept every fifty years, and to be proclaimed by the blast of trumpets throughout the land; during it the fields were to be left uncultivated, Hebrew slaves were to be set free, and lands and houses in the open country or unwalled towns that had been sold were to revert to their former owners" (sense 1a).

In the absence of their supposedly more advanced sovereign, the animals establish a free and communal culture in solidarity with Eve and the Mother Nature whom she represents.[24] Rather than a primitive corporeal surface, the benighted Eve of "Nocturnal Reverie" expresses unfathomable intellectual depth. Finch's fondness for the nocturnal defies God's world-creating fiat lux and the eighteenth-century idea that "illumination" denotes "[i]ntellectual enlightenment" (*OED* sense 3). According to the logic of her poem, creation occurs in the womb; the masculine light of morning brings only chaos: "Morning breaks, and All's confus'd again" (48).

While the poems of Egerton, Chudleigh, and Finch re-envisioned parts of the Genesis creation myth, this satirical tradition culminates in Mary Leapor's "Man the Monarch" (1751), one of the first comprehensive rewritings of Genesis by an English woman poet.[25] In four verse-paragraphs, the laboring-class Leapor reconceives the story of Adam and Eve from a feminist perspective that draws upon established theological and political modes of reinterpreting Genesis. In "Man the Monarch," she freely acknowledges that the primary works of the past influence the improved revisions of the present—just as Adam's rib formed Eve's body.[26] This highly mediated satire most prominently appropriates the political prose of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.[27] As Leapor's poem reveals, Locke presses Eve—and women generally—into the service of a philosophical argument against absolute monarchy. "Man the Monarch"

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[24] On the many historical and literary connections between Eve and Mother Nature, see Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 23, 33-35.

[25] "Man the Monarch" appeared in *Poems Upon Several Occasions,* Leapor's second published volume of poetry. On Leapor's feminist poetics, see Landry, *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain: 1739-1796* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 78-199.

[26] As Anne Milne points out, Leapor "openly admits the presence of other texts" as sources. See *Lactilla Tends her Fav'rite Cow: Ecocritical Readings of Animals and Women in Eighteenth-Century British Labouring-Class Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008), 35. On Leapor and revision, see Caryn Chaden, "Mentored from the Page: Mary Leapor's Relationship with Alexander Pope," in *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 45-46.

[27] On Locke's *Two Treatises*, see Jocelyn Harris, *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 18.

progressively works through the subject headings of Locke's *First Treatise*: "Of Adam's Title to Sovereignty, by Creation"; "Of Adam's Title to Sovereignty, by the Subjection of Eve"; "Of Adam's Title to Sovereignty, by Fatherhood"; and "Of the Heir to the Monarchical Power of Adam."[28] Yet Leapor quickly moves beyond Locke's politically motivated critiques of the idea that the Bible represents fathers as superior to mothers. She does this so radically that, as Patricia Meyer Spacks has observed, there is no masculine God in "Man the Monarch."[29] In disassociating God from Adam, Leapor takes the first and necessary step toward the redemption of Eve and the woman writer. In yet another advance for feminism, she reintroduces motherhood to the Genesis' creation story; here it is Mother "Nature's early Throes" that birth the world (1).[30]

Leapor's theological recuperation of the reproductive labors of feminine nature develops a critique of Adam's premature arrival in Eden that redevelops Egerton's critique of Adam's premature arrival in Eden.[31] Leapor's poem alludes to Adam before it does Eve: "Beasts submissive to their Tyrant, Man / To Man, invested with despotic Sway" (4-5). Adam's early appearance, however, does not denote anything in this context but rude physical power, a fact that Leapor signals formally by running the phrase "to their Tyrant, Man" into a line beginning "To Man." This enjambment associates Adam with repetitive repression and linguistic poverty.

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[28] See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). As Leapor would have known, Locke's work reenvisions Robert Filmer's apology for divine right in *Patriarcha* (1680). To attack the supremacy of Adam and his monarchical successors, Locke contends that God mutually addresses Adam and Eve; grants joint dominion over the animals; and commands children to honor mothers and fathers.

[29] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Reading Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 171. For the publication history of "Man the Monarch" as well as a full account of Leapor's biography, see *The Works of Mary Leapor*, eds. Richard Greene and Ann Messenger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xxvii.

[30] Mary Leapor, "Man the Monarch" (1751), in *Works of Mary Leapor*, eds. Greene and Messenger, 160. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to line numbers.

[31] Reclaiming the Garden of Eden might have had a personal resonance for Leapor as the daughter of a gardener.

Leapor further critiques Adam by mediating the lines that introduce him through the works of her predecessors—not only Egerton's, but also Finch's—"whilst Tyrant-*Man* do's sleep" ("Nocturnal Reverie" 38)—and Chudleigh's—"Men design'd for arbitrary sway / Born petty monarchs" (*Ladies Defence* 65-66). "Man the Monarch" reassembles the prior Adams of these woman poets. This composite Adam, meanwhile, remains a rudimentary being, devoid of superior secondariness. As might be expected, in Leapor's poem Mother Nature favors Eve; she pours "roseat Beauty on her Fav'rite [Eve]" (25).[32] Adam's flaws, by contrast, drive a feminized heaven to humble him: "Heav'n beheld him insolently vain, / And check'd the Limits of his haughty Reign" (7-8). In its clear critique of primogeniture, Leapor's argument revisits early modern defenses of Eve's sexual superiority and twice refined beauty. In the place of the judgment of an angry God, Leapor builds feminist forms of resistance into the Genesis myth. While Finch's rebels await nightfall, Leapor's insurgents disobey Adam in broad daylight: "the untam'd Coursers run, / And roll, and wanton, in the chearful Sun; / . . . / And rouse the Lightnings in their rolling Eyes" (15-18).

Leapor withholds her most powerful provocations for her poem's conclusion. The abrupt final verse-paragraphs of "Man the Monarch" refuse to move the reader smoothly to the end of the poem[33]:

> A tattling Dame, no matter where, or who;
> Me it concerns not—and it need not you;
> Once told this story to the listening Muse,
> Which we, as now it serves our Turn, shall use. (50-53)

[32] Almond highlights the prevalence of praise for Eve's beauty in the period. See *Adam and Eve*, 153.

[33] On Leapor and poetic disjunction, see Spacks, *Reading Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, 171.

Leapor introduces a new speaker (the "tattling Dame"), spatiality ("no matter where"), and temporality ("Once told this story"). Leapor's poetic turn—the revisionary thought that modifies what has come before—is transformed into a political movement: "Our turn." The first-person plural redefines female readers and writers as the performers of vital rather than superfluous literary labor.

By attributing the creation story to an irruptive afterthought and placing Western culture's most significant myth of origins in the mouth of a gossipy Dame, Leapor furthers her claims to poetic significance as a working-class woman attempting to revise Genesis from among the most marginal of social positions. In an era in which "secret histories" explored salacious scandals, she explored the secret histories of women's unrecorded lives. Through a tattler who simultaneously facilitates Eve's rebirth and prophesies the future, Leapor argues that the untold stories of the second sex are more compelling than the oft-repeated tales of Adam and his descendants.[34] Leapor, however, was not naïve; "Man the Monarch" returns to Adam's naming power at the end as a reminder that permanently revising Eve would require the wholesale revision of the English language. According to the Dame, it is Adam's forked tongue that causes Eve's Fall:

> Greedy of Pow'r, he hugg'd the tott'ring Throne;
> Pleased with the Homage, and would reign alone;
> And, better to secure his doubtful Rule,
> Roll'd his wise Eye-balls, and pronounc'd her *Fool.* (58-61)

[34] "Man the Monarch" draws upon the historical links between women, gossip, childbirth, and spirituality. According to the *OED*, the term "gossip" not only relates to baptismal sponsorship but also can denote "female friends invited to be present at a birth" (senses 1a, 2b). On gossip and midwifery, see Elaine Hobby, introduction to *The Midwives Book: Or, the Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered*, by Jane Sharp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiv-xv.

According to the Dame, it is Adam's forked tongue that causes Eve's Fall. After aligning Eve with smooth iambs, "A tattling Dame," Leapor repeatedly associates Adam with rhythmic disruptions. Initial trochaic inversions, "Greedy," "Pleased with," and "roll'd his," link the masculine to metrical irregularity. Accompanied only by the falling rhythms of a harsh and irregular Adam, the Dame struggles to escape her ahistorical, unidentifiable position: "no matter where or who." Nevertheless, Leapor's final lines represent as imminent the communal linguistic project that Rich terms "re-naming"

II. "A Softer Man": Feminism, Revision, and the Progress Poem

Following Leapor's groundbreaking satire, Mary Seymour Montague, Mary Scott, and Elizabeth Benger more commonly utilized the poetics of superior secondariness to reorder the "progress poem," an imperialist form historically associated with the English canon and "the transition of liberty and letters from classical Greece and Rome through to modern Britain."[35] The progress poem analyzes the historical development of almost every aspect of British society: economics (Richard Glover's *London*, *or the Progress of Commerce* [1739]); patriotic values (James Thomson's *Liberty* [1735-36] and The Anti-Jacobin's *Progress of Man* [1797-98]); and even poetry itself (Samuel Cobb's "Progress of Poetry" [1707], Judith Madan's *Progress of Poetry* [1721], Thomas Gray's "Progress of Poesy" [1757], and Anna Lætitia Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* [1812]).

To unlock the feminist potential of the progress poem's masculine teleology of succession, Romantic women poets channeled the work of Whig writers such as Millar who associated humankind's rise from savagery to civilization with courtly norms of politeness and

[35] Abigail Williams, "Whig and Tory Poetics," in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Christine Gerrard (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 451.

self-restraint.[36] Perhaps since British society had long applied the highest standards of decorum to the bodies and minds of privileged women, several prominent historians and moral philosophers of their time, such as Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, James Dunbar, John Millar, were theorizing that imperial progress was related to the cultural feminization. As Montague, Scott, and Benger would surely have known, according to Millar's *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (1771), the feminizing progress of Britain's historical development would increase the empire's cultural, political, and economic capital. For Millar, women's ascendancy in rank would be the consequence of an inescapable correlation between the advancement of civilization and the refinement of manners:

> As the servile condition of the women, in rude times, subjects them to constant labour and drudgery, they cannot fail to acquire such habits as fit them for the exercise of their employment; and therefore, when a spirit of improvement is afterwards introduced into a country, they seem naturally qualified to surpass the other sex by their superior proficiency in many of those arts and manufactures which become then the objects of attention.[37]

For Millar, a polite "spirit of improvement" ironically engenders the decline of men. His portrait of modern women as "superior" poses many of the following questions that vexed the Enlightenment's foremost philosophers of history and the politics of time: Was the feminizing progress of Britain's historical development increasing the empire's cultural, political, and

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[36] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The Development of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen, [1939] 1978), 137. These Whig writers participated in the rise of "conjectural history" and "stadial theory," two speculative modes of Enlightenment thought that imagined the origins of human culture and its development through progressive stages of civilization. On conjectural history, see Frank Palmeri, "Conjectural History and the Origins of Sociology," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 37 (2008): 1-21. For an account of Whig history, see Henry Knight Miller, "The 'Whig Interpretation' of Literary History," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 6, no. 1 (1972): 60-84. On women and "the progress of history," see Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-34.

[37] John Millar, *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (London: John Murray, 1771), 73-74.

economic capital? Had the professions already domesticated and feminized men? Was the increasing emphasis on sentiment, politeness, self-restraint, and effeminacy in England redefining women as superior beings? Were women better adapted to a more graceful modern world focused on commerce, peace, art, and politics rather than sport, warfare, instinct, and subsistence?[38]

Besides capitalizing upon these imperialist narratives of Britain's cultural feminization, women writers reinvented the progress poem as a record of women's literary inheritance by redesigning the genealogical lists of "women worthies" that appeared in several midcentury works: poetic anthologies (George Coleman's and Bonnell Thornton's *Poems by Eminent Ladies* [1755]); epic poems (John Duncombe's *Feminead*, *Or*, *Female Genius* [1754]); and biographical memoirs (George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* [1752] and the unattributed *Biographium Faemineum*: *The Female Worthies*, *Or*, *Memoirs of the Most Illustrious Ladies, of All Ages and Nations* [1766]).[39] Montague and Scott seized on such anxieties about the decline of men in progress poems entitled *An Original Essay on Woman* (1771) and *The Female Advocate* (1774). In order to reinterpret women's secondary status as progressive, Montague and Scott's took titles that simultaneously stressed originality and conventionality. Writing in the 1770s, these poets were clearly aware of the connections that *The Feminead* and *Biographium Faemineum* had drawn between lists of women worthies and Edenic revision. While *The Feminead* honors Leapor as a specter hovering over the Edenic landscape—"Young LEAPOR'S form flies shadowy o'er the green / Those envy'd honours Nature lov'd to

[38] These late eighteenth-century debates resonate with present-day conversations (often in the context of schooling) about whether women are better suited to the modern age.

[39] The list of "women worthies" dates back to antiquity and Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*. During the eighteenth century, these lists commonly excluded Aphra Behn and other important women writers of "questionable" morals. Present-day critics have pointed out the problematic nature of these catalogues, which sought to separate exceptional women from their sex. See Smith, *Gender of History*, 38-51.

pay"—*Biographium* echoes "Man the Monarch"'s connection of the Fall to Adam's physical emasculation.[40] According to *Biographium*, it is God himself who wills Eve's rise; after the Fall reduces Adam to "little more than the shadow of what he was before," he finds Eve "rising in her pretensions, encroaching on his authority, and claiming some of those prerogatives he had so shamefully forfeited."[41]

These well-known biographies, epics, and anthologies may have been the first to link lists of women worthies to rewritten Genesis myths.[42] Yet the striking titles of Montague's *Original Essay on Woman* and Scott's *Female Advocate: A Poem Occasioned by Reading Mr. Duncombe's* Feminead signify secondariness in two ways. On the one hand, the title of Montague's *Original Essay* references both Leapor's "Essay on Woman," Pope's *Essay on Man,* and Duncombe's *Feminead: Or, Original Genius*. On the other hand, Scott's *Female Advocate* simultaneously censures Duncombe's *Feminead* for omitting important women and alludes to Egerton's *Female Advocate*. Montague's work in particular raises the vexing question of originality in relation to the woman poet. In the preface to *Original Essay*, she states that her work "may stimulate some abler Champion to enter the Field with more Effect" (vii). Not only does Montague undercut her claim to original status by selecting a title that sits in shadows of what has come before, but she also suggests that if her work were original, then its power would pale in comparison to the potential influence of the "abler Champion" that it would inspire.

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[40] John Duncombe, *The Feminead: Or, Female Genius. A Poem*, 2nd ed. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757), ll. 216-17.

[41] *Biographium Faemineum: The Female Worthies: Or, Memoirs of the Most Illustrious Ladies, of All Ages and Nations* . . . (London: S. Crowder, et al., 1766), 1:iv. *Biographium* here represents Adam's fall in terms of physical disability; "after his lapse" his "powers were greatly impaired, his authority diminished, and his rational faculties . . . obscured."

[42] It is notable, however, that earlier lists of women worthies did reenvision Britain's myths of origin. *The Female Dunciad*, for example, claims that "Helena a British Princess" founded Christianity in Britain. See *The Female Dunciad* (London: T. Read, 1728), iii.

Mindful of Coleman's, Duncombe's, and Thornton's taxonomies of women's writing, Montague stresses the secondary position of progress over the primary situation of genesis. A woman who writes to open the masculine "Field" to her improving successors is one who thinks in terms of establishing future generations of militant feminists.[43]

After cataloguing an extensive list of women's poetry in English after the style of *The Feminead*, Montague's *Original Essay* returns to a prelapsarian Eden in order to reconceptualize Eve's fertility:

> Behold the blooming Beauties of the Spring;
>
> The Mountains smile, the festive Vallies sing
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Luscious Fruits, that tempting Ripeness waste,
>
> Delude Beholders to a fancy'd Taste:
>
> Then yield, proud Man; to Truth and Justice yield,
>
> And quit with Candour the contested Field
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Think not to Conquest you alone have Claim;
>
> In that our sex will sure eclipse your Fame. (45)

Montague restores the pastoral paradise of "Luscious Fruits," however, only to turn away from it. Her first-person plural pronoun, "our sex" and confident imperatives, "quit," "yield," reaffirm the power of collective feminist thought and action. More importantly, this account of a coming moment of women's empowerment as an "eclipse," which recollects the energetic nightlife of "Nocturnal Reverie," ironically rediscovers feminist forms of agency in concealment.

[43] On Romanticism and the "femmes fatale," see Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Montague's projection of the ostensible obscurity of women's writing onto men's "Fame" confronts the exclusionary force of Britain's public policy: the transnational wars, political establishments, and institutional practices that relegated most female Britons to historical insignificance.[44]

Eve's progressive eclipse of Adam belongs to the tradition of verse satires and progress poems that describe women's superior secondariness. Twenty years after Leapor had aligned the revision of Genesis with the correction of Pope, Montague puts forward the idea of secondariness most prominently by rethinking Pope's depiction of Martha Blount in "Epistle to a Lady" (1735): "Woman's at best a contradiction still. / Heaven, when it strives to polish all it can / Its last best work, but forms a softer man."[45] *Original Essay* remakes Pope's "softer Man" into an expression of woman's more refined nature:

> The All-supreme, in fair Creation's Plan,
> In forming Woman made a softer Man;
> More delicate in Body and in Mind,
> More tender, sentimental, and refin'd;
> While ev'ry Virtue dwells within her Brest,
> She shines a woman, and as such is blest;
> But when she spurns at Decency's Controul,
> She changes sex, and is a Man in Soul. (4-5)

[44] On poetic obscurity, see Daniel Tiffany, *Infidel Poetics: Riddles, Nightlife, Substance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 14. On the erasure of women from history, see Smith, *Gender of History* and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), as well as Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present* (New York: Harper, 1988).

[45] Pope, "Epistle to a Lady" (1735), in *Alexander Pope*, ed. Rogers, 357.

Montague here repurposes the commonplace image of physical "polish" that "Epistle to a Lady" employs to represent women's bodies as heaven's "last best work." The strong association that obtained between women and feeling during the era made it possible for her to connect mental processes to sexual differences. In an age of sensibility when women poets were claiming that maternal instincts and more sensitive nervous systems gave them the moral authority to condemn war, slavery, poverty, and empire, Montague argues that woman's "More delicate" body was the correlative of her "More tender, sentimental, and refin'd" mind. In a line of reasoning that updates for a new age the connections that Egerton had established between aristocracy and femininity, Montague links the emotional and intellectual intensity of the soft mind to the feminine ethics of the polite and commercial ruling classes of her time:

> But Virtues of the secondary Kind,
> Are not the same in Male as Female Mind . . .
> While ev'ry Virtue dwells within her Brest,
> She shines a woman, and as such is blest;
> But when she spurns at Decency's Controul,
> She changes sex, and is a Man in Soul. (4)

By coupling "kind" and "mind" through rhyme, Montague invites us to hear "kind mind." Unlike Wollstonecraft's call for women to become more masculine, Montague's vision of women's secondary virtues argues that, for women, change of sex indexes moral regression. In a time in which the religious *was* the political, Montague ultimately discovered fertile feminist ground within a poetic mode that typically chronicled the progress of English poetry from man to man.

Scott's radical experiments with this trope of sex change simultaneously map Montague's revisions of Pope's poetry onto his body and reverse Montague's sexual transformations by changing well-known men into women rather than immodest women into men. In *The Female Advocate*, Pope reappears not as a second Homer but as Mary Jones, whose distinguished epistles had appeared in *Poems by Eminent Ladies*: "Jones, in whose strains another Pope we view / Her wit so keen, her sentiments so true."[46] Such metaphorical sex changes—which recall the fact that Pope himself was known as "The Ladies Play-thing" in the earlier part of his career that encompasses *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717)—transform the turbulence of satire into the civility of sentiment.[47]

Although Scott's striking revision of *Original Essay* proves that Montague was correct to assume that her poem would "stimulate some abler Champion," she probably did not assume that her champion (Scott) would be succeeded by a thirteen-year-old girl. One of the most important feminist poets who connected Genesis revision to the struggle for women's rights in the radical climate of the 1790s was the child prodigy Elizabeth Benger. A year before the publication of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, Benger composed *The Female Geniad* (1791), a progress poem that clearly sustains the tradition to which Montague and Scott belong. As the poem's title implies, *The Female Geniad* reshapes Duncombe's *Feminead*, *Or*, *Female Genius* and brings to

[46] Mary Scott, *The Female Advocate: A Poem Occasioned by Reading Mr. Duncombe's* Feminead (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), 19. This portrayal of Pope as Mary Jones ironically challenges Jones's poetic apologies: "Whilst lofty *Pope* erects his laurell'd head / No lays, like mine, can live beneath his shade." See Jones, "Epistle to Lady Bowyer," in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (Oxford: R. Griffiths, 1760), 2.

[47] Aaron Hill, "The Progress of Wit: A Caveat" (London: J. Wilford, 1730), 15. On Pope as "ladies' plaything," see Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 40. Scott's poem reanimates *The Female Dunciad*, which "change[s] a snarling Pope to a smooth Lady Mary." See *The Female Dunciad*, 43. In the 1790s, Elizabeth Benger similarly joked that Frances Burney was an improved (less "vulgar") Henry Fielding. See *The Female Geniad: A Poem Inscribed to Mrs. Crespigny* (London: T. Hookham and J. Carpenter, 1791), 51.

fruition Astell's attempt to foster "ingenious" women.[48] Benger extends earlier arguments, championing the secondary status of the feminist literary critic rather than of the revisionary woman poet. According to *The Female Geniad*, Elizabeth Montagu's much-admired interpretations of Shakespeare in *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear* [*sic*] (1769) reinvigorated his genius for eighteenth-century readers:

> Not lost his genius, which o'er Death survives,
>
> In matchless Montague again revives
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Methinks on Mount of Science high she stands,
>
> Triumphant reigns, Pieria's fount commands:
>
> There she explores the bard's immortal lines,
>
> And a clear meteor thro' his pages shines:
>
> Her radiant light his obscure age unfolds,
>
> To years remote a brilliant taper holds.[49]

In the spirited feminist debate that develops between light (transparency) and dark (opacity), Benger holds with Chudleigh and Leapor over Finch and Montague. *The Female Geniad*'s portrait of Montagu projects the ostensible obscurity of women's writing onto the oeuvre of Shakespeare, the most canonical of English poets. In a mixed metaphor—"clear meteor," "brilliant taper"—Benger contends that the secondary intellectual radiance of a late eighteenth-century bluestocking can revive Shakespeare's dead canon and "obscure age."

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[48] On feminine genius, patriarchy, and disease, see Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, 569. For a contemporary theorization of "unoriginal genius," see Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1, 17.

[49] Benger, *Female Geniad*, 17. All subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to page numbers.

Benger's depiction of Montagu revises Pope's memorable conception of authorship as borrowed light: "In poets as true genius is but rare, / True taste as seldom is the critic's share; / Both must alike from Heaven derive their light."[50] In the tradition of her predecessors, Benger simultaneously subscribes to Pope's theory of composition and contests it; in her view, the works of women poets and critics are always after-the-fact but never derivative of the masculine heavens. On this view, progressive feminist criticism and Genesis revision perform the same secondary work of renewal and reanimation.

The concluding canto of *The Female Geniad* even more explicitly makes this point by citing Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753-54), an expansive compilation of literary criticism and translations of Shakespeare's Italian sources. Benger envisions Lennox not as subject to the Bard but as empowered in her own right:

> Behold a woman sits on Judgment's throne,
> Discernment, wit, and sentiment her own:
> Tis Lennox; she whose penetration shines,
> Thro' Britain's bard, immortal Shakespeare's lines:
> Observe ingenious her impartial quill,
> Detect his errors, and declare his skill:
> Correct his fancy, prune his flowers, that need
> Some friendly hand to prune the spreading weed. (47)

Benger's portraits of Lennox and Montagu resemble one another. *The Female Geniad* stresses women writers' similarities in order to fit them into evolving literary historical traditions. After arguing that only Montagu can penetrate "great Shakespeare's shade" (17), Benger's poem portrays Lennox as arriving at her meaningful truths through Shakespeare. According to Benger,

[50] Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 19.

these critics both work through formal and affective "penetration" rather than by means of the productions of great men. While *The Female Geniad* aligns feminism and traditionalism, the poem resolutely opposes the traditional idea that women's writing could not stand on its own terms. To give women the upper hand in the battle of the sexes, Benger places Lennox on the "Judgment throne" that equally belongs to the God of Genesis and the patriarchal critic. In an allusion to the Garden of Eden, she represents Lennox's Shakespearean source material as uncultivated flora. Here women's superior secondariness recovers gardening for feminism, specifically the idea of culture as cultivation. In Benger's view, Lennox's critical labor is the "friendly hand" that simultaneously roots out the Bard's imperfections and recalls the civility of sentiment.

Benger connects mental processes to sexual differences in order to revise the role of the literary critic. At the same time, she establishes an alternative biblical mythology that forgets men rather than women. Although *The Female Geniad* recounts several classical myths and historical anecdotes, the poem does not tell the story of Adam and Eve. Benger's revision replaces Adam with his son, Seth: "Seth, Adam's son, by heavenly genius fir'd" (29). In solidarity with Egerton's satire of primogeniture, *The Female Geniad* thus erases the privileged first-born son from human history. When she finally recounts the first biblical narrative of conflict between men, Benger subordinates the narrative to an apostrophe to her fellow woman poet, Mary Collier, who translated the Swiss poet Salomon Gessner's *The Death of Abel* (1758): "Enchanting Collier charms our wond'ring hearts, / . . . / We start, when Cain a daring murd'rer stands, / And wrings (embru'd in brother's blood) his hands" (39). Startled at the fratricide, Benger's poem generates its revisionary "start" from Cain's villainy. Throughout *The Female*

Geniad, women's rewritings, commentaries, and translations of men's myths are potentially more valuable than their source material.

Benger and her predecessors ultimately discovered fertile feminist ground within a poetic mode that typically chronicled the progress of English poetry from man to man. Yet the tradition of superior secondariness did not end with *The Female Geniad*. In her "Introductory Discourse" to *A Series of Plays* (1798), a work that commonly came to be referred to as *Plays on the Passions*, Joanna Baillie articulated a new theory of cognition that represented nearly all thoughts as unconsciously collective and therefore derivative and secondary. In relation to her literary craft, Baillie portrays her own mind as particularly porous, communal, and absorbent:

> I am frequently sensible, from the manner in which an idea arises to my imagination, and the readiness with which words, also, present themselves to clothe it in, that I am only making use of some dormant part of that hoard of ideas which the most indifferent memories lay up, and not the native suggestions of mine own mind.[51]

In the passage that follows, Baillie discusses her strong suspicions of her own literary derivativeness; she includes several notes citing the sources of her ideas and phrases but ultimately resigns herself to the impossibility of such a task. As she admits is true of any author, many of her borrowings are simply untraceable or unconscious; according to Baillie, claiming any thought as "unreservedly my own" results in authorial paranoia.[52]

[51] Joanna Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," in *Plays on the Passions*, ed. Peter Duthie (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, [1798] 2001), 112. All future citations refer to the Broadview edition.

[52] Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," 112.

In dialogue with Baillie's theory of cognition and composition, women poets such as the unorthodox prophetess Joanna Southcott reconceptualized Eve for a new age.[53] The much-followed Southcott famously figures herself as Eve's second coming in *The Strange Effects of Faith* (1801):

> I said I'd conquer hell and sin;
>
> And so to conquer I'll appear:
>
> The second woman you see there,
>
> With all her clothing drawn in red,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> What I call Eve, she is the last,
>
> And so the last she doth appear;
>
> Because the last, you all shall see,
>
> Is chang'd form [*sic*] Eve and come to thee.[54]

As these vatic verses suggest, this later generation of women writers redeveloped the feminist theology of progress. From the position of the "second woman," Southcott argues that she is not ruled by empire but that she *is* empire: "to conquer I'll appear." Southcott provides an especially powerful example of how Romantic women writers sought to rewrite imperial time. Through patient endurance, women would outlast men, and the future would be feminine: "she is the last,"

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[53] On Aikin's *Epistles*, the Fall, dissent, and rewriting, see Mellor, "Telling Her Story: Lucy Aikin's *Epistles on Women* (1810) and the Rewriting of Western History," *Women's Studies* 39, no. 5 (2010): 433, 437. Sarah Trimmer's *Teacher's Assistant* (London: T. Longman, and J. and C. Rivington, 1792; through seven editions by 1812) and *A Help to the Unlearned in the Study of the Holy Scriptures: Being an Attempt to Explain the Bible in a Familiar Way* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, and J. Hatchard, 1805; through six editions by 1826) contained instructive paraphrases that "adapted" the plot of Genesis "to common apprehensions." Widely disseminated catechistic texts of this kind regularly tested students' comprehension of the Bible. See *Help to the Unlearned*, title page. More's politics have been the subject of recent debate. See Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation*, 13-14, Anne Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution*: *Literary Conservativism in Britain*, 1790-1832 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 69.

[54] Joanna Southcott, "Tenth Vision," in *The Strange Effects of Faith: With Remarkable Prophecies* . . . 3rd ed. (London: Galabin & Marchant, 1801), 46.

"last she doth appear," "the last, you all shall see." Problematically, however, Southcott's imperialist rhetoric also throws into relief how heavily the feminist project of secondary significance relied on colonialist discourse, especially the so-called civilized/savage binary; the foremost issue with rewriting (rather than entirely dispensing with) the progress of imperial time was that the tragic racial logic of primitivism was put into the service of the liberation of Western women's bodies.

To be sure, since the foremost male Romantic critics and poets disregarded her work and that of her forebears equally, Southcott had to cover much of "the same ground in order to overcome the same hurdles on the road" as did her predecessors.[55] From 1790 to 1810, however, other seeming headwinds were developing; this period saw the increasing popularity of Hannah More and Sarah Trimmer, writers who concurrently advanced the Sunday school movement, increased access to scripture, and often disseminated emphatically traditional interpretations of biblical texts. Texts such as Sarah Trimmer's *The Teacher's Assistant: Consisting of Lectures in the Catechetical Form* (1792, through seven editions by 1812) and *A Help to the Unlearned in the Study of the Holy Scriptures* (1805, through six editions by 1826), for example, began with instructive paraphrases of the story of the Garden of Eden that saw its plot "adapted to common apprehensions."[56] The catechistic prose of Trimmer and More often followed biblical summaries with tests of reading comprehension.

Even elements of these supposedly solidly conservative works, however, also reinforced the connections that feminist revisers were making between civilization and femininity. In Hannah More's novel *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife* (1808), for example, the sexual desire of the eponymous male protagonist is mediated through his appreciation of Lucilla Stanley's similar

[55] de Groot and Taylor, "Recovering Women's Voices," 2.

[56] Trimmer, *Help to the Unlearned*, title page.

reading of Milton's Eve: "Our mutual admiration of the Paradise Lost, and of its heroine, seemed to bring us nearer together than we had yet been."[57] According to Cœlebs, in reading *Paradise Lost*, the educated Lucilla "considered Eve, in her state of innocence, as the most beautiful model of the delicacy, propriety, grace, and elegance of the female character which any poet ever exhibited."[58] Intriguingly, More too subscribes to the association of femininity with cultural civilization: Milton's Eve is represented as possessing the feminized values of privilege and luxury: "propriety," "grace," and "elegance." This particular passage, which was excerpted and reprinted in the *Lady's Magazine* and the *Monthly Review*, was intensely debated in the period. As a result, the preface that More adds to the novel's subsequent editions highlights this exchange between Cœlebs and Lucilla. In this later preface, More responds to her feminist readers' critiques of her approving treatment of Milton's misogynous portrayal of Eve: "[Milton] is so far from making Eve a mere domestic drudge, an unpolished housewife, that he pays an invariable attention even to external elegance . . . He uniformly keeps up the same combination of intellectual worth and polished manners."[59] Throughout her preface, More insists that Milton's Eve's "excellencies consist not so much in acts as in habits"; Milton's epic represents the "perfection of her character."[60] More's striking reinterpretations of Milton's Eve as a "polished," "elegant," and "intellectual" woman of "manners" of excellent "habits" and "perfect" character resonate with Burke, Millar, and Elias' representations of civilization as "second nature." More recovers both Milton's Eve, and the Eve of Genesis by connecting their femininity with

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[57] Hannah More, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife: Comprehending Observations on Domestic Habits and Manners, Religion and Morals* (New York: David Carlisle, 1809), 104-05.

[58] More, *Cœlebs in Search*, 104.

[59] In *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 7 Joseph Wittreich argues that from the eighteenth century to the Romantic era feminist readers and writers often interpreted Milton's verses as supporting the struggle for women's rights, and countering the "tradition of Scripture."

[60] More, *Cœlebs in Search*, 7.

discourses of secondariness; neither rudimentary nor fallen "drudges," these Eves are instead more advanced emblems of the civilizing process.

As More's work shows, supposedly reactionary Romantic catechists employed their own versions of feminist Genesis revision. At the same time that it contains paraphrases of Genesis, for example, Trimmer's *Sacred History: Selected From the Scriptures* (6 vols. 1782-85, through seven editions by 1817) also includes a section entitled "Annotations and Reflections." In "Annotations and Reflections," Trimmer moves beyond biblical plot summary in order to fill in secondary details that were lacking in the original myths. In these commentaries she describes as "probable" the idea that God figuratively represented his protection of Adam and Eve through clothing.[61] Moreover, Trimmer variously imagines what "without doubt . . . must have been" Adam and Eve's sorrow over their son's death despite the fact the "Scripture is silent," reflects on how gardening after the Fall "must have been a very laborious task," and speculates on the length of Eve's life: "in all probability Eve also lived to a good old age."[62] While Trimmer conservative politics cause her to portray her creative additions to the Genesis myth as realistic explorations of the "probable" and what "must have been," her approach is not wholly antithetical to that of her radical feminist counterparts.

In a revision of Trimmer and More as much as the now-canonical Romantic poets, including William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron—who rethought Milton's Satan as a heroic rebel—the Unitarian intellectual Lucy Aikin built on Southcott's prophecies of Eve's second coming in her poetic magnum opus, *Epistles on the Character and Condition of Women, in Various Ages and Nations* (1810). The niece of the prominent woman of letters, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, and the daughter of the physician and author, John Aikin, Lucy Aikin's poem, which

[61] Trimmer, *Sacred History: Selected from the Scriptures*, 6th ed. (London: J. Johnson, and J. Hatchard, 1810), 29.

[62] Trimmer, *Sacred History*, 29, 36, 62, 41.

includes an erudite vision of a female God, likely borrowed from Southcott, who by 1810 had long since become part of the cultural zeitgeist. From the early 1790s until her death in 1814, Southcott "conceived of the female as God" and declared herself "the new Eve who would restore peace and prosperity to all."[63] For Southcott, only a powerful reproductive female could redeem the world; a 'new Eve' could cure the world after the Fall.[64]

In *Epistles*, Aikin revises Southcott by rendering primary what Leapor's "Man the Monarch" had rendered secondary. Hence Aikin does to Leapor's poem what Leapor did to the works of her male predecessors. While Leapor's Nature pours "roseat Beauty on her Fav'rite [Eve]" (25), Aikin defines Eve as "Beauty's frail child."[65] Aikin transforms beauty, a force secondary to Nature in "Man the Monarch," into the creator of Eve:

> When slumbering Adam pressed the lonely earth, . . .
> Unconscious parent of a wondrous birth, . . .
> As forth to light the infant-woman sprung,
> By pitying angels thus her doom was sung:
> 'Ah! fairest creature! born to changeful skies,
> To bliss and agony, to smiles and sighs:
> Beauty's frail child, to thee, though doomed to bear
> By far the heavier half of human care,
> Deceitful Nature's stepdame-love assigned
> A form more fragile, and a tenderer mind;

[63] Selvidge, *Notorious Voices*, 7.

[64] Selvidge, *Notorious Voices*, 174-82.

[65] Lucy Aikin, *Epistles on Women*, eds. Mellor and Michelle Levy (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, [1810] 2011), 58. All subsequent citations of this poem appear parenthetically and refer to the Broadview edition.

More copious tears from Pity's briny springs,

And, trembling Sympathy! thy finest strings:

While ruder man she prompts, in pride of power,

To bruise, to slay, to ravage, to devour . . .

Poor victim! (I: 75-91)

For Aikin, beauty is a synonym for a world creating Mother Nature. In rewriting beauty as the creative force of nature, Aikin further critiques Burke's argument in *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* that wild nature exhibits a superior masculine sublimity. Aikin's "New Eve" therefore seconds Southcott, an already secondary Eve, and Leapor, a secondary poetic reviser. Aikin's doubly secondary Eve affords constructs a new model of independent female divinity that did not just reflect male divinity; both Southcott ('New Eve') and Aikin (Beauty/Mother Nature) undermined what Rita Felski terms the "very long history of equating the male with the universal and seeing the female as the special case."[66]

Extending her predecessors' disputes with the biblical account of Adam's creation, Aikin's account abandons all reference to Adam's rib. She nevertheless retains the sleep that allows God to remove his rib. Her portrayal of Adam's sleep removes all conscious agency from him as a participant in Eve's creation. In addition, her parentless Adam develops unnaturally, "No mother's voice has touched that slumbering ear" (I: 122). By contrast, Aikin naturalizes Eve's secondariness; Eve matures under the care of a sympathetic parent, Mother Nature.[67] Literally born from the womb of Mother Earth, Aikin's Eve comes closer to the Hebrew meaning of Adam as "ground," "soil" or "earth" than does her Adam. As the secondary daughter of the

[66] Rita Felski, *Literature after Feminism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 14-17.

[67] The vital parental agency that Aikin ascribes to Mother Nature supports Major's contention that, as a result of their learning, Warrington Academy dissenters possessed a unique understanding of nature. See Emma Major, *Madam Britannia: Women, Church, and Nation 1712-1812* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 219.

Earth, Eve is the creation of a Mother who eclipses Adam in both priority and significance.[68] By depicting the secondary Mother Earth as giving birth to Eve, *Epistles* foregrounds the acts of female labor that masculine Romantic poets typically neglected. By replacing God the father with a female parental agent, Aikin also undercuts the intellectual foundations of what Gilbert and Gubar call "the relationship between male (parent) culture and female (colonized) literature."[69]

Besides following Southcott and Leapor's feminizations of an ostensibly original, masculine God, Aikin also reorganizes the chronology of Genesis by altering the narrative sequence of Leapor's poem. The bleak milieu that succeeds after Nature's optimistic creation of Eve in "Man the Monarch," "Fear and Grief destroy her fading Charms . . . And Time's rude Sickle cuts the yielding Rose . . . Tis' all Delirium from a wrinkled Maid," reappears in *Epistles* as "But eyes, alas! grow dim, and roses fade, / And man contemns the trifler he has made . . . A wrinkled idiot now the fair is seen" (43-49; I: 23-26). Although this account of Eve's aging concludes Leapor's creation myth, Aikin offers it to her readers before she recounts her own story of Adam and Eve. *Epistles* effectively takes place after both the Genesis myth and "Man the Monarch." Aikin's opening, "Man to man / adds praise, and glory lights his mortal span," transforms Leapor's closing: "The regal Blood to distant Ages runs: / Sires, Brothers, Husbands, and commanding Sons . . . A long succession of Domestic Kings" (I: 3-4; 62-65). By commencing with Leapor's pessimistic ending, Aikin places herself within a progressive feminist tradition of superior secondariness. *Epistles* converts the despair of the final lines of "Man the Monarch" into a point of departure toward cultural perfection.

[68] As Mellor and Levy explain, Aikin's Genesis account "never mentions God" since "Adam has a wet-dream and impregnates Mother Earth." See "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 31.

[69] Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, 74.

Rather than emphasizing genesis or origins, Aikin stresses progress and endings. The retrospective lamentations of Leapor's "tattling Dame," a speaker who remakes the Genesis story into commonplace gossip, become Aikin's prophetic "pitying angels" (I: 78). These angels sympathetically foretell Adam's tormenting of Eve through the institution of patriarchy before it occurs: love will prompt "ruder man . . . in pride of power, / To bruise, to slay, to ravage, to devour" (I: 87-88). By translating the melancholy retrospection of Leapor's Dame into the proleptic prophecy of an angelical chorus, Aikin signals the arbitrariness of discourses of origins within narrative structures.

As these connections make clear, Aikin converses with Leapor throughout her first epistle. *Epistles* therefore also echoes Leapor's addresses to female readers in "Man the Monarch." Yet Aikin addresses her epistles to a personal female friend, Anne Wakefield Aikin. Channeling the female muse (in this case, Anne), that defines all poetic creation as secondary to an inspiring woman, Aikin writes a "friendship poem" of the kind that Backscheider terms "the only significant form of poetry that eighteenth-century women inherited from women."[70] By encoding into her Romantic poem what Backscheider calls the eighteenth-century woman poet's formal inheritance of friendship, Aikin explores how rewriting involves both the collaborative transmission of form, knowledge, emotion, and affect.[71]

Well suited for her own belated role in feminist literary history, Aikin received a stellar education that allowed her unparalleled access to both the female and male poetic traditions of the eighteenth century. By the time that Aikin composed *Epistles*, her aunt had become a fixture

[70] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 175.

[71] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, 175. There were many opportunities for Aikin to encounter Leapor. Her fellow Unitarian poet Mary Scott's *Female Advocate* referenced Leapor alongside Barbauld. In addition, Scott's poem both advertised John Aikin's works and shared Lucy Aikin's publisher, Joseph Johnson.

in catalogues of so-called women worthies. Scott's *Female Advocate*, for example, both celebrates Barbauld as a female worthy of "vivid intellectual paintings" and appeals to her as the quintessential female advocate: "Thy sex apprize of pleasure's treach'rous charms . . . Will thee, the open book of Nature scan, / Yet nobly scorn the little pride of Man" (426; 431-6). Scott's poem, which contains allusions to Leapor in addition to such tributes to Barbauld, exhibits the references to women worthies that Aikin would have encountered while reading poetic encomiums on her aunt. In addition to drawing Aikin's attention to the marginalized works of prior poets such as Leapor, verses that described the relationships between feminist poets living in different eras made it possible for Aikin to rewrite the newly established secondary traditions and tropes of women's poetry. Although Aikin charts similar thematic territory to her predecessors, writing at the end of the long Romantic tradition of secondary revision also allowed her to focus more intently on reinvestigating and reinvigorating the firmly established poetic methods, approaches, references, and contexts of her feminist precursors. Aikin marshals and revises the feminist tradition of secondary Genesis revision itself. By participating in a transhistorical community of feminist revisers, Aikin puts into practice what Leapor could only imagine in "Man the Monarch."

Aikin was influenced by her family's Unitarian hermeneutics, especially her father's approaches to interpreting biblical myth. In his ten-volume *General Biography* (1799-1815), John Aikin advocates biblical revision and reinterpretation. In his entry on Sixtinus Amama, a seventeenth-century Dutch writer, he details how Amama, "being informed that Mersennus had undertaken the vindication of the Vulgate, and had written a refutation of his critique on the first

six chapters of Genesis," composed a rebuke entitled "Antibarbarus Biblicus."[72] In John Aikin's view, Amama's "work effectively exposed the misrepresentations, whether through ignorance or design, of the meaning of the original scriptures, with which the vulgate translation abounded."[73]

In *Epistles on Women*, Lucy Aikin extends her father's limited support for biblical revision, issuing a feminist call for a wholesale rewriting of Genesis. While Michelle Levy and Mellor have identified the ways in which Aikin rewrites a host of male authors from Alexander Pope to Juvenal to John Milton to Virgil and St. Paul, Aikin's less overt but equally important reliance on the feminist tradition of Genesis revision has gone unremarked.[74] *Memoirs, Miscellanies, and Letters of the Late Lucy Aikin* (1864) provides clear evidence that Aikin engaged with feminist literary traditions. *Memoirs and Miscellanies* describes how Aikin fostered female literary sociability by overseeing a "ladies' book society."[75] To open the second stanza of *Epistles*, Aikin invokes Finch, a prior biblical revisionist. Alluding to Finch's "The Spleen," Aikin depicts "The glass reversed by the magic power of Spleen" (I: 25). Aikin's poem unreservedly exhibits its debts to feminist poets; the ambivalent portrait of Elizabeth I that she sketches in her fourth epistle, for example, draws heavily on Benger's study of Elizabeth in *The Female Geniad.* In *Epistles* therefore Aikin presents a version of Daniel E. White's conception of citation as agency: "Whereas imitation, like influence, is unidirectional, citation is recursive,

[72] John Aikin, "Amama, Sixtinus," in *General Biography; Or Lives, Critical and Historical, of the Most Eminent Persons of All Ages, Countries, Conditions, and Professions, Arranged According to Alphabetical Order*, eds. J. Aikin and William Enfield (London, G. G. and J. Robinson, et al., 1799), 1:221.

[73] J. Aikin, "Amama, Sixtinus," in *General Biography*, 1:221.

[74] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 29-30.

[75] See L. Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies, and Letters of the Late Lucy Aikin*, ed. Philip Hemery Le Breton (London: Longman, Green, et al., 1864), 125-27. Aikin here comments on contemporary women writers and states that the ladies' book society is "a great hobby horse with my aunt Barbauld and me, I must beg your congratulations on our spirit in setting up an institution into which not a single man is admitted, even to keep the accounts."

projecting the self out onto a range of styles and voices that in turn inform and become part of the self that cites."[76]

Aikin's *Epistles* articulates a sophisticated feminism that opposes women's superior secondariness to the supposedly original spirit of her age. Aikin responds to Genesis through her predecessors' revisions; after the fashion of her feminist ancestors, she returns to enlightenment in a Romantic age. *Epistles* reverses Finch's emphasis on the liberating power of Edenic darkness in "Nocturnal Reverie." Aikin's poem noticeably rewrites the stigmatized biblical associations of Eve and the tree of knowledge through the feminist imagery of illumination; the enlightened Eve of *Epistles* brings Adam civilization rather than damnation. Before he encounters Eve's belated body, Aikin's Adam is no noble savage; rather, he lives "vacant and sad" in a "hapless world" as a "joyless Adam, though a world he sways!" (I: 126-29). In Finch's hands, the "dark" defies both God's world-creating fiat lux in Genesis, and the cultural primacy of the eighteenth-century notion of Enlightenment: "Morning breaks, and All's confus'd again." Aikin, however, transforms Adam into a "moping idiot" who possesses a "darkling soul" until Eve enlightens him (I: 132, 127). In contrast to Finch, who juxtaposes the patriarchal world of "light" and its "Elements of Rage" with the yonic world of "dark," whose "silent musings urge the Mind to seek / Something, too high for Syllables to speak," Aikin's enlightened Romanticism portrays a civilized Eve who inspires "a brighter crimson" (I: 134). Through the influence of Eve, Adam's "broad eye kindles"; in Aikin's view, Eden is not a paradise until the sexually superior Eve arrives (I: 135).

In *Epistles*, Aikin assembles her poem's primary events from the secondary events of Leapor's "Man the Monarch." Aikin rewrites Leapor's narrative progression. The bleak milieu

[76] Daniel E. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, and Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 13. White's argument focuses on nineteenth-century Indian poets who reconstructed the Romantic canon.

that succeeds after Nature optimistically creates Eve in "Man the Monarch"—"Fear and Grief destroy her fading Charms . . . And Time's rude Sickle cuts the yielding Rose . . . Tis' all Delirium from a wrinkled Maid" (43-49)—reappears in *Epistles* as "But eyes, alas! grow dim, and roses fade, / And man contemns the trifler he has made . . . A wrinkled idiot now the fair is seen" (I: 23-6). Aikin's poem, however, reorders Leapor's account; instead of alluding to the destructive power of "Time's rude sickle" on Eve's body at the end of her poem, Aikin cites this passage from "Man the Monarch" before the story of Adam and Eve. Aikin therefore preempts the beginning of her own Genesis story with an account of the secondary aftereffects of the biblical Genesis myth that Leapor's conclusion describes.

Leapor reorganizes the temporality of Genesis, and Aikin reorders the events of "Man the Monarch." By beginning with Leapor's ending, the unorthodox Aikin posits a progressive female tradition. Aikin initiates *Epistles*, "Man to man / adds praise, and glory lights his mortal span" (I: 3-4), by recovering the sentiment that ends Leapor's poem: "The regal Blood to distant Ages runs: / Sires, Brothers, Husbands, and commanding Sons . . . A long succession of Domestic Kings" (62-65). Aikin effectively transforms the despairing end of "Man the Monarch" into a progressive beginning for her *Epistles*. As a feminist rewriter, she continues "Man the Monarch"; she progressively builds on Leapor's eighteenth-century voice during the nineteenth century.

Importantly, Aikin also rewrites Leapor's "tattling Dame." In Aikin's hands, the Dame whose retrospective lamentations close "Man the Monarch" metamorphoses into the "pitying angels" (I: 78) whose prospectively prophesies begin *Epistles*. Aikin's angels sympathetically foretell the tormenting of Eve by Adam before it occurs: "ruder man she [love personified] prompts, in pride of power, / To bruise, to slay, to ravage, to devour" (I: 87-88). By converting Leapor's reflection into prolepsis, Aikin rewrites the chronology of Genesis through Leapor.

Epistles temporal transformations of Genesis and "Man the Monarch" therefore signal the significance of endings and the arbitrariness of beginnings within narrative structures. Her poem's creation of beginnings from endings reminds her readers that the secondary, the end, and the after often exceed the supposed significance of the primary, the origin, and the before.

The focus of *Epistles* on the secondary superiority of women comes into relief most prominently in Aikin's rewriting of the Fall. In *Epistles*, Aikin reassigns responsibility for the Fall from Eve's desire to Cain's hatred: "*Equal* they trod till want and guilt arose, / Till Savage blood was spilt, and man had foes" (I: 168-69).[77] For Aikin, the Fall results from Cain's roughness, and Cain here stands in for modern warfare—the aftereffects of the prototypical story of masculinity gone wrong. For Aikin, reimagining women's social roles requires reemphasizing the first narrative of conflict between men—the origins of patriarchal politics. Rather than the primary story of Adam and Eve, it is the secondary story of Cain and Abel that ends up indelibly besmirching human history. Aikin constructs a critique of Cain's so-called physical savagery out of Leapor's condemnations of Adam's physical rudeness, rage, and power (I: 10, 58). In moving the Fall out of Eden, Aikin excoriates the force that has excluded women from history, namely, the political, public sphere. Put succinctly: for Aikin, the Fall *is* the creation of the doctrine of separate spheres.

Aikin concludes her first epistle by moving from her argument that Genesis must be rewritten to an argument that all poetry must be rewritten. This move to entirely reenvisioning poetic representation springs from "Man the Monarch." For Leapor, patriarchal society originates in the moment of naming when Adam "Roll'd his wise Eye-balls, and pronounc'd her *Fool*" (61). Developing Leapor's argument that the oppression of women derives from language, Aikin makes the case that English poetry's images, idioms, and metaphors need improvement. In

[77] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 33.

her reproach of English literary history, she expresses political claims similar to those of Percy Shelley in "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) that "poetry is connate with the origin of man," and that poetic language is "vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension."[78] Writing after Aikin, Shelley famously professes that to reimagine poetic language is to reimagine the world. To counter Leapor's emphasis on Adam's naming power, Aikin designates Eve as the source of speech. As Mellor and Levy argue, "It is Eve who teaches Adam to speak the language of Nature"; through Eve, Mother Nature brings about civilization.[79] By representing the first female as the creator of language, Aikin justifies the woman writer's linguistic authority; Eve bears the mother tongue.

Aikin bases her narrative of the woman poet's provenance on the biographies of female nature poets like Leapor. These biographies, however, problematically belie the learning of Leapor and her peers. Aikin's Eve embodies Leapor; she is a rural, natural genius, speaking the poetic language of nature. She murmurs "untried sounds" and listens to the "deep-toned numbers" that will "dwell / On rocks, on whirlpools, and the foaming swell" (I: 101, 108-9). Aikin's representation of Eve as a natural genius itself rewrites a 1750s poetic tradition that sought to insert Leapor into Genesis. In the wake of Leapor's death, Eve and working-class women poets were defended (and attacked) with the same rhetoric of genius. Midcentury Graveyard poet Edward Young, for example, endowed Eve with natural genius in *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). According to Matthew Wickman, Young idealized Eve in *Conjectures* as "truly the paragon of genius" by making "imitation into a source of qualitative

[78] P. B. Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 511-12.

[79] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 32.

originality which marks her creativity."[80] In *Epistles*, Aikin toys with such homologizing characterizations of Leapor and Eve as natural geniuses of expression. Nonetheless, Aikin also incorporates Leapor's pessimistic vision of masculine succession; *Epistles* records how the "darkening theme" of masculine violence suppresses Eve's enlightened voice (I: 172).

It remains important to emphasize that Aikin's revisions are not reducible to mere responses or reactions. Her civilized Eves and progressive transformations simultaneously foreclose the possibility of reading *Epistles* as merely imitative of its masculine or feminist sources. While patriarchy consistently silences Leapor's female speaker, Aikin's female speaker reclaims agency by self-silencing. After Cain's Fall, the learned female speaker of *Epistles* 'hushes' and dismisses her muse: "Be husht, my plaintive lyre! my listening friend, adieu!" (I: 174). In *Epistles*, this rewriting of women's silence engenders new forms of female optimism. To begin each subsequent epistle, Aikin's muse regenerates the representational power of the battered, softly speaking female poetic voice; the second epistle begins: "Once more my Muse uplifts her drooping eye" (II: 1). For Aikin, the secondary voice that survives being overwhelmed by men is always stronger and more persistent. In the three epistles that follow her rewriting of Genesis, Aikin confirms her interest in the alternative temporalities of feminist evolution—each new epistle marks the progress of women's rights.[81]

In the final three epistles, Aikin's revisionary speaker even revises herself. Doubling back on her own earlier accounts, the perpetually self-critiquing speaker of *Epistles* demands growth from herself as well as from her predecessors. By formally allowing her speaker to rewrite her claims, Aikin teaches women how to reimagine themselves. In the second epistle, the speaker

[80] Matthew Wickman, "Imitating Eve Imitating Echo Imitating Originality: The Critical Reverberations of Sentimental Genius in the 'Conjectures on Original Composition,'" *ELH* 65, no. 4 (1998): 901.

[81] In "The Enlightenment Feminist Project of Lucy Aikin's *Epistles*," *History of European Ideas* 31, no. 2 (2005): 435-50, Kathryn Ready analyzes Aikin in the context of Scottish stadialist theory and Whig historical progressivism.

questions the entire reality of Eden, the subject of the poem's first epistle. Discarding the pastoral, Aikin's poetic voice denies the existence of any idyllic poetic paradise: "No! […] vain the search, […] of warm poetic birth, / Arcadian blossoms scorn the fields of earth; / No lovelorn swains, to tender griefs a prey" (II: 216-18). Here Aikin practices a poetics of revisionary negation. The speaker rescinds the utopian thinking of the first epistle with a resounding "No!"

Aikin's use of silence and absence, however, is as diverse it is deft. Aikin recognizes that refiguring the secondary female as enlightened requires the erasure of Satan as much as the masculine God of Genesis. Her poem grapples with what Emma Major identifies as one of the lasting results of the paranoid climate of the French Revolution—British culture's development of increasingly strong associations between the serpent, women, and dissenters; the Francophobic British associated atheism, feminization, and dissent with the French during the Napoleonic wars.[82] As Major makes clear, Romantic caricaturists not only associated dissenters with atheists and women with Eve, but also bound them to the serpent. In a 16 May 1812 letter to Mary Wordsworth, for example, William Wordsworth derogates Aikin's dissenting aunt as "the old snake Letitia Barbauld."[83] Forgetting the serpent therefore became a particularly pressing project for feminist dissenters such as Aikin.

Aikin's most powerful use of erasure and silence to reinforce her argument for women's superior secondariness comes in her reclamation of the poetic device of ellipsis. According to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, "in ellipsis, the thought is complete; it is only that a word or words ordinarily called for in the full construction but not strictly necessary are omitted (since

[82] Major traces the "ubiquity of serpents in the graphic satire of the 1790s" to contend that both sides of the British political spectrum caricatured their enemies as serpentine. See *Madam Britannia*, 292-93.

[83] Major, *Madam Britannia*, 255-60.

obvious)."[84] Aikin uses ellipsis, however, not to omit unnecessary, irrelevant, or obvious material; instead, she employs ellipsis to represent women's sexual desires. While Mellor and Levy point out that in *Epistles* the world's demiurgic creation itself occurs in Aikin's "coy" ellipses, it also remains the case that when Adam and Eve first meet, Aikin suggests an unspoken activity of sexual generation through ellipsis: "But see! . . . they meet, . . . they gaze, . . . , the new-born pair" (I: 130).[85] In ellipsis, Aikin discovers a new way to record women's erotic desires. Her imagination of an alternative sexual politics works to represent the unrepresentable. Censoring women who openly represented female sexual desire as immoral, male poets mostly wrote them out of the lists of female worthies. When male writers did include such women in such lists, they commonly represented them as fallen and sullied. For example, Duncombe's *Feminead*, which charts the progress of women's poetry, only cites Manley, Centlivre, and Behn in order to disapprove of their supposed immodesty: "Abash'd she views the bold unblushing Mien / Of modern Manley, Centlivre, and Behn."[86]

Moreover, by beginning *Epistles* with ellipsis, "I sing the Fate of Woman: . . . Man to man / Adds praise," Aikin formally exemplifies her view that women's secondary status confers superior storytelling ability (I: 3-4). The ellipsis that forecloses the enumeration that we expect after the colon that follows "the Fate of Woman" implies—after Leapor and in defiance of the Romantic cult of poetic originality—that it is impossible for masculine Romantic poets to compose original verse. According to Aikin, these poets are doomed to repeated tired and worn tropes, figures, theories, and themes as "Man to man / Adds praise."

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[84] T. V. F. Brogan, "Ellipsis," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 400.

[85] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 31.

[86] Duncombe, *The Feminead*, ll. 141-42.

Aikin's disavowals, silences, and ellipses formally encode Western history's forgotten female voices into the verses of *Epistles*. Echoing both the prophetic voice of the tattling Dame that resounds in Leapor's "Man the Monarch" and imagery of creative darkness that appears in Finch's "Nocturnal Reverie," the form of Aikin's *Epistles* renders negation "pregnant"; she insightfully notes how the negative, universal wrongs of women offer women a pregnant, female solidarity across race, class, space, and time. [87] In *Epistles*, form mirrors content. Far from secondary to the poem's grand narratives, formal interruptions—gaps, fragments, eddies, and corrections—end up defining *Epistles*.

Not simply reducible to fiery feminist assertion, Aikin's *Epistles* articulate these quieter forms of activism as negation, reversal, revision, and erasure. Aikin's epic differs from the so-called strong feminist imaginations that would characterize Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812) and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). While Barbauld and Shelley's apocalyptic imaginaries represent the decline and fall of British culture and empire, Aikin conceptualizes feminist negation as a prelude to the secondary, softer mission of rewriting British culture. Less a woman warrior than a recuperative thinker, Aikin rethinks the supposed softness of the second sex; Aikin insists that she is "no Amazon, in frowns and terror drest" (I: 33). Aikin alternatively divorces feminist softness from the defective weakness of Burke's concept of beauty.

After Leapor, Aikin shrewdly acknowledges the comparative weakness of the secondary female body in order to contend for the supremacy of the secondary female mind. Aikin's early allusion to motherhood—"The softer sex! a mightier soul inspires"—defines her new, intellectually communal aesthetic (II: 130). To frame her final epistle, she further theorizes

[87] My use of the 'negative pregnant' here relies upon Laura Mandell's essay, "Demystifying (with) the Repugnant Female Body: Mary Leapor and Feminist Literary History," *Criticism* 38, no. 4 (1996): 551-82.

feminist poetry as a cooperative rather than egotistical endeavor; sharing power with the secondary reader, she diminishes the sublime primary speaker into a beautiful but languid body:[88]

> … thoughtful, cold,
> The fading lines I languidly behold;
> But thou, my friend, assert the generous part,
> O praise, O foster, with a partial heart!
> So shall the power my happier pencil guide,
> And Friendship grant me what the Muse denied. (IV: 35-40)

Friendly fostering enlivens Aikin's faint, "fading" speaker; under friendship's influence, feminist art on the verge of visibility becomes manifest. Aikin's speaker readily admits that her "cold" lines will not thrive without the warmth of female friendship. In warming verses with meaning, the secondary woman reader becomes a life-giving creator. Concluding *Epistles* by incorporating the reader into the text allows Aikin to reemphasize that English cultural memory must be rewritten in order to include the women it has excluded.

In sum, while Aikin cites the male rewriters of Genesis in order to display her learning, she equally weaves women authors into her text to address her female audience and to reward the segment of her male audience that was familiar with women writers.[89] By Aikin's time, such rich tapestries of allusion helped to maintain community amongst feminist intellectuals. Only women who had been educated in the traditions of women's writing could fully decode Aikin's implicit feminist references. Aikin addresses both women and men—insiders and outsiders—and her subtext is as rich as her text. Inescapably associated with triviality and fashion, women poets

[88] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 42.

[89] Mellor and Levy, "Introduction," in *Epistles on Women*, 33.

such as Aikin made themselves into expert manipulators of literary surfaces; hiding a secondary later of feminist meaning in plain sight, they engaged and rewrote newly established traditions of women's poetry.

Aikin, Southcott, and their precursors inaugurated a major feminist tradition that anticipates a significant strand of modern radical feminist thought.[90] Two centuries before Luce Irigaray and Carolyn Burke would call for women to embrace a post-Adamic language of "all," the feminist mythmakers of the Romantic era established a poetic theology of women's superior secondariness that noticeably differs from Wollstonecraft's primarily equality-oriented vision of womanhood.[91] After many of the landmark works of twentieth-century feminism—most notably, Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1949) and Elizabeth Gould Davis's *First Sex* (1972)—adopted similar critical vocabularies of "primariness" and "secondariness."[92] These early feminist writers, who recovered their precursors and traced their spiritual influences, established alternative poetic genealogies that not only precede but also initiate the type of feminist literary history that Woolf famously termed "thinking back through our mothers" in the 1920s and that Gilbert and Gubar attempted to establish half a century later in *The Madwoman in the Attic*.[93]

In more recent years, the rise of digital literatures and cultures has facilitated and furthered the progressive project of feminist literary history practiced by Romantic women poets.

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[90] Felicia Hemans's *Forest Sanctuary* (1825) and Elizabeth Barrett's *Drama of Exile* (1844) also reveal this tradition's continued influence in the nineteenth century.

[91] See Luce Irigaray and Carolyn Burke, "When Our Lips Speak Together," *Signs* 6, no. 1 (1980): 78-79.

[92] Elizabeth Gould Davis represents Eve as primary in order to reenvision her as the creator of Yahweh and Adam. See *The First Sex* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972), 144. Besides Davis and de Beauvoir, many feminist poets, novelists, critics, and theorists of the twentieth century such as Hélène Cixous, Monique Wittig, Phyllis Trible, Angela Carter, Ursula LeGuin, Diana George, Kathleen Norris, Linda Pastan, Leda Whitman, and Maurya Simon have worked to overturn the sexual contract by comparing Adam's and Eve's bodies, men's and women's writing, and originary and revisionary representations. See Ostriker, *Feminist Revision*, 80-83, and Susan Rubin Suleiman, "(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism," *Poetics Today* 6 (1985): 43-65.

[93] Woolf, *Room of One's Own*, 6.

The rise of the digital humanities has provided new networks, tools, and archives, which in turn have revitalized the study of women's writing. The urgent task of recovering—and making available for public access—the works of literary women ostensibly lost to history has now gone digital. One contemporary example of an online archive that continues in the spirit of the Romantic tradition that this chapter has explored is the *Women Writers Project*, a digital database that was founded at Brown University in the late 1980s, but has since moved to Northeastern University as part of their library's Digital Scholarship Group. Both feminist coteries—one past, one present—one print, one digital—work to resurrect, reanimate, and preserve the past works of women writers; to trace the contours and connections, the communities and trajectories, the chronologies and temporalities, the allusions and the forms that women differently engaged across time. As its online mission statement explains, "Our goal is to bring texts by women writers out of the archive and make them accessible to a wide audience of teachers, students, scholars, and the general reader. We support research on women's writing, text encoding, and the role of electronic texts in teaching and scholarship" (see fig. 1):

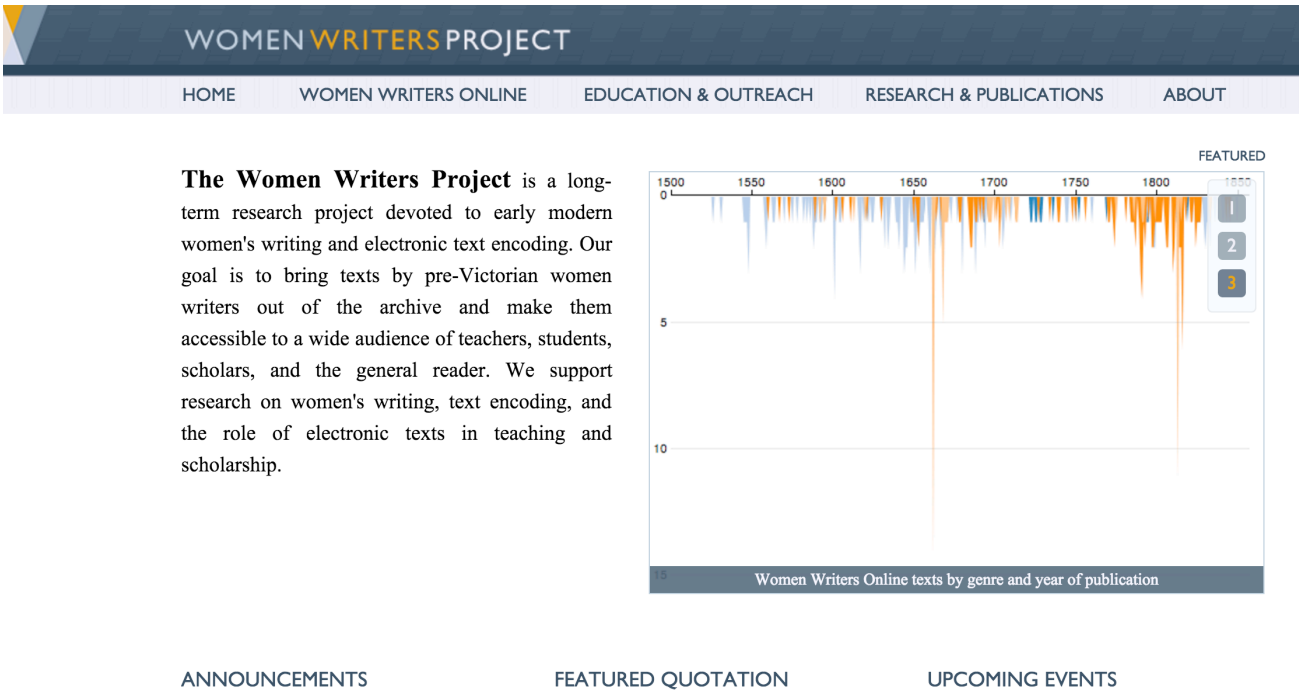

Figure 1 "Home," in *Women Writers Project*, Northeastern University, accessed April 17, 2016, http://www.wwp.northeastern.edu.

As its mission statement intimates, the *Women Writers Project* encodes and catalogues women's canons in the digital age, presenting a modern version of the Romantic feminist project that Aikin and Southcott undertook. This *Women Writers Project*, which has digitized countless editions of the recently canonical Romantic-era texts on which my argument rests, differently engages the same intellectual spadework that Romantic women poets themselves conducted: fixing and mapping the dates and chronologies of the major works of Romantic women's writing. The *Women Writers Project*, for example, has digitized Aikin's *Epistles*, a landmark Romantic feminist poem that was untaught and unknown until the 1990s; moreover, the *Project* renews the lost literary history of women's writing in which Aikin's poem appeared, placing *Epistles* in its historical context (see fig. 2):

Figure 2 "Texts Included in Women Writers Online, Sorted by Date," in *Women Writers Project*, Northeastern University, accessed April 17, 2016, http://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/wwo/texts/textlist.date.html.

As the scope of these innovative feminist endeavors in the digital humanities makes clear, today's digital repositories of women's writing are the sites that make possible new understandings of British literary history. Today's collaborative feminist digital cultures are the rich afterlives of the prior print cultures that used poetic citation, allusion, revision to form lateral bonds between women; both movements seek to create transhistorical feminist communities by progressively reconstructing the seemingly outmoded ghosts of their literary ancestors.[94] Not only do hypertext collectives such as the *Women Writers Project* announce that they "welcome

[94] The *Women Writers Project* website, for example, includes recent calls for cooperative projects in intextextuality studies as well as readership and reception studies. Moreover, their digital archive includes "communally edited manuscript materials, collective experimental interface ideas, cooperative methods of representing, visualizing, and analyzing digital texts in the humanities . . . and of assembling and digitizing syllabi contributed by affiliated faculty members." The Project also publishes a series of online exhibits organized around texts from the collection, and offers workshops on scholarly text encoding to a broad audience of humanities researchers, digital librarians, archivists, and digital practitioners.

opportunities to form collaborative partnerships with scholars and other digital humanities groups," but they broadcast their interest in building and sustaining communities in relation to—and through—past feminist literatures (see fig. 3):

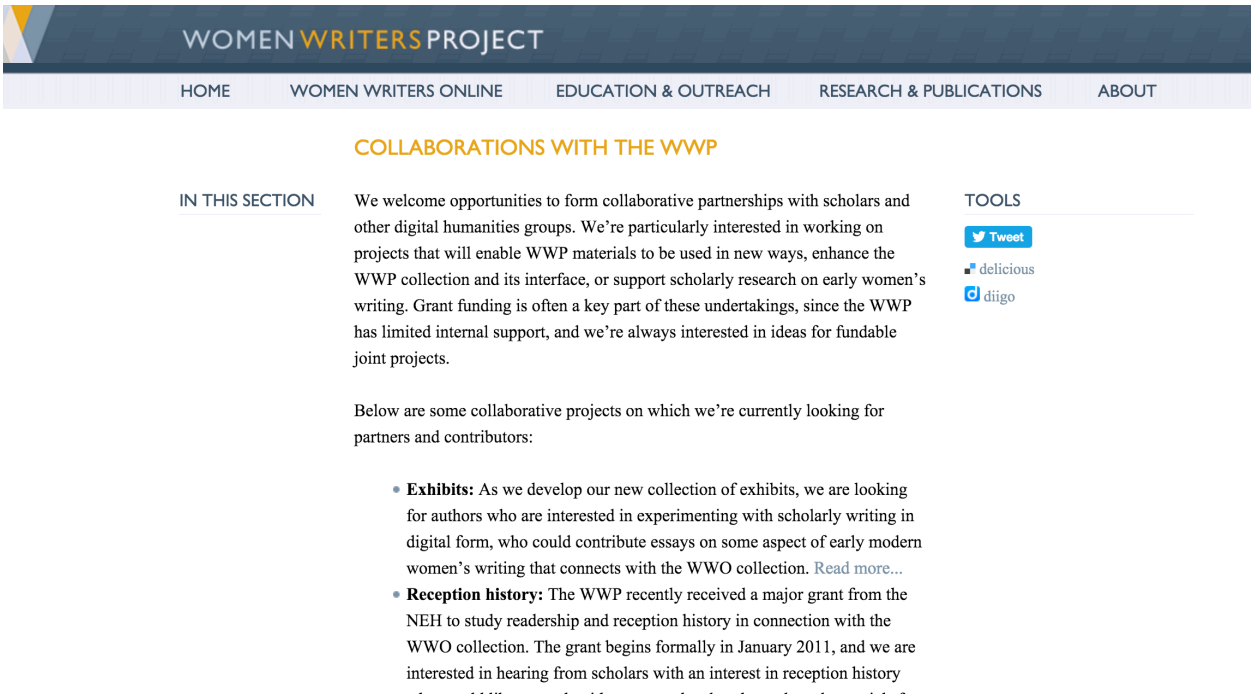

Figure 3 "Collaborations with the WWP," in *Women Writers Project*, Northeastern University, accessed April 12, 2016, http://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/research/collaborations.

In dialogue with (and in many ways in response to) their feminist collaborators working in digital media, Romantic scholars have also recently produced several prominent studies of early nineteenth-century British literature and culture that place a greater emphasis on the positions that women writers, and women more generally, held in the public sphere.[95] The poets that this chapter discusses participate in and exceed these paradigms, devoting themselves to the public and collective but also deeply personal projection of future feminist "homelands." The revised Edens that make up this simultaneously public and private feminist theology collectively

[95] On the rise of the critical doctrine of separate spheres and its contemporary critique, see O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment*, 10. See also, Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation*, 1-7.

converged upon the question: Who better to reinterpret and relocate Western culture's sacred myths of origins than women writers, the ostensible guardians of the domestic?[96] It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the ethical importance of the imagined homelands that Romantic women writers and their precursors introduced into existing masculine myths, verse satires, Miltonic epics, and progress poems. Aikin, Leapor, and others built new mythical roots for women out of stereotypes of female transience and secondariness. Only a supposedly secondary and ephemeral woman—whose sex exiled her from historical time and rooted her in domestic space—could imaginatively recreate Britain as a feminist utopia. In revising Genesis, these poets relocated themselves and the birthplace of their gender. As they looked for new places for women to originate from, they often rewrote Pope and Byron, two of the period's most prominent poets of retirement and exile. With some modification therefore, Theodor Adorno's maxim, "[f]or a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live," might accurately capture the surprising sense of belonging that women poets experienced as they re-envisioned Eve's exile.[97]

When we consider these progressive theological affirmations of the secondary virtues and sexual differences that Wollstonecraft assumed dispossessed women of their rights—we gain new insight into the diversity of long Romantic-era feminist thought. While Wollstonecraft was preoccupied with the superiority of original poetic genius—"A great reader is always quoting the description of another's emotions; a strong imagination delights to paint its own"—she would have recognized that the counterarguments of a secondary tradition of belated reflection

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[96] My argument here draws on Harriet Guest's suggestion in *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 336 that domesticity enabled both female empowerment and imprisonment; here Guest also examines domesticity's contributions to female education.

[97] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (New York: Verso, 2005), 87. My argument here draws on Charlotte Sussman's analysis of Adorno, exile, gender, and Genesis in "Epic, Exile, and the Global: Felicia Hemans's *The Forest Sanctuary*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 65, no. 4 (2011): 481-86. On eighteenth-century utopian thought and women's writing, see Alessa Johns, *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

represented a complementary and collective *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.[98] The present chapter, which similarly looks back in order to look forward, has accordingly adopted an progressive methodology of revival that takes seriously Montague's central lesson that no valuable piece of criticism is ever original. Instead, it is always contemplatively after-the-fact.[99]

[98] Mary Wollstonecraft, "Hints," in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 303. The cited passage occurs within a larger discussion that specifically references poetry and genius.

[99] This chapter's account of superior secondariness owes intellectual debts to several feminist critics of women's poetry from the eighteenth century to the Romantic era. Groundbreaking anthologies, critical works, literary histories, biographies, bibliographies, and scholarly editions such as Roger Lonsdale's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Backscheider's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (2005), Catherine E. Ingrassia's *British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century: An Anthology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), Joyce Fullard's *British Women Poets 1660-1800: An Anthology* (Troy, NY: Whitson Publishing, 1990), and Paula R. Feldman's *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) have helped make the kind of criticism that Benger imagined in 1791 a twenty-first century reality.

CHAPTER TWO

Occasional Time: Fugitive Poetics from Walpole to Byron

During the eighteenth century, occasional poetry was ubiquitous. What caused the decline and fall of occasional verse? It is possible, of course, that by the Romantic era—ostensibly the age of poetic originality and generic hybridity—occasional verse existed by any other name (as descriptive sketches, fragments, odes, elegies, and effusions). It is certainly the case, however, that by 1800 the once universal eighteenth-century title *Poems on Several Occasions* was on its way toward obsolescence (see fig. 1 below). While the Worldcat database lists 761 works entitled *Poems on Several Occasions* from 1700 to 1750 and 698 titles from 1751 to 1800, only 320 such texts can be found from 1801 to 1850, and 43 from 1851 to 1900. Moreover, the terms "occasion" and "occasions" increasingly fell out of cultural use after the eighteenth century (see figs. 4 and 5):

Figure 4 Google Ngram Search, "Poems on Several Occasions," 1700-2000

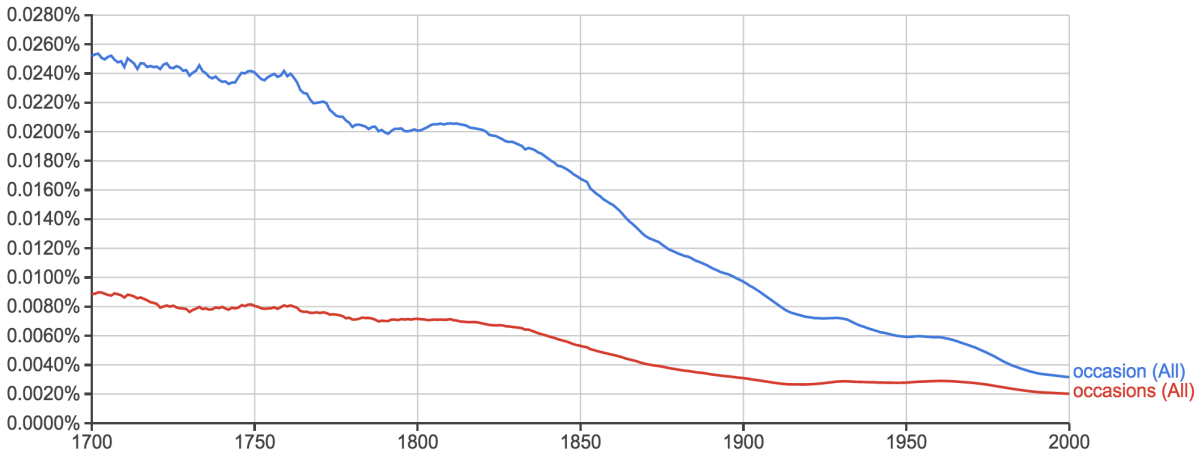

Figure 5 Google Ngram Searches, "Occasion" and "Occasions," 1700-2000

In accord with these changes, the role of the poet laureate has become less bound to the royal family and the composition of official, occasional verse over time.[1]

As a consideration of the entire life cycle of occasional poetry remains beyond the scope of the present chapter, I will focus instead on surveying and revising contemporary scholarly discussions of occasional poetry and poetics.[2] J. Paul Hunter summarizes the standard critical definition of occasional verse: works centering "on some particular moment in present (or very recent) time . . . poems written out of a particular temporal event that requires shared (or at least

[1] According to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eighteenth-century poet laureates were required "to become a member of the royal household and to compose a New Year's and birthday ode to the king; this custom was dropped in order to preserve the dignity of the office." By contrast, "In the 21st c., the poet laureate's role has been officially demarcated from the business of the royal court, and is now an honorary title awarded to a poet whose work is of national significance." See B. N. Schilling and R. Williams, "Poet Laureate," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1065.

[2] For the standard definitions of occasional poetry, see E. Miner, A. J. M. Smith, and T. V. F. Brogan, "Occasional Verse," in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 966.

communicable) thinking."[3] *The Oxford English Dictionary* connects the occasional and the literary in a similar fashion: "Of a . . . literary composition . . . produced on, or intended for, a special occasion" (sense 4c). I argue, however, that the less studied definitions of the term "occasional"—"Happening as an occasion presents itself, but without certainty or regularity" (sense 2); "Imperfect, incomplete" (sense 1, obs.); "Of a person: acting or employed for a particular occasion or on an irregular basis" (sense 4b)—facilitated the anachronistic appearance of a strange and increasingly outdated poetic temporality in the so-called minor and major works of Horace Walpole and George Gordon, Lord Byron.

The fugitive piece that Byron's title suggests was roughly in vogue during the chronological boundaries of the long Romantic era (1750-1850), reaching the height of its popularity during the very period, 1800 to 1850, that occasional verse was departing from the literary scene.[4] Writing at the end of the life cycle of occasional poetry, the eighteen-year-old Byron inaugurated his career with an 1806 volume of privately circulating verse entitled *Fugitive Pieces*. In Walpole and Byron's hands, the fugitive poem was a renewable form insofar as it rested upon sporadic temporalities. In both "To Mary," an amatory verse epistle addressed to his first opposite-sex infatuation, and "The Cornelian," an erotic effusion on the Cornelian heart he was gifted by the Cambridge chorister John Edelston, the juvenile Byron of *Fugitive Pieces* envisions affection as a roving state of unpredictable recurrence rather than stable presence:

> Though love than ours could ne'er be truer,
> Yet flames too fierce themselves destroy,
> Embraces oft repeated cloy,

[3] J. Paul Hunter, "The Poetry of Occasions," in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 207.

[4] On the publication history of Lord Byron's *Fugitive Pieces*, see Peter Sabor, Introduction to *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Sabor (New York: Routledge, 1987), 4-5.

Ours came too *frequent*, to endure . . .

Even now I cannot well forget thee,

And though no more in folds of pleasure,

Kiss follows kiss in countless measure,

I hope *you* sometimes will regret me.[5]

. . . . . .

But he who seeks the flowers of truth,

Must quit the garden for the field.

For Byron, it is the infrequent and surprising affects that last longest and touch us most; those that come "too frequent" or regularly only "cloy" and fade. Unlike Mary, the "*musical protégé*" Edelston, who quit Byron at Cambridge for a clerkship, continued to attract him; in a 5 July 1807 letter to Elizabeth Pigeot, Byron writes of Edelston: "I certainly love him more than any human being, and neither time or distance have had the least effect on my (in general) changeable disposition."[6] Such a fugitive occasionalism, which invokes the seventeenth-century libertine commonplace of excessive love betrayed, puts forward an intermittent temporal ethics that "endure[s]" in the face of the apparent distance created by its random oscillations between disappearance and appearance, departure and return.

As these selections from "To Mary" and "The Cornelian" intimate, although the fugitive piece did not solely adhere to one standard form, it typically incorporated the ephemerality of

[5] Byron, "To Mary," in *Fugitive Pieces*, ed. Marcel Kessel (New York: Columbia University Press, [1806] 1933), 18-19.

[6] Byron to Elizabeth Pigot, 30 June 1807, in *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life,* ed. Thomas Moore (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1831), 39, and Byron to Pigot, 5 July 1807, in *Letters of Lord Byron*, 39. On these Byronic letters, John Edelston, and Cambridge, see Graham Chainey, *A Literary History of Cambridge*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1985] 1995), 125.

passing time into the traditional definition of occasional poetry as commemoration. Yet this occasional form also played on the well-known meaning of the term fugitive as that which has "taken flight from duty, an enemy, justice, or a master." As the excerpts from Byron's *Fugitive Pieces* demonstrate, the term fugitive involves movement, the turn away of the deserter and the exile.

Byron's 1806 *Fugitive Pieces* specifically resummons the queer and idiosyncratic poetics of delay and disruption that Horace Walpole first formulated in his own 1758 volume of juvenilia entitled *Fugitive Pieces in Verse and Prose.* An awareness of the fact that The Strawberry Hill Press had printed only 200 copies of the Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces*, which Walpole then gifted to friends, might have also influenced the young Byron's choice of an older, slower mode of aristocratic authorship. By privately circulating a quarto edition of his first volume of poetry and taking Walpole's title, Byron sought to establish a relationship with a literary ancestor who wrote libertine letters to the young Henry Seymour Conway and moved in similarly queer coteries at Cambridge, most famously the "Quadruple Alliance" that included Richard West, Thomas Ashton, and Thomas Gray. The young Byron, whose volume also cites Gray, took the Edleston of "The Cornelian" as his protégé and associated with advocates of classical "paederasty" such as Charles Matthews. He effectively undertook the same queer genealogical project as did the juvenile Walpole, who modeled his early style on the work and biography of the rakish young Alexander Pope who wrote libertine letters to his literary mentor Henry Cromwell.[7] Byron's juvenilia, however, represented his same-sex desire in much more

[7] In his early life, Alexander Pope famously corresponded with the rakish patron, Henry Cromwell. Many of the libertine letters and poems that Pope sent to Cromwell were in print by Walpole's time. A 1781 letter from Walpole to William Mason specifically mentions Walpole's interest in the biographical details of the relationship between the young Pope and Cromwell: "Sir Joshua Reynolds has lent me Dr Johnson's life of Pope . . . he says, that all he can discover of Pope's correspondent Mr Cromwell is that he used to hunt in a tie-wig. The *Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady* he says, *signifies the amorous fury of a raving girl*; and yet he admires the subject of *Eloisa's Epistle to Abelard*"; see "To Mason," 14 April 1781, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S.

explicit terms than had Walpole's. The queerness of Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* is encoded in the volume's depictions of Greek love and intimate but ultimately elusive addresses to the foremost men of his affections; Walpole dedicates *Fugitive Pieces* to Conway and includes a poem entitled "Epistle to Ashton."

By contrast, the alternative anachronisms that Byron generated in *Fugitive Pieces* did not remain fugitive from the reader or require intimate personal knowledge to unlock. The result was that the more Byron's volumes changed hands, the more they became the unremitting subject of gossip in his native Nottinghamshire. In particular the Reverend John Thomas Beder's objection that *Fugitive Pieces* was "too warm" motivated Byron to burn every edition of the volume that he could recover. Today only four known copies of the suppressed *Fugitive Pieces* survive.[8] The following year, Byron set to work on a new compilation of these same poems, which he privately circulated and entitled *Poems on Various Occasions* (1807). This edition was ultimately reworked into two widely distributed published collections that he entitled *Hours of Idleness* (1807) and *Poems Original and Translated* (1808). Byron abandoned the term "fugitive" in the titles of all three of these subsequent works. Moreover, he neglected to reprint the sexually experimental poems that caused him to suppress his first collection, especially the aforementioned "To Mary" and "The Cornelian." All three of these later collections of Byron's juvenile verse reprinted only what he satirically called the "miraculously chaste" poems of his earlier *Fugitive Pieces*.

Lewis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937-1983), 29:130. The early letters of the Walpole circle are filled with imitations of Pope, discussions of his oeuvre, and allusions to his works. See, for example, "From West," 31 October 1736, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 13:118, in which Richard West addresses a poem entitled "The Grotto" to Walpole that depicts West as "setting out in Pope's style." See also, "From Ashton," 7 August 1737 and "To West," 3 January 1737, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 13:138, 121-22. Further associations between Pope and Walpole developed as a result of Walpole's 1747 move to Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, the town where Pope had resided.

[8] Possibly as a result, *Fugitive Pieces* does not appear in its entirety in the Oxford edition of Byron's collected works edited by McGann.

As these four different rearrangements of his early fugitive pieces exhibit, Byron constructed a now-and-again occasionalism, a fugitive poetics that unexpectedly travels across time by performing what Carolyn Dinshaw and others have recently termed the "queer act of taking one's sweet time."[9] This alternative, temporally unbound occasionalism defies both the present-oriented forms of historical engagement that critics such as Kevis Goodman find in poetic transformations of the news and the political detachment that scholars such as Alan Liu commonly connect to Romantic lyric timelessness, solitude, and immediacy.[10] As it relates to authorship and genre, the term fugitive signifies "a literary composition (occas. of a writer): Concerned or dealing with subjects of passing interest; ephemeral, occasional" (*OED* sense A.5). During the long Romantic period, fugitive poets such as Walpole and Byron incorporated the queer ephemerality of passing time into the traditional definition of occasional poetry as commemoration.

Moreover, they related the fugitive poem to the outcast and the refugee as much as to the impermanent and the insignificant. Notably, the term fugitive involves movement, the turn away of the deserter and the exile: "One who flees or tries to escape from danger"; "One who quits or is banished from his country; an exile, refugee" (senses B.1a, c). In incorporating the uncertain and illicit temporal dimensions of the fugitive into the established, certain, and time-bound form

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[9] Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 5. As Dinshaw shows in reference to the "asynchronous temporalities" of the literature of the Middle Ages and its readers, amateurs explore "queer ways of being in time" by "laboring in the off-hours . . . outside of regimes of detachment, governed by uniform, measured temporality." See Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?* 5-6. For an attempt to integrate Romantic studies and twenty-first-century queer theory, see George E. Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 2. Arguing for the queerness of gothic fiction, Haggerty contends that the narrative form that Horace Walpole famously inaugurated in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) offers **"**a historical model of queer theory and politics: transgressive, sexually coded, and resistant to the dominant ideology"; works such as *Otranto* "predate sexuality's codification. But by predating, they also prepare the ground . . . for later developments in sexological studies."

[10] See Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67-105, and Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3-31.

of occasional poetry, Walpole and Byron developed new literary strategies of time wasting to escape from the straight and standardized nature of "imperial time": the new clock-based, machine-regulated, and strictly standardized temporality used to enforce a forward-moving narrative of empire.[11] In the preface to *Hours of Idleness* (1807), a work that recollected many of the poems that had appeared in *Fugitive Pieces* (1806), a juvenile Byron announces: "Poetry . . . is not my primary vocation; to divert the dull moments of indisposition, or the monotony of a vacant hour, urged me 'to this sin.'"[12] As Byron's comment implies, fugitive poets embraced the multiplicity of meaning that the expression "wasting time" implies: the misuse of time's currency, and the idea of killing time.

The amateur Walpole and Byron's poetic project of time wasting capitalized on the landmark temporal shifts that were transpiring during the long Romantic period. It is probably not a coincidence that the first volume of poetry that Walpole published was printed by the Strawberry Hill Press a few years after the implementation of the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750. Although the Calendar Act of 1750 aligned Britain with the Gregorian calendar of the Continent—allowing the British Empire's goods to arrive on time—its passage necessitated the entire erasure of eighty-three days from 1751 (the year began in March) and eleven days from 1752 (the second of September was followed by the fourteenth). Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces*, included a trifling satire of the implementation of the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750, a bill

[11] Walpole and Byron's fugitive escapes contrast with the idealistic forms of flight that McGann argues define Romantic poetry: "The poetry of Romanticism is everywhere marked by extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization whereby the actual human issues with which the poetry is concerned are resituated in a variety of idealized localities." See *Romantic Ideology*, 1. By contrast, Romantic fugitive poets connected lyric "displacement" to ethical engagement.

[12] Byron, *Hours of Idleness: A Series of Poems, Original and Translated* (Newark: S. and J. Ridge, 1807), vii. Byron may be alluding to Jonathan Swift's famously self-referential claim that "S— [Swift] had the Sin of Wit no venial Crime" in his occasional poem entitled "The Author upon Himself." See Swift, "The Author upon Himself: Written in the Year 1713," in *Poems on Several Occasions* (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1735), 121. The Advertisement to Swift's *Poems on Several Occasions*, n.p., announces a desire "to print the Poems according to the Time they were writ in" before ultimately admitting failure; fixing the dates of the volume's various individual poems proves to be impossible: "but we could not do it so exactly as we desired."

sponsored in parliament by Walpole's intimate friend Philip Dormer Stanhope.[13] In his illustration, Richard Bentley captured Walpole's calendrical caricature with a reader in cap and bells (see fig. 6):

Figure 6 Satire of The (New Style) Calendar Act of 1750, designed by Richard Bentley for Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* (1758). Source: The Lewis Walpole Library.

Concurrent with these ostensibly enlightened developments in time recording technology, Walpole presented a frontispiece to his *Fugitive Pieces* whose Latin inscription anachronistically returns the reader to the sundial: an older, more natural form of timekeeping.[14] Walpole's

[13] Walpole was deeply interested in the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750. He regularly collaborated with Philip Stanhope, the Fourth Earl of Chesterfield (and parliamentary proponent of the Calendar Act). In *Fugitive Pieces*, Walpole satirizes calendar change by railing against the alteration of April Fools' Day: "usurers have lent their money on bad security; experienced matrons have married very disappointing young fellows; mathematicians have missed the longitude, alchemists the philosopher's stone, and politicians preferment, on that day." See Walpole, *Fugitive Pieces in Verse and Prose* (Twickenham: Strawberry Hill Press, 1758), 100.

[14] From the eighteenth century to the Victorian era, the seasonal time of nature gave way to the industrial clock time that E. P. Thompson connects to the cultural shift from an irregular, "task oriented time" of medieval agriculture to the modern, capitalist idea of time as a currency that can be stolen and spent. According to Thompson, modern time is made possible by the synchronized, regularized temporality of mechanical instruments. This new time program is maintained and disciplined by an array of new time-keeping technologies, including time recorders and more exact, ubiquitous clocks. See Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline," 56-97.

satirical frontispiece to *Fugitive Pieces* includes a well-known epigram by Martial that was commonly inscribed on eighteenth-century sundials, "Pereunt et imputantur," or "The hours are consumed and will be charged [to our] account" (see figs. 7 and 8):

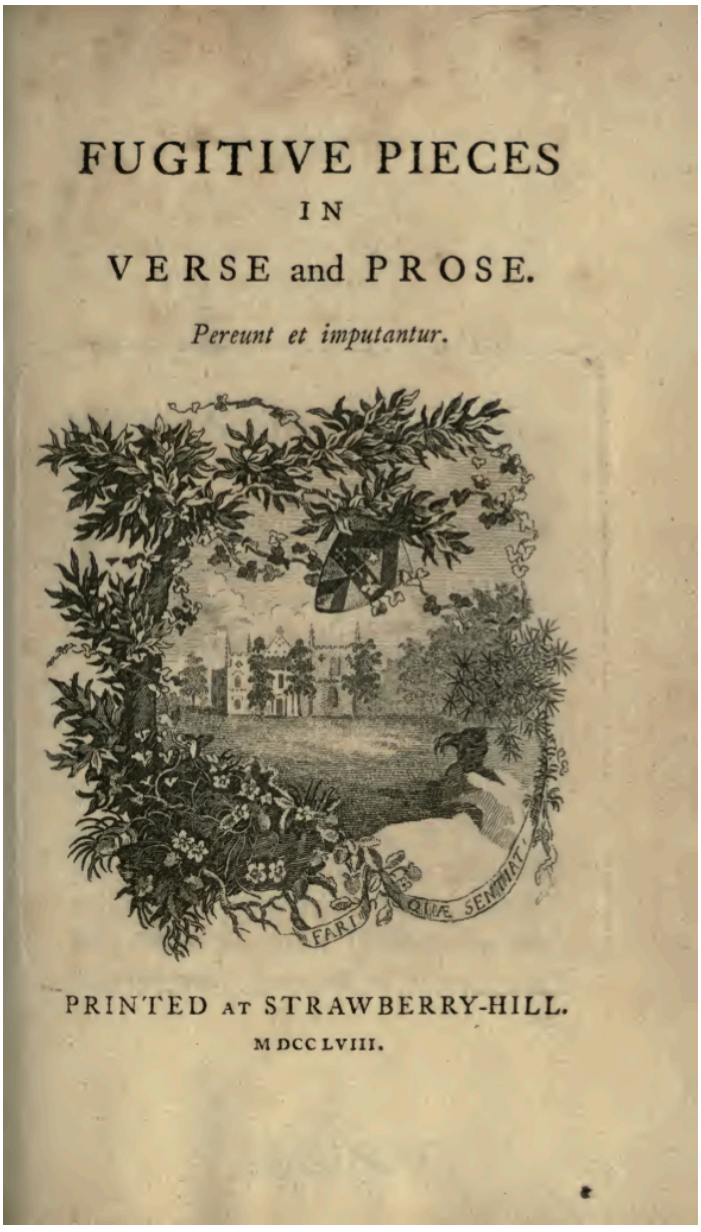

Figure 7 Frontispiece to Horace Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces in Verse and Prose* (1758)

Subtitle: "Pereunt et Imputantur" ("The hours are consumed and will be charged to our account").

Figure 8 Sundial (1747), St. Buryan's Parish Church, Cornwall, with inscription, "Pereunt et Imputantur" (trans.: "The hours are consumed and will be charged to our account").

During the Enlightenment age that was instituting an abstract, mechanized time program, Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* anachronistically returns the reader to the agrarian time of the sundial.

By beginning such a leisurely volume with a classical admonition about passing hours that will be reckoned and accounted for, Walpole established the queer intertext that would inspire Byron. Almost fifty years later, Byron would publish his own *Fugitive Pieces* the same year that Napoleon abolished the French Republican Calendar (see fig. 9), a revolutionary timetable whose month names such as Brumaire (October 22 to November 20, see fig. 10) were chosen by nature poets:

Figure 9 Philibert Louis Debucourt, *Calendrier Républicain* (1794). Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8412316v

Figure 10 Salvatore Tresca, “Brumaire: 23 Octobre” (1797-98). Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6950356n

Byron's experiments with anachronism resonate with the revolutionary history of the era of temporal experimentation that saw the poets rewrite the calendar, and the rise and decline of French Revolutionary Time, a decimal system that divided the French day into ten hours of 100 minutes each (see fig. 11):

Figure 11 "Decimal-Dialed Watch from the Time of the French Revolution." Source: The British Museum, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=167463001&objectid=57888

Byron's attachment to a prior poet who kept time queerly and attended to calendar change proves that Byron's juvenile hours were less lonely than we might expect from the creator of the Byronic hero. Byron's fugitive forms were neither misanthropic nor self-contained. As he retrospectively suggests in the preface to *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice* (1821), the young Byron effectively inaugurated his career through an intimate anachronism:

> It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of The Castle of Otranto, he is the "Ultimus Romanorum," the author of The Mysterious Mother, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance, and of the last tragedy in our language; and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.[15]

A generation before, the fugitive Walpole had anticipated and embraced "the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole." Here a mature Byron positions himself as an affectionate reader of Walpole's "incomparable" letters, appearing to commit him to a high place of literary posterity. However, in calling Walpole the "Ultimus Romanorum" (the Last of the Romans), the maturer Byron of 1821 represents Walpole as a queer literary "father" whose singular greatness is tied to the fact that he will not reproduce. The young Byron's occasional attachments to the "first" and "last" Walpole defy the progress of literary history and the permanence of mortality, establishing co-present, reciprocal bonds between two juvenile poets, one living and the other dead. Through the creation of a second *Fugitive Pieces*, the young Byron reanimates Walpole's supposedly outmoded fugitive forms and attitudes for a new age. Recasting backwardness as forwardness, he

[15] Byron, Preface to *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice* (London: John Murray, 1821), xx.

refracts his own poetic persona and myth of origins through the queer life and art of his predecessor.

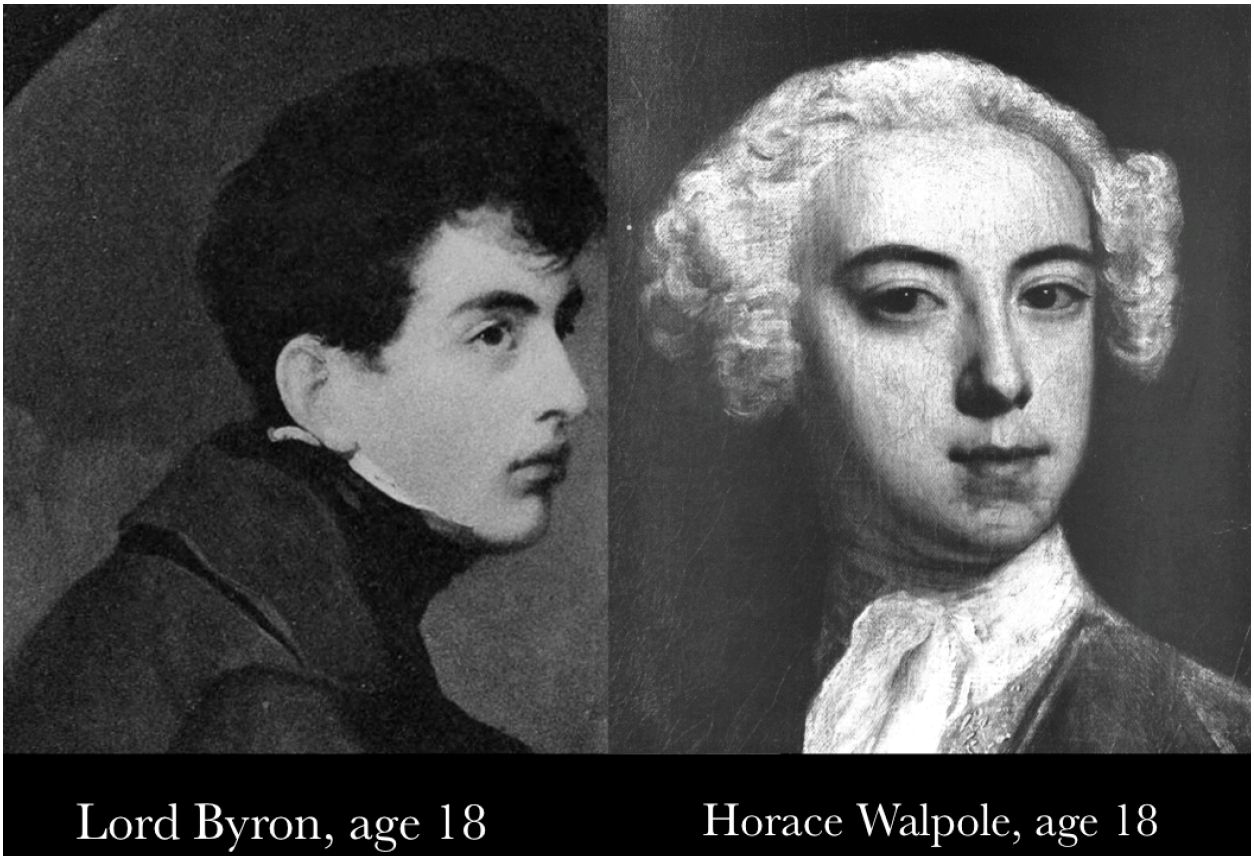

Figure 12 Portraits of Walpole and Byron at age 18

I. Occasional Time and Queer Fugitivity

The counter-tradition of occasional poetry that Walpole and Byron practiced enacts an earlier version of the anachronistic forms of time that several scholars have recently considered in relation to queer modernity.[16] These poets and their successors opposed the new temporal regime of modernity; Heather Love explores "the reliance of the concept of modernity on

[16] See, for example, Freeman, *Time Binds*; Halberstam, *In a Queer Time*; Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); and Amy Villarejo, *Ethereal Queer: Television, Historicity, Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

excluded, denigrated, or superseded others" such as queer figures associated with "backwardness."[17] In accord with Love, several queer theorists have recently argued that temporalities such as the "stubborn lingering of pastness" resist both "chronobiopolitics" and "chrononormativity."[18]

Attending to the ordering force of occasional chronopolitics on long Romantic-period poetry not only makes it possible to put scholarship on queer temporality and lyric time in dialogue, but also to respond to Valerie Traub's call for a more historicist queer studies.[19] If Elizabeth Freeman is correct that modernity demands that human lives follow a "novelistic framework: as event-centered, goal-oriented, intentional, and culminating in epiphanies or major transformations," then a return to lyric's less straight models of time, tempo, pace, and rhythm seems merited.[20] In many ways the lyric fugitivism of Walpole and Byron, which emphasized inconstancy over presence, approximates the queer utopianism that José Esteban Muñoz identifies with the movement away from the present.[21] The fugitive poet perfects the art of the vanishing act, the ability to be absent from present sight.

Walpole and Byron's poetics is renewable insofar as it rests upon sporadic rather than predictable temporalities of desire. In *Fugitive Pieces* Walpole laments any situation in which

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[17] Love, *Feeling Backward*, 5.

[18] Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3. Building on Halberstam's work on queer time, Freeman defines "chronobiopolitics" as the idea "that people are bound to one another . . . made to feel coherently collective, through particular orchestrations of time" and "chrononormativity" as the notion that "institutional forces . . . Schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches inculcate . . . 'hidden rhythms,' forms of temporal experience that seem natural to those whom they privilege."

[19] See Valerie Traub, "The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies," *PMLA* 128, no. 1 (2013): 21-39.

[20] Freeman, *Time Binds*, 5. On "lyric time," see Cameron, *Lyric Time*, 201-60. See also, Scott Brewster, *Lyric: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 6, 12-13, and Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 45-77.

[21] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 1. According to Muñoz, "Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world."

"fetter'd Nature is forbid to rove. / In . . . Love."[22] The roving Walpole breaks free from the fetters of straight time and individual genius. As a fugitive poet, he engages in affective commerce across the centuries, transforming time's shackles into the bonds of ostensibly unproductive "Love." The Byron of *Fugitive Pieces* similarly envisions affection as a state of unpredictable recurrence rather than stable presence. Byron's first volume of poetry becomes legible an anachronistic return (in 1806) to the queer fugitivism that Walpole practiced in 1758. Today, our view of these positively anachronistic authorial friendships is obstructed by overdetermined critical constructs such as the Byronic hero, the egotistical sublime, the myth of the solitary Romantic genius, and the secrecy of the closet.

With this untimely fugitive fellowship between men now in mind, we can turn to an exploration of the role that new developments in Romantic print history played in shaping Walpole and Byron's occasional verses. What makes the occasional poems and queer temporalities of writers such as Walpole and Byron so remarkable is their enigmatic duplicity, the way they can simultaneously resonate with untimeliness—the infrequent, the incomplete, the irregular, and the uncertain—and with timeliness—the present, the complete, the normative, and the monumental. For Walpole and Byron, the occasional can be either entirely unhistorical (outside the time of the individual), or firmly grounded in a particular moment (possessed by a specific reader and audience). In a further contradiction, these poets and their peers commonly combined the fugitive discourse of heterogeneous fragmentation (volumes of occasional verse often included the terms "several" or "various" in their titles) with the professional practice of collection. In the fugitive piece, the experimentation of the juvenile poetaster encounters the collection of the adult bookseller.

[22] Walpole, *Fugitive Pieces*, 15.

Figuring themselves as saving the literary scraps of fugitive writers from the wasting powers of time, long Romantic era anthologists commonly represented short, fugitive forms as impoverished, disabled, orphaned, or exiled British bodies in need of asylum.[23] Writing in 1806, Byron would have been familiar with works such as John Bell's eighteen-volume *Bell's Classical Arrangement of Fugitive Poetry* (1789-97), which were already recollecting and retaxonomizing individual poems from works such as Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces*. By the time that Bell's anthology of fugitive poems was classifying fugitive poetry into distinct categories including "Elegies: Moral, Descriptive, and Amatory" (Bell dedicated each volume to a different form of fugitive verse), even Walpole was lamenting the fact that his poems were being imprisoned in compilations including Bell's without his permission. In a 9 February 1789 letter to Lady Ossory on the occasion of Bell's unauthorized anthologization of "Epistle to Ashton" (in a section of Bell's fugitive anthology entitled "Ethic Epistles"), Walpole writes:

> I constantly lament having been born with a propensity to writing, and still worse, to publishing! how many monuments of my folly will survive me! One comfort is, that half the world seems to be as foolish as I have been, and eyes will not be born in plenty enough to read a thousandth part of what each year produces: Nos numeri sumus, and I shall be no more distinguished than my spare form would be in a living multitude. I only am sorry for it as a republication—my epistle is the worst poem in the volume, so I cannot complain of my company—I had no business to

[23] Take, for example, John Almon's *Fugitive Miscellany*: *Being a Collection of Such Fugitive Pieces* (1774), as well as anonymous works such as *The Repository: A Select Collection of Fugitive Pieces of Wit and Humour* (1777-83), *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit*: *Being a Collection of Fugitive Pieces* (1784), *An Asylum for Fugitive Pieces, in Prose and Verse* (1785-95), and *The American Museum: Or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces*, (1787-92, 98). The embodied temporal rhetorics of these anthologies, which seek to save implicitly disabled texts from impermanence, resonate with Alison Kafer's reflections on the connections between the so-called futureless orientations and asynchronic orientations of both "queer time" and "crip time." Kafer's argument that "Queer time is often defined through or in reference to illness and disability" advocates "critical maps of the practices and ideologies that effectively cast disabled people out of time and out of our futures"; see *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 25-46, especially 33-34.

> write verses, for I was not born a poet, whatever my propensities were—but Bell is a rascal.[24]

While Walpole continued to strike the juvenile pose of the fugitive poet throughout his life, Byron gradually shed the persona. Even in his elder years Walpole continued to resist the permanent preservation of his fugitive pieces—"monuments of my folly"—particularly the queer "Epistle to Ashton." Moreover, Walpole here delights in the inevitable obsolescence that applies to the bulk of the literary materials that "each year produces."

Walpole sought to sustain his fugitivity by embodying it in his own queer form, "I shall be no more distinguished than my spare form would be in a living multitude." He persistently emphasized the aesthetic dimensions of his slight stature, drawing constant parallels between his "spare" figure and thin (wasting, evanescent) poetic forms. The deliberateness of his corporeal poetics comes into view in an essay entitled "General Criticism on Dr. Johnson's Writings." Here Walpole calls Samuel Johnson a "bulky quadruped" who "prefers learned words to simple and common ones. He is never simple, elegant or light. He destroys more enemies with the weight of his shield than with the point of his spear . . . the study that his learned mirth requires, destroys cheerfulness. It is the clumsy gambol of a lettered elephant."[25] At times, Walpole turned the tables, embracing the feminine figure that eighteenth-century satirists regularly represented as defective. In this passage, he links the queerness of his slender frame to the elegance of his artful style. By contrast, Johnson's more masculine and weighty body is of a piece with his writing: "clumsy," "bulky," defective, and primitive. Walpole's repetitions of "simple" and "learned" problematically perpetuate what Helen Deutsch terms the cultural narrative of

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[24] Walpole, "To Lady Ossory," 6 February 1789, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 34:35.

[25] Walpole, "General Criticism on Dr. Johnson's Writings," in *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London: G. G. Robinson and J. Roberts, 1798), 4:362.

Johnson's "singularly eccentric authorial body" and "spectacle of bodily defect."[26] By contrasting Johnson's frame and his own, Walpole seeks to reclaim the poetics of effeminacy. While Johnson's style is pedantic, dense, and ponderous, Walpole's is easy, transient, and conversational. After associating Johnson with the voluminous and studious "weight" of overwritten prose, Walpole reserves for himself the polished brevity of the "light" fugitive piece. In a dissent from the typical eighteenth-century association of the fugitive poem with anatomical defect, Walpole asserts that ostensibly simple scraps and detached pieces are the markers of a lithe, spirited style whose ethereality relates to gentility.[27] Deutsch's insights that "Johnson's monumentality and monstrosity mirror each other" and that "Johnson . . . united style with substance, text with body" can be reconfigured for Walpole's literary manipulations of his own corporeal form.[28]

While the brevity of any single fugitive piece cuts against the authority of the author and the length of the book, Romantic assemblages of fugitive pieces by "rascal" printers such as Bell reduced both the exceptionalism of the individual poem's occasion and the urgency of its political rhetorics of flight. Walpole's statement that "Epistle to Ashton" is the "worst poem" in Bell's volume itself unexpectedly occurs within a particularly unwieldy sentence that piles clause upon clause. Notably, Walpole's desire for fugitive pieces to remain fugitive in 1789 cuts against the new Romantic era of hybrid literary production that, according to William St. Clair, was transformed by a series of late eighteenth-century legal decisions that effectively ended perpetual copyright in England. According to St. Clair, multi-volume compilations of fugitive pieces such as Bell's played a significant role in the rise of the anthology, a cultural phenomenon that

[26] Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 7, 71.

[27] On eighteenth-century anthologies, defect, and the fugitive poem, see note 23 in this chapter.

[28] Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson*, 72, 71.

facilitated the creation of new formal taxonomies, literary histories, ways of reading, and forms of authorship.[29] Walpole's personal complaint about literary "republication" and accompanying assertion that he "was not born a poet" identify during the reprinting craze that St. Clair connects to "the reading explosion of the romantic period," compilations such as Bell's *Classical Arrangement* increasingly allowed fugitive pieces to escape the authority of their original authors.[30]

It was perhaps one of the earliest anthologies of fugitive verse, Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Poems, by Several Hands* (1748), that inspired Walpole to assemble and publish his own collection of fugitive pieces in 1758. In the five-sheet "Short Notes of the Life of Horatio Walpole" (c. 1757-58 according to Walpole's editor, Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis), Walpole writes of the inclusion of the epistolary poem, "The Beauties," in Dodsley's miscellany: "In July of the same year I wrote 'The Beauties,' which was handed about, till it got into print very incorrectly."[31] Walpole's objection throws into relief the second major impulse of the fugitive poet (following the originary impetus to creative flight and freedom): the retrospective desire to repossess, correct, and discipline the fugitive productions that have escaped the author's grasp. Ironically, Walpole expresses his desire to fix and control his ostensibly ephemeral productions when they reappear, particularly when they get "into print very incorrectly" and are indiscriminately "handed about." In the case of "The Beauties," a poem which would later appear in *Fugitive Pieces*, Walpole's demand for textual accuracy is even more unexpected since, as W. S. Lewis notes, "this elegant trifle . . . was written in less than three hours for the

[29] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 135.

[30] St. Clair, *Reading Nation*, 135.

[31] Walpole, "Short Notes of the Life of Horatio Walpole" (c. 1757-58), in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 13:16.

amusement of Lady Caroline Fox," and because Walpole's title, "The Beauties," alludes to the eighteenth-century anthologies of literary beauties that commonly extracted, cut up, and incorrectly reproduced the original works of authors.[32] The elder Walpole seeks to transform a poem that was truly of its moment—produced extempore out of a young aristocrat's ease in a compressed temporality of "less than three hours"—into a reified literary monument.

To be sure, the connections Byron and Walpole drew between sexual license, detached poems, and spontaneous time have important antecedents in the works of the cavalier poets, particularly those of the Earl of Rochester, whose seventeenth-century corpus of libertine verse was composed in manuscript and includes several extempore poems. However, the rise of the Romantic anthology motivated authors to repossess and arrest poems that were once ostensibly ephemeral productions. Even "elegant trifle[s]"—truly occasional poems that were produced extempore in a few hours of a young aristocrat's ease—began to be treated as reified literary monuments. Unauthorized reprints allowed creative flights of fancy to escape from their originary authors. After Walpole's example, Byron took advantage of the collection craze that marked his era: Byron himself repurposed, revised, and reprinted his own fugitive pieces in a series of separate volumes.

[32] Lewis, "Short Notes," in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 13:16n102. The term "beauties" refers to a genre of edited anthologies that developed in eighteenth-century England and gained ascendancy in both Romantic Britain and nineteenth-century America. Books of beauties sought to collect the finest pieces of writing from a single author (or group of authors). While Deidre Shauna Lynch associates beauties with useful excerpts taken out of context, Barbara Benedict and Daniel Cook point out that from 1750 to 1900, the anthology of beauties served as a "repository for moral or aesthetic lessons." See Cook, "Authors Unformed: Reading 'Beauties' in the Eighteenth Century," *Philological Quarterly* 89, nos. 2-3 (2010): 303; Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 26; and Benedict, "The 'Beauties' of Literature, 1750-1820: Tasteful Prose and Fine Rhyme for Private Consumption," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 1 (1994): 317-46. See also Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4-5.

II. Juvenile Fugitivity and the Poetics of Privilege

Besides reimagining queer bodies through fugitive chronologies, Walpole and Byron rethought time through age. The juvenile poetic bonds that Walpole and Byron formed across time with one another and their libertine predecessors introduce us to a new, intergenerational paradigm of queer childishness that revises Lee Edelman's recent rejection of childhood and the politics of "reproductive futurism."[33] Walpole and Byron's death-defying queer ties enact what we might call "parthenogenetic anachronism": a more affirmative, proleptic version of the contemporary critical project that Love describes as "feeling backward"—insisting on "the importance of clinging to ruined identities" and attuning ourselves to "the queer historical experience of failed or impossible love.'"[34] These transhistorical queer networks between young men offer a solution to Edelman's dead-end, fatalistic future.[35] Walpole and Byron align the fugitive poet neither with the wholesale rejection of childhood and futurity nor with the radical embrace of the death drive. Instead, they connect poetic fugitivity to both the assembly of future juvenile traditions and the remarkable recovery of lost queer forms—Love's backward literatures and painful histories. Turning to Walpole and Byron allows us to revise what Love terms the modern stereotypes of queers as "throwbacks to an earlier stage of human development or as children who refuse to grow up," to redeem the uncanny impermanence so often associated with

[33] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 4. Dinshaw's insight that "the root of the word *amateur*" is "*love*" further illuminates the relations between Walpole, Byron, and their early works; see Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?* xv.

[34] Love, *Feeling Backward*, 30. For Love, "feeling backward" involves the analysis of works that register "the coming of modern homosexuality" before its time. Love's "ruined identities" include "the most vulnerable, the least presentable, and all the dead." On early modern parthenogenesis as "a queer theory of reproduction," see Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 8, 57-58.

[35] The case of Walpole and Byron accords well with the paradigm of the queer coterie that Tiffany explores in *My Silver Planet: A Secret History of Poetry and Kitsch* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 202. Tiffany's work here draws on Lytle Shaw's argument that Frank O'Hara's "New York coteries" were "temporary queer families" in *Frank O'Hara: The Poetics of Coterie* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 6.

both queer and young lives.[36] In the hands of Walpole and Byron, transience forms the basis of a fugitive poetics of anachronism that unexpectedly rediscovers alternative, queer forms of community, subjectivity, and time.

Besides building a personal fugitive archive and drawing on the occasional chronologies of piecemeal reading that the rise of the Romantic anthology made possible, Byron capitalized on the fact that the most prominent Romantic critics placed occasional verse at the bottom of the ladder of poetic genres, typically associating fugitive poetry with the juvenile struggle to master poetic forms. Keenly aware of the cultural commonplace that occasional poetry was the immature antecedent of a more mature and permanent epic poetics, the young Byron sought to reclaim fugitive verse as a creative compositional form. To compose fugitive pieces was to turn away from the sustained performance and monumentality of the mature, high art of epic and tragedy towards the liberating precarity of trash, ephemera, and fragments.

Byron—a poet whose youth was characterized by constant taunts about and quack remedies for his "defective" club foot—ties the supposed formal defects of the fugitive poem to the developing mind of the juvenile poet: "as most of [these poems] were composed between the age of 15 and 17, their defects will be pardoned or forgotten, in the youth and inexperience of the WRITER."[37] Such passages possibly nod to Samuel Johnson's preface to the *Harleian Miscellany* (1744-46), which sought to redeem the profusion of "*small* Tracts and *fugitive* Pieces, which are occasionally published" confirms both British liberty and the power of poetic license: "the Mind once let loose to Enquiry, and suffered to operate without Restraint, necessarily deviates into peculiar Opinions, and wanders in new Tracks, where she is indeed sometimes lost in a

[36] Love, *Feeling Backward*, 6.

[37] Byron, *Fugitive Pieces*, n.p.

Labyrinth . . . yet, sometimes, makes useful Discoveries."[38] The title page of Byron's *Hours of Idleness* similarly includes the phrase "By George Gordon, Lord Byron, A Minor," a reminder that so-called minor literature relates to age as much as to a perceived absence of cultural capital. Significantly, Byron's improvised poems embraced the unproductive, seemingly childish play that Johan Huizinga influentially linked to the creation of culture over commodities in *Homo Ludens*.[39]

Walpole practices a self-conscious poetics of dating that invites the reader to imagine the younger Horace Walpoles who at various times composed the individual poems that collectively make up his *Fugitive Pieces*. Take, for example, the title "An Epistle from Florence. To Thomas Ashton, Esq.; Tutor to the Earl of Plimouth. [Written in the Year 1740.]" Although *Fugitive Pieces* was published in 1758, Walpole here returns us to 1740, a time when he was but twenty-three years old. The sprightlier Walpole of "Epistle to Ashton" advises his friend to "melt the schoolman's jargon down to sense," before launching in an extended satire on didacticism:

> See the pedantic teacher, winking dull,
> The letter'd Tyrant of a trembling school;
> Teaching by force, and proving by a frown,
> His lifted fasces ram the lesson down.[40]

Walpole does not even represent the temporal regularity of the metronome when he mocks a "pedantic teacher." Instead, he draws on the multiple temporalities that sound and sense

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[38] Samuel Johnson, Introduction to *The Harleian Miscellany: Or, A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, as Well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the Late Earl of Oxford's Library* (London: T. Osborne, 1744), 1:ii. Walpole's double-edged attacks on Johnson's body and style become exceedingly ironic when we consider that Johnson—as a result of this introduction was widely recognized as the era's foremost critical authority on occasional composition.

[39] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Beacon: Boston, 1955), 1-2.

[40] Walpole, *Fugitive Pieces*, 7-8.

simultaneously make possible in order to associate the instructor with the irregularity of initial trochaic inversion, "See the," "Teaching." Through prosody, Byron associates instruction with disruption rather than order. In the dedication to *Fugitive Pieces*, Walpole similarly abandons the standard straight tropes of intellectual growth and development. Neglecting either to raise "Posterity's idea" of himself or to try fortune through the brave activity of masculine achievement, he instead describes his work as "a few trifles" and "idlenesses."[41] In a similar fashion, Byron refers to his poetic manuscript as a collection of "trifles" devoted "To THOSE FRIENDS, at WHOSE REQUEST THEY WERE PRINTED, for whose AMUSEMENT OR APPROBATION they are SOLELY INTENDED."[42] In the preface to *Fugitive Pieces*, Byron entirely abandons the standard straight tropes of intellectual growth and reproductive development taken up by the more canonical poems addressing Romantic childhood, such as Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, or Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode."[43] With Walpole, he refuses either to raise "Posterity's idea" of himself or to try fortune through the brave activity of masculine achievement, choosing instead to identify his poetic manuscript as a collection of trivialities never intended to meet the public eye.

As Byron's dedication suggests, the fugitive poetics that he and Walpole practiced derives from their class status and resistance to labor, particularly their parallel self-presentations as dabbling aristocrats. Whether or not Walpole and Byron desired to make money from their poems, both figures theorized an occasional queer temporality that defined poetic creation as a

[41] Walpole, *Fugitive Pieces*, iii-iv.

[42] Byron, *Fugitive Pieces*, n.p. Notably, Jonathan Swift's motto was "Vive la Bagatelle" and his poetry was often self-consciously trifling.

[43] McGann argues that the contrast between Byron's "hypocritical" poetics and Romantic "sincerity" marginalized him and his work. See *Byron and Romanticism*, ed. James Soderholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 114-15.

once-in-a-while activity taking place in leisure time. In the preface to *Hours of Idleness*, Byron again apologizes for his juvenile scribbling: "without doubt, I might be, at my age, more usefully employed. These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours of a young man, who has lately completed his nineteenth year."[44] This breathy, comma-laden passage, whose awkwardness resurrects Walpole's claim that he "had no business to write verses," formally reinforces Byron's claim that the poetry of "lighter hours" acquires an airy fugitivism related to its author's unemployment. The title *Hours of Idleness* plays with that of Johnson's *Idler* (1758-60), whose first number famously connects idle hours to escape: "The *Idler*, who habituates himself to be satisfied with what he can most easily obtain . . . escapes labours which are often fruitless"; "The *Idler* has no Rivals or Enemies. The Man of Business forgets him; the Man of Enterprize despises him."[45] Depicting himself neither as busy nor fruitful, the Byron of *Hours of Idleness* returns to Johnson's portraits of amateur ease while neglecting his predecessor's satires of the "waste of the lives of men."[46] By reimagining as an imaginative state the wastefulness that *The Idler* alternatively embraces and critiques, Byron entirely abandons the "Enterprize" that chrononormativity demands.

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[44] Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, v. It is certainly not coincidental that such a passage appears in a poem about Cambridge. Not only does Byron's critique of Cambridge come before his reference to Thomas Gray (a figure who was famously bored by the Cambridge curriculum in his youth), but Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* also had addressed the institutional time of the university in a poem entitled "Verses in Memory of King Henry the Sixth, Founder of King's-College, Cambridge [Written February 2nd, 1738]."

[45] Johnson, *The Idler: In Two Volumes* (London: Printed for J. Newbery, 1761), 2, 3. In *Idler* no. 1, Johnson also describes his periodical in occasional terms: "The *Idler*, tho' sluggish, is yet alive, and may sometimes be stimulated to vigour and activity." See *The Idler*, 5.

[46] Johnson, *The Idler*, 78. Johnson's *Idler* also satirizes idlers. In no. 14, for example, Johnson depicts temporality as property, rails against the "robbery" of time, and represents "the great danger of the waste of Time": "He, who cannot persuade himself to withdraw from society, must be content to pay a tribute of his time to a multitude of tyrants; to the Loiterer, who makes appointments which he never keeps; to the Consulter, who asks advice which he never takes; to the Boaster, who blusters only to be praised; to the Complainer, who whines only to be pitied . . . See *The Idler*, 78-80.

After the fashion of Walpole's "Epistle from Florence to Thomas Ashton," Byron's "Thoughts Suggested by a College Examination," which appeared in his *Fugitive Pieces*, builds a privileged fugitivism out of the speaker's juvenile male body. Byron's extemporaneous lyric celebrates the creative pose of aristocratic languor:

> The man, who hopes t' obtain the promis'd cup,
> Must in one *posture* stand, and *ne'er look up*,
> Nor *stop*, but rattle over *every* word,
> No matter *what*, so it can *not* be heard;
> Thus let him hurry on, nor think to rest,
> Who speaks the *fastest*, 's sure to speak the *best*;
> Who utters most within the shortest space,
> May safely hope to win the *wordy race*.[47]

Byron's satire on "the wordy race" that necessitates standing in "one posture" implicitly asserts a preference for wasting time and lying down. Ironically, his courtly fugitives typically move slowly despite their improvisational methods. Here the speaker's impromptu melancholy (sighs, "rest," and easy speech) contests the mechanical learning of industry and the productive "hurry" of the accelerating age of quicker coaches, swifter ships, and more timely wartime bulletins that Philip S. Bagwell and Jonathan H. Grossman tie to the English "transport revolution" and that Mary A. Favret studies in the context of rushed wars that aim "to obliterate distance, the temporal breadth between now and a future then. Send troops far away to secure the outcome *now*."[48] As might be expected, however, even the fugitive forms of Walpole and Byron cannot

[47] Byron, *Fugitive Pieces*, 27.

[48] Jonathan H. Grossman, *Charles Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3-4, and Favret, *War at a Distance*, 224. Grossman studies "the rise of a fast-driving, stage-coach

remain entirely motionless. Although Byron's queer poetic voice ostensibly declines to enter the "race," the poem's title suggests that it is "a College Examination" (specifically, the "word race" of an oral exam) that originally moves the speaker to heroic couplets.

The rapid movement of manufacture and planned obsolescence is absent in the privileged poetics of rest that Walpole and Byron experiment with in their fugitive verses.[49] In dialogue with Walpole's shirking of schooling in "Epistle to Ashton," Byron's "Granta, A Medley" recalls his predecessor's increasingly outmoded creative pose of aristocratic languor. In "Granta," Byron crafts a fugitive piece whose setting both capitalizes on Walpole's claim in "Verses in Memory of King Henry the Sixth, Founder of King's-College, Cambridge" that Cambridge was constructed by a "Vandal Builder's hand."[50] Granta anticipates Byron's later claim in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809) that Cambridge was once the a haven for fugitives, the "dark asylum of a Vandal race!"[51] Drawing on Cambridge lore, the Byron of "Granta" invites readers to join him in a prototypically Romantic moment of fugitive resistance to the professionalizing impetus of university time:

> *But if I write* much longer now,
>
> The deuce a soul *will stay to read*,
>
> My pen is blunt, the ink is low,
>
> 'Tis almost time to *stop, indeed*.

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network that systematized . . . swift, circulating, round-trip inland journeying, with regular schedules." Philip S. Bagwell notes that "Comparing the 1750s with the 1830s journey times on the main routes linking principle cities were reduced by four-fifths." See Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1974), 29.

[49] On queer time and production, see Villarejo, *Ethereal Queer*, 10. See also, Freeman, *Time Binds*, 9.

[50] Walpole, *Fugitive Pieces*, 2.

[51] Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire*, in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1809] 1980), 1:260. Byron here refers to Edward Gibbon's claim that it was "Into Britain, and most probably into Cambridgeshire he [the Emperor Probus] transported a considerable body of Vandals. The impossibility of an escape, reconciled them to their situation." See *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman* Empire, ed. David Womersley (London: Penguin, [1776, 1781] 1994), 1:367.

Therefore farewell, old GRANTA'S spires,

No more like *Cleofas* I fly,

No more thy theme my muse inspires,

The reader's tired, and so am I.[52]

Byron's impromptu speech reasserts Walpole's preference for wasting time and lying down. This medley on Cambridge provides a formal meta-commentary on the compositional practice of the fugitive poet; here the tired poet's body and materials, blunt "pen" and low "ink," become indistinguishable.[53]

Cultivating a fugitive readership in recreational time, Byron associates the collection of fugitive pieces with the variety necessary to account for the miscellaneous modern reading habits of skipping and browsing. Byron argues that as does the medley form, the collection of fugitive pieces takes into account the reader's tiredness. Taking his cue from the anthologies of fugitive pieces, literary beauties, and elegant extracts such as William Collyer's *Fugitive Pieces: Intended Principally for the Use of Schools* (1803-5), Byron offers his busy and impatient readers short pieces to peruse at random—welcoming them to take up and put down his work at irregular intervals. Keenly aware that in the modern age, hours are spent, he self-consciously reflects on the length of the fugitive poem, "time to *stop*," and positions the reader as needing to escape: "The reader's tired." As Byron's simultaneous invocation of (and departure from) the reader intimates, he combines the out-of-date if recognizable pose of the aristocrat who resists

[52] Byron, *Fugitive Pieces*, 53-54.

[53] Tiredness and sleep have been fundamental critical entry points in the study of queer temporality. As Dinshaw states, the heterogeneous time of sleep reveals the "essential asynchrony" of the human experience. According to Dinshaw, sleep is but the most prominent of the many altered states whose temporal gaps together contest the commonplace that lived experience is governed by clock time and temporal succession. See Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?* 10.

exposure through private circulation, and the desire to feed the market. His works toy with celebrity while refusing normative work time.[54]

These reflections on the temporal life of Cambridge in Byron's "Granta" implicitly transform the unprofitable, leisured ease of the fugitive poet into a reading strategy that specifically undermines the official academic time of the Trinity College Clock (see fig. 13):

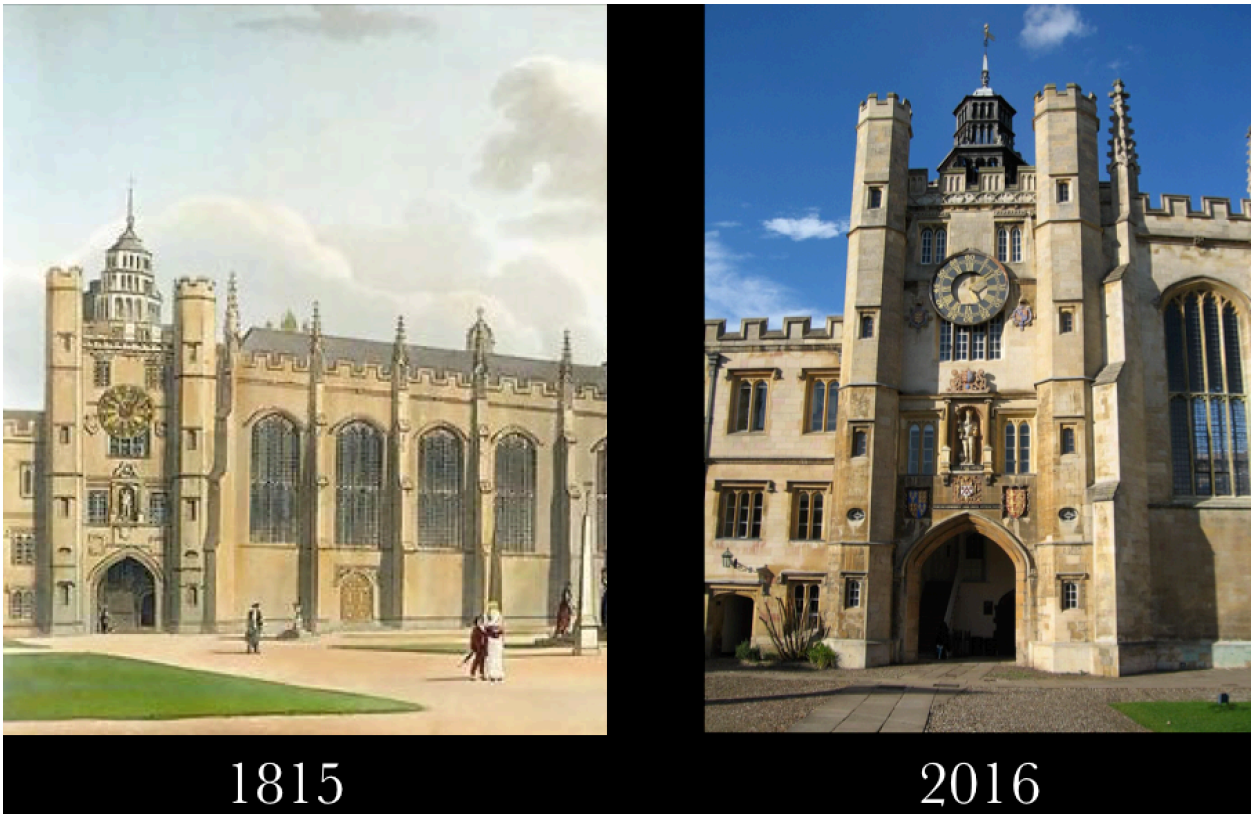

Figure 13 Images of the Trinity College Clock (Trinity College, Cambridge)

It was this eighteenth-century clock that William Wordsworth—who also attended Cambridge—would himself figuratively undermine by expanding its ostensible mechanical precision in book three of *The Prelude*:

> Near me was Trinity's loquacious clock,
>
> Who never let the Quarters, night or day,

[54] Byron's *Don Juan* may be an epic, but the poem puts forward a similarly dilatory and anti-monumental aesthetic.

Slip by him unproclaim'd, and told the hours

Twice over with a male and female voice.[55]

Wordsworth reimagines the ostensibly well-regulated Trinity Clock through the excess of loquacity and an androgynous doubled time. While he did not have the opportunity to read Wordsworth's *Prelude*, the Byron of *England Bards* derisively comments, "Let simple WORDSWORTH chime his childish verse."[56] Byron redefines Wordsworth's "simple" childishness as related to the regular chimes of adulthood, binding Wordsworth to clockwork. Elsewhere, Byron too comments on the Trinity metronome that sought to organize his and Wordsworth's collegiate days in common. In a fugitive piece from *Hours of Idleness* entitled "Childish Recollections," Byron alternatively represents the "lingering tones" of the same Cambridge timepiece as disciplinary—as interrupting his "early passions" and "daily sport."[57]

The queer temporal affiliations that Byron cultivated with Walpole were also clearly rooted in aristocratic familial connections as much as in Cambridge life. In a reversal of literary history's backward looking forms of inheritance and influence, Walpole proleptically establishes connections with Byron. In "Account of the Giants Lately Discovered: In a Letter to a Friend in the Country" (1766)—a piece that was reprinted in *The Repository: A Select Collection of Fugitive Pieces of Wit and Humor* (1777-83)—Walpole satirizes the travels of Byron's grandfather, Captain John "Foul-Weather Jack" Byron. The reprinting of Walpole's account of Captain Byron as encountering an apocryphal race of South American giants in an anthology of

[55] Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, in *The Thirteen-Book* Prelude, ed. Mark L. Reed (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1805-1806] 1991), 137. As Reed explains, the Trinity College Clock sounded "the hours first with a low-pitched, then a high-pitched, bell."

[56] Byron, *English Bards*, in *The Complete Works*, 1:258.

[57] Byron, "Childish Recollections," in *Hours of Idleness*, 155.

fugitive pieces allows us to consider the developing associations between the fugitive literary piece and the fugitive slave over the course of the long Romantic era:

> As soon as they are properly civilized, that is, enslaved, due care will undoubtedly be taken to specify in their Charter that these Giants shall be subject to the Parliament of Great-Britain . . . If Giants once get an Idea of Freedom, they will soon be our Masters instead of our Slaves. But what Pretensions can they have to Freedom? They are as distinct from the common Species as Blacks**,** and by being larger, may be more useful, I would advise our prudent Merchants to employ them in the Sugar Trade; they are capable of more Labour; but even then they must be worse treated, if possible, than our Black Slaves are; they must be lamed and maimed, and have their spirits well broken. This too will give a little respite to *Africa*, where we have half exhausted the Human, I mean, the Black Breed, by that wise maxim of our Planters, that if a Slave lives Four Years, he has earned his Purchase-Money, consequently you may afford to work him to Death in that time.[58]

Walpole's "Account" aligns the lack of movement in these imaginary Giants, "lamed and maimed," with the temporal compression of the lives of black slaves, "if a Slave lives Four Years," "work him to Death." This passage expresses Walpole's potential awareness of the fact that for the slave, existence itself was a precarious, fugitive state involving life-and-death attempts to expand time and space—to increase lifespan and distance from the plantation.[59]

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[58] Walpole, "An Account of the Giants Lately Discovered: In a Letter to a Friend in the Country" (London: F. Noble, 1766), 14-15.

[59] During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fugitive slaves sought to escape the normative time of the West Indian plantation, which was based on the process of sugar cane production. As Bernard Moitt and Richard S. Dunn show, "during the harvest . . . the sugar mill operated around the clock and had to be continuously fed with canes"; the steps involved in refining sugar cane "required close synchronization." See Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the*

In a light piece of prose whose tone ranges from comic to tragic, Walpole tests a tongue-in-cheek prototype of the abolitionist discourse that would come to connect Old World fugitive pieces to New World fugitive slaves once the knowledge of oppressive fugitive slave laws had crossed the Atlantic: "What have we to do with *America*, but to conquer, enslave, and make it tend to the Advantage of our Commerce? . . . Europe has no other Title to *America*, except Force and Murder."[60]

Following the 1772 Mansfield Judgment, the term "fugitive" would undergo a progressive racialization.[61] During the nineteenth century, transatlantic abolitionist poets invested the extemporized aesthetic category that Walpole and Byron popularized with a new ethical energy. In the period between the American Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850—laws which simultaneously standardized judicial procedures for recapturing fugitive slaves and criminalized the failure to assist in their recovery—English and American poets including John Pierpont, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, James Cruikshanks, and others advocated abolition in

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French Antilles, 1635-1848 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 47, and Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies*, 1624-1713 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 195. Edlie L. Wong's analysis of the "freedom suits that abolitionists brought on behalf of enslaved servants" also describes the fugitive slave's experience of freedom in terms of temporality. Wong argues that since "liberty was contingent on the loss of kinship or exile in a foreign state," escaped runaway slaves experienced liberty as "a retrospective flight into the past"; they were "caught in a present that resembled and unsettled the past of slavery." See *Neither Fugitive nor Free*: *Atlantic Slavery, Freedom Suits, and the Legal Culture of Travel* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 17.

[60] Walpole, "Account of the Giants," 17, 22. Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* (1758) presciently laid the groundwork for this coming transformation by connecting the fugitive piece to representations of slavery in ancient Greece and Rome. Although neither Walpole nor Byron's *Fugitive Pieces* directly reference the British Empire's involvement in slavery, Walpole's volume addresses slavery in the context of ancient Gaul and Persia: "How weak a Multitude, where each a Slave." Byron's work, by contrast, focuses on traditional lyric tropes of amatory enslavement: "The lips which made me *Beauty's* slave." See Walpole, "Epistle to Ashton," in *Fugitive Pieces*, 11, and Byron, "To Mary, On Receiving Her Picture," in *Fugitive Pieces*, 28. The anonymous 1780s anthology, *The Repository*, that reprints this fictional account of Byron's grandfather does however a few references to black slaves. See, for example, *The Repository*, 3:119 and 4:79.

[61] As Peter H. Wood reminds us, "No single act of self-assertion was more significant among slaves or more disconcerting among whites than that of running away." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 239.

lyrics such as "The Fugitive Slave's Apostrophe to the North Star," "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," and "The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850."

III. Fugitive Pieces, Fugitive Slaves

As the anthologization of Walpole's "Account" in a 1780s volume of fugitive pieces intimates, following Walpole, a variety of writers explicitly connected political and literary forms of fugitivism. Edward Jerningham's *Fugitive Poetical Pieces* (1778), was but one of the many long Romantic-era works which united modern slaves and historical exiles, on the one hand, and the publication format of the small pamphlet of miscellaneous, sporadic poems, on the other. A friend and mentee of Walpole's, Jerningham crafted a short collection of fugitive poems that pairs works that specifically mention chattel slavery, such as "Yarico to Inkle," with pieces that portray a motley of fugitives: a portrait of a Spanish soldier who deserts his post for love only to be executed ("The Deserter"), a narrative poem on the flight of Margaret of Anjou, epistolary invocations of the roving muses, and references to Hume's historical accounts of patriots and slaves.[62]

In "Yarico to Inkle," Jerningham crafts a verse epistle that remakes the Indian slave Yarico, who first appeared in Richard Ligon's "Inkle and Yarico" (1657), into a "Nubian Dame."[63] Jerningham's Yarico, by contrast to Ligon's, simultaneously laments her "deserted" status and expresses her desire to travel to England:

> Dar'st thou, Oh Christian! brave the sounding waves,

[62] In a 15 May 1773 letter to Mason, Walpole responds to Jerningham's request to dedicate a poem to him: "I value my writings very little . . . nobody forgets them so soon as myself." See *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 28:88.

[63] Edward Jerningham, "Yarico to Inkle" in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces* (London: J. Robson, 1778), 16. Ligon's work was popularized by Richard Steele in 1711.

The treach'rous wirlwinds [*sic*], and untrophied Graves?

. . . . . .

One humble boon is all I now implore,

Allow these feet to print their kindred shore:

Give me, Oh Albion's Son, again to roam,

For thee deserted my delightful home:[64]

Jerningham's poem artfully ties the fugitive poem to the mobility of the verse epistle—a form that resonates with the travel of the letter—and the black slave searching for freedom. Yarico's pun on "print" fuses the body of the African slave who desires to leave footprints on the African shore, and the black poetic speaker who implicitly wishes for her verse epistle ("feet") to be printed in England so that her poem will reach her deserting lover. Yarico's fugitive writing implicitly creates parallels between the precarious travels in time and space that both transatlantic letters and bodies experience.

Moreover, the letter that Yarico posts to England foreshadows the xenophobic fears of reverse colonialism and transatlantic invasion that would take hold in the British Empire of the Victorian era:

My country's Genius stood confess'd to fight:

"Let Europe's sons (he said) enrich their shore,

With stones of luster, and barbaric ore:

Adorn their country with their splendid stealth,

Unnative foppery, and gorgeous wealth;

Embellish still her form with foreign spoils,

Till like a gaudy prostitute she smiles:

[64] Jerningham, "Yarico to Inkle," in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 13-14.

The day, th' avenging day at length shall rise,

And tears shall trickle from that harlot's eyes:[65]

Jerningham, a queer poet Frances Burney called "a mighty delicate Gentleman,—[who] looks to be *painted*, & is all daintification," represents the privileged aspects of the Walpole circle, the "Unnative foppery" of "Europe's sons," as foreign to England.[66] Such a sentimental poem, which was characteristic of Jerningham, a rake whom Walpole called "the *Charming Man*" and Lord Mulgrave termed a "pink & white Poet,—for not only his Cheeks, but his Coat is Pink)," began to put fugitivism into the service of the ethics made possible by the emerging abolitionist movement.[67] According to Jerningham's poetic voice, the "Genius" of a masculine Africa, angered by a feminized Britain's prostitution to the "spoils" of empire, will "Invade" her "Christian coast":

Her [Britain's] own Gods shall prepare the fatal doom

Lodg'd in Time's pregnant and destructive womb:

The mischief-bearing womb, these hands shall rend,

And straight shall issue forth confusion's fiend:

Then shall my children urge the destin'd way,

Invade the Christian coast, and dare the day:

Sue, as they rush upon them as a flood,

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[65] Jerningham, "Yarico to Inkle," in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 22-23.

[66] Frances Burney, "To Susanna Elizabeth Burney" (29 April 1780), in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. Betty Rizzo (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 4:82.

[67] Walpole, "To Mary Berry," 22 October 1790, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 11:122, Burney, "To Susanna Elizabeth Burney," in *Early Journals*, 4:85. Jerningham's *Enthusiasm: A Poem in Two Parts* (1789) figures in Jon Mee's account of Romantic enthusiasm. Mee considers Jerningham's relationship with the Della Cruscan poet Robert Merry, and traces how Jerningham, "the excitable Della Cruscan poet," was "taken to task" for his over-impassioned verse. See *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56-57, 227-28.

Dishonour for dishonour, blood for blood."[68]

To reinforce the substitution of Britons for Africans that this occupying movement implies, Jerningham's speaker employs chiasmus, "Dishonour for dishonour, blood for blood." In a reformulation of the proverbial "eye for an eye," the colonized here becomes the colonizer. "Yarico to Inkle" contrasts the ostensible savagery of its black female speaker's children with the refinement of England's feminized body politic that Jerningham and Walpole embody. In a disturbing reversal that proves that queer time is not always a redemptive position in modern culture, Jerningham projects his anxieties about human reproduction onto the fugitive figure of a black slave's womb.[69]

The strange time of the fugitive poem thus provides the perfect vehicle for a literary piece portraying the complete destruction of the allegorized body of "Time": "Lodg'd in Time's pregnant and destructive womb: / The mischief-bearing womb, these hands shall rend." In a poem that depicts an African Yarico pregnant with an English Inkle's child, it is unexpectedly England that is sexually debased and Time whose maternal body is torn: Yarico rhymes "doom" and "womb." Jerningham magnifies the fleeting quality of the fugitive poem to represent the complete destruction of imperial time and the Englishness it upholds.

In addition to "Yarico to Inkle," Jerningham's diverse collection of fugitive poetry includes a narrative poem entitled "The Indian Chief" that similarly reverses the subjectivities and political concerns of the white planter and the fugitive slave. "The Indian Chief" represents a benevolent captor who recounts his actions to an auditing colonial prisoner:

Twelve tedious moons hast thou my captive been,

I've taught thee how to build the swift canoe,

[68] Jerningham, "Yarico to Inkle," in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 23.

[69] On queer time, the death drive, and against "reproductive futurism," see Edelman, *No Future*, 1-32.

To chace [*sic*] the boar, prepare the beaver's skin,

To speed the shaft, and scalp the shrieking foe.[70]

Jerningham's speaker reinforces the tedium of captivity with alliteration, "Twelve tedious," expressing his understanding of the monotonous temporality of slavery. Rhyming "been" with "skin," the poetic voice invokes the period's hackneyed portraits of Native American savagery only to then depart from them. The Indian chief teaches rather than profits from his prisoner's labor; his captive is hardly enslaved at all. Jerningham's poem concludes with a scene in which the Indian chief recounts the loss of his son:

Go virtuous stranger, to thy father go,

Wipe from his furrow'd cheek Misfortune's tear:

Go, bid the sun to him his splendor shew,

And bid the flow'r in all her bloom appear.[71]

Through memory the Indian chief identifies with the grieving father of his young captive and sets his imprisoned white prisoner free.[72] The speaker here transforms slavery into motion by likening the liberated captive to a "flow'r in all her bloom." The repetition of commands, "Go" (three times) and "bid" (twice), propels the speaker into fugitivity and freedom once again.

Not only was the young Byron also familiar with Jerningham, but later in life he also wrote his own "Inkle and Yarico."[73] In *The Blues: A Literary Eclogue* (1821, and a fugitive

[70] Jerningham, "The Indian Chief" in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 25.

[71] Jerningham, "The Indian Chief," in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 27.

[72] This passage resembles the episode in *The Iliad* when Priam persuades Achilles to grant Hector a funeral by reminding him of his own father, and Priam is likened to a fugitive from justice in a famous simile.

[73] An early reference to Jerningham appears in the postscript to the revised second edition of Byron's *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers; A Satire* (1809): "I hear that Mr. JERNINGHAM is about to take up the cudgels for his Maecenas, Lord Carlisle; I hope not: he was one of the few, who, in the very short intercourse I had with him, treated me with kindness when a boy, and whatever he may say or do, 'pour on, I will endure.'" While this passage's

poem, as we shall see), an older Byron—reflecting the increasing nineteenth-century imbrication of the printed fugitive piece and the body of the fugitive slave—follows George Colman's comic lead in *Inkle and Yarico: An Opera in Three Acts* (1787), a work published a year before Jerningham's "Yarico to Inkle." After Colman, Byron abbreviates the name Inkle to "Ink." While Colman's comedy represents a fugitive white colonist in blackface through metaphors of ink and descriptions of white flight, Byron transforms Colman's imperialist Inkle into a fugitive poet: a "fugitive writer . . . of rhymes."[74] In *The Blues*, Byron's Inkel is also a "fugitive reader sometimes."[75] Byron's formulation of Inkel, which couples "rhymes" and "sometimes," affiliates author and reader through an occasional queer temporality. Moreover, his representation of Inkle as a fugitive writer who admonishes a lecturer to "mind whom he quotes / Out of 'Elegant Extracts,'" anticipates the critical reception of *The Blues* as a fugitive poem.[76]

Although it is debatable whether or not these passages displays the intentional irony that is Byron's trademark, it is certainly the case that *The Blues* entirely removes Inkle from the colonial context of chattel slavery that defines Colman and Jerningham's Inkles.[77] Whether or not Byron is satirical of empire or complicit in attempts to avoid representing the actual history of slavery in his poetry, such an erasure raises the issue of the English fugitive poet's at times

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citation of an older Jerningham is perhaps unexpected, it nevertheless provides Byron with an occasion to reflect upon his childhood, "when a boy," in a prototypically Romantic way. See Byron, *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers; A Satire*, 2nd ed. (London: James Cawthorn, 1809), 85.

[74] Byron, *The Blues*, in *The Liberal*: *Verse and Prose from the South* 1, no. 3 (1822): 17.

[75] Byron, *The Blues*, in *The Liberal*, 17.

[76] Byron, *The Blues*, in *The Liberal*, 20. Editions of Byron's *Works* published in the 1830s, such as Thomas Moore's and George Dearborn's, include headnotes to *The Blues* which refer to the poem as "a trifle, which Byron has himself designated as 'a mere buffoonery, never meant for publication,'" and headings that taxonomize the poem as an afterthought: "Poems Not Included in Any Collection of Lord Byron's Works Until after His Death." See Thomas Moore, *The Works of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1832-33), 12:22, and Byron, *The Works of Lord Byron, in Verse and Prose, Including his Letters, Journals, Etc.* (New York: George Dearborn, 1833), 467.

[77] See Mellor, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

violent alignments of autobiographical and unlike forms of fugitivity; that is, the white writer's assembly for his or her own purposes of a menagerie of various other fugitives differing in race, class, gender, and sexuality. Byron's "Inkel," whose spelling alludes to Colman's own puns on the term "inkwell," develops the links that Colman first forged between human bodies and print technology. Byron repeatedly shortens Inkel to "Ink.," and Inkel's description of a female writer, "Lady Bluebottle," transforms the ink and inkstand binary into a sexual allegory: "Ink.: Why, that heart's in the inkstand—that hand on the pen."[78] Elsewhere Byron's speaker ties "shreds of paper" to the insomniac bodies of bluestockings and amateur poets writing at unexpected times, "unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper." Here—in yet another Byronic reversal—although masculinity appears to be associated with the fugitive and mobile "Ink.," femininity relates to the more permanent yonic "bottle" (and active, phallic "pen").

Colman's lines haunt *The Blues*. Byron's speaker, "heart's in the inkstand," evokes Colman's earlier representation of a white planter's morality through the image of an inky bodily piece: "I'll tell you what, Mr. Fair-trader; If your head and heart were to change places, I've a notion you'd be as black in the face as an ink-bottle."[79] While Colman here plays on the commonplace trope of the black "heart," the poetic voice of *The Blues* associates the circulation of fugitive ink and human blood through the mixed metaphor of the "heart . . . in the inkstand." In this passage, the image of a piece of the white fugitive writer's body (the heart), the organ which makes possible corporeal movement, is entrapped in the androgynous yet racialized trope of the inkwell.[80]

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[78] Byron, *The Blues*, in *The Liberal*, 28.

[79] Colman, *Inkle and Yarico*, in *Fugitive Poetical Pieces*, 37-38.

[80] Byron, "Blues and Amateur Authors," in *The Beauties of Byron, Consisting of Selections from his Works*, ed. J. W. Lake (Paris: Baudry, Bobée and Hingray, 1829), 21.

In the context of this discussion it bears noting that nearly all Romantic-era fugitive poems were made possible by the slave labor that this literary form, which allied itself with a poetics of escape, critiqued as a matter of course. As was the case for almost all writing of the period, the fugitive poem was materially imbricated in the plantation through the material ingredients that composed its ink. After all, encyclopedias from the period commonly noted that that "The best ink" was composed of the following elements: Caribbean "logwood," "white sugar," "powdered gum arabic," "galls," "vitriol," and "alum."[81] Although literary scholars such as Charlotte Sussman have addressed the importance of the slave and sugar trades to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature and culture, they have less often remarked upon the fact that some of the most prized imports from the Caribbean colonies of the day were the inking and dying materials—including logwood, Brazilwood, fustic, annotto, indigo—used to manufacture imperial paperwork, literature, and artwork.[82]

IV. *Childe Harold*'s Fugitive Ancestors and Afterlives

Besides Nineteenth-century works connecting Old World fugitive literary pieces to New World bodies of fugitive slaves made constant use of Byron's poetic representations of Greek political tyranny as a form of enslavement, particularly the following passage from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: "Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not / Who would be free themselves must

[81] A. F. M. Willich and Thomas Cooper, "Ink," in *The Domestic Encyclopedia; Or, a Dictionary of Facts, and Useful Knowledge: Comprehending A Concise View of the Latest Discoveries, Inventions, and Improvements, Chiefly Applicable to Rural and Domestic Economy* (London: Murray and Highley, et al., 1802 [1821]), 2:386-87. All citations refer to the 1821 edition, co-edited by Thomas Cooper and published in Philadelphia by Abraham Small. This edition's entry for "ink" also refers to ink recipes that call for "Brazil-wood" and "Sugar candy." See Willich and Cooper, *Domestic Encyclopedia*, 386.

[82] John Adolphus, *The Political State of the British Empire: Containing a General View of the Domestic and Foreign Possessions of the Crown; The Laws, Commerce, Revenues, Offices, and other Establishments Civil and Military* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818), 3:152-54. On the sugar trade, see Sussman *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender & British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

strike the blow?" (see fig. 14)[83]:

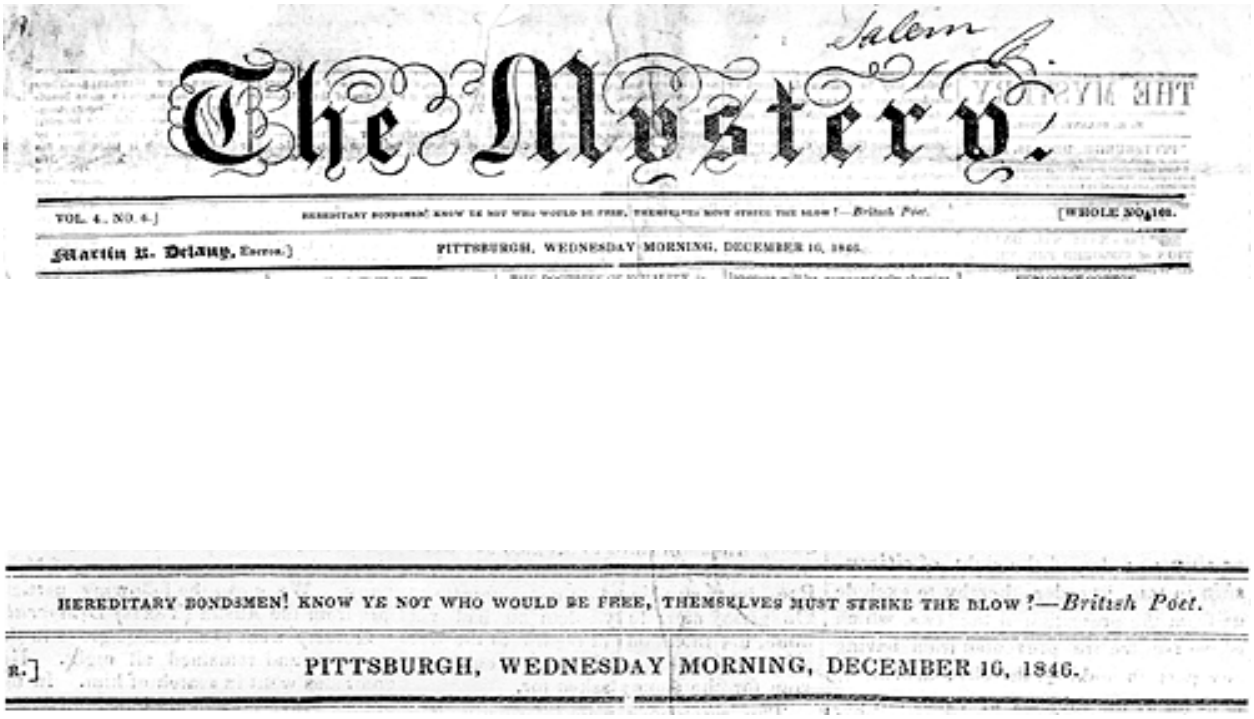


Figure 14 *The Mystery,* ed. Martin R. Delany (Pittsburgh, 1846). Masthead: "Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not / Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?"

For example, the prominent African American man of letters Martin R. Delany—the so-called "Father of Black Nationalism" and the first black field officer to serve in the American Civil War—took these lines from *Childe Harold* as the motto of *The Mystery*, the first African American newspaper published in Pittsburgh during the 1840s. Delany and his peers discovered Byron's memorable lines through the escaped fugitive slave Henry Highland Garnet's influential 1843 "Speech on the Fugitive Slave Bill," which occurred at a black national convention held

[83] Byron**,** *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt* (1812-16), in *The Complete Works*, 2:69.

near the US-Canada border in Buffalo, New York. Garnet's "Speech on the Fugitive Slave Bill," revised Byron's "hereditary bondsmen" in terms of radical black thought, citing the aforementioned selection from *Childe Harold* after the phrase, "Brethren, the time has come when you must act for yourselves."[84]

Garnet's oft-cited speech inspired Henry C. Bibb, a fugitive slave who escaped across the Canadian border to Windsor, to found and edit Canada's first black newspaper during the 1850s, the bi-weekly *Voice of the Fugitive*. In a request for subscriptions published in *Voice* on 3 December 1851, Bibb appeals to "all who feel interested" in the welfare of freed slaves to "hear an occasional 'Voice' from the refugees in Canada" (see fig. 15):

VOICE OF THE FUGITIVE.

HENRY BIBB, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR. SANDWICH, C. W., OCTOBER 29, 1851. VOL. I. NO. 22.

VOICE OF THE FUGITIVE IS PUBLISHED Every other Wednesday at Sandwich, Canada West.

TERMS. ONE DOLLAR per annum, always in ad-

over the lucubrations of such Jackdaws in Peacocks' feathers (for the sweat of the slave has contributed to all their embellishments) but while we are enjoying the sweets of freedom, we feel sad at the recollection that hundreds of our brethren may be suffering under the lash—lashes inflicted by men whom the God of the Universe has stamped with the seal of power! This reflection do-

which we should have done in the hands of others; by not giving our testimony at all proper times, and under all favorable circumstances, against slaveholding; by not doing our part in sustaining either the pulpit or the press which have faithfully vindicated our cause before the public; by not giving countenance to anti-slavery meetings, and by throwing off responsibilities which right-

or what is to be the remedy—whether it is to be moral or physical force? We say to our brethren, Be patient,—enter into no conspiracies for the shedding of human blood,—not only because of the improbability of your success against the government of the United States in such a contest, but because it is contrary to the will of God; because we believe that there is a better way; because we know that we have truth and

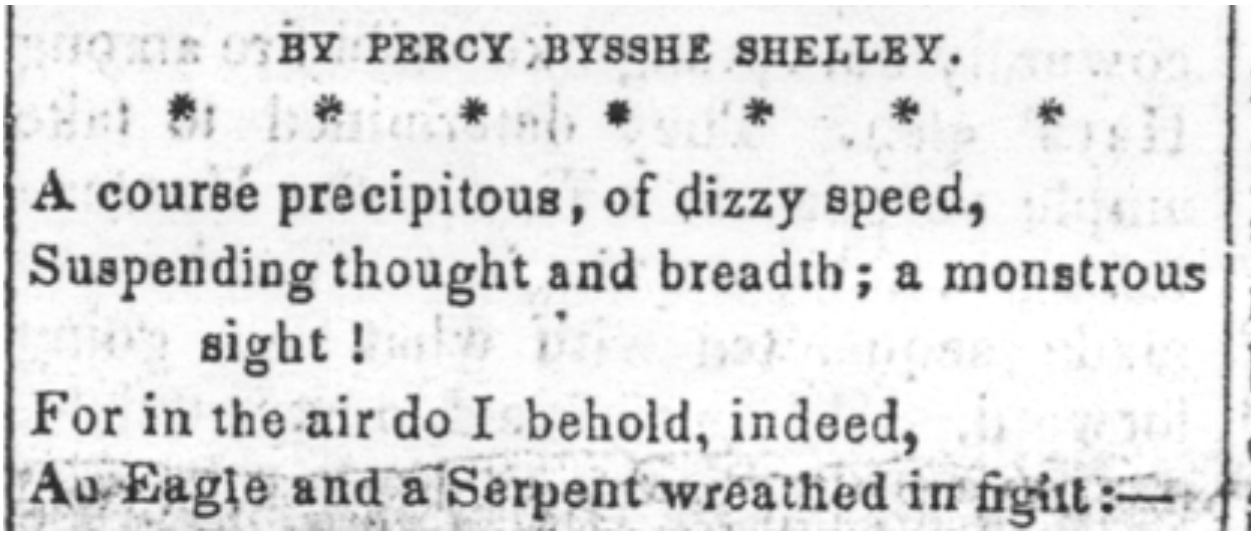
Let the state of New York, with her 60,000 free colored inhabitants, unite with us by adding 2000 members within one year, and we should have $10,000 to work with, and so could other states do likewise. How much this would gladden the fugitive's heart even to hear of such an organization located in Canada; and what man of color will say that this is not a desirable object? Who among us will pretend to say that it is impractible?

Figure 15 Henry C. Bibb, *Voice of the Fugitive* 1, no. 22 (3 December 1851): title page

Importantly, in *Voice*, Bibb printed fugitive poems on runaway slaves alongside not only the expected "hereditary bondsmen" passage from Byron's *Harold*, but also excerpts from

[84] Henry Highland Garnet, "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America," in *A Memorial Discourse* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, [1843] 1865), 48.

countless American and British poems addressing slavery or advocating liberty. For example, Bibb printed a contemporary poetic apostrophe entitled "The Fugitive Slave's Address to the North Star" at the same time that he reprinted a passage from Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* (1818) which describes an allegorical existential struggle for freedom between an eagle in flight and a serpent "wreathed in fight" (see fig. 16):


BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

* * * * * * *

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breadth; a monstrous sight!
For in the air do I behold, indeed,
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—

Figure 16 Extract from Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* (1818), reprinted by Bibb in *Voice of the Fugitive* (1851)

Through the form of the asterisk, Bibb signals the fragmented, fugitive nature of the piece of a Spenserian stanza that he extracts from Shelley's poem. Bibb and Delany's radical black presses effectively generated new abolitionist anthologies of fugitive print as they paired transatlantic accounts of American fugitive slaves with apropos selections loosed from the British Romantic canon.[85]

Detached scraps of Romantic literature such as the eagle and serpent passage from *The Revolt of Islam* and the "hereditary bondsman" passage from *Childe Harold* were remarkable in

[85] Black writers' continued to turn to the fugitive piece during the twentieth century. W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, would describe his *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) as a collection "of my fugitive pieces." See *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, in *The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1940] 2007), 40-41.

their enigmatic duplicity—for the way they refused singular possession and differently resonated with various transatlantic audiences. Delany, Garnet, Bibb, and their contemporaries' particularly common and creative citations of Byron's *Childe Harold* in particular might have resulted from their awareness that the poem's first canto appeared just five years after 1807, the same year that Byron published *Fugitive Pieces* and the British Parliament passed The Act to Abolish the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Moreover, Byron inserted into *Harold* a published note announcing that in the nineteenth century, slavery itself was a "barbarous" anachronism: "Amongst the remnants of the barbarous policy of the earlier ages, are the traces of bondage which yet exist in different countries; whose inhabitants, however divided in religion and manners, almost all agree in oppression. The English have at last compassionated their Negroes."[86] However, it is important to note that here Byron problematically retains the possessive "their," and that Britain's West Indian slaves were not fully emancipated until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833.

With *Childe Harold*'s abolitionist afterlives in mind, I will now return to a discussion of the poem's relationship to that which came before, Byron's juvenilia. *Fugitive Pieces* and *Hours of Idleness* were the laboratories that produced significant fugitive elements of *Childe Harold, Manfred,* and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,* a poem written in response to the *Edinburgh Review'*s savage review of *Hours of Idleness* and whose satirical form laid the groundwork for *Don Juan*, Byron's magnum opus. As this 1814 engraving after Thomas Stothard displays, *Childe Harold* focuses on a jaded juvenile runaway (see fig. 17):

[86] Byron, Notes to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:202.

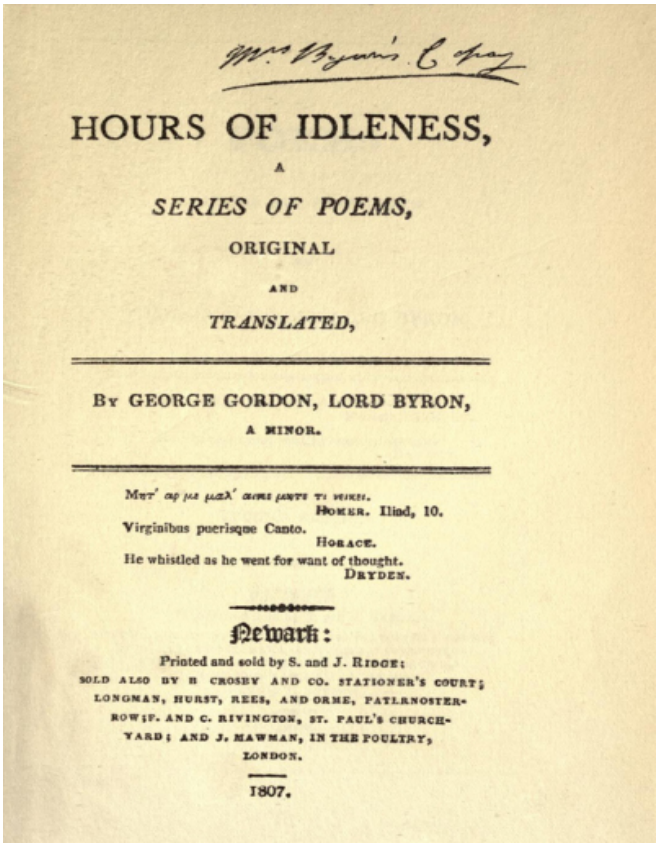
Fig. 17 Engraving (1814, after Thomas Stothard) of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto I.

Inscription: "The Childe departed from his father's hall: / It was a vast and venerable pile." Echoing Byron's first compilation of fugitive pieces, the illustration's inscription, taken from canto one of the poem, recounts that "The Childe departed from his father's hall: / It was a vast and venerable pile."[87]

In *Harold*, Byron expands on the anachronism of his juvenilia; the preface to the poem invokes both the medieval ballads of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Sir Walter Scott's three-volume *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3). Here Byron admits that he borrowed "the appellation 'Childe'" from Percy, and "the beginning of the first

[87] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:10.

canto" from "the Border Minstrelsy, edited by Mr. Scott."[88] Throughout *Childe Harold*, Byron intertwines these antiquarian intertexts with his own personal mythology (see fig. 18):



Mrs. Byron's Copy

HOURS OF IDLENESS,

A

SERIES OF POEMS,

ORIGINAL

AND

TRANSLATED,

BY GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON,

A MINOR.

Μυτ' αρ με μαλ' αιμε μητε τι νεικει.
HOMER. Iliad, 10.

Virginibus puerisque Canto.
HORACE.

He whistled as he went for want of thought.
DRYDEN.

Newark:

Printed and sold by S. and J. RIDGE;
SOLD ALSO BY B CROSBY AND CO. STATIONER'S COURT;
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-
ROW; F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-
YARD; AND J. MAWMAN, IN THE POULTRY,
LONDON.

1807.

Figure 18 Byron, *Hours of Idleness* (Newark: S. and J. Ridge, 1807), title page

He was a Northern border bard whose juvenile fugitive verses had been published in Newark rather than in London, and who had been raised in both Scotland and Nottinghamshire, a locality that—as he notes in *Fugitive Pieces*—contains Sherwood Forest, the secluded hideaway of the heroic medieval outlaw Robinhood. Significantly, both Percy and Scott's volumes contain militant border ballads such as "The Rising in the North," early works which situate themselves in opposition to England's past imperial conquests of its northern regions.[89] The Byron of *Childe*

[88] Byron, Preface to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:4.

[89] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry: Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of our Earlier Poets* . . . (London: J. Dodsley, 1765), 1:248. Percy elsewhere formulates "The North" as an

Harold channels the myth of the Anglo-Scottish border as a fugitive geography that remained outside so-called civilization. As Scott put it in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, the "the border counties, exposed from their situation to the incursions of the English . . . were reduced to a wilderness, inhabited only by the beasts of the field, and by a few more brutal warriors."[90]

Besides its revivals of Britain's medieval bards and borderlines, *Childe Harold* engages anachronism in its resurrection of the seasonal, task-oriented time of Edmund Spenser's 1579 *Shepheardes Calender*. *Childe Harold*'s second stanza rewrites a passage from Spenser's "December." In Byron's hands, Spenser's

> Whilome in youth, when flowrd my ioyfull spring,
> Like Swallow swift I wandred here and there:
> For heate of heedlesse lust me so did sting,[91]

becomes

> Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
> Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
> But spent his days in riot most uncouth.[92]

By beginning with the "heedlesse lust" of Spenser's ending, Byron positions his work and moment as in need of a return to the early modern forms of anachronism that Enlightenment history and philosophy had suppressed. Notably, Byron's prefaces to *Childe Harold* and *Cain*

---

anachronistic geography: "the civilizing of nations has begun from the South: the North would therefore be the last civilized." See *Four Essays, as Improved and Enlarged in the Second Edition of* The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry . . . (London: J. Dodsley, 1767), 21.

[90] Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads* . . . 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne for Longman and Rees [London], 1803), 1:xi.

[91] Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender: Conteyning Tvvelue Æglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monethes* (London: Printed by Hugh Singleton, 1579), ll. 19-24.

[92] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:9.

include discussions of critical attacks on anachronism. In the preface to *Harold*, for example, Byron states: "it has been stated, that besides the anachronism, he [the 'vagrant Childe'] is very *unknightly*."[93] The queer time of Byron's fugitive poetics was partially shaped by the new legions of historical fact finders that Enlightenment history and philosophy had produced.

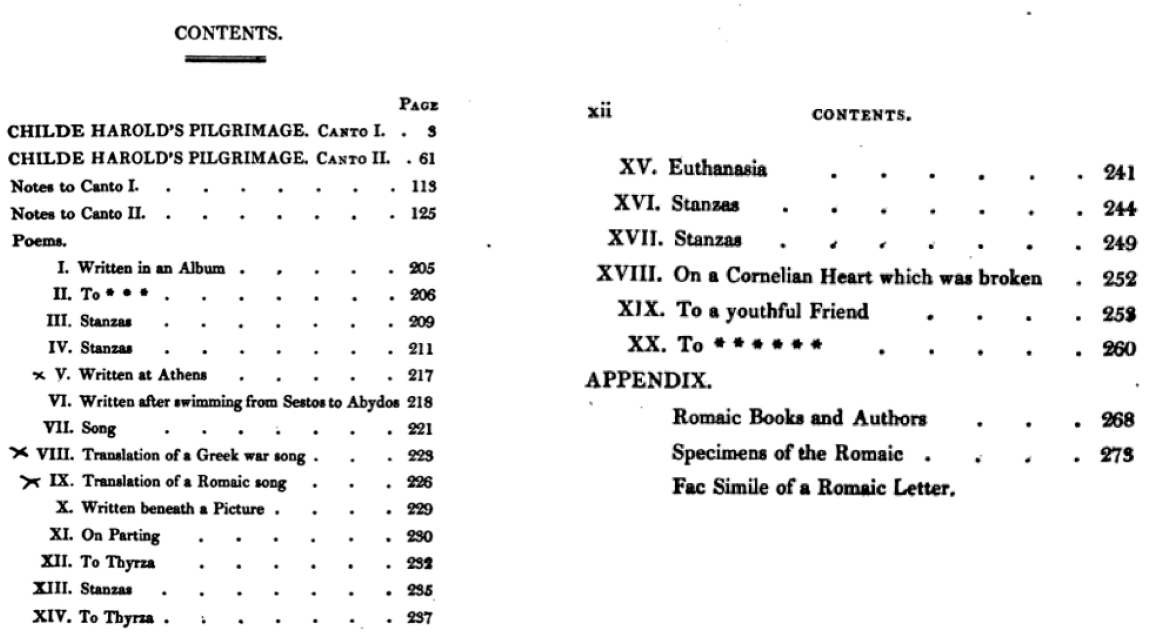
At the level of form, Byron's Spenserian stanzas, which mix alternating rhymes and couplets (ababbcbcc) and end in an alexandrine, reinforce the anachronism of his references. *Childe Harold* employs the alternating rests and shocks associated with the hybrid form of the Spenserian romance, whose stanzas typically cannibalize both the careening rhythms of the ballad and nod to the weightier movements of epic hexameter. The Spenserian stanza form performs particularly well for a poet seeking to elude the relentless forward movement of imperial time. In a passage that resonates with the unhurried "slow time" of Keats's "Grecian Urn," Byron's Dedication to *The Corsair* (1814) states that "the stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart."[94] Byron's comment looks backward and forward to the links that had been—and would be—established across English literary history between the languor and lingering of the Spenserian line and the enervated poetic subject. The Spenserian form's queer literary historical trajectory runs through James Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* (1748), Byron's *Childe Harold* (1812-16), John Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" (1820), Shelley's *Adonais* (1821), and culminates in the idle ephemerality and suspect sensuousness of Alfred Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters" (1832), a poem

[93] Byron, Addition to the Preface to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:5.

[94] Byron, Dedication to *The Corsair; A Tale* (1814), in *The Complete Works*, 3:149.

which—courtesy of George Brimley in 1855—occasioned the first recorded usage of the decadent term "aestheticism" in relation to British literature.[95]

Beyond its Spenserian prosody, *Child Harold* is riddled with the rhetoric of the occasional: the poem's operative terms are "oft-times," and "once more." *Harold*'s many digressions incorporate a variety of fugitive pieces: Byron inserts into the poem everything from Albanian ballads to queer elegies to his prematurely deceased Cambridge protégé, Edelston. Unlike most twenty-first century undergraduate texts of *Childe Harold*, the editions that John Murray published during Byron's lifetime included a supplementary sequence of fugitive pieces entitled "Other Poems" (see fig. 19):



CONTENTS.

Figure 19 Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), table of contents

Romantic readers would have experienced these additional occasional poems as part of the publication event of *Childe Harold*. "On a Carnelian Heart which was Broken," an appended

[95] See J. Dolven, "Spenserian Stanza," in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 1350-51, and the *OED* entry on "aestheticism." I am grateful to Joseph Bristow for the Brimley reference.

fugitive piece that appeared alongside Cantos I and II in the 1812 edition, can be read as an attempt to repair "The Cornelian," the "broken" prior apostrophe to Edelston that had been destroyed with *Fugitive Pieces*. Readers who knew "On a Carnelian Heart which was Broken" would surely have understood that the recurrent, but unnamed apostrophes that Byron weaves throughout *Childe Harold* refer to the departed Edleston.

The publication history of *Childe Harold* is as occasional as its form; the poem was written in four parts that were published over the course of six years. Pieces and paratext of *Harold* were published seemingly at random, unexpected times—making the reading process fundamentally different from the regulated order that would govern the standardized appearance of the serialized parts of Victorian fiction, numbers whose orderly appearance would reflect the industrial timeliness of the steam press. Moreover, the *Childe Harold* manuscripts themselves were truly fugitive, travelling on Byron's person to be picked up or left off at random. Byron often composed while in Greece and Turkey, parts of the Ottoman Empire that had not yet adopted the Gregorian Calendar. Greece and Turkey were thus literally out of time—beyond the reach of western imperial temporality. The conflicting dates of Byron's letters during this period make reference to the alternative time program of the Ottoman Empire and might account in part for Byron's continual interest in untimely rhythms.[96]

Childe Harold memorably begins with fugitivity—the young but prematurely world-weary knight fleeing from his father's moldering hall in an attempt to escape ennui. The poem ends with a similarly fugitive vision. In a vanishing act that parallels the disappearance of Byron's *Manfred, Childe Harold* concludes with Harold's untimely evaporation:

> But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,

[96] On Byron and Ottoman dates, see, for example, Peter Cochran, "Byron's Turkish Friends," in *Byron and Orientalism*, ed. Cochran (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 287-88.

The being who upheld it through the past?

Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.

He is no more—these breathings are his last;

His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,

. . . . . .

His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass.[97]

After Harold departs, becoming a fugitive from the poem itself, Byron replaces his lost, "ebbing" visions with a new alter ego centered on the occasional rhythms of the ocean:

not so thou,

Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—

Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—

Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form

Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,

Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,

Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime,

Dark—heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—

The image of eternity—the throne

Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime

The monsters of the deep are made; each zone

Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone

[97] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Works*, 2:179.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubble, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshing sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.[98]

In a passage that reminds his readers that he swam the Hellespont, Byron intimately aligns himself with the ocean—that "Almighty" fluid form whose tides roll and flow, outliving empires, moving without progression. The unlimited wave motion with which *Childe Harold* ultimately finishes urges us to consider what the many recent interdisciplinary conversations about temporality in critical theory, cultural studies, and poetry and poetics have yet to account for: the idea of timelessness. Byron and his late Romantic peers who would also theorize poetic timelessness in the 1820s, help us to see timelessness not as a quality of a poem addressed to posterity as "the timeless classic," but as a strategic anachronism that involves the complete defiance of normative imperial time.[99] Byron's endless and eternal ocean, which has touched the shores of every fallen empire, and which teaches the fallacy of imperial progress, also refuses to allow ships and goods to arrive on time. Through the power of its winds, weather, and caesurae,

[98] On wildness, queer time, and fugitivity, see Halberstam, "Wildness, Loss, Death," *Social Text* 32, no. 4 (2014): 141. Byron's wild waves resonate with Halberstam's exploration of "A queer inquisition into 'wildness'—where we might understand wildness as the space that colonialism constructs, marks, and disavows, as well as a space of vibrancy that limns all attempts to demarcate subject from object, and a space of normativity that holds the deviant and the monstrous decisively at bay."

[99] See my coda on Romanticism and timelessness.

the ocean interrupts and breaks continuous straight lines. The perpetual, personified sea that alternates between convulsion and "calm," but which cannot be disabled or wasted by "Time," is in Byron's imagination the playful form that receives his love and brings him to life, "child of thee." The "wild waves" that define Byron's liquid exit from *Harold*—which circle us back to the "wild sea-mew" and the wild, boiling thoughts of phantasy and flame of prior cantos—extend across the ages to offer us new ethical possibilities for anachronism.

As the eddying currents of *Harold*'s conclusion demonstrate, Byron simultaneously experimented with envisioning fugitive traditions and recovering elegant trifles; his most influential works combine the playful lyricism of the occasional piece with the serious politics of the fugitive. Byron's queer chronologies, which culminate in the unending opposition of plot and digression in *Don Juan,* help us to reflect on the non-linear, simultaneous temporalities of our own hypertext age of skipping, browsing, and skimming.[100] Channeling the effortless nonchalance of sprezzatura, Byron reconstructed Walpole's elusive poetics of undetermined duration for a new age, undermining the idea that human lives "tell time" as narrative and follow a sequential "novelistic framework."[101] Dispensing with the elongated temporalities of the magnum opus, the national narrative, and the imperial epic, he developed a queer formalism capable of linking the iterative waves of timeless oceans to the preliminary compositional gestures of the fugitive piece.[102]

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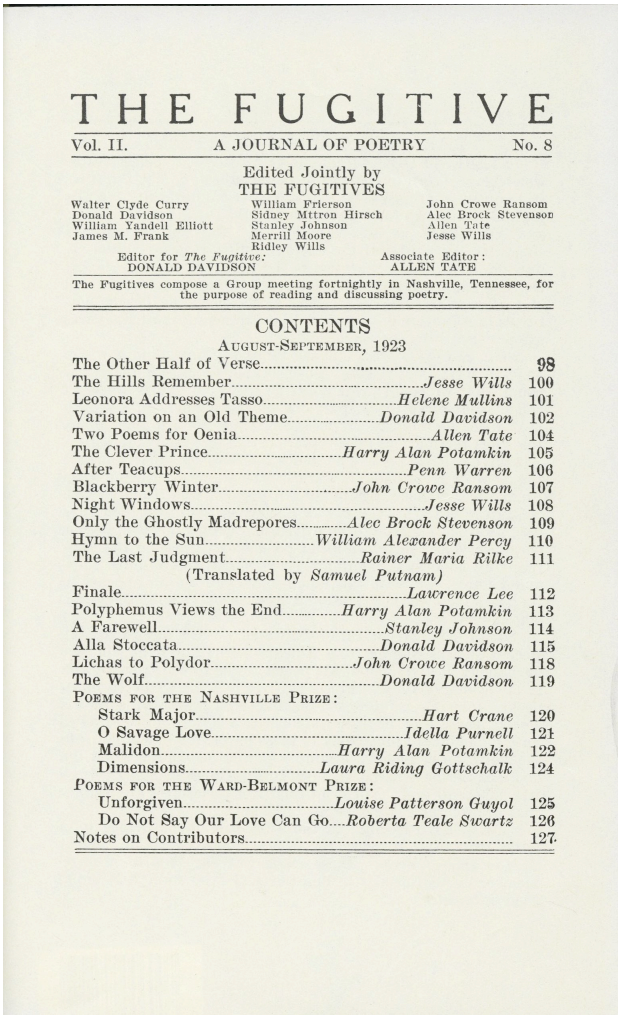
[100] McGann asks us to "recognize the nonlinear character of various kinds of pre-cybertexts," arguing that "Every poem comprised in our inherited Western corpus could fairly be described as a nonlinear game played (largely) with linear forms and design conventions, but sometimes with nonlinear forms as well." See *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 148.

[101] Sherman, *Telling Time*, ix-x, and Freeman, *Time Binds*, 5. Sherman explores how "Clocks tell time, narratives tell what transpires in time," while Freeman examines the narrative "logic of time-as-productive."

[102] Coleridge's mariner, who informs the wedding guest that he repeatedly awaits and experiences "an uncertain hour" of agony, reveals that this occasional poetic temporality also took on very different affects from those Byron's poetry expresses during the period.

Impossible to capture permanently, the fugitive forms that Walpole, Byron, and their abolitionist successors imagined do not persist permanently because they were built to return on occasion rather than to last. Today, the vanishing fugitive poet still appears occasionally, a fact confirmed by the appearance of the Vanderbilt literary magazine, *The Fugitive: A Journal of Poetry* (1922-25), in whose pages "The Fugitives"—John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and others—began to shape the rise of the New Criticism (see fig. 20):



THE FUGITIVE

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THE FUGITIVES

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Associate Editor: ALLEN TATE

The Fugitives compose a Group meeting fortnightly in Nashville, Tennessee, for the purpose of reading and discussing poetry.

CONTENTS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1923

Figure 20 John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, et al., *The Fugitive: A Journal of Poetry* 2, no. 8 (1923): title page

Around seventy-five years later, the poet Anne Michaels would craft the loosely intertwined narratives that make up her 1998 episodic novel *Fugitive Pieces*, which centers on a Jewish protagonist named Jakob Beer who escapes Nazi Germany to Toronto by way of Greece.[103] Michaels's work captures the untimely sense of belonging that Byron, together with his predecessors and protégés, discovered in the fugitive piece. Perhaps the Horatian epigraph to Byron's *Hours of Idleness*, "dulce est desipere in loco" ("'Tis sweet to trifle now and then")—which Byron may have taken from a published letter from the Walpole circle that references "hour[s] of leisure" and the same passage from Horace—is the motto that best describes how fugitive poets from Walpole to Michaels kill time.[104]

[103] See Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (New York: Vintage Books [1996], 1998).

[104] Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, viii, and William Oxberry, ed., "The Lounger's Pic Nic: No. I.," in *The Flowers of Literature*; *Or, Encyclopedia of Anecdote: A Well Diversified Collection* . . . (London: W. Simpkin, R. Marshall, and C. Chapple, 1821) 2:33. Long before Byron, Richard West wrote to Gray about this passage from Horace, and the "pleasure" of "hour[s] of leisure" stolen from "Each day of Business": "*dulce est desipere in loco*; so said Horace to Virgil, those two sons of Anak in poetry, and so say I to you, in this degenerate land of pigmies, Mix with your grave designs a little pleasure, / Each day of business has its hour of leisure. In one of these hours, I hope, dear Sir, you will sometimes think of me, write to me, and know me your's [*sic*] . . . that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you." See West to Gray, 22 December 1736, in *Elegant Epistles: Or, A Copious Collection of Familiar and Amusing Letters, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons, and for General Entertainment*, ed. Vicesimus Knox (Dublin: H. Chamberlaine and Rice, P. Wogan, et al., 1790), 652.

CHAPTER THREE

Local Time: Rural Architecture and Cumbrian Culture in William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*

From the romantic era to the present, literary critics have paid scant attention to William Wordsworth's "Rural Architecture," a seemingly inconsequential four-stanza poem in the two-volume 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.[1] At first glance there is perhaps little to recommend this short poem. When considered in the context of the 1800 volume, the poem's diction, rhyme scheme, and meter are neither complicated nor unusual. Its content is also easy to summarize. An unnamed speaker describes three "rosy-cheek'd School-boys" who build a stone giant named "Ralph Jones" on the Lake District summit of Great How, only to have their monument promptly destroyed by a "Wind."[2] They then build a second giant. Finally, the implicitly adult speaker imagines himself joining them in an apostrophic turn that details the creation of a third giant:

> There's George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
>
> Three rosy-cheek'd School-boys, the highest not more

[1] Most major studies of *Lyrical Ballads* fail to acknowledge "Rural Architecture." Those that do represent it as a humorous trifle that relates to a simple act of childish play. For an astute reading of "Rural Architecture" as a "trivial" account of "comic . . . play" that produces the same "anxiety about the inevitable failure of human creations" as the much more "emblematic and purposive" georgic labor of "Michael," see Bruce E. Graver, "Wordsworth's Georgic Pastoral: *Otium* and *Labor* in 'Michael,'" *European Romantic Review* 1, no. 2 (1991): 124. In a brief discussion of the poem Kenneth R. Johnston interprets the giants of "Rural Architecture" as didactic symbols of the French Revolution that present a "vindication against the public agendas of the world." Yet in the same breath Johnston noticeably dismisses "Rural Architecture" as "country comic relief." See Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (New York: Norton, 1998), 732. From Johnston's perspective, since it is a marginal lyric about children making fantastic giants, "Rural Architecture" remains outside what Michael G. Cooke calls the era's concern "with revolution and the gravity of life." See Cooke, "Romanticism: Pleasure and Play," in *The Age of William Wordsworth: Critical Essays on the Romantic Tradition*, eds. Johnston and Gene W. Ruoff (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 74. On "Rural Architecture" and genre, see also Johnston, "Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*," in *1800: The New* "*Lyrical Ballads*," eds. Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 95–122. For an exploration of the critical neglect of the comic in Romantic studies, consult Alan Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 94.

[2] William Wordsworth, "Rural Architecture," in *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems: 1797–1800*, eds. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1800] 1992), 234-35, ll. 2, 10, 13. All future references to this poem will be cited parenthetically by line number, and all future citations of *Lyrical Ballads* refer to the Cornell edition.

Than the height of a Counsellor’s bag;

To the top of Great How did it please them to climb,

And there they built up without mortar or lime

A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gather’d up as they lay,

They built him and christen’d him all in one day,

An Urchin both vigorous and hale;

And so without scruple they call’d him Ralph Jones.

Now Ralph is renown’d for the length of his bones;

The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the Wind sallied forth,

And, in anger or merriment, out of the North

Coming on with a terrible pother,

From the peak of the crag blew the Giant away.

And what did these School-boys?—The very next day

They went and they built up another.

—Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works

In Paris and London, ’mong Christians or Turks,

Spirits busy to do and undo:

At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag.

—Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag!

And I'll build up a Giant with you (ll. 1-24).

This poem's unadorned representation of the repetitive construction and destruction of peripheral rural edifices, ones located far from the metropolis, has seldom appeared to have any secrets worth unearthing.

For all its ostensible simplicity "Rural Architecture" addresses a regional phenomenon whose broader significance remains—for reasons I explore here—hard to construe. "Rural Architecture" has the quality of a riddle. The poem's transparent form highlights children's play and mordant comedy to veil its instances of local dialect and regional allusion. Once decoded these encrypted local references force reflection on the significance of the incessant cycles that continually construct and destroy stone giants in Cumbria.[3] Noticeably, the rolling anapestic verse produces playful, rising rhythms that dramatize the tireless dynamism involved in the acts of giant building. Each of the poem's four sestets repeats the structure of, first, a couplet that pairs a line of anapestic tetrameter with one of catalectic amphibrachic tetrameter and, second, a line of anapestic trimeter. Such prosody, although hardly uncommon in its time, was not exactly dignified. In the second edition of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1767) Thomas Percy terms anapestic verse a "degraded" English metrical form that is "now never used but in ballads and pieces of light humour."[4] The fact too that "Rural Architecture" offers no judgment on the

[3] Stephen Jay Gould argues that despite the fact that the purposive, developmental, and sequential idea of "time's arrow"—the notion that "history is an irreversible sequence of unrepeatable events"—is the West's governing paradigm today, "most people throughout history have held fast to time's cycle, and have viewed time's arrow as either unintelligible or a source of deepest fear." See *Time's Arrow*, *Time's Cycle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 10, 12-13. In accord with Gould, P. Burke claims that the Greeks lacked "a sense of anachronism." P. Burke illuminates how in contrast to the Romans, the Greeks "believed that human nature was always the same; that the past tended to repeat itself." See *Sense of Anachronism*, 138-40.

[4] Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 2nd ed. (London: Dodsley, 1767), 2:277-78. On the relationship between nationalism and meter in English culture, see Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter*: *Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1-13.

custom it describes also makes it hard for readers to discern the poem's overall point of view. Besides its final stanza, which distributes judgment ironically across a series of binaries that the speaker's memory juxtaposes—"Paris and London," "Christians or Turks," "do and undo"—"Rural Architecture" portrays a poetic voice that does not moralize the events it records, adopt serious attitudes toward them, or indulge in overt didacticism about them (ll. 20-21). "Rural Architecture" certainly escapes the preachiness that has made many of Wordsworth's critics, such as Walter Pater, bristle.[5] Yet the poem's refusal to impart wisdom deserves scrutiny, since formally, tonally, and discursively its form seems to evoke that of a parable written for the instruction of children.[6]

All of these elements suggest that giant building in "Rural Architecture" defies the straightforward description that the poem's form might initially suggest. The rapidly developing genres of the tourist guide and the architectural study of local building techniques are crucial to the development of a better understanding of the distinctly regional practice that the poem's title mentions. Here I show that the Cumbrian specificity of the insider codes, conventions, and histories that this apparently simple lyric engages has made its otherwise clear lines enigmatic for nonnative audiences from the nineteenth century to the present. The poem's portrayal of a local cultural tradition deftly maneuvers between two reading communities—one metropolitan and one Cumbrian—that did not until the appearance of this work always enjoy productive

[5] Walter Pater, "On Wordsworth," *Fortnightly Review* 15, no. 88 (1874): 465. According to Pater, Wordsworth is at his best when he does "not . . . teach lessons, or enforce rules." On Wordsworth and didacticism, see Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 86; Geoffrey Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 45; John L. Mahoney, *William Wordsworth: A Poetic Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 213; and Judith W. Page, *Wordsworth and the Cultivation of Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 83.

[6] "Rural Architecture" employs the alternating lines of tetrameter and trimeter that characterize oral poetic forms. On Wordsworth and orality, see Frances Ferguson, "Writing and Orality around 1800: 'Speakers,' 'Readers,' and Wordsworth's 'The Thorn,'" in *Wordsworth's Poetic Theory: Knowledge, Language, Experience*, eds. Alexander Regier and Stefan H. Uhlig (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 122-32.

communication with each other.

As do many of Wordsworth's more well-known poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, such as "The Idiot Boy," "Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman," "The Thorn," "We Are Seven," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill, a True Story," "Lucy Gray," "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," and "Hart-Leap Well," "Rural Architecture" concentrates on a particularly local subject in "low and rustic life."[7] "Rural Architecture," however, requires more of its readers than do these other poems in the way of familiarity with the specific details of local Cumbrian culture, details that were not readily accessible to those who lived outside the region. The poem neither welcomes the uninitiated nor practices what many of Wordsworth's foremost critics identify as the alchemy by which his most discussed poems successfully parlay "low and rustic" traditions into transcendent and universal truths that any reader can access without much contextual knowledge.[8] The arguments of these critics follow Wordsworth's own claims in the preface that *Lyrical Ballads* aims to represent "the great and universal passions of men, the most general and

[7] Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *Lyrical Ballads*, 743-44. Despite our common associations of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* with industrial critique and regional particularity, the word "rural" does not appear at all in the 1798 edition. Outside the preface and the advertisement, the term only appears three times in the 1800 edition: once in "Hart-Leap Well" in a nod to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" ("I'll build a Pleasure-house upon this spot / And a small Arbour, made for rural joy"), again in "The Old Cumberland Beggar" to describe what the downward glancing traveller does not see ("fields with rural works"), and more prominently in the title "Rural Architecture." See "Hart-Leap Well," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 135, "The Old Cumberland Beggar: A Description," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 230, and "Rural Architecture," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 234.

[8] Fiona Stafford reads Wordsworth's localism as translatable to global audiences, focusing on the enduring value of his poetry: "The poems created by Burns and Wordsworth were not 'local' in the sense of having meaning only for those living in the areas where they were set, but represented a kind of art whose truthfulness was universally recognizable." See *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 21. For Don H. Bialostosky, speakers in Wordsworth's experimental poems attempt "to identify the 'great and permanent forms of nature' and make the understanding of his utterance depend on them rather than on the temporary interests of small coteries and classes." See *Making Tales*: *The Poetics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 45. Marjorie Levinson argues that in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" "the order of authorial and contextual urgencies—fades from view," and as a result the poem's mysteries become universally accessible and attractive to literary critics. See *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 15.

interesting of their occupations."[9]

My account of "Rural Architecture," however, investigates how the poem mostly refuses to universalize an inscrutable local custom.[10] This lyric's enduring attention to a regional practice that proves resistant to immediate interpretation helps us grasp those moments when Wordsworth's poetic project diverges from his avowed belief that great "poetry has an essential nature that is timeless and universal."[11] My inquiry into the poem's localism builds on Don H. Bialostosky's nuanced recuperation of Wordsworth's more experimental poems. Bialostosky provides many insights into the function of the rustic elements of *Lyrical Ballads* that have sometimes struck scholars as unintelligible: "Wordsworth's rustic speakers can safely assume that they will be understood by their fellows without needing to elaborate on what they are talking about or where they stand toward their listeners or what they are trying to do or what they take to be important."[12] Taking seriously his argument that Wordsworth develops a "poetics of speech" in *Lyrical Ballads* that triangulates "human narrator, hero, and reader" means focusing more attention on how the volume relates the obscurity of Cumbria's dialect, topography, and culture to the interruption of the nonnative reader's understanding.[13]

Although modern scholarship has naturally attended to Wordsworth's geographic knowledge of the Lake District, it remains the case that comparatively little criticism reflects on the region's dialect and customs in relation to the opacity that characterizes many of the poems

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[9] Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *Lyrical Ballads*, 754.

[10] Wordsworth's poem thus anticipates the twentieth-century "rise of ecocriticism" that Ursula K. Heise argues "was initially facilitated by its foundational investment in local subjects and forms of knowledge." For Heise's critique of localist rhetoric in contemporary environmental criticism, see "Ecocriticism and the Transnational Turn in American Studies" *American Literary History* 20, nos. 1-2 (2008): 381-87.

[11] Perloff, *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 2.

[12] Bialostosky, *Making Tales*, 40.

[13] Bialostosky, *Making Tales*, 11, 55.

in *Lyrical Ballads*. It is notable that the so-called dialect riddle was a fundamentally Cumbrian poetic form and that one of the area's most popular dialect riddles catalogs a trip to a Lake District "wood":

> I went toth' wood an I gat it,
>
> I sat me doon en I leakt at it;
>
> En when e saa I cudn't git't,
>
> I teakt heam we ma.
>
> [I went to the wood, and I got it,
>
> I sat me down and I look'd at it;
>
> And when I saw I could not get it,
>
> I took it home with me.][14]

This riddle's answer, "a thorn in the foot," ties the initial inaccessibility of the Cumbrian enigma to the geographic obscurity of the mountains that historically protected the region.[15]

To account more fully for the preliminary lyric obscurity of "Rural Architecture," we can reconfigure Daniel Tiffany's insights into the enigmatic quality of metropolitan verse for the hard to decipher particularities of the Cumbrian tradition. As Tiffany argues, the history of lyric obscurity continually balances formal and cultural unknowns.[16] For criminal subcultures, poetic language's resistance to transparent meaning made possible the communication of hidden secrets.[17] The connections he traces between cryptic poems and political infidels help move us

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[14] Adam Walker, *Remarks Made in a Tour from London to the Lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland* (London: Nicol and Dilly, 1792), 84.

[15] Walker, *London to the Lakes*, 84.

[16] Tiffany, *Infidel Poetics*, 1-13.

[17] On the connections between the lyric, the collectible, and the miniature, see Tiffany, *Toy Medium: Materialism and Modern Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 11-33.

away from the notion that poetic obscurity is always a purely aesthetic force whose apolitical, elite, and unhistorical nature presents "the principal impediment to poetry's social relevance."[18] Tiffany's reflections on secrecy in the contexts of urban slang, illicit nightlife, and radical vernaculars are exceptionally illuminating when translated to the rural context of a lyric such as "Rural Architecture." His research helps elucidate the difficult lyric expression of what Fiona Stafford calls "the deep, hidden narratives associated with habitual experience."[19] In this regard the stone giants of "Rural Architecture" arguably render the playful energy of this poem especially cryptic in ways that demand a contextual understanding of a custom that unites lyric secrecy and political consequence.

I. Cumbrian Customs and Local Resistance

In "Rural Architecture" the "Wind" completely dismembers the first giant the boys construct. In this respect the giant hardly counts among the ruins that the Comte de Volney describes in *The Ruins, or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires* (1791), his influential account of the crucial role ruins play in understanding the rise and fall of successive empires. Wordsworth's giant cannot even aspire to the condition of a broken monument, because its body provides no permanent structural form: "the Wind sallied forth, / And . . . blew the Giant away" (ll. 13-16). Since the wind almost instantaneously destroys the boys' first giant, Ralph Jones, the poem offers no parallels to other familiar romantic-era depictions of crumbling monuments, such as John Keats's "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" or Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ozymandias."

[18] Tiffany, *Infidel Poetics,* 4.

[19] Stafford, *Local Attachments*, 21.

Conspicuously, Ralph Jones passes away without leaving remains.[20] The monumentalizing power that marks many of Wordsworth's so-called universal lyrics, such as "The Thorn" and "Tintern Abbey," is clearly absent from "Rural Architecture." In contrast to the romantic ruin, which Anne Janowitz argues simultaneously signifies "the conception of the British nation as immemorially ancient" and the notion of "historical and imperial impermanence," the disappearing body of Ralph Jones is purely ephemeral.[21] After the wind blows Ralph Jones away, the speaker both queries and responds: "And what did these School-boys?—The very next day / They went and they built up another" (ll. 17-18).[22] The speaker suggests that the boys' desire to rebuild what is easily destroyed makes perfect sense. Literary scholars, however, have seldom sought to discover why this rhetorical inquiry generates such a ready-made but hard to construe answer.

The following passage from the preface, in which Wordsworth theorizes the "diseased impulses" that lead to an "unworthy" poem, illustrates why "Rural Architecture" expresses no interest in the cultural permanence that Janowitz associates with the romantic ruin: "I request the Reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, sometimes from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy

[20] On Wordsworth's increased emphasis on death and communal mourning in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* (the edition that adds "Rural Architecture"), see Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 4, 6, 127. On bodily erasure in the Lucy poems, see Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment*, 207. For a theorization of the elegiac in the context of Wordsworth, consult Liu, "The New Historicism and the Work of Mourning," in *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment*, eds. Helen Regueiro Elam and Frances Ferguson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 149-57, esp. 155.

[21] Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 4. See also note 13 of my introduction.

[22] Wordsworth removed the last stanza of "Rural Architecture" in the 1805 and 1815 editions, effectively making the poem itself into a ruin.

subjects."[23] The preface links "defects," "diseased impulses," "unworthy subjects," and "false importance" to the "particular"; it encourages us to consider why things that are unworthy or defective do not make sense in a "general" context. In contrast to poems such as "Tintern Abbey" which explain apparently obscure local customs and make the history of rural monuments available to metropolitan readers, "Rural Architecture" preserves Cumbrian particularity by refusing to treat the regional landscape feature of the stone giant as if it were an urban monument. Instead, the poetic voice implicitly embraces the clear openness of the Lake District's rural landscape by leveling a critique against the monument-littered capitals of Europe; alluding to the Tower of Babel, the speaker laments, "blind boisterous works / In Paris and London" (ll. 19-20). In contrast to the reactionary *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, which printed John Whitaker's denunciation of British radicals as "ready to renew the French Babel of Confusion, and to repeat the French war of giants against heaven, in their own region of Britain," the speaker of "Rural Architecture" condemns Londoners and Parisians for organizing their architectural and cultural constructions according to equally misguided imperialistic aims.[24] If, he implies, the giants of Cumbria were to become too monumental or too "general," they too would become tourist attractions in an era in which the Napoleonic Wars' interruption of Continental travel was making the Lake District itself into a fashionable tourist destination.[25]

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[23] Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *Lyrical Ballads*, 757.

[24] John Whitaker, "Reflections Suggested by the Present State of Europe," *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* 1, no. 6 ([1797] 1798): 693.

[25] William Cockin revised Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes: Dedicated to the Lovers of Landscape Studies, and to All Who Have Visited, or Intend to Visit, the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* (London, Richardson, Urquhart, and W. Pennington [Kendal], 1778), a text which later became *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* (London: Richardson and Urquhart, [1778] 1780). Citations refer to the second edition. West's *Guide* saw its seventh edition by 1799. By 1800 a slew of Cumbrian tourist guides were in print, such as John Housman's *Descriptive Tour, and Guide to the Lakes, Caves, Mountains, and Other Natural Curiosities, in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and a Part of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Carlisle, UK: Printed by J. Jollie, and sold by C. Law [London], 1800). On the rise of ecotourism in Cumbria, see Amanda Gilroy, *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press), 2000.

Wordsworth thus portrays the Cumbrian giants of "Rural Architecture" as seemingly unserious, simple, and quotidian provincial forms that rise and fall at the mercy of the elements rather than the epoch-making phases of history.

At a time when organized tourism threatened the traditions of the English Lake District, "Rural Architecture" cultivated a protective secrecy that sought to shelter both Wordsworth the Cumbrian native and his local community.[26] The poem's cryptic regional references invite strangers—readers of the poem lacking an intimate knowledge of the Lake District—to perceive giant building as a trivial, meaningless curiosity. This distinctly local lyric includes knowing Cumbrian audiences at the same time that it excludes curious urban ones. For Wordsworth, the giant building of "Rural Architecture" is highly specific to a regional culture whose customs relatively few visitors had until recently tried to understand. In a prefatory note to the poem recorded by his amanuensis, Isabella Fenwick, Wordsworth observes that rural giants pervade the Lake District: "These structures, as every one knows, are common among our hills, being built by shepherds, as conspicuous marks, and occasionally by boys in sport."[27] "Every one" here clearly means everyone from the region. As Cumbrians, Wordsworth and his sister literally held such stone "Men" in "common." In *The Grasmere Journal*, for example, Dorothy Wordsworth similarly depicts a "Stone man upon the top of the hill . . . [who] stood like a Giant watching from the Roof of a lofty Castle."[28]

The seemingly short and simple "Rural Architecture" grows out of Cumbria's landscape,

[26] In August 1797 William Pitt's extensive spy ring monitored Wordsworth in Nether Stowey. When Wordsworth returned to the Lake District to reside in Grasmere in 1799, he would have been especially attracted to the idea of remaining out of sight. See Johnston, *Unusual Suspects: Pitt's Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 229.

[27] Wordsworth, *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 45.

[28] Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere Journal*, in *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals*, ed. Pamela Woof (Oxford: Oxford University Press [1800-1803], 2002), 41.

history, and culture—especially the regionally famous site of the Giant's Grave at Penrith.[29] Readers without such local knowledge miss much. *Crosby's Complete Pocket Gazetteer of England and Wales*, an 1807 tourist guide by Benjamin Crosby, includes an account of the Giant's Grave: "Two pyramidical stone pillars stand at the opposite ends of the grave, about 15 feet asunder; they are 11 feet 6 inches in height, and nearly 5 feet in circumference at the bottom, where they are mortized into round stones, embedded in the earth."[30] As the calculating vocabulary of this passage suggests, Crosby precisely recorded and mapped Cumbria with a classificatory exactitude that drained the region's auratic sites of their mythological idiosyncrasies. Daniel Defoe's description of the Giant's Grave in *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies* helps explain how the boys' giant-building projects express a shared oral history that had only recently come into print.[31] This point is borne out in Arthur Granville Bradley's *Highways and Byways in the Lake District*, which recounts the local history of how the Giant's Grave knit the Cumbrian community together.[32] When the churchwardens of George I attempted to break up and remove the Giant's Grave, referring to it as rubbish, the "populace rose as one man" to defend and repair it and the local culture the Grave cultivated and represented. That such a local revolution had centered on the Giant's Grave would

[29] For critiques of literary critics' common associations of William Wordsworth, individualist subjectivity, and the egotistical sublime, see Fosso, *Buried Communities*, 139, and Susan J. Wolfson, "Individual in Community: Dorothy Wordsworth in Conversation with William," in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Mellor (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1988), 139-66, esp. 146.

[30] Benjamin Crosby, *Crosby's Complete Pocket Gazetteer of England and Wales; or, Travellers' Companion* (London: Crosby, 1807), 417. The descriptive accuracy of works such as *Crosby's* attempted to transform local historical sites into tourist attractions.

[31] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies* (London: Strahan, Mears, and Stagg, 1724-26), 3:235.

[32] Arthur Granville Bradley, *Highways and Byways in the Lake District* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 16.

strike a nerve in the conservative historical context of Britain in 1800.[33]

The anthropological roots of this fetishization of Cumbrian giants can be traced to the area's pagan history.[34] The British archaeologist Aubrey Burl flags Cumbria as a place famed for its pagan architecture and its development of the first avenues and "portalled entrances" to "giant stone circles."[35] Local knowledge of the violent Cumbrian history of druidical giant rituals shifts the poem's seemingly insignificant description of childish play into a much darker register. The ancient Celtic and Anglo-Saxon chronicles tell of pagan rites in which the bodies of wicker giants were filled with human sacrifices. According to the British anthropologist and poet H. J. Massingham, it was the custom to place "human beings for sacrifice in the huge wicker limbs of giants. These were then fired, and the giant consumed his victims."[36] Such tales of immolated giant bodies and the human sacrifices that accompanied them are the oral sources that Wordsworth's material imaginary draws upon in "Rural Architecture."[37] Built from these local customs, the giants of "Rural Architecture" thus signify both rural resistance and terrifying power: their local history is concerned with fiery destruction, rural defense, regional tradition,

[33] Today's tourist guides to Penrith have converted this account of rebellion, which was once solely the province of locals, into an innocuous public narrative. Lesley Anne Rose, for example, recounts for the enjoyment of twenty-first-century tourists the anecdote that "a legendary giant, and King of all Cumbria, is said to be buried in the Giant's Grave in St. Andrews churchyard." See *The Best of Britain: The Lake District, Authentic, Accessible Guides by Local Experts* (Richmond, UK: Crimson, 2008), 262.

[34] Stewart stresses that giants have always embodied local emotions, dialects, religions, cultures, vernaculars, and landscapes. See *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 81.

[35] Aubrey Burl, *From Carnac to Callanish: The Prehistoric Stone Rows and Avenues of Britain, Ireland, and Brittany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 41.

[36] H. J. Massingham, *Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum: The Giants in England* (London: Kegan Paul, 1926), 81.

[37] Writing outside the Cumbrian context, the Wordsworth of "Guilt and Sorrow" personifies Stonehenge as a secretive observer of such ancient sacrifices: in "Pile of Stone-henge! so proud to hint yet keep / Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear / . . . / Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear / For sacrifice its throngs of living men." See "Guilt and Sorrow," in *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1842], 1975), 235. This later portrait reworks the earlier one Wordsworth crafts in *Salisbury Plain*, which depicts the "human sacrifice" of "huge wickers paled with circling fire." See *Salisbury Plain*, in *Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. Gill ([1793-94], 1975), 35.

and open countryside. They embody Cumbrian culture's fierce opposition to the ornamental littering and industrialization of the countryside that James C. McKusick associates with the "development and improvement of rural landscapes."[38]

"Rural Architecture" enigmatically absorbs this ancient sacrificial past into a cyclical narrative about children's play. Wordsworth's note to this spirited lyric reports that although adults normally constructed stone men, "Rural Architecture" concerns a child's game. In this context it bears noting that following the druidical era the history of Cumbrian giants refers not to childish joy but instead to what Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley calls medieval "dummy spearmen" capable of defending borders.[39] When stationed on Cumbrian crags, stone giants were indistinguishable from real soldiers. According to accounts of Cumbria's medieval history that circulated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the region was defined by its status as the unruly border territory that Scotland and England constantly contested. Edward Wedlake Brayley and John Britton's *Beauties of England and Wales* describes Cumbria as a place inhabited by militant "borderers": "So accustomed were the borderers to rapine, that they went armed even to their feasts."[40] Embedded in Cumbrian history is the idea of a necessarily restive, often defensive, and at times lawless people whose allegiances perpetually shifted. According to Brayley and Britton, in spite of the incessant incursions that it experienced, Cumbria remained a fiercely independent region with a piratical culture comparable to that of "Algiers, Tunis, and Morocco": "a petty district, situated between two powerful nations, and

[38] James C. McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 64-65.

[39] Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, *Months at the Lakes* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1906), 104.

[40] Edward Wedlake Brayley and John Britton, "Cumberland," in *The Beauties of England and Wales; Or, Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of Each County* (London: Maiden, 1802), 3:13.

inhabited by clans of banditti."[41]

In "Rural Architecture" the seemingly innocuous portrait of rural community building is associated with regional historical codes that both renew the memory of ceaseless imperial invasions into Cumbria and emphasize the need to band together for Cumbrians in the interest of preservation. By reinforcing the concerns of this local history, the poem's ostensibly comic anapestic prosody—a meter that Edmund Burke connects to popular verse, pastorals, songs, ballads, and burlesques—can also be read as evoking militancy.[42] Eighteenth-century introductions to poetry, grammar, and rhetoric, such as the expanded second edition of John Brightland's *Grammar of the English Tongue, with Notes* (through eight editions by 1759), identify anapests with the marching rhythm of a call to arms: "a very spritely Trot, and a Motion proper to excite and enrage."[43]

Alongside its militant prosody and the "to the barricades!" feel of its final lines, the poem's cyclical narrative subtly advocates the continuation of Cumbria's historically defensive and defiant provincial politics by substituting the threats of tourism and urban development—"blind boisterous works / in Paris and London"—for those of military invasion. By the late 1790s, when transnational conflicts were emphatically preoccupying political life and Cumbria was being marketed in print, it was hard for metropolitan readers to remember that the formation of the English nation was itself immersed in historical conflicts that went back hundreds upon hundreds of years. It took a significant amount of time for Cumbria to become a part of England,

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[41] Brayley and Britton, "Cumberland," 3:14.

[42] Edmund Burke, *The Annual Register; Or, A View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1783*, 2nd ed. (London: Crowder, 1800), 221.

[43] John Brightland, *A Grammar of the English Tongue, with Notes: Giving the Grounds and Reason of Grammar in General*, 2nd ed. (London: Brugis, 1712), 136. Graver reads "Michael" as using heroic "military metaphors" in localized depictions of shepherding that adopt a defensive posture paralleling Virgil's *Georgics*. See "Wordsworth's Georgic Pastoral," 122-23.

and this short poem provides an occasion to consider that deeply embedded—and extremely violent—history of conquest and resistance.

What this seemingly trivial lyric implies is that Britain's new imperial program was experiencing resistance in an unexpected place: within England. His poetic descriptions of obscure Cumbrian customs implicitly contest the disciplinary process of "Occidentalism" that Saree Makdisi has recently described as "making England Western."[44] By the 1790s, Cumbrians were being derogatively defined as out of time in ways that parallel how, according to Johannes Fabian, Western anthropology constructs the other: while the other lives in the same moment as the Western anthropologist, he or she is denied contemporaneity and relegated to the past; the other is represented as living prior to civilization, as the inhabitant of a primitive, benighted, and backward past.[45] Wordsworth, however, rejects the past and present binary that Fabian would later describe; the author of *Lyrical Ballads* instead argues for the futurity of seemingly past forms of cultural knowledge—for the idea that seemingly anachronistic and out of date regional codes, customs, and cultures might in fact be nascent forms of future being.[46] Wordsworth was prescient in so far as the greenness of Cumbrian culture speaks to our twenty-first century era of

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[44] Saree Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race and Imperial Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1, 84. On "Occidentalism," see also 247.

[45] See Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 16-18. Fabian's insights—that the primitive is "essentially a temporal concept," and that "anthropology's efforts to construct relations with its Other by means of temporal devices implied affirmation of distance as *difference*"—can be applied to the Cumbrian countryside.

[46] Through the example of Lapérouse's eighteenth-century travels to East Asia, Latour describes how Western empires described so-called primitive forms of knowledge as local and in need of translation; imperialists represented "the universal knowledge of the Westerners and the local knowledge of everyone else." According to Latour, imperial networks sought to comprehensively accumulate and chronicle all non-Western regional knowledge in order to assert the West's modernity: they acted "at a distance . . . to do things in the centres that sometimes make it possible to dominate spatially as well as chronologically the periphery." See *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 215-21, 232-33. Latour's tracings of the colonization of alternative indigenous information systems, facts, and customs collectively offer insight into Cumbria's remote forms of understanding. What emerges is the possibility of recovering provincial ways of knowing as contemporaneous (rather than backward)—as providing alternatives to the Romantic-era's imperial facts and chronologies.

climate change; *Lyrical Ballads* exceeds simultaneity with the modernity that Romantic empire and industry asserted.

More broadly, *Lyrical Ballads* participates in a new movement among Cumbrian writers interested in reclaiming the region from primitivist discourse; a survey of Wordsworth's early reading reveals that he had read nearly every important work from the period on Cumbria or by a Cumbrian.[47] As the Lake District increasingly turned into a tourist destination in the 1780s, several Cumbrian authors addressed the dangers of development and incorporation. One such writer, the Cumbrian inventor and lecturer Adam Walker, rails against "the rattling Tourist" and laments the decay of provincial manners: "The ruddy lass forgets her dialect, and appears at church in a tall bonnet fluttering with ribbands."[48] Walker's depiction of a "ruddy lass" who "forgets" her Cumbrian dialect and dress implicitly issues a call to defend local traditions; the term "ruddy" denotes both good health and red-faced fury. Desiring to remain outside English history while refusing to be dismissed as prehistoric and primitive, Walker represents noisy tourists and the urban fashions and commodity culture that they introduce as prostituting Cumbrian identity: "When this baneful prostitution cannot be kept out of almost inaccessible

[47] Duncan Wu's two-volume *Wordsworth's Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993-95) exhibits Wordsworth's familiarity with almost every major work addressing the Lake District in the romantic era. Wordsworth read writings on the region by Cumbrians and Londoners alike, such as James Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* (1789) in 1789 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:29); William Gilpin's *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1786) in 1787-89 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:64); Thomas Gray's *Journal in the Lakes* (1769) by 1787 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:70); William Hutchinson's *Excursion to the Lakes in Westmoreland and Cumberland* (1774) by 1796 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:77); Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn's *History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* (1777) in 1796 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:108); Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* ([1778] 1780) by 1787 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 1:146); Robert Anderson's *Ballads in the Cumberland Dialect* (1805) by 1814 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:4); Samuel Daniel's *Epistle to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland* (1718) by 1803 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:68); Housman's *Guide to the Lakes* (1800) by 1804 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:113); Charlotte Smith's *Ethelinde; or, the Recluse of the Lake* (1789) by 1812 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:194); Thomas Wilkinson's "Lamentation on the Untimely Death of Roger, in the Cumberland Dialect" (1801) between 1801 and 1804 (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:242); and the *Westmorland Advertiser* from 1813 on (see Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading*, 2:238).

[48] Walker, *London to the Lakes*, 82.

Mountains, no wonder it has over-run the rest of the Kingdom."[49] For him, the region's continued cultural dissidence reflects the "inaccessible" terrain of Cumbria's mountainous landscape. According to Walker, bourgeois Londoners desire to "over-run" and flatten the region—to make its people like "the rest of the Kingdom." He sees Cumbria as England's last stronghold in the fight against an ever-encroaching commercial culture.

Such a critique implicitly responds to the imperialist discourses that writers such as William Hutchinson applied to Cumbrian culture in the 1790s. Hutchinson effectively exhorted members of the landed gentry to colonize Cumbria, a region whose people were "immersed in idleness or vice" and whose landscape "exhibited nothing but the appearance of neglect and barrenness . . . profligacy and want."[50] Writers such as Hutchinson applied their benevolent paternalism to regional identity as much as to social class. Ironically, Cumbrian peasants living in eighteenth-century England were represented as primitive savages in need of discipline—as the anachronistic inhabitants of a backward border zone populated by lawless "persons habituated from infancy to war and plunder . . . devoted, either to the unprofitable amusements of the field, or to the pernicious practice of smuggling."[51] Ostensibly one of the oldest and most Anglo-Saxon of spaces, Cumbria was cast as a retrograde, barbaric, and dangerous place capable of corrupting modern Britain; its anachronistic cultural persistence might undermine the British Empire's stadial progress.

At the same time that he borrows from the provincial anticapitalist and anticolonialist discourses of writers such as Walker, Wordsworth also opens a critical dialogue with the work of

[49] Walker, *London to the Lakes*, 85.

[50] William Hutchinson, *The History of the County of Cumberland and Some Places Adjacent from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (Carlisle, UK: Jollie, 1794), 2:555.

[51] Hutchinson, *History of Cumberland*, 2:555.

the Cumbrian-born aesthetic theorist William Gilpin. In *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland* Gilpin sketches his own Cumbrian scene of wind, stones, and playful boys[52]:

> We had made a pause to observe some part of the scenery; and by half a dozen yards escaped mischief. The wind was loud, and we conceived the stones had been dislodged by its violence: but on riding a little further, we discovered the real cause. High above our heads, at the summit of the cliff, sat a group of mountaineer children, amusing themselves with pushing stones from the top; and watching, as they plunged into the lake.—Of us they knew nothing, who were screened from them by intervening thickets.

Anticipating "Rural Architecture," Gilpin's seemingly ludic scene both invokes the secrecy that the "intervening thickets" of the Cumbrian landscape permit and borders on violence—"mountaineer children" playing with stones nearly injure him. While he believes that they "know nothing" about him, it remains the case that he is only saved from the threatening play of these youngsters by moving slowly, appreciating the Lake District landscape, and observing "some part of the scenery." Wordsworth's "Rural Architecture" reworks Gilpin's anecdote by strengthening its account of Cumbrian nature. The wind that finally does not move rocks in Gilpin's account actually does blow down the stones in Wordsworth's poem. In "Rural Architecture" Cumbrian nature acquires the agency necessary to resist its own degradation.

[52] William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland* (London: Blamire, 1786), 1:189.

II. Cumbrian Dialect and Regional Defiance

"Rural Architecture" reinforces the productive secrecy of its local allusions at the level of language.[53] By slipping in and out of Cumbrian dialect, the poem fosters a sense of community in local readers, who can immediately understand its distinctive regional references.[54] According to the Cumbrian member of Parliament Robert Ferguson, this "canny" insider/outsider dynamic is endemic to the structure of the Cumbrian dialect itself: "Its humour and its pathos, its 'canniness'—quaintness with a touch of cynicism—have been ably illustrated."[55] In his linguistic analysis of Wordsworth's oeuvre, Alex Broadhead calls attention to the "covert" uses of Cumbrian dialect in "Rural Architecture."[56] According to Broadhead, Wordsworth "does not make explicit that [building a stone effigy on a mountain] is a local custom and that the regional term for this kind of effigy is a "man," although the capitalization of the initial letter hints that this seemingly standard English word carries a non-standard sense."[57] Knowing the Cumbrian definition of "Man" therefore allows for the cultural recognition of a local archetype that exceeds the commonplace definition of that word. Similarly, when Broadhead informs us that "bag in Cumbrian denotes 'the belly,'" the poem's comparison of the tallest boy's stature to "the height of a Counsellor's bag" shifts in resonance from the professional to the organic (l. 3).[58]

The seeming simplicity of the poem's straightforward, declarative statements involves a

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[53] On Wordsworth's "conspiratorial voice" and rural marginality, see Christensen, *End of History*, 26-29.

[54] The representational secrecy of Wordsworth's Cumbrian dialect parallels that of the "flash" slang that Gary Dyer studies in "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets: Being Flash to Byron's *Don Juan*," *PMLA* 116, no. 3 (2001): 562-78.

[55] Robert Ferguson, *The Dialect of Cumberland: With a Chapter on Its Place-Names* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1873), v.

[56] Alex Broadhead, "Framing Dialect in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*: Wordsworth, Regionalisms, and Footnotes," *Language and Literature* 19, no. 3 (2010): 249-63.

[57] Broadhead, "Dialect in *Lyrical Ballads*," 255.

[58] Broadhead, "Dialect in *Lyrical Ballads*," 255.

regiolect that requires local knowledge but reveals further layers of meaning. According to Ferguson's dialect dictionary, in the Cumbrian dialect "How" (l. 4) signifies both "hill" and "a sepulchral mound or barrow."[59] Cumbrian readers would recognize that if there is monumentality in the poem, it is in the sepulchral hill that the poem describes rather than in the giant. "Legberthwaite" contains "thwaite," an "isolated piece of ground" in the Cumbrian dialect (l. 12).[60] As Ferguson suggests, "Legberthwaite seems possibly to contain a reference to the *lögberg*, rock of law, where the legislative court was held."[61] It is therefore possible that the poem's very place-name evokes an ancient communal gathering place. These vernacular references to the local landscape might strike Cumbrian readers as alluding to a regional politics most probably lost on readers unacquainted with the region.

In "Rural Architecture" the speaker uses provincial myth and dialect to engage a wide range of local Cumbrian voices and projects, both linguistic and literary. Yet the problem of understanding other cultures, particularly the people of the Lake District, is hardly specific to Wordsworth alone. This was the era in which Ann Wheeler, a local philologist, went out of her way to record and make public the Cumbrian dialect in a manner that, as in Wordsworth's poem, only led to more unintelligibility. Contra Samuel Johnson's standardizing *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), Wheeler's *Westmorland Dialect, in Four Familiar Dialogues: In Which an Attempt Is Made to Illustrate the Provincial Idiom* ([1790] 1802; the first edition includes three dialogues) creates an orthography and a dictionary for the Cumbrian dialect. Her critiques of the "Progress towards Improvement, which is daily making in the Dialect of every

[59] R. Ferguson, *Dialect of Cumberland*, 68.

[60] R. Ferguson, *Dialect of Cumberland*, 203.

[61] R. Ferguson, *Dialect of Cumberland*, 204.

District" resist the increasing homogenization of vernacular speech that defined her era.[62]

Wheeler's vernacular discourse is itself part of a wider cultural movement interested in protecting the Lake District's unique culture. Her Cumbrian dictionary and dialogues revise the second edition of Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* ([1778] 1780), which publishes local Cumbrian tales and dialect glossaries. The successive editions of West's *Guide* helped put the Lake District on the map as a tourist destination. West sees recording, understanding, and making available the Cumbrian dialect as a useful linguistic project. In his view, provincial dialects offer insight into the "rude original . . . genius and primary elements" of the English language.[63] He argues that Cumbria in particular needs to be linguistically mapped on the empire's behalf, because it is in "Westmorland and Cumberland, where the common speech at this day . . . contains several unnoticed roots and elements of derivation."[64] For West as for Walker, Cumbria is a last bastion of regional identity in an increasingly uniform and metropolitan England, now the center of the British Empire. Following such calls for provincial dialect dictionaries in the face of an advancing metropolitan culture and anticipating the rise of Victorian dialect societies in Britain, Francis Grose published an account of the vernacular of Cumberland and Westmorland, *A Provincial Glossary, with a Collection of Local Proverbs, and Popular Superstitions* (1787).

The ethnographic and linguistic project that Wheeler initiated—and that Wordsworth

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[62] Ann Wheeler, *The Westmorland Dialect, in Four Familiar Dialogues: In Which an Attempt Is Made to Illustrate the Provincial Idiom* (London: Richardson and Richardson, [1790] 1802), vii-viii. Citations refer to the Richardson edition, which saw the addition of a fourth dialogue. My analysis of Wheeler here draws on Daniel Dewispelare's insightful reading of her *Dialogues* as collectively constituting a "feminist, anti-imperial, and presciently iconoclastic" critique of Standard English that "functions both as communicative medium and distractive smokescreen." See Daniel Dewispelare, "Dissidence in Dialect: Ann Wheeler's *Westmorland Dialogues*," *Studies in Romanticism* 54, no. 1 (2015): 107-09, 123.

[63] West, *Guide to the Lakes*, 285.

[64] West, *Guide to the Lakes*, 186.

drew on in "Rural Architecture"—records the oral form of the Cumbrian dialect in dialogues that aggressively resist the appropriating linguistic influence of London in the countryside. The second edition of Wheeler's work contains an ironic heading, "To the Public," and a reprint of an August 1791 evaluation of her first edition by the *Monthly Review*[65]:

> We speak with caution of a work written in a language which we cannot perfectly read; and which, we are persuaded, would baffle the united learning and abilities of all the Reviewers in Europe . . . compositions of this kind . . . require an intimate acquaintance with the vulgar provincial dialects in which they are written; and without which, the jokes and pleasantries contained in them will be as little understood in other parts of the Kingdom, as is the language in which they are disguised.[66]

Here polite metropolitan culture "speaks with caution" of a work "we cannot perfectly read." Wheeler's radical orthography reverses the normative association between urbanity and correctness. Her study simultaneously baffles an urban reviewer and endows a rural speaker with authority and legitimacy. The *Monthly Review* perceives local dialects as potentially cryptic in their "disguised" nature; they interrupt the anonymity of the metropole with the "intimacy" of the countryside. While inaccessibility and secrecy are not necessarily incompatible with affective pleasure, Wheeler's regional imaginary paints London readers as impoverished by their lack of Cumbrian cultural capital. Wheeler's metropolitan reviewer remains so far outside the Cumbrian experience that he or she believes only "jokes and pleasantries" are misconstrued. The reader's failure is so complete that he or she entirely misses the radical political content of Wheeler's dialogues.

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[65] Wheeler, *The Westmorland Dialect*, iv.

[66] Wheeler, *The Westmorland Dialect*, iv.

In her fourth dialogue, "Barbary and Mary," Wheeler reinforces her critique of metropolitan centrality by focusing on an anti-industrial exchange between two Cumbrian women. Mary's return to Cumbria from a social visit in London initiates the following dialogue:

> Barb: Haw likd yee Lunnon.
>
> [How liked you London?]
>
> Mary: Nit et awe; I wad nit leev thear for awth ward; Its a miry dirty spot; an sic rumbling a coaches an carts we can hardly hear yan anudder tauk; full a pride.
>
> [Not at all; I would not live there for all the world; It's a miry, dirty spot; and such rumbling of coaches and carts we can hardly hear one another talk; full of pride.][67]

The speedy "rumbling" of London business drowns out the unhurried "tauk" that defines the oral culture of the Lake District; the "dirty" urban environment drives away a visitor from the nation's periphery rather than incorporating her. Mary's portrait of the capital of the British Empire repeatedly depicts Londoners who laugh at and belittle her Cumbrian identity.

In many respects Mary is treated the same way critics have historically treated "Rural Architecture," as too simple or inconsequential. When Mary desires to leave the theater before a play ends in favor of examining London's giants, she explains that her cousin "wor bleady mad at me, coad me cuntry foals, clauns, an I knanit what, she taukd sae fast en sae fine I kent net what she sed, sae it wor quite lost ea me" [was bloody mad at me, called me country fools, clowns, and I know not what, she talked so fast and so fine I know not what she said, so it were quite lost on me].[68] In Mary's view, Londoners exchange speech too "fast" and "fine." The irony is that despite her preference for slow and simple speech, she understands the chatter of London

[67] Wheeler, *The Westmorland Dialect*, 92.

[68] Wheeler, *The Westmorland Dialect*, 102.

much better than her cousin comprehends the Cumbrian vernacular. While her London-based cousin views her provincial dialect as unintelligible, Mary correctly paraphrases her cousin's metropolitan talk, "called me country fools, clowns," at the same time that she professes her ignorance of its meaning, "I know not what . . . I know not what she said." Wheeler's dialogues, like Wordsworth's "Rural Architecture," expose and destabilize the historical connections that British culture had established between the London metropolis and intelligence, complexity, and significance.[69]

III. Revising Eighteenth-Century Theories of "Rural Architecture"

Despite the ways Wordsworth's lyric engages with Cumbrian language and culture, the title of his lyric is clearly not in the Cumbrian idiom. As a term "rural architecture" speaks from a professionalized rhetorical vantage point that, while very different from "Legberthwaite," still insists on the preservation of local nature and culture. The poem therefore combines different elements of localism. Some are linguistic or historical, others have to do with regional building design. The title "Rural Architecture" lyricizes the ecological school of architecture that Robert Morris formulates in *Rural Architecture: Consisting of Regular Designs of Plans and Elevations for Buildings in the Country* (1750). Morris's structures eschew urban "luxuriancy." Instead, they express nature's "simplicity, plainness and neatness."[70] In *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth returns to Morris's ideas and reclaims the term "rural architecture" from the vogue of later treatises, such as William Halfpenny and John Halfpenny's *Country Gentleman's Pocket*

[69] Although Dewispelare offers an alternative reading of this scene, "Mary neither knows nor cares what insults or accusations her cousin wants to level; they are lost in translation," he similarly concludes that "Wheeler is upsetting the habitual equation of proper speech with admirable behavior and social value." See "Dissidence in Dialect," 121-22.

[70] Robert Morris, *Rural Architecture: Consisting of Regular Designs of Plans and Elevations for Buildings in the Country* (London, 1750), 13.

Companion, and Builder's Assistant, for Rural Decorative Architecture (1753), that define rural architecture as the practice of importing urban luxury into the rural context. Continuing the arguments of Halfpenny and Halfpenny's treatise, John Plaw's *Rural Architecture* (1794) advocates rural citification: the development of ornamental, "nonnative" structures.[71] Wordsworth's application of the phrase to his unadorned stone giants therefore ironizes Halfpenny and Halfpenny's and Plaw's characterizations of rural architecture as a "decorative" building process of imperial eclecticism.[72]

The rural architectures of *Lyrical Ballads* anachronistically defy the ways that the Lake District was urbanized, mined, domesticated, and "opened" in the period. To be sure, during the Romantic era Cumbria's rocks were forever altered by the region's transformation into a mining site producing the raw materials (such as slate, copper, and lead) necessary to secure England's empire and fight the Napoleonic Wars.[73] Yet the giants of "Rural Architecture" embody the protoconservationist thinking critics have associated with Wordsworth's later writings, especially *Guide to the Lakes* (1810).[74] Both "Rural Architecture" and *Guide to the Lakes* contend that rural

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[71] Elizabeth A. Fay, *Becoming Wordsworthian: A Performative Aesthetics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 88. See also John Plaw, *Rural Architecture* (London: Taylor, 1794). The term "rural architecture" had significant currency at the turn of the century. By the time of the publication of Francois Cointeraux's *École d'architecture rurale* (1790-91) it had even traveled to the Continent. A few years later, Richard Elsam published (by subscription) *An Essay on Rural Architecture, Illustrated with Original and Œconomical Designs* (London: Lawrence, 1803). This volume includes thirty-one plates and accompanying descriptions of designs for rustic cottages, park entrances, garden fronts, and a variety of other so-called rural structures.

[72] Wordsworth elaborates his understanding of rural architecture in "Lines Written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone, the Largest of a Heap Lying near a Deserted Quarry upon One of the Islands at Rydale." The poem's speaker juxtaposes an appreciative portrait of the native constructions of the linnet and the thrush, "little builders," with a critique of nonnative human architecture: "if . . . thou hast hewn / Out of the quiet rock the elements / Of thy trim Mansion destin'd soon to blaze / In snow-white splendour,—think again." See "Lines Written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone, the Largest of a Heap Lying near a Deserted Quarry upon One of the Islands at Rydale," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 210.

[73] On mining, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Lake District, see Noah Heringman, *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2004), 25-26.

[74] For an account of the Lake District's coal mining projects and their relation to the deforestation of Keswick, see Gilpin, *Picturesque Beauty*, 1:xi. On the proposed plan to engineer a "Lancaster canal" to support the industrial

architecture should fuse human and natural agency. In *Guide* Wordsworth argues that Cumbrian buildings should be indigenous. Their structures should "rather be said to have grown than to have been erected;—to have risen by an instinct of their own out of the native rock—so little is there in them of formality, such is their wildness and beauty."[75] While paralleling the protoconservationist attitudes toward local nature of the *Guide*, "Rural Architecture" departs from the *Guide*'s political conservatism by emphasizing labor rather than effacing it. The poem connects political and ecological radicalism, insisting that in both cases state development must be resisted in favor of local communal bonds.[76] As they piece together Ralph Jones, the boys build with the natural landscape and out of regional materials and methods.[77] They only cocreate Ralph's form. Nature's randomness and stones picked up "as they lay" equally dictate the giant's structure (l. 7). This practice of rural architecture involves both intentionally building out of cultural constructs and unintentionally allowing nature to materialize the construction process. The boys' organic creation literalizes Wordsworth's later theorization of native architecture in *Guide*. Ralph Jones is as much one of the many Cumbrian giants that have "risen by an instinct of their own out of the native rock" as he is the result of the boys' labor.

In giving the boys natural names, "Fischer" and "Shore," which express the local environment in which they build, Wordsworth confuses the borders between Cumbria's humans

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trade of Lancashire coal and Westmorland limestone, thus "join[ing] the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and open[ing] a Water-communication with every part of the kingdom," see Walker, *London to the Lakes*, 114. Despite the objections of many Cumbrians, an act of Parliament authorized the canal in 1792, and by 1797 a forty-three-mile stretch linked Preston to Tewitfield. Wordsworth's contributions to Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire* (1810) initiated *Guide to the Lakes.*

[75] Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, ed. Ernest De Sélincourt (London: Lincoln, [1810] 2004), 70.

[76] On Wordsworth's politics, see Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 417n34. First published in 1810, *Guide to the Lakes* was followed by four revised editions that culminated in the fifth edition of 1835.

[77] While the giant's surname Jones is very common in Britain, it plays on that of both the great seventeenth-century English architect Inigo Jones and, according to Butler and Green, *Lyrical Ballads*, 395, Wordsworth's traveling companion and frequent visitor in Cumbria, Robert Jones.

and its nonhumans. The poem does not individualize the identities of the boys over time. Like the mythical, world-creating giants of the Cumbrian past, Wordsworth's boys simultaneously shape and become the landscape.[78] Sometimes they work as builders in the foreground, while at other times they act as environmental background. It is out of this fusion of human and nonhuman forms of agency—the ethos of rural architecture—that Wordsworth creates the lyric voice of the poem.

Through the plurality of meaning, even the poem's hard Cumbrian stones hold commerce with the animate.[79] In "Rural Architecture" even the simplest and seemingly least significant words, "stone" and "Man," signify very actively and richly. The Cumbrian dialect term "Man" that defines Ralph Jones in the poem also conveys the craggy summit on which he is built (l. 6). Ferguson details how in Cumbrian "Skiddaw man" refers to a mountain peak: "Skiddaw man . . . would simply mean the culminating point of the mountain."[80] Cumbrian nature can literally constitute a "Man"; when viewed from below, nature's crags can suggest human forms. Considered in this context, the stones that construct Ralph Jones's body experience slippage; they simultaneously refer to a giant, a mountain, and a man. To be sure, such incarnate stones resonate with the deep time that allowed strata of rocks to speak, mark history, and become legible after the geological discoveries of James Hutton and Charles Lyell, figures whose

[78] In Book VIII of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth accordingly describes a shepherd in the fog as both a giant and an aerial cross on a crag: "Mine eyes have glanced upon him, few steps off, / In size a Giant, stalking through the fog, / His Sheep like Greenland Bears: at other times, / . . . / Or him have I descried in distant sky, / A solitary object and sublime, / Above all height! like an aerial cross, / As it is station'd upon a spiry Rock." See *The Prelude*, in *The Thirteen-Book* Prelude, ed. Reed, 221.

[79] The word "stone" signifies everything from a testicle to a concretion in the body to a lithographic writing material. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "crag" also resonates with the human: "a lean scraggy person," "the neck," and "the throat" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "crag," accessed August 10, 2015, www.oed.com). R. Ferguson notes that "crag" signifies "face" in the Cumbrian dialect. See *Dialect of Cumberland*, 28.

[80] R. Ferguson, *Dialect of Cumberland*, 84.

writings bookend the Romantic era.[81]

The creative contract between local nature's materials and the boys' labor necessitates forms that are biodegradable and open to being knocked down. When the iconoclastic "Rural Architecture" does invoke the language of architectural professionalism—as it does in its title—it does so only to theorize the construction of impermanent works. Ralph Jones can move, because his personified giant body is built "without mortar or lime" (l. 5). He is made up of stones that are affixed neither to one another nor to the edifice of the mountain. His rough, impermanent frame therefore evokes the "defects" of "Rural Architecture" and resonates with Wordsworth's assertion in the preface that "defects . . . will probably be found" in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

The transient nature of Ralph Jones's body resists conspicuousness (ironically despite its location on a high peak) and becomes especially important when considered in conjunction with the giant Magog, whose carved effigy stood outside London's Guildhall. Unlike the ephemeral and obscure Ralph Jones ("The Magog of Legberthwaite dale" [l. 12]), the historic and conspicuous London Magog was built to last. While Wordsworth's surprisingly unimportant rural Magog is "renown'd" (l. 11) by a local audience, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen informs us that the London Magog continually embodied the state in the Lord Mayor's parade.[82]

IV. Cumbrian Temporality and Lyric Time

The ephemerality of Ralph Jones's body reveals that the regional resistance of "Rural

[81] Gould, *Time's Arrow*, *Time's Cycle*, 4. On "deep time," see also Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). On Wordsworth and "deep time," see John Wyatt, *Wordsworth and the Geologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 151.

[82] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 29-31.

Architecture" comes from the poem's Cumbrian representation of local time as much as material. It is easy to interpret the short lyric's three giant-building episodes in terms of the nihilistic, meaningless temporality that John E. Jordan has identified with Wordsworth's unserious moments of parodic humor.[83] Yet it is also possible to read the poem as an expressing a local, lyric time that formally defies the progressive, developmental nature of narrative time. The poem manifests the synchronic temporal continuum so often associated with lyric form. Sharon Cameron, for example, describes lyric's ongoing temporal fullness and hypercomprehensiveness, arguing that lyrics can carry radical forms of "temporal protest."[84] Paul Ricoeur alternatively contends that lyric "redescribes[s]" reality in ways that allow its readers to engage with the affective resonances of time.[85] The eddying, bent, and obscure sense of lyric time that Wordsworth connects to the communal, regional rhythms of Cumbria (or the Lake District) in *Lyrical Ballads* has deep roots. His 1793 juvenile poem, *An Evening Walk*, puts forward an ancient model of poetic time governed by nature's "Sweet . . . sounds that mingle from afar, / Heard by calm lakes."[86] Wordsworth directly ties the Lakeland environment to sonic forms of

[83] John E. Jordan, "Wordsworth's Humor," *PMLA* 73, no. 1 (1958): 81, 86.

[84] Cameron, *Lyric Time*, 24, 70. The concept of "lyric time" has a long critical history. More recently, in *Choosing Not Choosing: Emily Dickinson's Fascicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) Cameron revises her earlier account of lyric's temporal isolation to consider the genre's ability to encompass sequence, aggregation, and community. Just as Cameron has moved toward a more sympathetic reading of lyric time, Blasing also attempts to redeem the ostensibly "irrational" nature of the genre's temporality in her materialist account of lyric. See Blasing, *Lyric Poetry*, 137-48. My recent reading of John Clare's lyric oeuvre takes a similar view of the poetic power of anachronism. See "The Itinerant 'I': John Clare's Lyric Defiance," *ELH* 82, no. 2 (2015): 637-69.

[85] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 1:x–xi. Possibly as a result of Wordsworth's emphasis on memory, lyric time has also been a fundamental critical entry point in Wordsworth studies. Chandler claims that Wordsworthian lyric escapes history and aligns with the conservative politics of Burke. See *Wordsworth's Second Nature*: *A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 212. Liu also reads Wordsworthian lyric's resistance to narrative as an escapist denial of history. See *Sense of History*, 202. In a more approving account of Wordsworth's lyric temporality, John Beer contends that *Lyrical Ballads* defies the "linear," "plottable," and "quantifiable" sense of Newtonian time. See *Wordsworth in Time* (Boston: Faber and Faber 1979), 29-30.

[86] Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, ed. James Averill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1793] 1984), 66. All future citations to this poem refer to the Cornell edition. Adam Potkay cites this passage in his consideration of

timekeeping:

> Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranquil tides;
>
> Nought but the char that for the may-fly leaps,
>
> And breaks the mirror of the circling deeps;
>
> Or clock, that blind against the wanderer born
>
> Drops at his feet, and stills his droning horn.
>
> —The whistling swain that plods his ringing way[87]

An Evening Walk's representation of "the clock" that expires at the speaker's feet, invokes the Cumbrian dialect term "clock" that signified "a name for any kind of beetle."[88] The wordless humming of the "whistling swain" ultimately succeeds the "droning horn" of the "blind" Lakeland beetle. Importantly, Wordsworth's speaker whistles rather than speaks; he practices a musical form that his local nature's elements and animals also perform. This succession of harmony from beetle to swain that Lakeland nature makes possible is both marked by a caesura (an em dash) and the fact that the Cumbrian clock "Drops at his feet." As Wordsworth's juvenile depiction of this living Cumbrian clock (insect) and its wandering human successor makes clear, the Romantics were keenly aware that nature and its rhythms had once marked and organized human time; in *Lamia* (1820), for example, John Keats makes reference to "the moth-time" of a dim evening.[89] Romantic poetry reveals how every environment uniquely produces and organizes its own time system.

Wordsworth's green representations of soundscapes and listening; the "shift from ear to eye" that carries "environmental humility." See *Wordsworth's Ethics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 23.

[87] Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, 66.

[88] Averill cites the alternate *OED* definition for the term "clock" as "a name for any kind of beetle (chiefly northern)." See *An Evening Walk*, 66.

[89] John Keats, *Lamia*, in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1820] 1978), 458.

The naturalization of time that Wordsworth begins in *An Evening Walk* continues in *Lyrical Ballads*' explorations of the sonic aspects of time and pace:

> My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme,
>
> And rose and lilly for the sabbath morn?
>
> The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
>
> The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;[90]

The speaker here rhymes the delightful morning-marking chime of "Sabbath bells" with thyme and time. By contrast, she recollects as "dismal" the "toll" of the city clock at night: "How dismal tolled, that night, the city clock! / At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung."[91] Wordsworth represents rural church bells and city clocks as keeping time differently; this passage highlights how ostensibly objective clock time is refracted through human perception, feeling, and interpretation. Wordsworth's speaker translates the city clock's sounds into a "toll," a term that through the multiplicity of meaning resonates with mourning and exactitude.

Importantly this passage from *The Female Vagrant* represents a nostalgic speaker who invokes the homonymic relationship between the plant "thyme" and the seasonal signifier of "shearing time." The local time of Wordsworth's lyrics is deeply rooted in the periodic cycles of Cumbrian shepherding culture and the bodies of sheep, a fact confirmed by the sheep counting rhythms of "The Last of the Flock," a lyrical ballad that describes the reduction of a shepherd's flock from "a full score" to "none."[92] Wordsworth's "full score" refers to the Cumbrian sheep-counting system, "*Cumbric Score* or *sheep-counting numerals*," an ancient "method of counting things in four tallies of five up to twenty . . . Counting in fives reflects the use of fingers, if not

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[90] Wordsworth, "The Female Vagrant," in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), 51.

[91] Wordsworth, "The Female Vagrant," in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), 56.

[92] Wordsworth, "The Last of the Flock," in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), 86, 87.

toes. After twenty, a scratch or score was made on a piece of stone or wood and the scoring recommenced."[93] The regional sheep counting system that Wordsworth's poem alludes to derived its numerical terms such as "yan" and "tan" from a specifically northern "language closely related to Welsh, known generally as Cumbric."[94] Notably, Wordsworth references an alternative linguistic form of tallying based on (and inscribed on) the organic forms of nature: "fingers," "toes," "stone or wood."[95]

At times Wordsworth stresses the distance of these Cumbrian forms of counting, tempo, and time from the rural church bells whose irregular, community-gathering chimes he prefers to the impersonal precision of the city clock. According to Wordsworth, the dispersed nature of rural space affords an escape from the temporality that the town's central timepiece registers. While the speaker of *An Evening Walk* simultaneously focuses on a swan and represents "The distant clock forgot," the poetic voice of *The Ruined Cottage* moves beyond the reach of the clock's temporal discipline: "Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge, / Far from the sight of city spire, or sound / Of Minster clock."[96] Against the visual aspects of imperial time recorded on

[93] Tom McArthur, "Cumbric," in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1992] 2005), 275, Stephen Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British: The New Prehistory of Britain* (London: Robinson Publishing, 2006), 63, and John Bugg, "Shepherding Culture and the Romantic Pastoral," in *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 167. These Cumbrian sheep-scoring methods stand in stark contrast to the forms of sheep and citizen counting that Bugg ties to the census, the works of Thomas Malthus, and the "encyclopedic" taxonomies of works "sponsored by the Society for the Improvement of British Wool" such as John Naismyth's *Observations on the Different Breeds of Sheep, and the State of Sheep Farming* (1795), a text which "takes a measure of the size and variety of sheep farms, and offers a meticulous account of variations in breeds of sheep and shepherding practice from region to region." See "Shepherding Culture," 163.

[94] Oppenheimer, *Origins of the British*, 63. On the relationship between counting and clock time ("clocks count time"), see Sherman, *Telling Time*, x.

[95] Bugg similarly relates Wordsworth's Cumbrian numbers to his lyric obscurity: "bringing the Shepherd's Score into his poem without gloss Wordsworth ran the risk of alienating readers not versed in country things, and contemporaries such as Burney did indeed perform the legitimacy of their concerns–the puzzled responses to 'The Last of the Flock' dramatize the potential illegibility of Wordsworth's version of pastoral." See "Shepherding Culture," 167.

[96] Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, 64, and *The Ruined Cottage: A Poem*, ed. Butler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1798] 1979), 44.

the faces of watches and clocks, Wordsworth here further explores the sonic aspects of time, arguing that poetry and voice must remain as remote and unfamiliar as the mountainous "edge" of the Lake District. Wordsworth preferred the less immediate nature of rural church bells that took time to ring, resonate, and signify a specific hour. In order to escape the tick tock regularity of the clock, the metronome, and the chime, Wordsworth's animates Cumbrian chimes and clocks with emotions: "the solitary clock / Ticked, as I thought, with melancholy sound.—"[97] According to Wordsworth, the Cumbrian clock's mechanical ticks only enter the minds of his rural speakers through the pathetic fallacy; these timepieces are neither regular nor predictable but are instead as "solitary" and "melancholy" as the Romantic poet than describes them.

While literary critics have commonly objected to the lack of French Revolutionary politics in *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth's experiments with anachronism resonate with the revolutionary history of the era of temporal experimentation that also saw the rise (and decline of) French Revolutionary Time. Moreover, Wordsworth organicizes the French Revolutionary Calendar, which both turned back the hands of time to Year One and reminded Europeans that all temporal systems are arbitrary:

> No joyless forms shall regulate
> Our living Calendar:
> We from to-day, my friend, will date
> The opening of the year.[98]

Rejecting the standardized Gregorian calendar that England adopted in the 1750s, Wordsworth advocates a dating system based on emotional consequence. His "living Calendar" embodies the

[97] Wordsworth**,** *The Excursion*, ed. Sally Bushell, Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1814] 2007), 96.

[98] Wordsworth, "Lines Written at a Small Distance from my House, and Sent by my Little Boy to the Person to Whom They Are Addressed," in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), 63.

French Republican Calendar, adopting its universalism to his own provincial purposes.

Besides constructing his lyric time through distinct Cumbrian feelings, natures, and atmospheres, Wordsworth represents time itself as local—as something only a truly regional intelligence could fully decode and decipher. A complete understanding of the chronopolitics of his verse requires highly specific knowledge of the sequences and cycles of Cumbrian flora and fauna. "The Idiot Boy" from *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, tells "eight o'clock," not with the abstraction of the ticking watch face, but with an owlet's hoots, the moon's rise, and the color of the sky.[99] In *Lyrical Ballads*, it is easy to miss that fact that Wordsworth's poetic method corresponds to that of "The Fountain: A Conversation," a poem whose speaker seeks "to match / This water's pleasant tune / With some old Border-song, or catch / That suits a summer's noon."[100] Throughout the volume Wordsworth pegs his "Border-song[s]" to a variety of persons, places, and things: a mossy fountain's "pleasant tune," the unreliable and idiosyncratic "Church-clock and . . . chimes" that Butler and Green connect to the "unreliable Hawkshead Church Clock," and a Cumbrian home referred to in his day as the "Village Clock" because of the regular life cycle of its residents, who predictably lit and extinguished their lamps.[101] Such an

[99] Wordsworth, "The Idiot Boy," in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), 91. "The Idiot Boy" begins: "'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night, / The moon is up—the sky is blue, / The owlet in the moonlight air, / He shouts from nobody knows where; / He lengthens out his lonely shout, / Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!"

[100] Wordsworth, "The Fountain: A Conversation," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 215.

[101] Wordsworth, "The Fountain: A Conversation," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 215, Butler and Green, "Notes: The Fountain. A Conversation," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 391, Rawnsley, *Reminiscences of Wordsworth Amongst the Peasantry of Westmoreland*, in *Wordsworthiana: A Selection of Papers Read to the Wordsworth Society*, ed. William Knight (London: MacMillan & Co., 1889), 100, and Butler and Green, "Notes: Michael, A Pastoral Poem," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 402. Butler and Green point out that T. W. Thompson, *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, ed. Robert Woof, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 172-77 includes rhymes on the erratic Hawkshead Church clock by Thomas Cowperthwaite, the figure who arguably inspired Wordsworth's "The Fountain." Rawnsley describes the Cumbrians of Wordsworth's day as establishing a common regional time; they set their clocks to the "Village Clock" (a shepherd's cottage): "a shep, lived here, and i' winter days folks from far enough round would saay, 'Is leet out i' shep's cottage? then you may wind the clock and cover the fire' (for you kna matches was scarce and coal to fetch in them days); and of a morning 'Is leet i' winder? is shep stirrin'? then you munna lig no longer,' we used to saay." See *Reminiscences of Wordsworth*, in *Wordsworthiana*, ed. Knight, 100.

irregular local lyric temporality remains firmly in line with Wordsworth's continual comments in *Lyrical Ballads* that although it may seem to visitors that Cumbrians neither record time nor enter history, it nevertheless remains the case that northerners "have no need of tombstones and epitaphs" as a result of their communal proximity; they remain close to death, continually talking "about the dead" and encountering their spirits.[102]

With these alternative forms of Cumbrian temporality and timekeeping in mind, we can return to our case study of "Rural Architecture." As is that case of many of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, "Rural Architecture" traces its lineage to polytheistic, precapitalist, and pagan worldviews. Industry and empire, by contrast, rely on the diachronic, teleological, and uniform narratives of progress that grew out of Christian theology. Cumbrian giants neither develop nor become standardized; each giant's enigmatic form simultaneously reexpresses local culture and presents distinct rough edges.

In the particularly Cumbrian way that it undermines the linear development of its own plot—Wordsworth's speaker builds an omnitemporal sense of temporal synchrony by moving through a sequence of three unique but similar giant-building events—"Rural Architecture" counteracts the temporality of environmental degradation. Downplaying its significance, the poem maintains a deceptive depth that requires its local readers to inhabit what Kevis Goodman has referred to as a "slow" readerly temporality of rereading distinct from the rapid browsing associated with urban modernity.[103] The full experience of the multiple giant-building scenes of

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[102] Wordsworth, "The Brothers, A Pastoral Poem" in *Lyrical Ballads*, 148. In the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* "The Brothers" was accompanied by a note that roots the poem in the rugged Lake District terrain, frames its appearance as interruptive, and seeks to recover a planned (but neglected) serial relationship with pastoral poems such as "Michael": "This Poem was intended to be the concluding poem of a series of pastorals the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologize for the abruptness with which the poem begins." See "The Brothers," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 142.

[103] Goodman, "Making Time for History: Wordsworth, the New Historicism, and the Apocalyptic Fallacy," in *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment*, eds. Elam and F. Ferguson, 169.

"Rural Architecture" requires local knowledge and unfolds through a process of deep rereading that itself expresses the rhythms of Cumbrian culture. "Rural Architecture" allows outsiders to hurry. If Cumbria could similarly underplay its value, perhaps so-called foreigners (manufacturers and tourists) might pass the region over too. Unaware of the slow violence of climate change that Rob Nixon has recently described as occurring "gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispensed across time," Wordsworth works to contest the more conspicuous fast violence of his time; the Romantic age of acceleration that was marked by quicker coaches, swifter ships, and more timely wartime bulletins.[104]

In both human bodies and natural histories, "Rural Architecture" displays how the progress of time that imperial expansion celebrates eventually becomes associated with decay rather than growth, aging bodies and eroding rocks.[105] In an era in which public common greens were rapidly disappearing as a result of the Enclosure Acts, Wordsworth's giants denote expansive, ownerless structures that both assemble and are assembled by a rural community.[106] The formal insertion of giants into a brief lyric paradoxically expands the poem's linear shortness with imagerial length. The poem is twenty-four lines, while Ralph Jones is "renown'd for the length of his bones" (l. 11). Since, as David Williams argues, giants have historically signified transgressive, uncontained states of being, they have always carried with them an

[104] Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 2. On temporal acceleration during the Romantic era, see Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 11-13, 22. Koselleck here notes that the future-oriented and "self-accelerating temporality" that took hold during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "robs the present of the possibility of being experienced as the present."

[105] It is notable that Wordsworth's critique of imperial time in *Lyrical Ballads* consistently draws on his cousin's experiences in the East India Company.

[106] Stewart delimits the gigantic as the realm of the public, the unbounded, and the wild. By contrast, the miniature is the domain of the private, the domesticated, and the regulated. See *On Longing*, 70.

implicit critique of enclosure's erasure of common greens and local traditions.[107] By resisting enclosure, Wordsworth's giants challenge the narratives of progress that justified it. Notably Wordsworth's sense that the progress of enclosure leads only to the decay of rural life is a particularly Cumbrian affair. J. V. Beckett, C. E. Searle, and Ian Whyte's studies of the anachronistic persistence of feudal land rights in the region reveal that by the end of the eighteenth century—the very moment of the English countryside's enclosure—two-thirds of Cumbria was still held by a customary tenantry primarily composed of family farmers with access to the area's vast common greens.[108]

Wordsworth's local, lyric temporality, whose synchronic nature connects past and present Cumbria, therefore derives from the environment of the Lake District. Ralph Jones, "The Magog of Legberthwaite dale," refers to a regional site, Legberthwaite, that resonates with the enormous size of the area's giants: "thwaite" (punning on weight) and "leg." In addition to calling to mind the raw physicality of giants' bodies, Legberthwaite suggests the Cumbrian temporality they construct. "Berth" (birth) implies cyclicality and the defiance of mechanized reproduction and "thwaite" (evoking the sound of *wait*) the resistance to improvement. To challenge the official forms of time governing London as the center of the British Empire, the Cumbrian landscape authors organic, jagged, and irregular forms of time and being.[109]

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[107] David Williams, *The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996), 113.

[108] See J. V. Beckett, "The Decline of the Small Landowner in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England: Some Regional Considerations," *Agricultural History Review* 30, no. 2 (1982): 97-111; C. E. Searle, "'The Odd Corner of England': A Study of a Rural Social Formation in Transition; Cumbria, c. 1700-c. 1914," (PhD diss.: University of Essex, 1983); and Ian Whyte, "The Impact of Parliamentary Enclosure on a Cumbrian Community: Watermillock, c. 1780-1840," *North West Geography* 9, no. 1 (2009): 9-10.

[109] Heise points out the continued prevalence of critiques of modernity in contemporary environmentalist discourse: "The political resistance informing environmentalist thought has never been directed at the nation-state so much as at modern society more broadly. . . . Premodern social structures typically envisioned as 'communities' have more often provided the inspiration for alternative political visions than global connectivity." See "Ecocriticism and the Transnational," 386–87.

The speaker's engagement with this regional temporality along with his familiarity with the local landscape and dialect allow us to presume that he is a Cumbrian insider. In the more familiar poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, however, the speaker commonly tries, at times unsuccessfully, to overwhelm the agency ("Simon Lee") and voices ("We Are Seven") of female or laboring-class figures.[110] The Cumbrian collaboration of "Rural Architecture" presents an exceptional case. By acceding to the communal impulse to build a giant, the speaker avoids any attempt to assert his adult authority over the boys. The organized labor of the boys gradually incorporates him, pulling him away from description and into the time of the poem's action. The communal building of "Rural Architecture" presents the exceptional temporal case of a speaker who figuratively grows backward In the poem's final stanza the speaker drops "they" in favor of "you": "Then light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag! / And I'll build up a Giant with you" (ll. 23–24). The communal building of "Rural Architecture" therefore presents the exceptional temporal case of a speaker who figuratively grows backward; the end of the poem marks the speaker's metaphorical transformation into a child.

The boys push a retrospective literary observer to do what he or she often cannot in lyric, to actively take part in the present community and event that a poem describes. The act of joining the boys in building a third giant allows the isolated speaker to feel alive again, to overcome the "remembrance" of urban destruction that has made his "blood . . . flag" (l. 22). In the penultimate imperative of "Rural Architecture"—"Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag!" (l. 23)—the speaker exhorts rather than commands the boys and his readers. His desire to build a giant merely recapitulates the communal desires of the boys; he marks a new iteration of a customary process that has and will go on in Cumbria with or without his participation. The poem's

[110] Scott McEathron, "Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, and the Problem of Peasant Poetry," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 54, no. 1 (1999): 3.

ultimate line reinforces the idea of provincial community. Before he abandons speech in favor of action, the speaker informs the boys that he will build "with" them rather than oversee them: "And I'll build up a Giant with you" (l. 24).

As we have seen, "Rural Architecture" incorporates its speaker, employs Cumbrian rhythms, and expresses a regional version of the covert address to insiders often employed by authors marginalized by their race, gender, class, ability, or sexuality. Yet even this lyric does not entirely escape from disciplining and commodifying an unruly Cumbria on the empire's behalf. After all, the poem appears within the frame of *Lyrical Ballads*, a volume published in London and marketed to a metropolitan audience.[111] In the end "Rural Architecture," like *Lyrical Ballads*, manifests two simultaneous poetic voices in tension: first, the organic, local voice attempting to cultivate an originary sense of authenticity by speaking directly to provincial readers as a Cumbrian born in Cockermouth and, second, the commercial, antiquarian voice speaking to his urban peers about Cumbria's curiosities, which were quite topical at the time. As the eighteenth century came to a close, an array of antiquarians, such as Hayman Rooke in "Druidical and Other British Remains in Cumberland" (1789) and William Hutchinson in *The History of the County of Cumberland and Some Places Adjacent from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (1794), published accounts of Cumbrian relics that focused transnational attention on the region's newly discovered curiosities. Rooke, for example, details how the importation of modern agricultural techniques into Cumbria led to the unearthing of a giant "skeleton of a man, which measured seven feet from the head to the ancle bone."[112] On the one

[111] According to Wordsworth's publisher, Joseph Cottle, in October 1799 T. N. Longman, a London publisher, "reckoned as nothing" the worth of *Lyrical Ballads*. See Cottle, *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847), 250.

[112] Hayman Rooke, "Druidical and Other British Remains in Cumberland" *Archaeologia; or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity* 10, no. 9 (1789): 112.

hand, locodescriptive poets such as Wordsworth highlight a special folk connection to a place and its protection; on the other hand, they struggle to make that place relevant and universally available.

As a result of these conflicting motivations, Wordsworth presents two contrary arguments on the relations between poetic fame and obscurity. At times he suggests that significant poems challenge us to "review" the verses that have "displeased us." His preface proposes, "If an Author by any single composition has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that, on other occasions where we have been displeased, he nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it."[113] At other times, such as in "Rural Architecture," Wordsworth more directly celebrates the enigmatic independence of marginal poems that remain too specific and authentic, too secretive and resistant to universality to become important to most metropolitan readers. Taken as a whole, both "Rural Architecture" in particular and *Lyrical Ballads* in general engage the dyadic forces that define the genre of the lyrical ballad more broadly: on the one hand, the desire to expand the concision lyric form implies in order to garner mass appeal; on the other hand, the desire to conserve it in order to preserve local appeal.

V. Wordsworth's "Michael" and the Survival of "Rural Architecture"

Wordsworth's so-called marginal lyrics such as "Rural Architecture," however, refuse any neat opposition to the volume's more canonical, universalizing poems. As a genre that joins the long and the large to the short and the small, the lyrical ballad also fuses centralization and

[113] Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *Lyrical Ballads*, 759.

collection with marginalization and inscrutability. Scholars have rarely noticed that many of the more canonical poems first published in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* take up the concerns of "Rural Architecture."[114] The final poem that appeared in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, "Michael, A Pastoral," resurrects the work of "Rural Architecture." "Michael" similarly focuses on stone edifices and unfinished rural construction; the poem depicts an aged father (Michael) and his son (Luke) who together plan "To build a Sheep-fold" out of "A heap of stones, which close to the brook side / Lay thrown together, ready for the work."[115] Unforeseen debts incurred by a nephew to whom Michael "had been bound / In surety," however, only leave time for Luke to "Lay . . . the corner stone" before he leaves Cumbria to join a merchant "beyond the seas."[116]

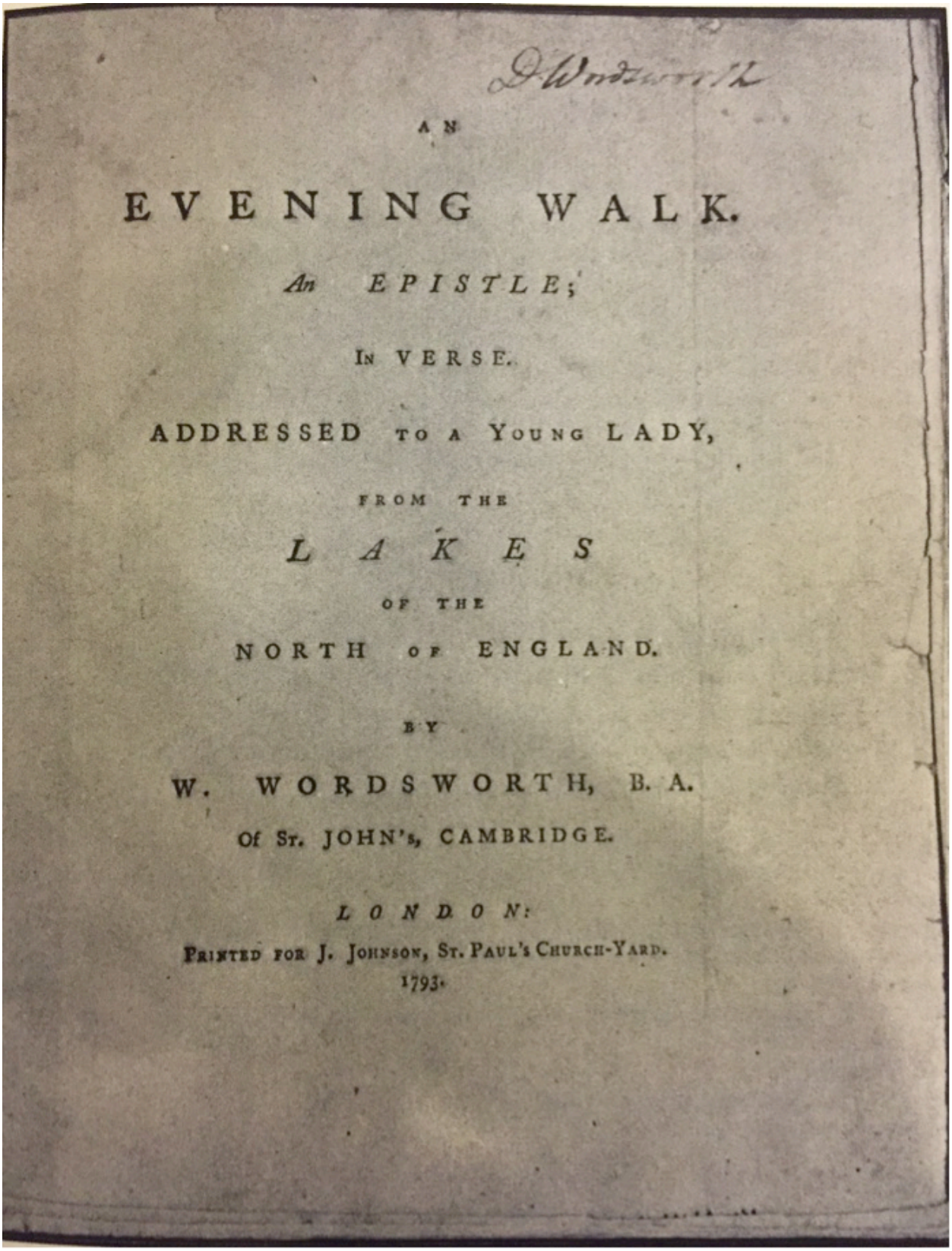
"Rural Architecture" is a neglected skeleton key that helps to decode "Michael." "Rural Architecture"'s militant wind, which "sallied forth, / . . . out of the North" and "blew the Giant away," reappears in "Michael." Intriguingly, Luke is harder than Ralph Jones; the ten-year-old Luke's body "could stand / Against the mountain blasts."[117] The fact that the gusting wind of "Rural Architecture" originates "out of the North"—far away from London—is significant. It bears remembering that early works including *An Evening Walk* (1793) emphasized the location of Wordsworth and his poetry in the Lake District (see fig. 21):

[114] After citing Coleridge's correspondence with Robert Southey as evidence that "the first title proposed for" *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) "seems to have been *Lyrical Ballads and Pastorals*," Johnston argues that "a still more accurate title for the new volume could have been *Lake District Pastorals*." See *Hidden Wordsworth*, 520-21. On *Lyrical Ballads* and the pastoral, see Bugg, "Shepherding Culture," 160-62.

[115] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads,* 263.

[116] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 260, 266, 267.

[117] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads,* 259.



D. Wordsworth

AN

EVENING WALK.

An EPISTLE;

IN VERSE.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY,

FROM THE

LAKES

OF THE

NORTH OF ENGLAND.

BY

W. WORDSWORTH, B. A.

Of St. JOHN's, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1793.

Figure 21 Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk* (1793), title page

The title page from *An Evening Walk* figures Wordsworth as a Northern border bard who, despite the fact that he publishes in London, nonetheless addresses his fellow Cumbrians, a "Lady from the Lakes of the North of England." Wordsworth's verse originates in double-voiced volumes such as *An Evening Walk* that simultaneously claimed Cumbrian exceptionalism and disavowed it in favor of engaging as wide an audience as possible.

Reading "Michael" and "Rural Architecture" as closer than they initially appear—as companion pieces collectively advocating a project of ecological architecture and time at empire's margins—allows us to comprehend the importance of Wordsworth's representations of Luke as both a building boy and a constructed stone artifact. "Rural Architecture"'s "Three rosy-cheek'd School-boys, the highest not more / Than the height of a Counsellor's bag;" (ll. 2-3) lay the groundwork for "Michael"'s Luke: "A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek / Two steady roses that were five years old."[118] Moreover after Michael cuts "a perfect Shepherd's Staff" for his son, Wordsworth describes Luke as a "Watchman"[119]:

> He as a Watchman oftentimes was plac'd
> At gate or gap to stem or turn the Flock,
> And to his office prematurely call'd
> There stood the Urchin, as you will divine
> Something between a hindrance and a help,[120]

As Rawnsley explains, Watchmen "are the stone 'men' . . . that shepherds have piled up on . . .

[118] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 259.

[119] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads,* 259.

[120] Wordsworth, "Michael," *in Lyrical Ballads,* 259.

outlying crags."[121] Through an act of self-plagiarism, Wordsworth reanimates the prior lyric body of Ralph Jones. The last poem in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* circles readers back to what has come before; the ""Urchin" of "Michael" incorporates and revives the "Urchin both vigorous and hale" that defines "Rural Architecture." In reanimating stone men "Michael" continues the unfinished work of the schoolboys on the top of Great How. In "Michael," Wordsworth reimagines the playful labor of Giant-building that characterizes "Rural Architecture" as part of the adult employment of shepherding: "turn the Flock." In *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth develops a lyric serialism; the seemingly insignificant "Rural Architecture" participates in (and remains inseparable from) the more canonical "Michael." Wordsworth ties the endurance of such seemingly marginal lyrics to the local culture of the Lake District.

Wordsworth represents his local lyrics as liminal—as living in one another—in the same way that he represents Cumbrians and Cumbria as substitutable. For Wordsworth, the boundaries between life and death and human and nonhuman are always shading into one another. *Lyrical Ballads* describes human and nonhuman actors that refuse the singularity of empire and industry in favor of obscurity. The rocks that compose Ralph Jones can stand in for Luke, and Luke can also stand in for the boys of "Rural Architecture." Similarly, Michael can equally represent a Cumbrian Giant.[122] Wordsworth's depiction of the "Old Man," Michael, also resonates with the Cumbrian Giant, or Watchman: "watchful more than ordinary men."[123] In accord with these stone edifices, Michael's physical form is composed of hard materials; his "bodily frame had

[121] Rawnsley, *Months at the Lakes*, 103-04, qtd. in Butler and Green, "Notes: 'Michael, a Pastoral Poem,'" in *Lyrical Ballads*, 402-03.

[122] Michael's body anticipates the leech-gatherer of "Resolution and Independence" (1802), another "Old Man." See Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence," in *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 126.

[123] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 254.

been from youth to age / Of an unusual strength."[124]

Although "Michael" appeared in stately blank verse in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, the influential poem's compositional history also encompasses "Rural Architecture." Wordsworth transformed "Ballad Michael," a poem written in the militant anapestic rhymes of "Rural Architecture," into a stately blank verse pastoral, the "Michael" of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*.[125] John Bugg argues that "Michael"'s depictions of buried bodies are the correlate of his subterranean incorporations of "the music of northern Britain's shepherding culture"; according to Bugg, Wordsworth's "blank verse line has grown out of, and still bears within it, the ballad tradition."[126] The metaphorical lyric growth that Bugg identifies with "Michael" is tied to the ballad's survival within Wordsworth's blank verse lines:

> The Cottage which was nam'd The Evening Star
> Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
> On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
> In all the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left[127]

As Bugg shows, if we break the above blank verse lines from "Michael"'s final stanza differently, we discover the persistent rhyme and vitality of the ballad stanza[128]:

> the ploughshare has been through
> the ground On which it stood;

[124] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 254.

[125] Butler and Green, "Notes: 'Ballad Michael,'" in *Lyrical Ballads*, 464.

[126] Bugg, "Shepherding Culture," 172-73.

[127] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 268.

[128] See Bugg, "Shepherding Culture," 171-72. Some of these pastoral traditions only required rural (rather than specifically Cumbrian) knowledge to decode. As Bugg points out, the shepherd poet John Clare would have understood that the "Evening Star" of Wordsworth's "Michael" refers as much to the specific cottage that "critics and Grasmere hoteliers have . . . tried to pinpoint" as it resonates with "a popular term used throughout Britain for [the planet] Venus, the Shepherd's Lamp."

great changes have been wrought

In all the neighborhood [.][129]

In a passage that focuses on rural remains, "the Oak is left," Wordsworth includes the rhyming remains of "Ballad Michael." His poem's ending doubly signifies that which is "left" to decay (the corpse) as much as that which is "left" to endure (the relic).[130] These formal parallels between "Rural Architecture," "Ballad Michael," and "Michael" are reinforced by the fact that Butler and Greene point out that "Ballad Michael" directly follows "Rural Architecture" in Dove Cottage manuscript fifteen.[131] It is the 1800 published version of *Lyrical Ballads* that introduces significant distance between "Rural Architecture" and "Michael;" there "Rural Architecture" is followed by eight poems and an advertisement for a section entitled "Poems on the Naming of Places" before "Michael" appears.[132]

This increased distance between the two poems (along with the obscurity of the unpublished "Ballad Michael") has concealed the Cumbrian connections between "Michael" and "Rural Architecture." To be sure, the published version of "Michael" includes an asterisk followed by a note glossing the Cumbrian word "clipping":

Thence in our rustic dialect [an oak] was call'd

The *Clipping Tree, a name which it yet bears.

. . . . . .

[129] Bugg, "Shepherding Culture," 172.

[130] According to the *OED*, the term "remain(s)" encompasses the following definitions: "To be left behind after the removal, use, or destruction of some part, number, or quantity; To continue in the same place or with the same person; to abide, to stay; The survivors of a war, battle, or other destructive event; A relic of some obsolete custom or practice; a surviving trait or characteristic; A part or the parts of a person's body after death; a corpse. The literary works or fragments (esp. the unpublished ones) left by an author after death."

[131] Butler and Green, "Notes: 'Ballad Michael,'" in *Lyrical Ballads*, 464.

[132] See Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, 234-52.

*Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.[133]

Although Wordsworth here assists the unfamiliar reader, his pastoral poem otherwise holds its secrets. While Wordsworth translates Cumbrian dialect for metropolitan readers in this one instance, "Michael" simultaneously hides the forms and concerns of "Rural Architecture" and "Ballad Michael" beneath its surface. Wordsworth's ballad-in-lyric methodology is one that balances apparent, surface ephemerality with actual, deep durability. Besides including only a single prose gloss of the northern dialect term "Clipping" in a blank verse pastoral of nearly 500 lines, the Wordsworth of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* continually offers only partial access to Cumbria; he includes only tantalizing glimpses of the regional landscape and culture encoded in his poems. The Wordsworth of *Lyrical Ballads* annotates, interprets, and defines only the most obviously foreign terms, characters, and locales; those sites, words, and individuals that conspicuously interrupt the metropolitan reader's experience with their noticeable difference. In the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, the cryptic provincial content of "Rural Architecture" is followed by a single explanatory note: "Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirl-mere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside."[134] Wordsworth's location of "Rural Architecture" on a "single and conspicuous hill" is exceedingly ironic; his contextualizing comment follows a lyric that describes an intentionally inaccessible poetics, history, and custom. After the fashion of "Rural Architecture," "Michael"'s underlying and anachronistic blueprints remain largely strange and indecipherable. In parallel with Cumbria's crags, Wordsworth's lyrical ballads are on the one hand "conspicuous" and "beautiful," but on the other hand rugged and difficult to access without a guide.

[133] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 258.

[134] Wordsworth, "Rural Architecture," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 235.

These interweaving generic discourses of lyric obscurity and exposure return us to the question of what particular kind of work Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* performs. Pater provides one possible answer in his shrewd identification of the way Wordsworth's Cumbrian poetic economy rests on an anachronistic interest in "survival":

> To him every natural object seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life, to be capable of a companionship with man full of finesse and expression, of inexplicable affinities and subtle secrets of intercourse. An emanation, a particular spirit, belonged not to the moving leaves or water only, but to the distant peak arising suddenly by some change of perspective above the nearer horizon, to the passing space of light across the plain, to the lichened Druid stone even, for a certain weird fellowship in it with the moods of men. It was like a "survival" in him of that primitive condition, which some philosophers have traced in the history of human culture, in which all outward objects alike, even the works of men's hands, were believed to be endowed with life and animation, and the world was full of souls; that mood in which the old Greek gods were first begotten, and which had many strange aftergrowths.[135]

Pater here draws on E. B. Tylor's anthropological interest in how "primitive" practices can persist in so-called civilized circumstances.[136] In Pater's view, Wordsworth's poetic importance derives from his visionary ability to see the copresence of ancient and modern cultural elements. Paying close attention to the "weird fellowship" of a Cumbrian practice that has undergone considerable mutation over the centuries prompts us to rethink "Rural Architecture" and

[135] Pater, "On Wordsworth," 458.

[136] See E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy*, *Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: Murray, 1871).

"Michael" as strange lyric "aftergrowths" akin to giant building: as durable local phenomena whose distinguishing characters rest in their desires to "survive" in a hostile imperial framework.

Wordsworth works out this survival through a logic of collective environmental endurance that blurs boundaries between life and death, Cumbrians and Cumbria.[137] As the animate Giant of "Rural Architecture makes clear, *Lyrical Ballads* describes liminal human and nonhuman actors that refuse the singularity that empire and imperial time demands of its subjects and objects. Just as the rocks that compose Ralph Jones can stand in for a "Man," the old man Michael is interchangeable with the stone sheepfold that he tirelessly constructs. Wordsworth's oeuvre contains innumerable depictions of old men as lithic; Michael and the hoary leech gatherer of "Resolution and Independence" are similarly composed of hardened materials:

> Upon the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale
> There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name,
> An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
> His bodily frame had been from youth to age
> Of an unusual strength.[138]

> I saw a Man before me unawares:
> The oldest Man he seem'd that ever wore grey hairs.
> . . . . . .
> As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie

[137] Wyatt illuminates the durability of the Cumbrian landscape: "The Lake District is a continuous landscape from prehuman times through the histories of the ancient people who erected Long Meg and its companion stones . . . A territory has been created which is permanent and can transcend human history; yet human history is included with it." See *Wordsworth and the Geologists*, 162.

[138] Wordsworth, "Michael," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 254.

Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence;[139]

As does the corpse of Lucy Gray—which in "A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal" is "Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course / With rocks and stones and trees!"—Michael's body becomes part of an enduring rural architecture; in his case, one that he constructs out of stone.[140] Wordsworth depicts aged and deceased rural figures such as Michael, the Lucy of "Slumber," and the leech gatherer of "Resolution" either as living stones or as nonhuman but animate matter that remains indistinguishable from rocks "Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course." In a period in which rocks represented the inhuman (during the Romantic era terms such as "flinty" and "stony" represented "unfeeling," "rigid," "obdurate," and "hard-hearted" individuals) Wordsworth recuperated the durability, impenetrability, and ruggedness of rocks in order to personify old, dying, and dead Cumbrians.[141]

Wordsworth's embodied and disembodied temporalities of endurance together define *Lyrical Ballads*, a volume that continually straddles the binaries of center and periphery, past and present, speaker and environment, and center and periphery. Poems such as Cumbria, "Michael" and "Rural Architecture" refuse translation and embrace borderline status. The open secrets they keep challenge our understanding by simultaneously standing on their own terms and making themselves available to those who, though they may be outsiders, are willing to adopt a more cosmopolitan vision that understands marginal lyrics, localities, and landscapes as anachronistic

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[139] Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence," in *Poems, in Two Volumes*, ed. Curtis, 125-26.

[140] Wordsworth, "A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 164. Paul H. Fry argues that poems such as "A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal" perform a dual function; they simultaneously "release the poet from the obligation to contain time even though they refuse to wince away from the reality of death." See *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 94.

[141] The *OED* defines "stony" as "Rigid, fixed, motionless; destitute of movement or expression" (adj. sense 5a), and "flinty" as "hard, impenetrable, rugged" and "Obdurate, unfeeling, hard-hearted" (adj. senses 2b, 3a). Wordsworth's representations of old, ill, and disabled speakers resonate with Kafer's formulation of "crip time": the different modes of being and temporal experience—including living in "quick bursts" or slow time—that alternative corporealities and compressed lives make possible. On embodied time, see *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 34.

sources of instruction rather than as bygone tourist attractions.[142]

[142] See Tiffany, *Infidel Poetics*, 3, 15 for a discussion of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theorization of the "open secret" in the context of lyric poetry. For Tiffany, poetic secrecy engages openness and closure, accessibility and obscurity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Anachronism, Itinerancy, and the "I": John Clare's Lyric Defiance

'Tis not gone for ever,
The light of the soul;
It flows like the river,
When it meets with controul!—
It rolls like the ocean,
Over mountain and glen,
Till past the commotion,
And the sun smiles again.
The valleys may tremble,
The mountains may move,
But I can't dissemble,—
In the soul of love.

—John Clare, "Hope of Home"[1]

The poetry of the late Romantic writer John Clare (1793-1864) presents an array of speakers whose enigmatic "I"s challenge the conventional critical identification of lyric with an intentional, meditative, and embodied first person subject. In typical accounts of the genre, an individual voice speaks in an intensely personal manner about a single experience in a timeless yet present moment.[2] Today's lyric theorists have begun to contest this narrative by calling

[1] John Clare, "Hope of Home," in *The Later Poems of John Clare: 1837-1864*, eds. Eric Robinson, David Powell, and Margaret Grainger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 402. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number and abbreviated *LP*.

[2] Virginia Jackson's entry on "Lyric" in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., ed. Roland

attention to the genre's outwardly turned energies of address and apostrophe.[3] In addition, historicist critics such as Virginia Jackson, Paul Alpers, and Yopie Prins have emphasized how the genre's definitions have shifted over time; in Jackson's view, the notion that lyric is "thought to require as its context only the occasion of its reading" is a critical abstraction whose origins can be traced to the nineteenth century.[4] Today's scholarly revisions of what counts as lyric help to illuminate how the historical neglect of Clare's poetry relates to his challenging of the genre's long established definitions. Because they describe a lost local history and a future "Hope of Home," Clare's poems neither support the idea that lyric is the quintessential literary mode of

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Greene, Stephen Cushman, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) describes the rise of "J. W. Goethe's idea of the three 'natural forms of poetry': lyric, epic, and drama" (826). According to Jackson, from the later eighteenth century onward lyric was linked to "concentrated," indirect, and "personal" qualities: "since the 18th c., brevity, subjectivity, passion, and sensuality have been the qualities associated with poems called *lyric*; thus, in modernity, the term is used for a kind of poetry that expresses personal feelings (G. W. F. Hegel) in a concentrated and harmoniously arranged form (E. A. Poe, S. T. Coleridge) and that is indirectly addressed to the private reader (William Wordsworth, John Stuart Mill)" (826). See Cameron, *Lyric Time*, 23, where she identifies lyric with such narratives of interiority and containment. Próspero Saíz traces the connections that critics have drawn between the lyric "I," presence, containment, and authority back to Plato and the idea that "[i]n lyric voice there is . . . the idea of proper authority and truth" ("Deconstruction and the Lyric," in *Ode to Anthem: Problems of Lyric Poetry*, eds. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989], 221).

[3] Although William Waters stresses that critics have historically represented lyric as the prototypical genre of the self-enclosed and "meditative" "I" (*Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003], 18) and Blasing connects the genre to a substantial "I" with the "*power*" (*Lyric Poetry,* 62) to determine its fate, both critics' works emphasize how lyric address undermines narratives of the self-contained lyric "I." For deconstructive readings of lyric as a fundamentally apostrophic genre, see Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 135–54; Barbara Johnson, "Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 28-47; and de Man, "Lyrical Voice in Contemporary Theory: Riffaterre and Jauss," in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, eds. Chavina Hosek and Patricia Parker (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 55-72.

[4] Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery*, 7. Here Jackson argues that "the poetry that comes to be understood as lyric after the eighteenth century is thought to require as its context only the occasion of its reading . . . [poems] considered lyrical in the Western tradition before the early nineteenth century were lyric in a very different sense." Jackson and Prins have stressed that today's conception of lyric is a critical abstraction that consolidated from the Romantic period to the present and does not accurately describe what writers prior to the nineteenth century would identify as lyric. For these readings, see the collection of essays entitled *The New Lyric Studies* in *PMLA* 123, no. 1 (2008): 181-234, which includes essays by Jackson and Prins. Paul Alpers has issued a similar call to historicize lyric and its formal devices such as apostrophe (see "Apostrophe and the Rhetoric of Renaissance Lyric," *Representations* 122, no. 1 [2013]: 1-22). On the indeterminacy of lyric's definition today as either isolated and unitary or performative and historical, see Brewster, *Lyric: The New Idiom*, 6, 12-13. While it is beyond the scope of this study to entirely redefine lyric, the present chapter speaks to how fetishizations of the Romantic lyric 'I' must continue to be challenged so that we can appreciate the historical engagements of the big six, and so-called minor poets such as Clare.

containment, presentness, and presence nor uphold the notion that the genre requires an authoritative poetic "I" who addresses an auditor from an identifiable and grounded position in the immediate moment. To be sure, the genealogy of lyric stretches back to antiquity and encompasses the concerns and conceits of the songs, odes, and sonnets of mid seventeenth-century religious, metaphysical, and amorous verse. During the Romantic period, it is a historical contingency that the lyric "I" preoccupied British poets more strongly than it had in previous parts of the eighteenth century, which in the main adopted a neoclassical focus that more explicitly rooted lyric in history and celebrated epic, epistolary, and occasional verse forms.[5] Clare's poetry, I argue, constitutes a historical revision of first person lyric whose illegibility in relation to what were long the genre's standard critical conventions has caused it to remain marginal to both critical theories of lyric and of Romanticism.

As we can see in "Hope of Home," Clare was a poet with a keen sense of how the lyric "I" could embrace and embody the "rolls" and "flows" of immaterial "souls" that refuse to remain singular, immediate, and circumscribed in time and space. In this poem, which remained unpublished during Clare's life, the speaker describes a meeting between "the light of the soul" and "controul." The poem encircles "controul" rather than the soul: two lines that portray active, defiant waters, "like the river" and "like the ocean," form a double simile around the line that depicts the soul's encounter with "controul." The poetic voice then envisions another enclosure: the lyric "I" resides "[i]n the soul of love." Such an "I" looks tautological. On the one hand, it simultaneously asserts the lyric rhetoric of the confined speaker through the preposition "in." On the other hand, it rejects the materialism and solitude that makes his confinement possible. The "I" is enclosed "in the soul of love," a spiritual community that the poetic voice has previously

[5] Jackson, "Lyric," 830. Jackson dissents from the common critical notion that the lyric genre itself went out of fashion in the eighteenth century; her work highlights how this period emphasized the lyric qualities of songs and odes.

connected to an itinerancy that resists "controul." What the speaker's use of "in" therefore suggests is not a narrowed life lived "within" the self but a broadened vision of life spent "in" love. The poem's expansive voice both wanders in an extended simile that erases his immediacy and explores the distant temporalities of the future, "[h]ope," and the past, "'[t]is not gone for ever." "Hope of Home" provides a representative example of the especially defiant manner in which Clare's lyric "I" roves through space and time.

The itinerant lyric "I" that we find here belies common assumptions about lyric subjectivity and its relationship to nature in the Romantic era. One way to understand why Clare's poetic voices reject a contained and present lyric "I" is to consider them as formal responses to the larger historical transformation of landscape enclosure that took place within the very environment that Clare inhabited. Clare's vagrant lyric subjects work against the critical genealogy of the contained lyric "I" that finds its roots in the moments within Romantic poetics that express the zeitgeist of an era when Britain saw itself as an enclosed island of enclosed estates. As a field-worker, Clare's relationship to the historical upheavals of landscape enclosure was clearly different from those of William Wordsworth, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Yet embracing Clare's resistance to lyric enclosure does not mean flattening out and jettisoning the prominent works of the Romantic poets. Instead, attending to Clare's work allows us to recognize that the theory of the Romantic lyric's self-containment overemphasizes the extent to which formal enclosure defines the poetry of the big six: William Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lord Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Moreover, as Michael Macovski and Susan J. Wolfson note, the big six themselves formally contested enclosure, solitude, and egotism in complex ways through their oftentimes conversational, dialogic, and apostrophic

poetics.[6]

It nevertheless remains the case that Clare's sustained critique of landscape enclosure produces a poetry that reads somewhat differently from many of the more canonical works of the period upon which theories of the modern lyric as an enclosed and contemplative form were built. Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" (1802), to take a very well known example, expresses a conception of the "soul" that is antithetical to the one that "Hope of Home" communicates:

> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within . . .
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the Earth—[7]

In contrast to the ways in which Coleridge's speaker envisions the "I," both as an embodied container (one in which passion and life reside "within") and a spiritual force of containment ("soul itself must issue forth," a "cloud / Enveloping the Earth"), Clare's poetic subjects offer an alternative vision of the "I" as migratory point of communal identification that refuses to restrain or be restrained. Certainly, my approach here engages the foundational scholarship on Romantic lyric by critics such as Charles Rzepka and Macovski who discover moments of community in

[6] On the dialogic and communal nature of Romantic lyric discourse, see Michael Macovski, *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors, and the Collapse of Romantic Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), and Mary Jacobus, "Apostrophe and Lyric Voice in *The Prelude*," in Hosek and Parker, 167-81. For Macovski's critique of the insularity of the Romantic "I," see *Dialogue and Literature*, 5-6, 34-35. In accord with Macovski and Jacobus, Wolfson claims that Wordsworth "is not the sure, secure figure of logocentric performance and egocentric confidence ascribed to him in some feminist (and older masculinist) readings of Romanticism." See "Individual in Community," in *Romanticism and Feminism*, 146.

[7] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Dejection: An Ode," in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. J. C. C. Mays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 16:699.

even what appear to be such prototypical big six moments of lyric individuation.[8] Yet the irrepressible "I"s of Clare's poetic voices are filled with an untamable sympathetic energy that flows outward toward other things and people. As "Hope of Home" makes evident, these energetic "I"s are in continual motion, though they must constantly negotiate ostensible obstacles and limits. In "Hope of Home," Clare gives voice to an itinerant lyric "I" whose unstoppable momentum defies the loss of his home to the sublime force of landscape enclosure that "moves" mountains and makes valleys "tremble." Although Clare's speakers view their travels in relation to "home," their "I"s resituate home from its usual location in the present to one in both the future and the past. When the present moment displaces them, they move to new landscapes where they can reimagine "home" in the face of immense dispossession.

Born in 1793, Clare writes primarily after the landscape had been enclosed around Helpston, the village in Northampton where he spent his childhood.[9] As a result, one of the main points of inquiry for Clare's critics has been his personification of Helpston's local terrain. John Barrell, for example, argues that Clare "opposed the ideology of enclosure, which sought to de-localise, to take away the individuality of a place."[10] Helpston was therefore part of a national movement of enclosure that absorbed local particularity by regularizing and homogenizing rural

[8] Charles Rzepka points out that "self-consciousness requires the presence, real or imagined, explicit or implied, of another." See *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 6, qtd. in Macovski, *Dialogue and Literature*, 34. Macovski draws upon Mikhail Bakhtin to argue that we might read such ostensibly enclosed and contemplative poems as "interior dialogues." See *Dialogue and Literature*, 5. Helen Vendler contends that "Although in the usual lyric the speaker is alone, this solitude does not mean that he is without a social ambiance." See *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5.

[9] John Barrell traces how the enclosure of Helpston began with The Act for the Enclosure of Helpston in 1809 and ended in 1820 with the publication of the last Award. According to Barrell, enclosure incorporated Helpston into the spatial logic of a much larger region: "The Act was a very comprehensive one, and provided for the enclosure not only of Helpston but of Maxey to the north, and of Etton, Glinton, Northborough and Peakirk to the east, and this allowed the commissioners to think of these six parishes as forming together one large area of land." See *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place: 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 106.

[10] Barrell, *Idea of Landscape*, 120.

landscapes and cultures. An understanding of the attachment of Clare's identity to Helpston's once unenclosed topography helps to illuminate how the Enclosure Acts dislocated him by radically altering his local landscape.

Clare's experiences as an observer and inhabitant of a local landscape that The Act for the Enclosure of Helpston (1809) radically altered resonate with his emotional sufferings as a semi-literate subject who experienced mental illness over many years and was confined to institutions that he could not leave for much of his life. Although the connections between Clare's biographical enclosure in an asylum and the enclosure of the British landscape are coincidental, Clare nevertheless capitalized upon them. His lyrics exploit the distressing details of his incarcerated life in order to construct a metaphorical critique of enclosure as a force that imprisons the landscape and the laboring class. His acute awareness of the scrutiny that took place within his carceral spaces caused him to focus on the liberation of his speakers and their transportation to open spaces. The voices of Clare's lyric subjects express his profound sensitivity to the efforts of the popular press to cast him as a lunatic poet who was institutionalized, eccentric, and close to death. As "Hope of Home" intimates, Clare reacts to such stigmas by creating revisionary speakers who depict themselves as overflowing the boundaries put in place to control them. Yet Clare's lyric "I"s also move from highly recognized landscapes to a spiritual realm that allows them to more perfectly voice their resistance and grief. While his poetic works intimate that enclosure might have succeeded in destroying these imperiled subjectivities, they also make it clear that their lyric voices can never be annihilated. Clare's first person speakers thus take on an otherworldly endurance, in the sense that they transform their deaths into highly animated forms of haunting.

Clare's sense that he had been displaced, forgotten, and superseded resulted from his

brief experience of poetic fame following the publication of *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820), a volume that even the conservative *Quarterly Review* assessed favorably, if patronizingly, as the work of a "patient and persevering talent existing and enduring in the most forlorn and seemingly hopeless condition, that literature has at any time exhibited."[11] Clare's instant celebrity as the "Northamptonshire peasant poet" was evanescent, however. His momentary celebrity gave way to a long and diverse poetic career that extended well into the 1860s, and which includes a vast body of poetry that was mostly unpublished and unnoticed during his lifetime. As a result of the contrast between the brevity of his fame and the length of his subsequent career, Clare himself is a difficult poet to periodize or place; although today's critics commonly characterize him as a Romantic, he attempted to publish much of his work during the Victorian era. The majority of Clare's poetry therefore contends with the Victorian moment that, according to Jackson, solidified the connections between formal enclosure and lyric that would make possible the "twentieth century . . . idea of the lyric as temporally self-present and unmediated."[12]

In equal response to his lack of audience as to his horror of enclosure, Clare figures his first person speakers as dead but still defiant and in search of an addressee. These metaphorically spectral poetic subjects express a strong sense of belatedness in relation to the poetic "I" as they attempt to recover a sense of meaningful address and move beyond self-contained immediacy. Through his haunting "I"s, Clare reanimates the superannuated role of the eighteenth-century peasant poet that had been associated with field laborers such as Stephen Duck. Clare desired to

[11] Review of *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, by John Clare, *The Quarterly Review* 23 (1820): 166. Sarah Zimmerman points out that four editions of Clare's first volume were published in a year, but "subsequent volumes . . . declined in sales." See *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 160.

[12] Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery*, 9.

create lyric "I"s that could sustain for the future both the outdated "peasant poet" tradition and the local landscapes, subjectivities, and rural customs that were connected to it. The paradoxical power of these "I"s stems from Clare's status as a leftover individual who transmits knowledge of Britain's communal past despite the fact that the Landscape Enclosure Acts had apparently made that knowledge unsustainable, atavistic, and otherwise unhistorical.

Together, Clare's intense struggles against the historical and personal pressures of enclosure positioned his work as a response to the chronologies and concerns of nineteenth-century modernity. In other words, he transformed the lyric "I" into a strategic anachronism, an untimely vehicle capable of unsettling complacent accounts of poetic subjectivity that confined the speaker to personal experiences in the present moment. Clare's poetic "I"s reject lyric immediacy as restrictive, problematic, and altogether too connected to an enclosed present landscape and a public who no longer reads peasant poetry; untimely rather than timeless, they insist that the invincible forces of a past prior to enclosure and a future "Hope of Home" promise what Helen Vendler terms an "invisible listener," someone who can appreciate an address from a speaker who departs from the ideologies that govern his present moment.[13]

I. The Landscape of the Romantic Lyric "I"

While materialist critics such as Barrell, Timothy Morton, Mark Storey, James McKusick, and Jonathan Bate have embraced Clare for his empathetic connection to landscape, scholars have only rarely recognized the potential that his reconfigured poetic "I" has to revise ideas about lyric subjectivity.[14] Sarah M. Zimmerman convincingly argues that Clare undermines

[13] Vendler, *Invisible Listeners*, 1, 4-5.

[14] Most historicist accounts of Clare's poetry have connected his descriptive poetics to the local history of Helpston's enclosure. See Barrell, *Idea of Landscape*, and Mark Storey, *The Poetry of John Clare: A Critical*

the Romantic lyric's "poetics of privacy by demonstrating how two key features long deemed to foster the mode's insulation from social concerns may instead comprise a poem's social content: the poet's turn to nature and a concern with subjectivity."[15] Yet even Zimmerman's astute analysis does not specifically discuss the lyric "I." Despite the fact that 206 poems in the volumes of Clare's collected works under Eric Robinson's general editorship begin with the pronoun "I," and the fact that the lyric "I" has always been a fundamental critical entry point in Romantic studies, no systematic inquiry into the implications and interplays of Clare's poetic "I"s has ever been undertaken.[16] An 1830 letter to Eliza Emmerson, in which Clare directly critiques both the "I" and the present tense, provides a starting point:

> that little personal pronoun 'I' is such a presumption [*sic*] ambitious swaggering little fellow that he thinks himself qualified for all company all places . . . he is a sort of Deity over the rest of the alphabet . . . I <therefore hope to get rid of his company for> wish there he is agen—for varietys sake the English language like some of the oriental ones had no present tense.[17]

Introduction (London: Macmillan Press, 1974). Ecocritical scholars have read Clare's descriptive verse as both ecological and visionary. See Jonathan Bate, *John Clare: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003), McKusick, *Green Writing*, and Timothy Morton, "John Clare's Dark Ecology," *Studies in Romanticism* 47, no. 2 (2008): 179-93.

[15] Zimmerman, *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 148.

[16] Simon Kövesi comes closest in his claim that Clare critiques "the ordering first- person subject," adopting a rhizomatic poetic vision that stresses ecological interdependency. See "John Clare & . . . & . . . & . . . Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizome," in *Ecology and the Literature of the British Left: The Red and the Green*, eds. John Rignall, H. Gustav Klaus, and Valentine Cunningham (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 87. On the "I" in Romantic poetry, see Stuart Curran, "Romantic Poetry: The I Altered," in *Romanticism and Feminism*, 185-207. John Henriksen argues that the Romantic lyric "repressed its own addressing." See "Poem as Song: The Role of the Lyric Audience," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 21 (2001): 80. Chandler defines Wordsworth's lyric method as a Burkean retreat into the self and the Lake District. See *Wordsworth's Second Nature*, 212. Following Chandler, Liu has read Wordsworth's lyrics as escapes from history into the "individuation" of a strong "I." See Liu, *Sense of History,* 23, 51.

[17] Clare to Eliza Emmerson, circa March-April 1830, in *The Letters of John Clare*, ed. Storey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 504, qtd. in Kövesi, "John Clare's 'I' and 'Eye': Egotism and Ecologism," in *Green and Pleasant Land: English Culture and the Romantic Countryside*, ed. Gilroy (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 82. I am

Yet in order to understand the precise manner in which Clare rethinks the poetic "I," we must explore the literary history of Romanticism that constructs the formal taxonomies that even today ground many discussions of what counts as lyric. The traditional big six Romantic poets often stressed the poetic expression of the spiritual and natural in relation to the individual; moreover, their works appeared during an era of lyric redefinition that reacted to the relative neglect of the lyric "I" in the eighteenth century. As a result of the emphasis that these poets placed on the "I," Victorian-era critics such as John Stuart mill routinely used their poems to develop totalizing theories of lyric presence and containment. For Mill, lyric utterance is "*overheard*" speech: "the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude."[18] According to Jackson, modernist texts such as T. S. Eliot's "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1957) would "define lyric in Mill's terms, as 'the voice of the poet talking to himself.'"[19] As the twentieth century unfolded, the critical tradition that mill and Eliot helped to establish continued in the New Critics' portrayals of the special responsiveness of Romantic lyric to "close reading"; for the New Critics, Romantic poets and close readers valued the same qualities: textual density, meditation, ambiguity, containment, and self-reflexivity.[20] In his oft-

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indebted to Kövesi for providing me with this reference, and for his identification of Clare's "less egotistical" poetry with his "ecological consciousness" (73).

[18] John Stuart Mill, "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties" (1833), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 1:348. For a reading of Mill and his critics, see Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery*, 9.

[19] Jackson, "Lyric," 833. Jackson here describes the influence that Eliot's lyric theory had on the work of the New Critics: "In different ways, Am. Critics such as Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in the late 1930s, W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley in the 1940s, and Reuben Brower in the 1950s assumed Eliot's definition of the personal lyric and used I. A. Richards's focus on individual poems . . . to forge a model of all poems as essentially lyric" (833).

[20] See, for example, Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939) and *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Brace, [1947] 1975). On

cited 1965 essay, "structure and style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," M. H. Abrams memorably defines the "Greater Romantic Lyric" as a univocal form that maintains "lyric magnitude and a serious subject, feelingfully meditated"; such poems:[21]

> [P]resent a determinate speaker in a particularized, and usually a localized, outdoor setting, whom we overhear as he carries on, in a fluent vernacular which rises easily to a more formal speech, a sustained colloquy, sometimes with himself or with the outer scene, but more frequently with a silent human auditor, present or absent.[22]

While Abrams complicates his argument through an emphasis on the colloquial, many subsequent critiques of Romantic lyric have focused on his powerful portrayal of the genre's "overheard" and "meditative" speakers whose auditors usually remain "silent" and unacknowledged. A number of deconstructionist critics have questioned the methods and ethics of the Romantic lyric, for example, by representing the genre as a closeted and solipsistic form. Many feminist critics too have redescribed the traditional account of the Romantic lyric as an egocentric form of "masculine" narcissism.[23] Yet perhaps because formalist accounts of

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the ways in which the New Critics' quest to detach the text from its historical context reflected Romantic ideologies of enclosure, see Henriksen, "Poem as Song," 77-78.

[21] M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," in *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, [1965] 1984), 76. This chapter of "After Time" draws upon the arguments that Abrams earlier articulated in *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), especially the idea that the Romantic poets moved away from the so-called realistic narratives of natural imitation toward a lyric discourse of originary expressivity. See 84-99.

[22] Abrams, "Greater Romantic Lyric," 76-77.

[23] Mark Jeffreys catalogues how Victor Lee's and Saíz's deconstructionist critiques of lyric base themselves almost exclusively on Romantic lyric and the ideas of the "assertion of self, the programmatic exclusion of otherness or difference, and the logocentric quest for presence." See "Ideologies of Lyric: A Problem of Genre in Contemporary Anglophone Poetics," *PMLA* 110, no. 2 (1995): 197. De Man, in a more appreciative account of the Romantic lyric, connects the genre to both a retreat from the "ontological priority of the sensory object" and an embrace of the "possibility for consciousness to exist entirely by and for itself." See *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 16. Feminist critics such as Mellor have associated the traditional account of the Romantic lyric with "the concept of an autonomous and

Romantic poetry such as Abrams's often emphasized the mind of the poet over the speaker's body, until recently few inquiries into the class of first person lyric speakers during the Romantic epoch of enclosure had been carried out.[24]

Contrasting themselves to Abrams and his critics, Paul de Man and Jonathan Culler associate lyric voice in the Romantic era with apostrophic address. Culler contends that "[c]lassic essays such as M. H. Abrams's 'Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric' do not discuss apostrophe, though it is a feature of most of the poems mentioned."[25] Although Culler depicts lyric as the genre that apostrophe defines, it is important to note that he echoes Abrams's critics when he describes how, despite its apostrophic nature, lyric implies a self-contained, immediate, and "timeless" presence.[26] In a reading of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," Culler reflects upon "[t]he fact that apostrophe involves a drama of 'the one mind's' modifications more than a relationship between an *I* and a *you*."[27] According to Culler, the very figure of apostrophe, "which seems to establish relations between the self and the other[,] can in fact be read as an act of radical interiorization and solipsism."[28] In dialogue with Culler, de man makes a more appreciative case for apostrophic address as the definitive figure of lyric: "the figure of address is recurrent in lyric poetry, to the point of constituting the generic definition of . . . the ode (which

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self-conscious 'I' that exists independently of the Other." See *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 6.

[24] While Janowitz's *Lyric and Labor in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) provides a notable exception, most of the scholarly works on the relations between lyric, labor, and class in the Romantic era have been published quite recently. See, for example, the three-volume *Nineteenth-Century English Laboring-Class Poets*, ed. John Goodridge (Pickering & Chatto: London, 2006), as well as *Robert Bloomfield: Lyric, Class, and the Romantic Canon*, eds. Simon J. White, John Goodridge, and Bridget Keegan (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006).

[25] Culler, *Pursuit of Signs*, 136.

[26] Culler, *Pursuit of Signs,* 149.

[27] Culler, *Pursuit of Signs*, 148.

[28] Culler, *Pursuit of Signs*, 146.

can, in its turn, be seen as paradigmatic for poetry)."[29] For de Man, since critics have termed lyric "the instance of represented voice," characterizations of lyric should stress "the grammatical transformation of the declarative into the vocative modes . . . the tropological transformation of analogy into apostrophe."[30] In a more explicit critique of the links that Culler establishes between solipsism, lyric, and apostrophe, Mary Jacobus argues that apostrophe's lyric significance derives from the fact that it allows Romantic poets such as Wordsworth to participate in a transhistorical poetic community that transcends the individual voice and material representation; in her view, apostrophe "permit[s] Wordsworth himself to join the ranks of Homer, the great thunderer, and the bible."[31]

In order to account adequately for what the lyric "I" could do in the hands of a peasant poet such as Clare who crafts speakers who are synonymous with local nature and the laboring-class body, it is not enough to dismiss Abrams, Eliot, and mill and concur with their subsequent critics. Any attempt to locate Clare's poems firmly within a critical camp that defines lyric as a genre of vocative address, or one that defines it as overheard speech, fails. As his career unfolded, Clare gave voice to impoverished, isolated, and displaced poetic "I"s. His lyric subjects continually express their sense of alienation from an industrial age that was uninterested in being addressed by peasant poets about common greens. Clare's speakers respond to the fact that their local traditions and landscapes have vanished through the adoption of a voice that moves, searches, and reaches out in time and space in order to discover more sympathetic settings and listeners. While such poetic "I"s admit that the efficacy of apostrophe may be lost in the present moment in which they speak, they simultaneously embrace the alternative landscapes

[29] de Man, "Lyrical Voice," 61.

[30] de Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 261.

[31] Jacobus, "Apostrophe and Lyric Voice," 181.

and cultures of the past and the future.

While today's theorists of lyric have disagreed about whether the genre is defined by apostrophe, enclosure, presence, address, or some combination of these terms—and although close attention to Romantic poets such as Clare exposes the limitations of unitary theories of lyric—almost all studies of Romanticism have treated the lyric "I" as co-terminous with the natural landscape. Abrams argues that the form of the "Greater Romantic Lyric" maintains an "out-in-out" structure in which the speaker's initial report of a natural landscape provides "the occasion for a meditation which turns out to constitute the *raison d'être* of the poem."[32] For this reason, scholars have long stressed the locodescriptive and pastoral nature of high Romantic lyric. Moreover, they have concentrated on the ways in which this genre negotiates and replicates the concerns of the aesthetic theories and visual cultures of the period, especially those articulated by Edmund Burke and William Gilpin.[33] More recently, ecocritics have reclaimed the Romantic lyric's common association with nature poetry for modern environmental activism.[34]

Yet what such scholarship has studied less often, and what Clare's writing enables us to understand, is that by the 1820s the Romantic lyric "I," which frequently addresses nature, was embedded in a completely enclosed landscape. The enclosure of estates and erasure of common greens significantly redefined the British countryside as the domain of private property and

[32] Abrams, "Greater Romantic Lyric," 77-78.

[33] For a theorization of locodescriptive poetry, see John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problems of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 89. Guillory recalls Samuel Johnson's view that local poetry takes a "particular landscape" as its subject and embellishes it "by historical retrospection" (89). On the pastoral forms of Romantic poetry, see Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 85-127.

[34] For ecocritical studies of Romantic "nature poetry" that emphasize the period's literary encounters with the nonhuman, the natural, and the green, see Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Scott Hess, *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012); and Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry*.

firmly defined borders.[35] These changes were remarked upon by a litany of British pastoral poets, the foremost of whom, Oliver Goldsmith (*The Deserted Village* [1770]), and William Wordsworth ("Preface" to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*), eulogized the death of rural life as the direct result of the commercial and industrial revolutions that drove men out of villages and concentrated them in cities. British agricultural historian mark Overton has identified enclosure as a major part of the ongoing agricultural revolution during which an open-fields system of agriculture transitioned into an enclosed one that supported the British class system. Ad hoc communal farms gave way to large-scale industrial ones that traded internationally in goods and seeds and instituted strip farming, new fertilization methods, "new fodder crops and crop rotations, convertible husbandry . . . animal breeding, field drainage, and new machinery and implements."[36]

In order to understand Clare's special sensitivity to the effects of enclosure on the lyric "I," it is important to recognize that in the early nineteenth century, Britain's geographical isolationism not coincidentally developed a nationalistic rhetoric of self-enclosure. Arthur Young's *Political Essays Concerning the Present State of the British Empire* traces the roots of this isolationist discourse to the Enlightenment association of British insularity with nationalistic immunity; according to Young, Britain's security, happiness, and commercial prosperity were

[35] Rachel Crawford points out that during the Romantic era, "contained" spaces such as the "cottage-garden, the homes and hearths of ordinary people, and, in literature, the minor lyric" became "productive of Englishness." See *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape: 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5. Such spaces replaced the sprawling ones, including the landed estate, the expansive green, and the epic georgic, that dominated during the eighteenth century. Judith Rowbotham traces the roots of this new privileging of the fenced-in to Evangelical valorizations of interiority and self-regulation: "landowners surveying their lands had moral, as well as aesthetic, grounds for not wishing to bump into any of the hoi polloi, and for building walls and fences and restricting free access." See "An Exercise in Nostalgia?: John Clare and Enclosure," in *The Independent Spirit: John Clare and the Self-Taught Tradition*, ed. John Goodridge (Helpston, UK: John Clare Society, 1994), 168, 169.

[36] Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy, 1500-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4. Overton here argues that British culture viewed enclosure as a "prerequisite for selective animal breeding in that it prevented the promiscuous mingling of livestock on the commons" (4).

contingent on her separation from the Continent:

> What a striking advantage therefore is the insular situation! Without even the defence of a navy, a neighbor's power by land cannot offend the happy inhabitants of an island . . . If we combine in one view the several circumstances of situation, such as security, national character, convenience of government, commerce, &c., we shall find that no people upon earth enjoy such advantages as the British nation.[37]

In the wake of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars that closed off Britain's access to the Continent, this connection between national identity and island geography further solidified in the reactionary British imaginary.[38] In 1808, for example, British farmer and diplomat Gould Francis Leckie advocated an expanded British empire of proximate island states:

> We have seen that Buonaparte has brought under French influence all the western part of Europe, that Russia extends over the greater part of the remainder, and threatens the falling empire of the Turks; we must therefore determine to *Britannize* every part of insular Europe which suits our purpose, and, . . . to establish as much as lies in our power our laws and government.[39]

Echoing Leckie's argument, Patrick Colquhoun would espouse a similar logic of containment in *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1797) and *A Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Resources of the British Empire* (1814). Perhaps because the creation of the first regularized

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[37] Arthur Young, *Political Essays Concerning the Present State of the British Empire*, (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1772), 5.

[38] In addition to appearing in a diverse array of Romantic era reviews, from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* to the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, this nationalistic notion of British insularity circulated in both the parliamentary debates and naval, military, and political histories of the era. See *Inquiry into the Present State of the British Navy* (London: C. Chapple, 1818), 155-56; Edward Baines, *History of the Reign of George III* (Leeds: Longman, Hurst, & Co., 1820), 1:5; and Baines, *History of the Wars of the French Revolution* (London, 1818), 2:513.

[39] Gould Francis Leckie, *An Historical Survey of the Foreign Affairs of Great Britain* (London: J. Bell, 1808), 115.

British police force did not become a permanent reality until the passage of the 1829 metropolitan Police Act, Colquhoun expanded upon *Treatise on the Police*'s ideas about domestic enclosure in *Treatise on the Empire*'s depiction of the navy as the international police force that protects Britain's borders and property: "an insular situation and a powerful navy [have] rendered this country invulnerable."[40] During this period, radical French polemicists such as the Anglo-French journalist Lewis Goldsmith attacked British nationalism by condemning the values that Britain's archipelagic geography produces: "The security which the English owe to their insular situation, instead of producing an inclination for peace . . . has had quite the contrary effect . . . it is from this source that their arrogant pride, their insolence, and their *prepotenze*, towards other nations spring."[41]

By the 1820s, the notion of Britain as an enclosed island comprised of enclosed estates produced a strikingly unified cultural narrative of British space as secured, protected, and regularized. The 1815 Corn Law, which restricted cereal imports in the wake of the many agricultural depressions of the Romantic era, was but one of the many controversial protectionist tariffs instituted in the era to shield British landowners from the competition of foreign goods. In addition, this age marks the moment when nativist fears of "Little Britain" began to compete with the expansive optimism of imperial Britain. As the inwardly-turned worries of reverse colonization, economic competition, radical revolt, and imperial invasion began to take hold, the discourse of Britain as an isolated, enclosed archipelago increasingly resonated with those interested in the defense of the nation's borders.[42]

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[40] Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Resources of the British Empire* (London: Joseph Mawman, 1814), 424.

[41] Lewis Goldsmith, *The Secret History of the Cabinet of Bonaparte*, 5th ed. (London: J. M. Richardson and J. Hatchard, 1811), 494.

[42] In *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999),

II. Clare's Lyric and Biographical Afterlives

In response to these changes, Clare focuses on the creation of lyric "I"s that recall what the landscape previously was, and envisions what that now-enclosed environment might become. These "I"s address the significance of rural afterimages whose legibility enclosure has compromised. In the extended lyric "Remembrances" (c. 1832), a poem intended to be part of Clare's unpublished volume *The Midsummer Cushion*, the speaker remembers the loss of Helpston's local nature and at the same time insists upon its aftereffects: "by Langley bush I roam but the bush hath left its hill / On cowper green I stray tis a desert strange & chill."[43] The voice of "Remembrances" intimates that no matter how irredeemably the nation ravages the local landscape of Helpston, he will nonetheless continue to conceptualize his "I" as providing a sustained vision of his environment in its pre-enclosed "green" state; his defiant "I" will perpetually "roam," "stray," and overcome obstructions. This speaker argues that his "I" will always be "by Langley bush" whether or not the bush is still to be found there.[44] The particular phrasing of the speaker leaves room for nature's autonomy and agency—even the rooted "bush" has not necessarily been forced out since it is possible that it too has left, wandered, and escaped.

Nevertheless, at the same time as he envisions himself and nature as resistant wanderers, this poetic voice recognizes that if "the bush hath left its hill," then the unenclosed lyric "I"

Ian Baucom argues that place conveyed Englishness in the nineteenth century. For Baucom, Englishness became synonymous with the idea of warding off an "imperial invasion" in this period. See 24. Richard Helgerson traces the roots of such a nationalistic discourse of enclosure to early modern English conflicts with the Spanish. According to Helgerson, these conflicts cultivated "a postcolonial/colonializing dynamic, a dynamic in which the English came to think of themselves and their language both as having been colonized and as potentially colonizing others." See "Language Lessons: Linguistic Colonialism, Linguistic Postcolonialism, and the Early Modern English Nation," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 11, no. 1 (1998): 289.

[43] Clare, "Remembrances," in *John Clare: Poems of the Middle Period, 1822-1837*, eds. Eric Robinson, David Powell, and P. M. S. Dawson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 4:133. Hereafter abbreviated *MP* and cited parenthetically by page number.

[44] Bewell reads "Remembrances" as a revisionary "form of ordnance mapping" that tells "a counter-history of the Helpston countryside." See "John Clare and the Ghosts of Natures Past," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 65, no. 4 (2011): 575.

connected to it must also have passed away. The speaker effectively possesses an identity rooted in a locality that no longer exists. When enclosure lays waste to the common sites of local nature, Clare's poetic "I" actively understands its loss of place in the present. In a way that marks a clear difference from more familiar Romantic appeals to rural settings such as the hedgerows of "Tintern Abbey," where, as Ian Baucom points out, national sites of memory store, situate, and solidify constructs such as Britishness, the speaker of "Remembrances" images regional sites of memory such as the "cowper green" that sustain his unenclosed subjectivity.[45]

The straying speaker of "Remembrances" defies the era's new economies of privacy by connecting the poetic "I" to something other than individuality. Clare's speaker reanimates the entirety of a past local culture and way of life and reaches beyond it to highlight the solidarity of all agricultural laborers. In "Remembrances," the singular lyric "I" transforms into the plural "our" and signifies collectivism: "When beneath old lea close oak I the bottom branches broke / To make our harvest cart like so many working folk" (*MP*, 131). Clare's speaker links nature, labor, and community—"oak," "broke," and "folk"—through assonance and rhyme. The poetic voice first envisions how his act of natural construction, "I the bottom branches broke," resonates with the constructive labor of his co-workers, "To make our harvest cart." His second expansionary move is to render the communal labor of his local co-workers continuous with that of the entire agricultural laboring class, "like so many working folk." The common labor of the working class makes possible the communal "I" of the laboring-class poet. Thus while Clare's lyric "I"s resist the destruction of the local and the common, in the wake of enclosure they also embrace an itinerancy that allows them to accumulate multiple perspectives and comprehend the relationships between local and global ecologies and cultures.

[45] See Baucom, *Out of Place*, 19 for a reading of Pierre Nora's *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, trans. Mary Trouille and David P. Jordan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001-10) in the context of nineteenth-century British attitudes toward place.

Such a poetic voice implicitly departs from Wordsworthian lyrics such as "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (1807) that represent themselves as self-contained in so far as they focus on a single individual whose mature adulthood serves as a funeral urn for his rural childhood. As common as are Clare's expansions of the Romantic lyric "I," he also splits and divides the poetic "I" in order to contest its self-contained certainty.[46] The striking implications of the opening phrase of his unpublished sonnet "I am" (c. 1844), "I feel I am" (*LP*, 397), are that the lyric "I" can undo its singularity through self-redundant loops. The circular idea that Clare's "I" can "feel I am" radically undermines the authority of the lyric "I." If the "I" serves as the poem's subject and object, "I feel I," then the poem effectively posits the "I" as a de-individuated term that discovers the multiplicity and openness of self-reflexivity.

While Clare engaged a multiplicity of poetic images, forms, and linguistic modalities over his career, this thematic thread of the speaker's de-individuation unifies his post-enclosure nature lyrics. Collectively, his many re-imaginings of the lyric "I" as something astray, intangible, expansive, and irrepressible work toward the representation of a first-person poetic voice that refuses to be contained in a present body or a singular subjectivity. In the post-enclosure world he imagines, Clare sees himself, the British landscape, and the Romantic lyric as dead but not inert bodies. Despite the deaths of these entities, he defiantly represents the persistence of the traditions and ecologies of Helpston's past. In order to empower the open past to contest the enclosed present, Clare translates outdated ecologies into eternal futures; he applies the spiritual imagery of the afterlife to the subjectivities, landscapes, and lyrics of the past.

In Clare's post-enclosure lyrics, his metaphorically "dead" speakers exist beyond the materiality of the corpse, the containment of the tomb, and what de man terms the notion of "the

[46] For a parallel reading of how the speaker of Clare's "I am" perceives otherness as "intrinsic to the self," see Morton, "John Clare's Dark Ecology," 191.

mind as a hollow container, box, or grave"; the immaterial "I"s of these poems relate to afterlives rather than to the rooted certainty of present bodies.[47] A survey of Clare's post-enclosure lyrics finds that their speakers often arrive at twilight to wander, lose themselves, take leave, or escape; their poetic voices materialize in first lines such as "Ive been roaming in the gloaming" (*LP*, 464), "In the gloaming o' moonlight so soft and so dreary" (*LP*, 661), and "I'll come to thee at even tide" (*LP*, 248). Clare manifests restive speakers in lyric "I"s that haunt the present with the uncanny historicity of the pre-enclosed British landscape. If enclosure thins out the peasantry, then Clare reclaims this thinness so as to construct ghastly, "chilling" speakers who match what Alan Bewell has identified as Clare's haunting poetic landscapes: "Clare's nature-poetry verges on ghost-writing, for the present is seen as being haunted by the natures it has displaced, natures that have been violently uprooted yet refuse to leave."[48] Early in "Remembrances," the enclosure of the commons "chills" the speaker: "O it turns my bosom chill / When I think of old 'sneap green' puddocks nook & hilly snow" (*MP*, 132). Yet later in the poem the brook onto which the speaker projects himself also "runs a naker [*sic*] brook cold & chill" (*MP*, 133). In Clare's sonnet "I am," the speaker similarly portrays his "chilled" body: "Earth's prison chilled my body with its dram" (*LP*, 397).

The voice of the brook in Clare's 196-line elegiac lyric, "The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters" (c. 1818) also provides a natural "chill" to sympathize with the speaker's affect: "The wind between the north and East / blow'd very chill and cold / Or coldly blow'd to me at

[47] de Man, "Lyrical Voice," 71.

[48] Bewell, "Ghosts of Natures Past," 576. Bewell then reminds us that "Ghosts make themselves visible for many reasons, but often it is because they are seeking justice for a crime committed against them" (577). With Bewell's argument in mind, we can read Bloom's description of Clare as "the Wordsworthian shadow" against the grain as an image of haunting resistance rather than secondary derivativeness (*The Visionary Company* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961], 444). On Clare, rural superstitions, and ghost stories, see Paul Chirico, *John Clare and the Imagination of the Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 107-37.

least / my cloa'hs were thin and old."[49] The first half of the "cold" chiasmus of "Lamentations" connects the speaker's resistant voice to the blowing of nature's "very chill and cold" wind. Low temperatures signify his sympathy with the special invincibility of the untamable and unchangeable elements of Helpston—the frigid local winds and waters that cannot be held in, domesticated, or suppressed. Yet the speaker's qualifying phrase, "to me at least," also suggests that he maintains a certain self-awareness of the way in which he interprets the climate of his present landscape through the lens of a local history that is no longer common knowledge.

While the speaker initially claims that his spectral essence is linked to the cool waters and airs that are the aspects of the local nature that he portrays, he then implies that his chill is tied to the poverty that the punishing effects of enclosure have produced. After he depicts a series of cold images, the lyric subject directly transitions to a representation of himself: "my cloa'hs were thin and old." In a poem that describes nature as "naked" four times, the speaker's worn clothing fails to warm his body. He blends his tears with the "dropping" dew to suggest "low bent" nature's sympathy with the "lowly" peasantry: "The grass all dropping wet wi' dew / Low bent their tiney spears / The lowly daise' bended too / more lowly wi my tears."[50] The speaker's clothes, tears, and cold body resonate with the many depictions of the poor in the wake of the 1815 Corn Law as starved, "thin," "old," weepy, and close to death. Radical poet Ebenezer Elliott's hugely popular *Corn Law Rhymes* (1834), for example, paints a portrait of a disabled beggar:

> STRUCK blind in youth, Platt ask'd the proud for bread;

[49] Clare, "The Lamentations of Round Oak Waters," in *The Early Poems of John Clare: 1804-1822*, eds. Eric Robinson, David Powell, and Margaret Grainger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1:228. Zimmerman calls attention to how the poem's title "heightens the identification of speaker and stream . . . making it unclear whose lamentations the poem records." See *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 169.

[50] Clare, "Lamentations," 228.

. . . . . .

I saw him weep—"Hail holy light!" he cried;

But living darkness heard him, and he died.

Oh, by the light that left too soon his eyes,

And bade him starve on ice-cold charities.[51]

In dialogue with the connections between poverty and national enclosure that Clare's speaker subtly suggests, Elliott's first person speaker more explicitly argues that "death," "starvation," and "ice-cold charities" are the direct results of the protectionist tariffs that enclosed the British wheat market. Here the metaphorical iciness of enclosure chills the bodies of Britain's most vulnerable subjects. Clare's poetry reclaims the chilled and chilling, the "old," poor, and "thin," as the imagery of the irrepressible; out of this imagery he creates ghostly, ranging speakers that refuse to be grounded. The speaker of "I Am" (c. 1844, published in the *Bedford Times* on 1 January 1848), a three-stanza lyric that shares its name with the aforementioned sonnet "I am," begins with a sketch of his evanescence, "my friends forsake me like a memory lost" (*LP*, 396), that he follows with a description of his dispersal into an ethereal and vaporous "I": "I am, and live—like vapours tost" (*LP*, 396). Clare's poem formulates a rhetoric that differs from the one that appears in the theories of the role of the Romantic poet, such as Coleridge's in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), that critics often cite when they connect the Romantic lyric to a vital, enclosed, and self-creating "I am" that echoes the divinity of the "infinite I am."[52] The ghostly, decidedly non-godlike "I am" that Clare's poem occasions floats not only as a "shipwreck"—"Into the living sea of waking dreams, / the vast shipwreck of my lifes esteems" (*LP*, 396–97)—but also as

[51] Ebenezer Elliott, *The Splendid Village: Corn Law Rhymes, and Other Poems* (London: Benjamin Steille, 1834), 1:111.

[52] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in *Collected Works*, 7:304.

dispersed and dislocated "vapours" that become part of the atmosphere. In fact this floating speaker suggests that he has abandoned the idea of self-enclosure so fully that he discovers a dizzying openness in the prepositional language of containment: "Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,— / Into the living sea of waking dreams" (*LP*, 396). The preposition "into," a word that ordinarily suggests the idea of containment—though it can also signify irruption—does not enclose the speaker's "I" but rather opens up the endless and otherworldly sonic landscapes of "the nothingness of scorn and noise" and the "living sea of waking dreams."

"I am" concludes with a vision of death as an escape to the unenclosed "grass" of "childhood": "And sleep as I in childhood, sweetly slept / Untroubling, and untroubled where I lie, / The grass below—above the vaulted sky" (*LP*, 397). These concluding lines undermine the lyric convention of the epitaphic ending by imaginatively transforming the speaker's present moment of enclosure into nothing but the open air of the lofty "vaulted sky" that he juxtaposes with the lowly common green of his childhood. By contrast, in the final four lines of "Lamentations," Clare's poetic voice revels in the way in which death will force the British elites who are responsible for landscape enclosure to experience their afterlives not as a joyous return to the mobility and fluidity of the unenclosed past, but as a needy, restless state: "Poor greedy souls . . . / . . . / Will riches keep 'em from the grave? / Or buy them rest in heaven?"[53] According to the speaker's sharp irony, "riches" both make "greedy souls" "poor" and lack the power "to buy them rest" from their earthly guilt. The poetic voice portrays their sleep as impossible in heaven as it would require their enclosure in rooted locations and bodies.

Clare's descriptions of his poetic "I"s as dead, entombed, and yet breaking free of their

[53] Clare, "Lamentations," 234.

containment draw significantly from his own biography, especially his institutionalization.[54] His method is as strikingly ironic as it is tautological; while the "I"s of his speakers dispense with their own individual concerns and ground themselves in those of the community of Helpston, they also refer to the details of Clare's individual life. Yet Clare's lyric "I"s do not individuate themselves so much as they allow the captive, disciplined, and forgotten life of Clare the poet and his lost community of Helpston to stand in for one another. Locked up for madness in 1841 in the Northampton General Lunatic asylum, Clare inserted himself into his lyric "I"s.[55] Although the titles of poems from this period, such as the undated late lyric, "Enslaved in bonds—Acrostic," often suggest the institutional repression of the speaker, their lines also imply his resistant endurance: "I felt a feeling nothing can subdue / Endurable as nature no decay [*sic*]" (*LP*, 1092).

The self-addressed epistolary sonnet, "To John Clare," written in February 1860 and published in June 1861, even rethinks as emancipatory the identity of the mad poet who remains out of sight and, in a very different sense than either Mill's or Eliot's lyric voice, talks to himself. As Zimmerman argues, the speaker of this poem makes use of an epistolary tautology to address the poet Clare as if he were still living in the vibrant "spring" of a pre-enclosed Helpston: "Well honest John how fare you now at home / The spring is come & birds are building nests" (*LP*, 1102).[56] While this speaker writes "To John Clare" from the enclosed present, he also represents the poet that authors him as surrounded by an unenclosed past landscape. Moreover, since the

[54] Bate recounts how Dr. Nesbitt, the superintendent of Clare's asylum from 1845 to 1858, describes Clare as having "lost his own personal identity." See P. R. Nesbitt to Frederick Martin, 15 April 1865, in *Northampton Manuscript*, 58, qtd. in Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 518. Edward Strickland similarly terms Clare's "sense of identity . . . extraordinarily fluid." See "Approaching 'A Vision,'" *Victorian Poetry* 22, no. 3 (1984): 235.

[55] Clare's critics have commonly read his poetry through his biography. Zimmerman reminds us that Clare's "biography has in general been better known" than his poetry. See *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 174.

[56] Zimmerman, *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History,* 175.

speaker writes to the poet at the same time that the poet composes the speaker, "To John Clare" creates a circular subject-object loop that destabilizes the borders of the real and the literary, the living and the dead, and the present and the past. This poem, which fittingly emphasizes "home" and dislocates poetic speech from its originary author, suggests that Clare's lyrics present multiple Clares: the embodied Clare of the enclosed present and the disembodied one of the unenclosed past. Clare's "mad" speakers obstruct the unity of the first person lyric "I"; they are at once here and not here.

While critics such as Storey describe how "[f]or twenty-three years Clare rotted away" in the Northampton General Lunatic asylum (1841–64) after his time in Dr. Matthew Allen's private asylum in the Epping Forest (1837–41), it is equally true that Clare creates a lyric narrative of bodily rot in which he depicts himself as slowly decaying in asylums from 1837 to his death in 1864.[57] Such a narrative allows him the freedom that comes with the ability to represent himself and his speakers as posthuman spirits that have untethered themselves from their restrictive and immobile presents. These immaterial speakers transform the traumatic loss of Helpston into the cathartic release of their enclosed and metaphorically dead bodies. Such imaginative exercises of bodily loss make possible the temporal itinerancy of Clare and his poetic voices. In his sonnet "I am," Clare absents his speaker's body in order to refuse the enclosure of his voice. This speaker rephrases "I am" into "I was" (*LP*, 398); such a reconstructed "I" allows him to travel out of his present self: "I was a being created in the race / Of men disdaining bounds of place and time: —/ A spirit that could travel o'er the space / Of earth and heaven,—like a thought sublime" (*LP*, 398). The speaker is able to move *outside* the present and the enclosed British Isles to discover an eerie state in which men "travel" and disdain the "bounds of place and time." In defiance against the idea that he—as a laboring-class man—

[57] Storey, *Poetry of John Clare*, 1.

can be settled in a specific place, Clare creates a speaker that insists that he can travel the globe as a free "spirit" in an era in which tourism had only recently become a bourgeois affair.[58] Clare's poetic voice asserts a laboring-class "sublime" that is occasioned by free "thought" rather than expensive excursions to imposing landscapes.

In his asylum years, Clare imagines his identity as void of temporal and physical presence—as an unchanged but disembodied voice that drifts spiritually and imaginatively across time and space in search of a lost Eden. In this period of his life, he asserted that he had traveled to places that he had never actually been and met people that he had never actually met; an American named Dean Dudley describes a meeting with Clare at the Northampton asylum in which Clare represents his literary relationships with American and Scottish writers as authentic, real-life encounters: "He said he had been in America, at a place called Albania, on the Hudson river, and saw Irving and Bryant there. . . . He spoke of Burns as of a brother, assuring me he had been in Scotland and seen his grave."[59] As Dudley makes clear, Clare's statements trouble the links between poetic vision and transnational travel that so-called high Romanticism privileges. Clare reimagines himself—a local, institutionalized, laboring-class poet—as able to access the foreign landscapes and personalities that his class station and incarceration bar him from physically visiting. Ironically, he could not accomplish this imaginative liberation from the asylum without poetic license; Bate details how Clare transforms the freedom and community of the asylum—a term that can signify either a refuge or a mental institution—into the restraint and

[58] On the rise of middle–class tourism in the nineteenth century, see James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Literature, Tourism, and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 19, and Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 54.

[59] Dean Dudley, "John Clare, the Peasant Poet," in *Pictures of Life in England and America: Prose and Poetry* (Boston: James French, 1851), 118. See also, Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 483–84.

isolation of a prison.[60] He remakes the actual conditions of his asylum into a more perfect poetic metaphor for the hemmed in landscape in order to more completely align his personal and political protests of enclosure.

III. The Untimely Clare: Poet Past and Future

By converting the many discourses of death that surround him and his works into a lyric methodology of untimely speech, Clare manifests elements of what Edward Said termed "late style," that peculiarly non-normative and estranged sort of vision that results from the situation of an identity in relation to death as always "coming after it, and surviving beyond it."[61] As the nineteenth century progressed, Clare and his poems became living relics. Dr. Allen published a corrective letter to the *Times* dated 23 June 1840 in order to discount its report of Clare's death: "sir,—I observe in *The Times* of yesterday that it is stated in the *Halifax Express* that the poet Clare died some months ago in the Lunatic Asylum at York. The Northamptonshire peasant poet, John Clare, is a patient in my establishment at Highbeach, and has been so since July, 1837."[62] Bate speculates about the ongoing nature of these literal "deaths" of Clare when he remarks that Clare's prolonged poetic and personal silences during his residence in various asylums would have caused even his family to anxiously "wonder whether he was dead."[63]

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[60] In *John Clare: A Biography*, Bate explains that the Northampton Lunatic Asylum offered its inmates ubiquitous "sports in the grounds, rural walks in summer, board games in winter (bagatelle, chess, dominoes), country dancing and 'occasional musical parties in the centre of the house.'" According to Bate, "Clare was allowed to walk the mile into Northampton alone. He quickly became a well–known figure in the town, sitting for hours at a time in the portico of All Saints' Church" (469).

[61] Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 16.

[62] Matthew Allen to the Editor of *The Times*, 23 June 1840, qtd. in Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 429.

[63] Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 511. Bate's analysis resonates with Storey's depiction of Clare's death: when Clare "died on 20 May 1864, no one in the outside world could really care less (to most people he was already dead); even when his body was taken back to his native village, Helpstone, there was nobody to receive it." See *Poetry of John Clare*, 2.

As a poet who lived longer than he remained in fashion, Clare survived many cultural deaths; his ability to translate material aspects of the present moment into the immaterial afterlife therefore also draws upon his poetic career's resistance to the closure of death. Clare is what de man terms a "poet of death" not because he reveals "the discontinuity between the personal self and the voice that speaks in the poetry from the other bank of the river, beyond death," but because his haunting lyric "I"s foreground his metaphorical death as an institutionalized writer who has lost his audience.[64] In his account of an 1841 visit to the private asylum of Dr. Allen, the journalist and editor Cyrus Redding envisages Clare's "volumes" as dead, neglected monuments covered in "dust": "There will some day be a return to the simply beautiful, when the love of Truth and Nature will again cause the dust to be blown off the volumes of such poets as CLARE."[65] For Redding and others, Clare's cultural image as a "simply beautiful" poet of "Truth and Nature" was no longer consonant with the literary tastes of the era of Tennyson and browning—though that could change "some day" in the future. Clare's poetic renown, and even his existence, had become impossible in the industrial present of the mid-nineteenth century because they were tied to the rural ways of life that enclosure had erased. Yet Redding calls attention to the way in which Clare's lyric belatedness relates to his descriptive style as much as to his content and subject matter; not only does Clare depict a bygone Helpston landscape and community, but he also focuses on recording its most passed by, unnoticed, "insignificant," and "inferior" details: "The simple subjects upon which CLARE delights to dwell most persons pass by, or have deemed beneath their notice, as inferior in the order of Nature, and wonder how such

[64] de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen & Co., 1983), 181.

[65] Cyrus Redding, "John Clare," in *The English Journal: A Miscellany of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts* (London: How and Parsons, 1841), 1:340.

charming things can be said of what appears to them insignificant."[66]

It is impossible to disconnect Clare's poetic reinvigorations of dead images, details, personae, settings, and subjects from the obsolescence, neglect, lowliness, and invisibility that defined him as a laboring-class poet. Throughout the nineteenth century he remained a so-called minor poet.[67] Rather than making use of the common lyric argument that poetry immortalizes dead poets, Clare's speakers simultaneously express the transhistorical endurance of both their distress and their desire to survive, unsettle, and touch the British Empire.[68] Clare's poetic subjects continually represent their self-awareness of the minor nature of their own marginalized voices; they reflect Clare's recognition that history preserves and records the privileged.[69] After first portraying how "nature hides her face where theyre sweeing [swinging] in their chains / & in a silent murmuring complains" (*MP*, 132), the speaker of "Remembrances" couples the "decay" of "love" to the failed preservation of the rural pleasures of his "poesys": "gave her heart my poesys all cropt in a sunny hour / As keepsakes & pledges all to never fade away / but love never heeded to treasure up the may / so it went the common road with decay" (*MP*, 134).

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[66] Redding, "John Clare," 342. Goodridge echoes Redding's assessment that Clare recuperated and recycled the dead and minor. See "Pastoral and Popular modes in Clare's 'Enclosure Elegies,'" in *The Independent Spirit*, 139.

[67] On Clare and so-called minor literature, see Alan D. Vardy, *John Clare, Politics and Poetry* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 3. Vardy argues that the anthologization history of Clare's poetry has seen the inclusion of poems that display a "relationship to other Romantic writing" (3). Philip W. Martin critiques readings of Clare as a "*failed* Romantic" who lacks decorum. According to Martin, Clare's status as a "minor" poet is the result of the "'historical repression' of class and regionality." See "Problems of Placement and Displacement in Romantic Critical Practice," in *Placing and Displacing Romanticism*, ed. Peter J. Kitson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 50. On Clare, class, and reception, see Goodridge, "Clare's 'Enclosure Elegies,'" 144. For a postcolonial reading of the minor in the Romantic era, see David Lloyd, *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[68] Andrew Bennett identifies the Romantic poets with a "culture of posterity" whose adherents interested themselves in their cultural legacies (*Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 7). For B. Johnson, Keats in particular saw death as "the mother of poetry." See "Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion," 36.

[69] Zimmerman reads Clare's critiques of enclosure as expressions of both his "anxieties about his own disappearance on the literary scene" and his institutionalization. See *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 175-76. See Tim Chilcott, "*A Real World & Doubting Mind*": *A Critical Study of the Poetry of John Clare* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1985) for a reading of Clare's poetry as "evolving into a poetry of absence" (118).

Yet Clare's speakers commonly represent their minor roles as hardy and patient positions that await the transformative arrival of an audience. The poetic voice of "I am," for example, begins by imagining himself as a seemingly estranged and irrelevant speaker who, although he has lost his cultural capital and his human and nonhuman "friends," still survives and refuses to be silenced: "my friends forsake me like a memory lost" (*LP*, 396); "Even the dearest, that I love the best / Are strange — nay, rather stranger than the rest" (*LP*, 397). By the poem's conclusion, however, this speaker describes an afterlife capable of replacing his sense of alienation with communion: "I long for scenes, where man hath never trod / . . . / There to abide with my Creator, God" (*LP*, 397). This unenclosed spiritual realm both remains outside human development, "where man hath never trod," and offers the speaker solace from the isolation that he suffers in the present.

In the years just prior to his death in 1864, Clare even suggests that his lively verbal freedom is a function of his spectral status as a culturally dead but nevertheless still speaking "minor poet."[70] In his 1860 correspondence with James Hipkins, which Storey identifies as "Clare's last extant letter," Clare considers the relation between being "shut up"—enclosed—and "shut up"—silenced: "I am in a madhouse & quite forget your Name or who you are you must excuse me for I have nothing to commu[n]icate or tell of & why I am shut up I dont know I have nothing to say so I conclude."[71] It is possible that the dead, meaningless prose that Clare uses to assert his enclosed "conclusion" contains two extended blank spaces in order to suggest unenclosed gaps. His last known letter could suggest his awareness of how to transform the

[70] McKusick, "John Clare and the Tyranny of Grammar," *Studies in Romanticism* 33, no. 2 (1994): 277. McKusick here argues that Clare's experimental asylum verse results from his freedom from externally imposed constraints such as grammar.

[71] *John Clare: Selected Letters*, ed. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 223, and Clare to James Hopkins, 8 March 1860, in *John Clare: Selected Letters*, 223.

seemingly enclosed, minor voice into one that embraces the mobility that open space allows. His declaration that he has "nothing to commu[n]icate" and "nothing to say" both displays the ghastly spectacle of his metaphorically posthumous voice and hints of a reclamation of his class status as a liberatory position of invisibility; while he repeats "I" four times, his "I" always seems to be elsewhere.

While Culler identifies apostrophe with what is "most radical . . . and mystificatory in the lyric" and Eliot associates the genre with a voice that "talks to himself," Clare's poetic voices often attempt to "forget" so as to move outside the reality of their enclosure in the present moment; their resistance to their containment involves losing track of names and whom they might be in correspondence with—and even failing to recall why they are "shut up."[72] To free them from their restriction in the immediate present, Clare represents his living speakers as dead. Thus what Barbara Johnson describes as apostrophe's ability to "reanimate" the absent in the present—"[t]he absent, dead, or inanimate entity addressed is thereby made present, animate, and anthropomorphic"—makes apostrophe an inefficacious vehicle for the poetic resistance of Clare's lyric voices.[73] Nor does Clare's poetry find its power in the kind of apostrophic reversal that de man refers to as a type of prosopopoeia which "by making the death speak [*sic*] . . . implies, by the same token, that the living are struck dumb, frozen in their own death."[74] What the institutionalized Clare's lyric defiance involves is in fact a rhetorical motion that reverses the momentum of apostrophe. Rather than representing present speakers whose apostrophic invocations aspire to move absent objects of address toward themselves, Clare imagines poetic voices that absent themselves from the present moment so as to travel toward the audiences that

[72] Culler, *Pursuit of Signs*, 137.

[73] B. Johnson, "Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion," 30-32.

[74] de Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 78. On apostrophe and prosopopoeia, see de Man, "Lyrical Voice," 62.

they seek to address.

Although Clare may have come to embrace aspects of his minor status by the end of his life, Victorian critics marginalized both him and his poetry as disconnected from what these commentators understood to be the "modern" middle-class concerns of the London metropolis. Such readers viewed the industrial revolution as having rendered his collectivist model of subjectivity obsolete in Britain; they found solace in the creation of a myth of the Romantic lyric that tied originality to individualism. For many of the mostly metropolitan critics in the Victorian era who defined the Romantic lyric, Clare's rural model of peasant subjectivity no longer existed as an inhabitable psychological category; in their view, Clare was an odd leftover, a remainder from a bygone era. In an 1847 letter, Thomas Inskip, the Bedfordshire watchmaker whose advice and assistance allowed Clare to publish in the *Bedford Times* from 1847 to 1849, articulates the foreignness of Clare's lyric voices: "there is in fact hardly such a thing left as an English peasantry."[75] Echoing Inskip, Redding depicts Clare unable to "identify" or maintain "community" with Britain's metropolitan readers: "the mass of the people in middling circumstances have little community with the productions of imagination of a simple and natural character, particularly the inhabitants of large cities, who . . . seek their reading in writers of more congenial feeling with their own."[76] Redding perceptively details the ways in which Clare would have maintained celebrity had he been born a generation before; according to his view, Clare lives a belated existence that is out of sync with the progress of time. According to "modern" and "middling" men such as Redding and Inskip, Clare's peasant subjectivity was a

[75] Thomas Inskip to Clare, 29 April 1847, in *Northampton Manuscripts* 52, qtd. in Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 490. See also 489. David Simpson explores an argument similar to Inskip's in the context of the identity politics of the modern academy. See "Is the Academy Ready for John Clare?" *The John Clare Society Journal* 18 (1999): 70-78.

[76] Redding, "John Clare," 306.

primitive, distressed, and outdated British worldview.

As the peasant vanished from Britain's literary and cultural view, so too did the generic label of the "peasant poet" that had originated in the ballad revival of the early eighteenth century.[77] This term was broad enough to incorporate both the ideas of the rude, plebian poetaster and the spontaneous, untutored genius. As the last of the British peasant poets writing in an expired and exhausted genre commonly associated with the mid-eighteenth century, Clare conjures up the resistant ghosts of Britain's laboring-class poetic traditions, such as Stephen Duck, Ann Yearsley, William Cobbett, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, James Hogg, and George Crabbe, who once denounced the exploitation of the people and the enclosure of the land. The longer Clare lived—the more distant in time he became from these local voices and the audiences to which they addressed their protests—the less acclaimed were his volumes of poetry. Clare's first collection of poetry, *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820), would remain his most popular over the course of his career.

By the end of the Romantic era, even the processes of landscape enclosure to which Clare's lyrics responded had become outdated. Edward Edwards, writing for the Tory-leaning *Quarterly Review* in 1827, published a chart that calculated the specific yearly number of both British Acts of Enclosure and enclosed acres of British land (see fig. 22):

[77] On Clare's use of the "peasant poet" label, see Mina Gorji, *John Clare and the Place of Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 15-31, and Zimmerman, *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 151-52. Linked to the "peasant poet" was the poetic category of the untutored "natural genius." On the mythic nature of Clare's unschooled rural genius, see Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 12-13. On Clare and the defense of the uneducated classes, see Johanne Clare, *John Clare and the Bounds of Circumstance* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1987), 112.

Reign.	No. of acts.	Extent of land inclosed.
Queen Anne	2	1,438
George I.	16	17,660
George II.	226	318,778
George III.	3554	5,686,400
George IV. (up to 1827)	188	300,800
	3986	6,325,076

Figure 22 Edward Edwards, "On Agriculture and Rent," *The Quarterly Review* 36 (1827): 401.

Edwards uses this table to demonstrate "that spirit of improvement which, for the last seventy years, has been spreading with constantly increasing rapidity throughout the empire."[78] According to his analysis, enclosure had participated in a long narrative of British progress:

> [S]ince the commencement of the last century, upwards of six millions of acres of land have been inclosed and brought into a state of tillage . . . no less than eleven parts in twelve were inclosed in one reign—that of George III., the steady and constant patron of agriculture. If we suppose that one-third of this quantity was already under some sort of tillage, as common land, still the waste surface reclaimed will amount to four millions of acres.[79]

Edwards' work exhibits how by the end of the Romantic period, the once new landscape forms that enclosure had instituted were becoming old and nearing completion. The extended eighteenth-century history of enclosure meant that by 1830 the public had long been habituated to the national work of disciplining the countryside. If enclosure names the political force of Clare's work over the course of his career, and if the process of enclosure was mostly finished by

[78] Edward Edwards, "On Agriculture and Rent," *The Quarterly Review* 36 (1827): 400.

[79] Edwards, "On Agriculture and Rent," 401.

1830, then the 34 years of his writing that follow 1830 can be viewed as a historical anachronism. In other words, commentators such as Redding may have been correct to read Clare elegiacally, as a vestige of a former world.

Yet the fact that the local enclosure of Helpston happened "late" (1809 to 1820) in the history of British landscape enclosure—and long after the conclusion of the last major peasant protests against it—means that even the lyric excoriations of enclosure that Clare penned prior to 1830 were inherently belated. Lines such as "How pleasures lately flourish'd here" imply a twofold belatedness; unenclosed Helpston exists as a place whose common "pleasures" have both passed away and survived enclosure longer than most other parts of rural Britain.[80] The lateness that applies to Helpston, Clare, and his speakers simultaneously ties together the activity of the recently departed ("of late") and the passivity of the long since dead (the "late" John Clare).

In addition to establishing the belatedness of Clare's resistance to enclosure, Edwards's polemic demonstrates how the apologists of agricultural capitalism sought to retroactively expunge all value from the unenclosed landscapes that Clare's poetry celebrated. In the reactionary imaginaries of men such as Edwards, the open landscapes of the past were merely unproductive "waste surface[s]" that enclosure had "reclaimed" for the nation as productive. The more that such accounts circulated and gained sway, the more that Clare's lyric descriptions of Britain's pre-enclosed ecologies became elegiac and anachronistic. Moreover, since Clare bound the identities of his speakers to the common greens of Britain's past, characterizations of such landscapes as dead and unproductive wastes could be applied to his first person poetic voices.

Clare responds by representing wasteful belatedness—in which "waste" signifies both open landscape and cultural outdatedness—as a position of strength that allows the refusal of

[80] Clare, "Lamentations," 229.

enclosure's permanence. His lyric subjects commonly insist on their untimely ability to outlast or even reverse their present moment. "Remembrances" ironically describes what the Tories asserted was the quintessentially British process of enclosure as the arch usurper and foreign devil, Napoleon: "Inclosure like a Buonaparte let not a thing remain / It levelled every bush & tree & levelled every hill / & hung the moles for traitors—though the brook is running still / It runs a naker brook cold & chill" (*MP*, 133).[81] Through a striking simile, the speaker personifies the invasive force of enclosure as a Napoleon who levels "every hill." Yet this personified image of enclosure itself becomes leveled through the history of Napoleon's fall that readers of the poem, which Clare published in 1832, could not help but visualize. By this time, Napoleon himself was securely contained. The British press of the era commonly portrayed him as a melancholic, fallen, and ruined figure who had wasted away in isolation on St. Helena. Eleven years after his death on the mid-Atlantic island, Napoleon could no longer be imagined as the imperial maelstrom that closed Britain off from the Continent; he had long since ravaged Europe and threatened Britain's shores. The exiled figure of Napoleon creates cognitive dissonance in readers as he represents both an expired force of desolation and a self-imprisoning impotency. Clare's lyric imaginary allows the historical fate of Bonapartist despotism to speak to what might be the future fate of Tory land policies. "Remembrances" subtly suggests that enclosure might someday dissipate into a weak and tautological force that is itself enclosed.[82] After his general statement that Napoleon (enclosure) categorically "let not a thing remain," the speaker signals his own haunting survival as he elaborates on his memories of the specific traumas that his local

[81] For the astute reading of these lines that I build upon here, see Zimmerman, *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*, 162.

[82] Long after Napoleon's decline, Clare would present himself as Nelson and Wellington and claim "that he had fought and won the battle of Waterloo, that he had had his head shot off at this battle, whilst he was totally unable to explain the process by which it had again been affixed to his body." See Nesbitt to Martin, *Northampton Manuscript* 58, qtd. in Bate, *John Clare: A Biography*, 518.

landscape has experienced, "every bush & tree & . . . every hill." Yet the most important symbol of his continued resistance comes in the fluid brook onto which he projects himself. The poem's brook both remains audible and relentlessly "runs" on in a line that enjambment quickens and an em-dash extends: "& hung the moles for traitors—though the brook is running still / It runs a naker brook cold & chill."

As Clare's critics have recently begun to demonstrate, the particular way in which he exploits his seemingly irrelevant status as a displaced and untimely peasant poet who lacks a present audience makes him a proleptic writer whose lyrics are better addressed to the diasporic and environmental concerns of readers from the twentieth century to the present.[83] Clare's jaded, estranged speakers have much in common with postcolonial voices; both attempt to resituate aesthetics and identity outside of imperial Britain's strong, confident, and unitary interiority. In addition, Clare's "I"s express the values that today's green culture advocates: sustainability, conservation, and environmental ethics. Viewed holistically, his post-enclosure lyrics participate in a resistant genre of local lyric whose radical critique of the development and improvement of the British Isles manifests many of the devices that twenty-first century writers have returned to as they have wrestled with both the legacy of the British Empire and the rise of globalization.[84]

As a local peasant poet whose revisionary speakers haunt and menace the critical myths of compression and isolation that long defined the Romantic lyric "I," Clare reminds us of what we have lost to the neoliberal narratives of progress and development. Although Clare was by no

[83] Bewell connects Clare's poetic preoccupation with his loss of place to today's concerns about the displacing power of colonization. See "Ghosts of Natures Past," 549. On Clare's exiled voices and those of Lord Byron, see "Ghosts of Natures Past," 550. Bate's discussion of Clare's common delusion that "he was Lord Byron" further connects these two poets. See *John Clare: A Biography*, 5. While class disrupts Clare's perfect alignment with Byron, even Abrams admits in his definition of the "Greater Romantic Lyric" that "[o]nly Byron, among the major poets, did not write in this mode at all." See "Greater Romantic Lyric," 76.

[84] Although he writes from within Britain, Clare reinforces Vendler's claim that local poets must negotiate how "to make a literature" and resist the externally imposed stereotype of the "peasant bard." See Vendler, "Anxiety of Innocence," *The New Republic* 209 (1993): 28.

means the only Romantic poet who resisted containment, he uniquely coordinated his refusals of the British Empire's ontological, spatial, and temporal discourses of enclosure into a theory of the lyric "I" that still maintains revisionist potential today. In our present age of continued imperial and ecological depredation, we have much to learn from the descriptive lyric "I"s through which Clare reimagined lost histories as future alternatives to the dominant natures and cultures of the Romantic era. His visionary first person lyric speakers skillfully balance elegy and protest; at the same time that they admit that their search for a listener is futile in their present instant, they take on a surprisingly prophetic relevance when we think of them as addressing us today: "my friends forsake me like a memory lost:—/ I am the self-consumer of my woes" (*LP*, 396). Such uprooted and anachronistic "I"s deserve fresh consideration in the context of literary criticism's recent turn toward queer temporality and diasporic, postcolonial, cosmopolitan, and transnational voices. The twenty-first century condition resonates with that of Clare's mutable and self-transforming speakers who simultaneously break their bounds and retain their local connections. As the untimely speaker of "An Invite to Eternity" (1847) suggests, Clare and his counter-cultural speakers *move*; homeless and wretched in the present, they either speak of the past—or for the future:

> Say maiden wilt thou go with me
> In this strange death of life to be
> To live in death and be the same
> Without this life, or home, or name
> At once to be, & not to be
> That was, and is not—yet to see
>
> (*LP*, 349)

CODA

From Time to Timelessness

Following "After Time"'s analysis of anachronism to its necessary conclusion requires commentary on the different forms of timelessness that first appeared in Edward Young's *Complaint: Or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality* (1742-45; notably, according to the *OED* the first work to use the term "timeless" in relation to poetry).[1] After enclosing time's birth in a parenthesis—"the Dread Sire, on Emanation bent, /. . . / Call'd forth Creation, (for then *Time* was born)—Young's speaker invokes the term "timelessness" in his famous blank-verse description of the death of time:

> From old Eternity's mysterious Orb,
> Was *Time* cut off, and cast beneath the Skies;
> The Skies, which watch him in his new abode,
> Measuring his Motions by revolving Spheres;
> That Horologe Machinery Divine.
> Hours, Days, and Months, and Years, his Children, play,
> . . . . . .
> When Worlds, that count his Circles *now*, unhing'd
> (Fate the loud signal sounding) headlong rush
> To timeless Night, and Chaos, whence they rose.[2]

For Young's poetic voice, the turn toward timelessness involves a flight from the temporary and a return to the eternal, "old Eternity's mysterious Orb." This passage imagines not an

[1] See "timeless, adj.1b," *OED Online*, April 2015, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/202112.

[2] Edward Young, *The Complaint: Or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality* in *Edward Young:* Night Thoughts, ed. Stephen Cornford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1742-45] 1989), 56-57.

antagonistic chase *after* time but instead a renegotiation of the *aftertime*. In *Night-Thoughts*, time itself is ephemeral and the "Hours, Days, and Months, and Years" that define human existence transpire as interludes between eternities. According to Young's speaker, the origins of time involve detachment, "cut off," and descent, "beneath the skies," while the supposedly heady apocalypse suggests order, integration, and harmony though alliteration: "When worlds," "signal sounding," "Count his Circles," and "To timeless."

The timelessness that Young—whose theories of original genius in *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) put down the roots of Romanticism—first connected to poetic form reaches its apogee in John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820). A case study of Keats's ode reveals that most literary critics associate the poem (whether positively or negatively) with the word "timeless."[3] Whatever Keats intended, the timeless, frozen lovers inscribed on his urn can be interpreted as expressing an ethical, ekphrastic response to the progress of imperial time.[4] Approaching the timelessness of Keats's ode through the nineteenth-century history of time requires dispensing with the apolitical idea of lyric timelessness that the New Critics instituted in the twentieth-century.[5] The rise of close reading relied on an archive that focused generally on

[3] Some selected examples: "[T]he timeless being of the artwork in the Platonic realm" (Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], 133); "the ideal, timeless world of Greek art and literature" (Theresa M. Kelley, "Keats, Ekphrasis, and History," in *Keats and History*, ed. Nicholas Roe [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 212); "unequivocal celebration of the timeless world of art" (Jack Stillinger, *Romantic Complexity: Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006], 122); "a unified, naïve, pure, timeless art object" (Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt, and Their Circle* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 154).

[4] While my account stresses the political possibilities that Romantic timelessness unlocks, Michael W. Clune alternatively emphasizes the connections between the "timeless" and the "static" in the context of Keats's representations of "ideal sensation." Clune's study of Keats's "ambition to arrest lived time" in "Grecian Urn" recounts longstanding critical debates between "the urn's time-defeating capacity," the historicist dictum that poetry must "perform a total immersion in lived time," and an awareness of "the eternal torture of the marble youth's Tantalus-like condition." See *Writing Against Time* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 5, 44-45.

[5] Brooks's *Well Wrought Urn*, for example, attempts to redeem Keats's "Grecian Urn" from critical attacks that he sees as detaching "from its context" the line "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Here Brooks also argues that "the figures on Keats's urn . . . are timeless." See *The Well Wrought Urn*, 151-55, 186, 208. I am grateful to Rovee for reminding me that the New Critical preoccupation with the Romantics included attacks on Byron and Shelley.

poetry and more specifically on Romantic verse; short lyrics such as "Grecian Urn" that represented vessels or containers were the perfect metaphors for a theory of textual interpretation that represented literary artworks as self-contained aesthetic systems—as masterpieces whose insights were separate from their sociocultural contexts. Rather than rejecting the timelessness of "Grecian Urn" as connected to the aesthetic ease that attracted the New Critics, I argue instead that Keats's poem slips the binds of lyric containment.[6] Considered in the context of the British Empire's newly standardized clocks and calendars, Keats's "still unravish'd bride of quietness, / . . . foster-child of silence and slow time," neither represents the epitome of a comfortable, contented, and self-enclosed Romanticism, nor confirms the class-based critiques that, according to Christopher Rovee, focused on Keats's supposed ""shabby-genteel' literary posturing, and exaggerated sensuality."[7]

The untimely rhythms of Keats's poem move us backward in order to imagine the end of the world, humanity, and time. His timeless ode returns us to the protoromantic apocalyptic tropes of Young's *Night-Thoughts*: "worlds . . . unhing'd." Unsatisfied with momentarily interrupting the sublime progress of time from a local affair governed by nature's seasons to the

[6] On the once critically "improbable conjunction" of Keats and politics, see the 2011 special issue of *Studies in Romanticism* edited by Emily Rohrbach and Emily Sun, and entitled *Reading Keats, Thinking Politics*, which itself resurrects the conversation of the 1986 special issue of *SiR* edited by Wolfson, and entitled *Keats and Politics: A Forum*. See "Reading Keats, Thinking Politics: An Introduction," *Studies in Romanticism* 50, no. 2 (2011): 229-37, and Introduction to *Keats and Politics: A Forum*, *Studies in Romanticism* 25, no. 2 (1986): 171-74. Rohrbach and Sun's introduction tellingly invokes the term "timeless" as a word that typically accompanies critiques of Keats as an aesthetic rather than political poet: "According to long-held assumptions about the relationship between literature and politics, Keats appeared to be the pre-eminently apolitical or even anti-political Romantic poet, the dreamer who evaded topical issues and whose well-wrought productions aspired to a realm of *timeless beauty*" (emphasis mine). As Christopher Rovee points out, whether for aesthetic or political reasons "trashing Keats" has long been a critical pastime. See "Trashing Keats," *ELH* 75, no. 4 (2008): 993.

[7] Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820), in *Poems of John Keats*, ed. Stillinger, 372, and Rovee, "Trashing Keats," 993. All future references to Keats's ode refer to the Stillinger edition. On Romanticism and "slow time," see Robert Mitchell, "Suspended Animation, Slow Time, and the Poetics of Trance," *PMLA* 126, no. 1 (2011): 119. Mitchell suggests that Keats and Shelley's poetry "suggests that a politically engaged aesthetics must do more than awaken a population frozen in automaticity; it must also seek to produce suspensions in those who are already far too animated. Suspension, in this sense, empowers the differential capacities of sensation, which in turn makes possible new forms and objects of willing. . . . Keats's and Shelley's poetics seek to produce the future by attuning readers to the rhythms of slow time."

yet-to-come global imperial standard of Greenwich Mean Time, Keats embraces infinity in order to transcend time itself. "Grecian Urn" does not undertake this project in isolation but instead throws into relief the broader rhetoric of late Romantic timelessness. As Keats's poem makes clear, it is not a coincidence that the *OED* continually cites the Romantic poets in its definitions of the term "timeless." While the *OED* cites the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge twice—as marking both the first appearance of the word "timeless" as "that which exists outside of . . . time; the eternal" and as a grammatical term denoting that which has "no explicit tense"—the *OED* also cites Lord Byron's *Don Juan* as an example of the term "timeless" in the context of rhythm's absence: "Having no sense of musical time or rhythm . . . out of time."[8]

As these etymological connections between timelessness and Romantic poetry suggest, Keats's 1820 "Ode on a Grecian Urn" was accompanied by several late Romantic poems, most notably William Blake's *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804-20) and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), which similarly foregrounded timelessness. Act IV of Shelley's poem includes recurrent descriptions of Time's permanent passing:

> We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Be the faded flowers
>
> Of Death's bare bowers

[8] The *OED* cites Coleridge's letters (1817) as the first instance in which the term "timeless" was defined as "Not indicating a particular time; having no explicit tense. Compare: omnitemporal," and his *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality and Religion* (1825) as the first appearance of the meaning "That which is timeless or is unaffected by the passage of time; esp. that which exists outside of, or is unbounded by, time; the eternal." The *OED* also cites Byron's *Don Juan* in its definition of the word "timeless" as "Having no sense of musical time or rhythm; that is out of time." In contrast to these more modern definitions of the term "timeless," earlier Romantic-era dictionaries typically described the word in terms of mortality, aligning it with the premature and the unexpected. Thomas Sheridan's dictionary, for example, defines the word "timeless" as "Unseasonable, done at an improper time; untimely, immature, done before the proper time." See "Timeless," in *A General Dictionary of the English Language: One Main Object of Which, Is, to Establish a Plain and Permanent Standard of Pronunciation* (London: Printed for J. Dodsley, C. Dilly, and J. Wilkie, 1780), n.p.

Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours![9]

Blake's prophetic epic concludes with a representation of Time's completion: "Time was Finished!"[10] Although brief and lyric, Keats's "Urn" is continuous with the cosmic, epic untimeliness of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Jerusalem*. The timeless, "eternal love" that Demogorgon voices in Act II of Shelley's epic

For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? what to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change?—To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.[11]

parallels the "more happy, happy love!" of Keats's ode:

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
  Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
  For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
  For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
    For ever panting, and for ever young;[12]

In "Urn" a series of "For ever[s]" aligns unfading natures, songs, and lovers. Keats's speaker gestures toward that chronopolitics that Shelley's Demogorgon more explicitly represents: the

[9] P. B. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts* (1820), in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Reiman and Fraistat, 270.

[10] William Blake, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, in *William Blake's Writings*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1804-20] 1978), 1:627. All future references to this poem refer to the Oxford edition.

[11] P. B. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose,* eds. Reiman and Fraistat, 250.

[12] Keats, "Grecian Urn," 373.

utopian prospects, ethics, and affects that the end of time makes possible. In fact, the very title and poetic subject of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* resonates with the modern idea of timelessness as a seemingly limitless, borderless, and anarchistic state: "that which exists outside of, or is *unbounded* by, time"; "*not* subject to or *bound* by the passing of time" (*OED* senses 5c and 1a, emphasis mine).

As much as it does with Shelley's Prometheus, Keats's untimely Greek vessel resonates with Blake's Albion. Keats crafts a deliberatively excessive speaker, one who repeatedly refers to the quietude of the timeless urn:

> And, little town, thy streets for evermore
>
> Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
>
> Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
>
> As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral![13]

Keats here undertakes a more ironic but ultimately parallel poetic experiment to Blake's imagination of the destruction of time through caesura:

> And the Body of Albion was closed apart from all Nations.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Them howls the Wolf of famine deep heaves the Ocean black thundering
>
> Around the wormy Garments of Albion: then pausing in deathlike silence
>
> Time was Finished![14]

[13] Keats, "Grecian Urn," 373.

Keats and Blake's poems directly address the irony that the term timelessness implies through the multiplicity of its meaning: the complete absence of time, and the idea of eternity. On the one hand, both poems mediate on the defects of timelessness as a "silence" or lack ("timeless" as a term that includes "less"). On the other hand, they consider the unlimited possibilities of perpetuity. According to Keats and Blake, although the absence of time may result in "silence," it is only the figurative muteness of "Cold" art and poetic print—a language that is not so much dead but "deathlike" because it remains unspoken. The freezing pauses of Keats and Blake enact a poetics of suspension whose arrests run counter to the era's new emphasis on timely punctuality. Through the formal force of the caesura, these late Romantic poets represent an agelessness that remains—that refuses to be trashed by time: "When old age shall this generation waste, / Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe."[15]

To be sure, it is a contingency that all three of these Romantic texts, which variously foreground the complete defiance of normative, imperial time through timelessness, emerged in the same year (1820).[16] Yet reading *Prometheus Unbound*, *Jerusalem*, and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" as constituting a synchronic publication event (as dispensing with time through their content but arriving in the nick of time through their publication date) allows us insight into how the erasure of time constituted a late Romantic movement; all three of these writers broke with the clockwork poetics that began in the seventeenth century with the incorporation of the

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[14] Blake, *Jerusalem*, 1:627. In according with the idealistic project of reimagining being in time that concludes Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Blake's *Jerusalem* ends by "Creating Time according to the wonders Divine / Of Human Imagination" and embracing the enigmatic "Life of Immortality." See *Jerusalem*, 1:636, 638.

[15] Keats, "Grecian Urn," 373.

[16] A few years later in 1826, the conclusion to Mary Shelley's *Last Man* links the end of humanity to the end of measured, meaningful time: "I may find what I seek—a companion; or if this may not be—to *endless time*, decrepid and grey headed—youth already in the grave with those I love—the lone wanderer will still unfurl his sail, and clasp the tiller—and, still obeying the breezes of heaven, for ever round another and another promontory, anchoring in another and another bay, still ploughing seedless ocean" (emphasis mine). Elsewhere Shelley describes classical ruins as "the voice of dead time." See *The Last Man*, in *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley,* eds. Jane Blumberg and Nora Crook (London: William Pickering, [1826] 1996), 4:364, 357.

Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, and culminated, but did not conclude, in the "Time-Piece" from William Cowper's *Task* (1785).[17]

What we might call the "timely untimeliness" of these three late Romantic works, which variously resisted timelessness at the same time that they appeared concurrently, unexpectedly concludes a poetic history that ostensibly moves from time to anachronism to timelessness, from Enlightenment to Romanticism. As they suspend the mechanistic temporality of empire in the same moment, Keats, Blake, and Shelley collectively make it possible for us to redefine Romanticism itself as a simultaneously timeless and time-bound idea. As the paradigm of a past history that is still with us, Romanticism is itself simultaneously historical, anachronistic, and timeless.

[17] William Cowper, *The Task*, in *The Poems of William Cowper*, eds. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1785] 1995), 2:139. This horological poetics, which intensified from the Restoration to the eighteenth century, was initially partly inspired by the manufactures of Thomas Tompion, the "Father of English Watchmaking," a figure whose workshop engineered and distributed thousands of timepieces from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century. Julien Offray de La Mettrie and the Enlightenment materialists also spread this poetics through their preoccupation with mechanism, process, and the timepiece.

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