ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN ROMANTICISM

The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry

Romanticism, Subjectivity, Form

D. B. Ruderman

The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry

This book radically refigures the conceptual and formal significance of childhood in nineteenth-century English poetry. By theorizing infancy as a poetics as well as a space of continual beginning, Ruderman shows how it allowed poets access to inchoate, uncanny, and mutable forms of subjectivity and art. While recent historicist studies have documented the "freshness of experience" that childhood confers on nineteenth-century poetry and culture, this book draws on new formalist and psychoanalytic perspectives to rethink familiar concepts such as immortality, the sublime, and the death drive as well as forms and genres such as the pastoral, the ode, and the ballad. Ruderman establishes that infancy emerges as a unique structure of feeling simultaneously with new theories of lyric poetry at the end of the eighteenth century. He then explores the intertwining of poetic experimentation and infancy in Wordsworth, Anna Barbauld, Blake, Coleridge, Erasmus Darwin, Sara Coleridge, Shelley, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, and Augusta Webster. Each chapter addresses and analyzes a specific moment in a writer's work, moments of tenderness or mourning, birth or death, physical or mental illness, when infancy is analogized, eulogized, or theorized. Moving between canonical and archival materials, and combining textual and intertextual reading, metrical and prosodic analysis, and post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the book shows how poetic engagements with infancy anticipate psychoanalytic and phenomenological (i.e., modern) ways of being in the world. Ultimately, Ruderman suggests that it is not so much that we return to infancy as that infancy returns (obsessively, compulsively) in us. This book shows how, by tracking changing attitudes toward the idea of infancy, one might also map the emotional, political, and aesthetic terrain of nineteenth-century culture. It will be of interest to scholars in the areas of British romanticism and Victorianism, as well as nineteenth-century American literature and culture, histories of childhood, and representations of the child from art historical, cultural studies, and literary perspectives.

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For Ella and Bruno

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Introduction
"Infant Bud of Being"

> I had no idea the journal of my own disposition and feelings was so intimately connected with that of my little baby, whose regular breathing has been the music of my thoughts all the time I have been writing.
> —Elizabeth Gaskell[1]

0.1 Beginnings

This book has two beginnings. The first can be traced back to early 2000, when my daughter, my oldest child, was 6 months old.

I was an undergraduate, worked a day job, and my wife at the time worked late as a waiter. On most nights it fell exclusively to me to care for my daughter until about 2 or 3 in the morning. Often, having rocked her to sleep with a bottle, I would be unable to sleep myself. We lived in a street-level, rent-controlled apartment on a busy corner in San Francisco. The streetlights would pour in through the crosshatched windows, throwing diagonal shapes on the kitchen and hallway floors. My daughter would be in my lap or on my shoulder. It seems to me now that she weighed less at that time than a book, or a jacket or pillow. I was surprised to find myself at these moments jotting down notes for song lyrics, poems, essays, or letters that I imagined she would read when grown. Besides the constant sounds of traffic and the occasional late-night reveler, her breathing would be the only sound in our apartment. What was I doing? Who was I addressing, a portion of myself or her? We seemed to form a chiasmus. But what was being connected, her as a grown-up or me as an infant? What is time to an infant? What is history or writing? What is family or work or love? Had I entered her arena of infancy or had I imagined her inside my grown-up sphere of memory and loss?

Wide awake with this strange being sleeping on my shoulder, or sleep deprived the following mornings, I began to recognize resonances and patterns between the depictions of infancy in the poems and texts I was reading at college—Coleridge, Melanie Klein, Rousseau, and Blake—and my own unconscious acts of identification and reverie. Thus began an awkward and halting attempt to think through what I was feeling, to wrestle intellectually with ideas of human infancy. I think of these moments now as

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the early stages of conceiving this book, a book that discovers in infancy a way of conceptualizing inchoate and unfinished self-states much different from those offered by our modern and sentimental notions of childhood. As I will argue throughout this book, both images of the incipient human—reassuring and destabilizing—have their roots in the nineteenth century. Yet the sentimental view of childhood (the child of Blake's innocence) seems to have mostly overshadowed the more disturbing and philosophically fraught notion of infanthood (that of Blake's experience). It will be the work of this book to retrieve the latter, more complex vision and establish a powerful link between the recursive experience of infancy and the form of the romantic and postromantic lyric more generally.

Thus, while this volume owes a profound debt to the many fine books that have been written about romantic childhood, it takes a decidedly different tack.[2] It focuses on a small but significant collection of poems and related texts from the English nineteenth century, some canonical and some rare, which share a unique relation to infancy. By returning to these romantic texts, *The Idea of Infancy* returns as it were to a scene of origination. It tells one version of the story of how the idea of infancy was born (in some sense is still being born), not merely within the individual alone, but also within our shared cultural history.[3] We know, of course, that childhood and infancy in the romantic and Victorian periods designate a whole range of images and ideas: the Wordsworthian "infant babe," with its deeply "interfused" relation to mother and world; Blake's symbiotic voicing of mother and child in "Infant Joy"; the dead babies, wild children adrift, scenes of turbulence, and cycles of rebirth and death in the poetry of Shelley, Byron, and Keats. Within and beyond these familiar tropes, what I am terming "infancy" is related most powerfully to the idea of the self—not the developing and not the completed self, but rather an inchoate subject, always in the process of becoming and thus capable of challenging narrative trajectory and calling forth new poetic genres, forms, and effects.

If I use the word infancy rather broadly in this study, I do so for two reasons: first, because the window of infancy was open wider in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Rousseau, for example, argued that infancy continued until age five[4]—and, second, because infancy in the period begins to function as an important conceptual (not to mention medical, social, and legal) category. Therefore, I am not talking about real babies, at least not for the most part. The line of thought I follow here is indebted to Raymond Williams. Infancy is, in Williams's terms, a structure of feeling.[5] As such, I argue, it emerges in society as ideology and in literary culture as formal reinvention, or what Fredric Jameson terms "the ideology of form."[6] Just how infancy and childhood became so central to our understanding of what it is to be human, and why this development happened in Europe in the eighteenth century, has been theorized in different ways by Michel Foucault and Philippe Aries. For Foucault, a radical break happens at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The new

modern period broke from the classical episteme when the human sciences attempted to posit origin and meaning, to relate "the visible to the invisible," on empirical rather than religious bases. Infancy, as the origin of "man," therefore became a site of investigation.[7] In a more conventionally historical and structuralist mode, Aries argues that "childhood" replaces "youth" as the preferred term in the nineteenth century, a refiguration that paved the way for Rousseau and Wordsworth.[8] The story of how childhood and infancy then came to function ideologically in European and American literature has been told in various ways by Peter Coveney, Carolyn Steedman, Judith Plotz, and, most recently, by Ann Wierda Rowland.

Building on these important studies, this book seeks to shift the focus from the thematic and narrative representations of childhood and infancy in the texts of the period (for example, the poet as infant, the child in nature, etc.) to argue that in nineteenth-century Britain, attention to infancy catalyzed a revolution in literary form and genre. On the one hand, *The Idea of Infancy* situates romantic constructions of infancy within protopsychoanalytic and phenomenological accounts of feeling and thought; on the other, it relates infancy directly to poetic form. This approach, I suggest, is not imposed on the poetry adventitiously but rather suggested and supported by it. Establishing a link between aesthetic form and our lived subjectivities, the idea of infancy, as it emerges from the readings in this book, relates both to formal and generic changes within the poetry (ode form, ballad measure, pastoral) as well as to the thoughts and feelings that underpin and are reciprocally changed by changes in the aesthetic realm (for example, a belief in the changeability of our memories and even histories).[9] This reciprocal relation not only anticipates modern and postmodern ways of being in the world, but it also bores into and suggests fresh ways of understanding our present aesthetic, critical, and psychosocial situations.

To understand the stakes of such a recalibration, consider briefly one of the most well rehearsed scenes of the emergence of the romantic subject: letter 3 of Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* his account of how the individual comes to enter into the social realm. Man "comes to himself out of his sensuous slumber, recognizes himself as Man, Looks around and finds himself—in the State."[10] Rightfully discontented by the "blind necessity" of social and civil institutions, man:

> artificially retraces his childhood in his maturity, forms for himself *a state of Nature* in idea, which is not indeed given him by experience but is the necessary result of his rationality, borrows in this ideal state an ultimate aim which he never knew in his actual state of Nature …[11]

Bringing back from infancy a "clear insight and [a] free resolve," he is paradoxically able to occupy both positions: a citizen within the state and an independent moral being. This narrative of development and progression is told in a different way in Hegel, evinced in many canonical texts of

English romanticism, and reiterated in much of our literary critical theory (M. H. Abrams, Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman). It is so compelling and ubiquitous as to seem beyond question or reproach. Yet the work that I address in this study suggests another, more fraught and less continuous and synthetic narrative. There is an aspect of infancy, in other words, that resists and pushes back, does not allow for easy assimilation or processes of return. For example, as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* demonstrates (for what else is the creature but an infant), the infant in its mutability can also be monstrous, especially insofar as it emerges at the point of indifference between animal and human, living and dead, lingual and prelingual, and so on.[12] Here we see a darker side to Schiller's "return." To ground an ethics or poetics on our shared identification in infancy, as J. S. Mill, Wordsworth, and others in the nineteenth century intimate, leads us surprisingly back to a potentially anarchic and paradoxical position. What unites us, in other words, is not only our desire to transcend "the shades of the prison-house" and our capacity for continuous rebirth, but also our primordial animal, irrational, and instinctive natures—our universal monstrousness.[13]

Attention to this more recalcitrant aspect of infancy, which refuses reabsorbtion into narratives of development and *bildung*, gives us not only a fuller and deeper picture of what constitutes the romantic, but also a fuller and more complex picture of the prehistory of psychoanalysis, arguably the most powerfully tenacious iteration of late romanticism.[14] Romantic poems that refuse to neatly resolve gesture toward the figure drawn by Freud of interminable analysis, governed and explained by the positivity of the death instinct rather than by traditional theories of romantic progression.[15] In the light of this model of infancy as continual and compulsive repetition, organicism and *bildung*—progressivist models of depth—are consequently subject to reconfiguration. From this perspective, Hegel's spiral of becoming, so important to mainstream narratives of Romanticism, is flattened out, becoming a recursive, iterative structure.[16] This flattened out dimension, whether represented or imagined as an aesthetic experience or as the "semiotic" space of the child, corresponds not only with what Anne-Lise François has termed Wordsworth's natural piety, a "kind of trust and openness to contingency," but also with darker, more uncanny romanticisms.[17]

If it is true that romantic infancy functions as a structure of feeling, that is, as an index of certain emerging, often conflicting ideas about the self in the English nineteenth century, it is equally true that these ideas assume their most cogent and lasting expression through renovations and revitalizations of form. Ideas and incidents, writes Wordsworth in the "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*," are "colored" by imagination as though a blanket of passionate feeling is "thrown over" them—in short, in poetry, ideas are given aesthetic form.[18] These translated passions—uncanny, exalted, expansive, or elegiac—are then inculcated in the bodies and minds of the readers by virtue of patterns of formal, thematic, and generic repetition, variance, experimentation, and innovation. These processes and tensions are on full display in

Wordsworth's lyrical ballad, "The Thorn," the first stanza of which juxtaposes nature, human infancy, and traumatic repetition:

> There is a Thorn—it looks so old,
> In truth, you'd find it hard to say
> How it could ever have been young,
> It looks so old and grey.
> Not higher than a two years' child
> It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
> No leaves it has, no prickly points;
> It is a mass of knotted joints,
> A wretched thing forlorn.
> It stands erect, and like a stone
> With lichens is it overgrown.[19]

In a note appended to the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth explains the seeming tautology at work in the poem, that is, its formal and thematic repetitions. Anticipating Gertrude Stein, he argues that the same word repeated in a poem does not constitute repetition.[20] Rather, "impassioned" repetition of diction, rhyme structure, and narrative elements creates a "craving in the [reader's] mind."[21] The poem's task, Wordsworth intimates, is to tantalize the reader, and by so doing, to "convey passion" of a sort that would not ordinarily (that is, in another form) be allowed into consciousness. The mode of passionate conveyance is often associative. Notice, for example, the excessive proliferation of vegetal images in this first description, among which the "two years' child" forms a natural relation. Thus the poem makes room for an "unnatural" image, that is, a rumored infanticide, which sits side by side with images of thorny nature and even thornier village gossip. The prosodic profuseness redoubles this richness. The unique alternation of repeated rhyme sounds (A/B/C/B/D/E/F/F/E/G/G) of the nonce form and the unevenly spaced trimeter lines confound any sense of completion and balance. Wordsworth claims that he purposely chose a metrical arrangement that would appear "rapid," thereby masking the reiterated "adhesive" and compulsive slowness of the poem's obsessive thought.[22] Indeed, ballad measure is itself "overgrown" here: a motley tapestry of different stanza forms crudely yet brilliantly stitched together.[23]

Wordsworth's repeated associations, words, and varied tempos are insufficient, however, to soften the blow of stanza 21, when the reader encounters a dead baby's face staring out from her own reflection in the pond. Beneath the layers of passionate mediation, we find the inscrutable face of infancy. Apropos of this unspeaking and unspeakable figure, "The Thorn's" conclusion tells us nothing; neither innocence nor guilt can be decided with any certainty. Although the infant's form is reflected in the pond (a muddy pond no less), analogized to the thorn, and mourned by the community, infanticide (or any crime for that matter) remains mere hearsay. This is not

to say that nothing happens in the poem. Clearly violence has been done to innocence, but to the degree that there is progression in the poem, it happens in the reader, not by virtue of a sentimental image, but rather through an unspoken formal and generic invitation to the imagination to synthesize the images, and the consequent struggle to bring "unnatural" violence in harmony with "natural" innocence.[24] As if to mark the accusation and struggle, the poem's prosody falls heavily on the infant in stanza one, marking out its uniqueness; in a stanza of regular iambic meter, the phrase "two years' child" resolutely calls for a triple stress: "Not **high**er than a **two years' child** / It **stands** e**rect**, this **age**d **Thorn**": ta Da / ta ta / ta Da / Da Da. In conventional metrical terms, a pyrrhic in the second foot compensates for a spondee in the terminal foot. Yet in the context, the experience of reading the triple stress (molossus) overburdens the line. Wordsworth's note insists upon this inassimilable and excessive lexical and metrical aspect in the poem. He assures us that the repeated word, in this case the compulsively recurring figure of the child, does not interest us as a "symbol … of the passion, but as [a] *thing* … active and efficient, which [is of itself] part of the passion." The thing-ness of the infant then is instantiated (we might even say buried) at the level of a stuttering syncopation as well as at the level of a disturbing juxtaposition of images.

In a recent and comprehensive account of the relation between childhood and literature in the period, Ann Wierda Rowland argues that these "images of infancy and childhood" emerge not only as indices or symbols but also as "pervasive historical rhetoric in British Enlightenment and romantic writing."[25] According to Wierda Rowland, the rhetorical uses to which the image of the child was put in nineteenth-century Britain secured new conceptions of individual and collective history: using infancy as its primary analogy, late enlightenment historicism replaced cyclical, religious time with a model of reiterative development and progression.[26] Wierda Rowland convincingly captures the ways in which this new mode of temporality—repetition as mere iteration rather than as "return"—creates the frame and rationale for literary and national historical narrative.

This book builds on these insights. It argues that a new temporality exposed by infancy challenges and displaces, from within as it were, these and other historical narratives—and that this temporality is most acutely registered in romantic poems concerning infancy that often seem in excess of their narrative structures. To say even more clearly what I believe distinguishes this book from two recent, very fine monographs on romantic childhood (by Judith Plotz and Wierda Rowland), is that whereas those works focused primarily (from historicist perspectives) on romantic projections onto the child, this book focuses (from a psychoanalytic and new-formalist perspective) on romanticism as bringing into view an introjection or internalization of infancy itself. Thinking along these lines, *The Idea of Infancy* suggests that it is not so much that we return to infancy as that infancy returns (obsessively, compulsively) in us.

0.2 Natal Structures of Feeling and Form

Infancy and romanticism have each been long linked with theories of repetition.[27] In the nineteenth century, some of the primary theorists of repetition were Wordsworth, Hegel, Darwin, and Kierkegaard. Whether this repetition is figured as historical, social, psychological, literary-formal, or biological, it tends to be seen as paradoxically essential *and* disruptive to linear narratives of development and change. Infancy is an essential figure for narratives of becoming insofar as it forms a universal ground for every person. It is disruptive to linear theories of progress and development precisely to the degree that it remains an *accessible* space open to memory, mutability, revision, and modification.

Thus, beginning with the romantics, but continuing on with Freud, postclassical psychoanalytic thinkers, early childhood theorists, and process philosophers and phenomenologists, infancy has become something not merely epistemic (i.e., a way to ground our human subjectivity in a knowable, verifiable, and universal set of events), but also ontological (i.e., a process that is never entirely finished and in some sense remains with us forever). More recently, continental philosophers, including Giorgio Agamben, Jean-François Lyotard, and Jean-Luc Nancy, have begun to widen their investigations into theorizations of human infancy.[28] Lyotard, for example, claims that infancy is the only space from which to properly do philosophy: "it is the [necessary] possibility or risk of being adrift," of beginning "in the middle," and of "losing your proper form."[29] He calls for "a return to the childhood of thought," for "patience, anamnesis, and recommencement."[30] For Lyotard, the infant is the primary figure of the human, one that calls on all of us to acknowledge the seemingly unbridgeable divide between itself and our "humanist" society (a paradoxically inhuman system):

> Shorn of speech, incapable of standing upright, hesitating over the objects of its interest, not able to calculate its advantages, not sensitive to common reason, the child is eminently the human because its distress heralds and promises things possible. Its initial delay in humanity, which makes it the hostage of the adult community, is also what manifests to this community the lack of humanity it is suffering from, and which calls on it to become more human.[31]

What is unfinished in the infant remains unfinished in us. Our humanity, says Lyotard, sounding uncannily like Blake, is irrevocably grounded not only in what is "inhuman" in us, but also what is "unharmonizable."[32] Lyotard's formulation—about the processual and conflictual nature of what makes us human—represents only one in a series of correlations between contemporary theorists of infancy and nineteenth-century writers. Again and again, the poets I examine here return to infancy, to inchoate formulations and forms—beginning in the middle, so to speak, in shards and in fragments, in states of near total unknowing. They do so because, as

Lyotard suggests, infancy's distress—its hesitations, unreason, and inability to calculate—"promises things possible."

Conceiving of infancy in terms of the paradoxical possibilities of its incompletion (instead of in terms of its not-yet-adult-ness) opens up new ways to understand our entrance into thought, and with it into sociality more generally. According to Lyotard, alongside the ideological education of the infant (Wordsworth's "shades of the prison house" or Lacan's "entrance into the symbolic order") there is another connected development. We might think of this as a kind of sense-knowledge, "a passage from infancy to thought … [that] is not established by the concept or the symbol" but rather by the figure.[33] For Lyotard the "figure" is that which opens up a gap or breech, transcends language and yet can only be entered through language.[34] As Gabriel Schwab writes, Lyotard propagates "a poetics and a politics of indeterminacy that draws on the unformulated, the undifferentiation, nonconceptuality and indetermination of the earliest modes of a child's exchange with the world."[35] These infantile modes should not be read as hazy, confused, or vague. Rather they are emergent, in the process of taking shape, returning always to the body.[36]

In a well known notebook passage from 1801, Coleridge narrates just such a scene of childhood education and exchange, in which he short-circuits (or perhaps redirects) his son Hartley's attempt to understand the problem of impermanence and permanence.

> Hartley looking out of my study window fixed his eyes steadily & for some time on the opposite prospect, & then said—Will yon Mountains always be?—I shewed him the whole magnificent Prospect in a Looking Glass and held it up, so that the whole was like a Canopy or ceiling over his head, & he struggled to express himself concerning the Difference between the Thing & the Image almost with convulsive Effort—I never before saw such an Abstract of *Thinking* as a pure act & energy, of *Thinking* as distinguished from *Thoughts*.[37]

Rather than fixing for his son a concept of mutability or mountain, he clears for him a passage into thinking. In Jerome Christensen's important study, *Blessed Machine of Language*, he writes of this notebook entry that Coleridge "compels the child to introject the difference he has naively supposed."[38] I would simply add that alongside the educative reading of this incident, in which Christensen argues that a new temporality emerges for the child, it is possible to argue that the adult observer is himself involved in an introjection, in a return to the infancy of thought. Through a triangulation of father–child–mountain, the child's necessary, impossible, and convulsive struggle to express "the Difference between the Thing & the Image" becomes at once an initiation into thinking for the child and a secondary initiation for the father. We have here the semiologial framework of a myth, in which the primary sign (mountain / Hartley's mentalization) gets

taken as a second-order sign by Coleridge (Hartley thinking / THINKING). This recursive and identificatory temporality is available to both father and child because Coleridge does not answer Hartley through speech alone, but rather through an act of figuration. As Lyotard makes clear, "figure is both without and within" individual consciousness; it can only be conceptualized through language, is embedded *in* language. Yet because the figural is the necessary condition of language, when attention is paid to the "exteriorization of the sensory," that is, to the figural in the external world, it offers us new possibilities for thought foreclosed upon by language alone.[39] As Coleridge discovers and demonstrates, infancy is the theater of the figural. The struggle to comprehend image and thing, both aspects of the figural, Hartley's struggle, our struggle, will later take the name of the fort/da game, a spatializing and temporalizing dialectic, which rather than being solely driven by a need to symbolize (emphasis on the words "fort/da") might also be understood figuratively (emphasis on the throwing of the spool).[40]

Infancy shows us, in other words, that the importance of an event is not fixed ("*thoughts"* in Coleridge's anecdote) but rather fluid ("*Thinking* as pure act & energy"). It will take one hundred years before Freud will begin to theorize the phenomenon of *Nachträglichkeit* or retranscription, and then another eighty for Lyotard (and others) to link phenomenology to psychoanalytic temporality:

> And what makes an encounter with a word, odor, place, book, or face into an event is not its newness when compared to other "events." It is its very value as initiation. You only learn this later. It cut open a wound in the sensibility. You know this because it has since reopened and will reopen again, marking out the rhythm of a secret and perhaps unnoticed temporality.[41]

Again we see that, from the perspective of our infancy, experience is never finished, never set in stone: "You only learn [it] later." What is captured in our memory is our infancy itself and what is inscribed—written, dreamed, expressed—is the impossibility of ever capturing it fully. This rhythmic temporality (again, akin to Freud's *Nachtraglichkeit*), finds unique expression in the poetry and poetics of the British nineteenth century, in fact, might even be said to be one of its driving forces. The importance of recognizing and accounting for this initiatory and reflexive temporal structuring (de- and restructuring) is that it may allow us to rethink our received notions of late enlightenment *bildung* and development. As Lyotard writes in the second half of the twentieth century, "'Development' is [still] the ideology of the present time."[42]

It is this possibility, not of return per se but of the possibility of continual renewal and revision, that Hannah Arendt terms "natality." According to Arendt, three fundamental activities structure our human condition: labor,

work, and action. The first two are biological and social, respectively. The third activity (action) is uniquely political and unites all three dimensions:

> [T]he new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities.[43]

"Natality," not morality, supplies the grounds for political action, that is, for life itself. On this reading, what Coleridge termed an "Abstract of *Thinking*" turns out then to be a natal figure. As I argue in Chapter 2, Coleridge treats the infant body much as he treats his own body, as a figure for observation, action, and recommencement. This aspect of romantic poetics—the linking of the infant body with the poet's body and ultimately with the body of the poem—has a long afterlife. In fact, I would argue that it is still largely with us. Oren Izenberg, in his study of postromantic and postmodern poetry, comments on the importance of natality to Percy Shelley in the "Defence of Poetry": "'Poetry in the general sense' is [for Shelley] both a power of the mind, a faculty, and a natal privilege that is coextensive with our nature as persons."[44] Thus the body of the infant for Shelley is the primary receptor of lyric inspiration, not muse but rather a kind of psychoacoustic instrument, a mnemic echo chamber—an invocation that I examine in more detail in Chapter 4.[45]

0.3 Interspersed Vacancies

In a certain sense, new formulations of infancy are inseparable from our imaginings of the inauguration of romanticism. At the turning point of S. T. Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," for example, the poem turns suddenly toward the sleeping child:

> Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
> Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
> Fill up the interspersed vacancies
> And momentary pauses of the thought!
>
> (44–47)

Perhaps at no other point in literature, before or since, is infancy so directly linked to the possibility of (personal and aesthetic) development and change. Yet if this famous passage, at once claustrophobic and tender, marks the final movement in the sequence of M. H. Abrams's "greater romantic lyric"—that is, a clearly recognizable and forward moving romantic narrative—then it does so unremarkably—subtly, we might say—through passive syntheses rather than active ones.[46] For although the poem maps on to Abrams's lyric structure exactly as it moves dialectically from "out" (external nature) to "in" (interior meditation) to "out" again (a changed nature that reflects a changed state of

consciousness) or, from strophe to antistrophe to epode, it functions, as Nancy Yousef has written, through the movement of a "generative silence," a quietness of argument as well as scene.[47] It is precisely at one of these moments—the turn or return from the melancholic atmosphere of the remembered Christ's Church School to the thick present-tenseness of the cottage—that the poem turns abruptly to the babe. Clearly the child is the catalyst for the poem's working through. But it is not the child as such, not the poet's actual son Hartley, not even Coleridge's projections and identifications, but rather the figure of infancy itself—its form in the broadest sense of that word—that gets evoked and apostrophized in this famous passage. Thus the promises made to the infant—"But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze … so shalt thou see and hear / The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible / Of that eternal language"—are somehow universal blessings, bestowed on all readers that they may hear or see for themselves. In other words, through the figure of the infant, the blessing that Abrams claims is essential for this new pastoral genre assumes a uniquely social and natal form and character, at once universal and particular.[48]

The body of the infant, tactile ("cradled by my side") and sonorous ("heard in this deep calm"), opens the poem to possibility. Yet despite its incorporation in the "interspersed vacancies" of the poet's thought, the infant body remains somehow intact, impermeable, separate and autonomous.[49] Anya Taylor, Lucy Newlyn, and David Ferry have each in their own way argued that for Coleridge the infant equals the imagination.[50] This seems to me exactly right, yet also somehow not enough. It is right insofar as the babe, like the Coleridgean imagination, possesses a unique mobility, "movement of mind" doubled by a figure unconstrained by time and space.[51] Yet the babe not only assuages the poem's anxious mood, it also authors it, first by marking out a space of difference ("save that at my side / My cradled infant slumbers peacefully" [6, 7]), then by filling up the very "interspersed vacancies." The babe, what we might call its "over-presence," as I have suggested, is problem and solution in one.[52] It seems to me that this excessive and inassimilable aspect of infancy is a far less familiar form of the romantic, and one for which this book attempts to account.

Jean-Luc Nancy traces this uncanny vacancy back into the mother's womb, suggesting that infancy has a syncopated rhythm because we have our first being as "syncope," a form of being that connects and separates at the same time, a period of unconsciousness that will never be exposed.[53] In other words, in gestation we have no distinct identity—we are "affected souls" thanks to the tenderness of the mother."[54] For Nancy, since our birth is impossible for us to experience firsthand (that is, to remember), it is never finished. Thus we experience it continually in a dialectic that is akin to waking and sleeping, a dialectic of being continually born *and* always/already having been born. Anne O'Byrne glosses Nancy's natality this way:

> Natality is my having been thrown into the world and given a spatial existence in the form of a body. Yet I am never quite at one with this

> body, with the result that my spatial (embodied, worldly, temporal) existence is not so much indeterminate as determined in part as the experience of loss.[55]

This estrangement is neither inaugurated nor undone by our birth since, according to Nancy, "the subject never ceases being born."[56] For Nancy, there is a radical exteriority to our relation to others and the world. Even in the mother's womb, we are interrelated yet not interpenetrating. Even our most intimate encounters of touching (affectively, physically, psychically, aesthetically) happen in the mode of "natal spacing," a being that is also a "being with."[57] Infancy on this reading is intensely material: "we are bodies that come to be and pass away according to the specific rhythm of 'being born, dying, open, closed, enjoyment [*jouissant*], suffering, touching one another, withdrawing.'"[58]

"Frost at Midnight," which is nearly always read as exemplary of the progressivist mode of the romantic, also presents us with an infant body that is at once intractable and timeless, or, in the language of Wordsworth's Ode, immortal.[59] As I suggest in my reading of related material by Coleridge in Chapter 2, there is an aspect of infancy in these poems that threatens and frustrates rather than softens and fulfills. This resistant little figure, barely commented on in the literature, disrupts the developmental model of subjective manufacture deemed crucial to so many of our received notions of romanticism. On the one hand the poem indexes a *universal* site of imaginative poetic labor, a relational space, a site paradoxically of interrelatedness, rhythmicity, sleep, and, ultimately, patience.[60] On the other, it presents us with a mediated, incomplete, and formal image of intimacy, one that Yousef claims is a figure for "mere" proximity and "being with" as opposed to fullness, empathy, or conscious presence.[61] In modernity, after this poem, when we call out to the infant, that is, when we apostrophize, invoke, and use it as analogy, we are awaiting a response that never quite comes, at least not in the manner we might reasonably expect or in a time frame of our choosing. Clearly, this is a radically new figure for poetic reproduction.[62]

Perhaps then we could consider the sleeping child poem a new romantic genre. Anna Barbauld's "To a Little Invisible Being Who Is Expected Soon to Be Visible" (ca. 1795) epitomizes the genre insofar as the entire poem is an apostrophe, an address to an "infant bud of being," that is, to an unborn child. Apostrophe, like the body of the infant itself, is a perennially problematic figure. The critical consensus of the late twentieth century was that apostrophe and rhetoric more generally produce a sort of embarrassment for the casual reader as well as for the theorist. Paradoxically, according to those same critics, apostrophe holds the key for understanding lyric address as such.[63] Apostrophizing an infant foregrounds and intensifies the recursivity of apostrophe, not necessarily from an "embarrassed" position a la Jonathan Culler and Paul de Man, but

rather from a structural one, in which "I" (adult presence in the poem) and "thou" (infant) are experienced as at once the same yet different.[64] As several of the poems analyzed in this book demonstrate, the very definition of apostrophe, that is, a sudden address to a "missing, inanimate, or dead" object, begins to break down when applied to the infant.[65] Although some of the poems addressed in this study apostrophize children who are dead, the prelingual or paraverbal infant, who is neither missing nor inanimate, can be apostrophized only by virtue of its inability to comprehend the address.[66] The infant therefore occupies a position of indeterminacy, neither missing nor present, animate nor inanimate, fully alive nor ever quite dead—a position that, we will see, it occupies in several other domains as well.

The obsessive use of apostrophe in Barbauld's strikingly original ballad not only foregrounds the intimacy of its address, but also calls into question even more powerfully than "Frost at Midnight" the possibility of its message ever reaching its addressee. The poem invites readers into a feminine, domestic, maternal, and finally interuterine communicative and lyric space. Here is its first quatrain:

> Germ of new life, whose powers expanding slow
> For many a moon their full perfection wait,—
> Haste, precious pledge of happy love, to go
> Auspicious borne through life's mysterious gate.

The poem, like Blake's "Infant Sorrow," which I address later herein, begins by establishing a relation not only between "I" and "thou" but also between inside and out, and thus retraces the separation between subject and object, self and world, two related domains separated by a "mysterious gate." Thus it opens by mapping out a subjective terrain, a circuit, a detour, and a spatial–temporal rhythm.

The affinities between Coleridge's poem and Barbauld's are striking. Like "Frost at Midnight," "To a Little Invisible Being" creates an attenuated and cramped environment. Relocating the hushed cottage of "Frost at Midnight" within the mother's body suggests the sense in which both might be considered holding environments, spaces that, according to D. W. Winnicott, facilitate "the individual's discovery of a self."[67] In the same way in which "Frost at Midnight" waits for a stranger who never comes (note that the baby never wakes in the poem), the gestational waiting of "To a Little Invisible Being" promises a new beginning, but remains forever imminent. Like Lyotard's recommencement and patience in infancy and Nancy's natal spacing, the poem introduces gaps and breaks (interspersed vacancies) in narrative temporality or rhythmic cadence.

We might read these interruptions as "contractions"—an appropriate word for a poem about childbirth—but it is also Gilles Deleuze's word (borrowed perhaps from Henri Bergson) for the work of passive synthesizing.[68]

These breaks are accompanied by a sudden opening up of the imagination, the visual and auditory field, and a hyperawareness of physical, psychic, and social space. Here is the poem in full:

> Germ of new life, whose powers expanding slow
> For many a moon their full perfection wait,—
> Haste, precious pledge of happy love, to go
> Auspicious borne through life's mysterious gate.
>
> What powers lie folded in thy curious frame,—
> Senses from objects locked, and mind from thought!
> How little canst thou guess thy lofty claim
> To grasp at all the worlds the Almighty wrought!
>
> And see, the genial season's warmth to share,
> Fresh younglings shoot, and opening roses glow!
> Swarms of new life exulting fill the air,—
> Haste, infant bud of being, haste to blow!
>
> For thee the nurse prepares her lulling songs,
> The eager matrons count the lingering day;
> But far the most thy anxious parent longs
> On thy soft cheek a mother's kiss to lay.
>
> She only asks to lay her burden down,
> That her glad arms that burden may resume;
> And nature's sharpest pangs her wishes crown,
> That free thee living from thy living tomb.
>
> She longs to fold to her maternal breast
> Part of herself, yet to herself unknown;
> To see and to salute the stranger guest,
> Fed with her life through many a tedious moon.
>
> Come, reap thy rich inheritance of love!
> Bask in the fondness of a Mother's eye!
> Nor wit nor eloquence her heart shall move
> Like the first accents of thy feeble cry.
>
> Haste, little captive, burst thy prison doors!
> Launch on the living world, and spring to light!
> Nature for thee displays her various stores,
> Opens her thousand inlets of delight.
>
> If charmed verse or muttered prayers had power,
> With favouring spells to speed thee on thy way,
> Anxious I'd bid my beads each passing hour,
> Till thy wished smile thy mother's pangs o'erpay.

We see that the poem reveals a tension—not merely between self and other, outside and in—but also between high and low registers, between what would become Wordsworth's language of the common man and what Susan Rosenbaum calls Barbauld's "use of Augustan diction."[69] An eighteenth-century syntax is pitted against a proto-Wordsworthian demotic speech, as though classical poetic form, like the body of the mother imagined in the poem, is being stretched to include burgeoning new life in the form of a newer, more colloquial lyric diction, expressive of a wider range of lived human experience. The neoclassical invocation, ("Germ of new life"), for example, gives way to a democratic call for empirical observation, for the apostrophized stranger to "see." Likewise, the periodic, hypotactic style of the first quatrain gives way to the intimate, paratactic, and "modern" specificity of stanza three. Notice how the address foregrounds the imperative mood ("Haste … see … come …") and does so in a way that verges on Blakean prophecy. Yet for all of its formal conventions, the rhetorical range of the poem is intimate and inherently reflexive (it is either intra- or intercorporeal depending on whether or not you grant maternity to the speaker). The poem welcomes the uncertain child and offers itself as body, store, and tributary. At the same time it invites us to identify with the infant; even more, it addresses us *as* infant. Through the apostrophic address (apostrophe blending with, tending toward prosopopoeia), we identify with uncertainty itself.[70] This open invitation and interpellation uncannily does more than open an anamnestic space of continual expectation and surprise; it includes us within it.

Like "wise passivity" in Wordsworth's poetics, which is not at all equivalent to inactivity, Barbauld's gestating "being" is more than a mere argument for "preformation" and organic growth.[71] This is because, while on the one hand the being resides (without struggle) in uncertainty, on the other, lyric gestation itself becomes a radical figure for uncertainty and unknowability as such, an ambiguity that is both formal and thematic. Given the ambiguous syntax—

> Haste, little captive, burst thy prison doors!
> Launch on the living world, and spring to light!

—it is difficult to say with certainty whether the promised utopian light comes to the infant once it is born into the world or whether the child, like Wordsworth's "immortal" babe, brings light into this dark world from a distant anamnestic heaven. To be open to this ambiguity requires something like Keats's negative capability. Yet to respond to its rhythms, one need only feel the force of the trochaic substitutions that drive the stanza and the hypermetricality of the line: "**Haste, lit**tle **cap**tive, **burst** thy **pri**son **doors! / Launch** on the **li**ving **world,** and **spring** to **light!**"[72] Barbauld's poem challenges us first to accept that we cannot know ("Part of herself, yet to herself unknown") and second to learn to tolerate knowing that we

do not know. The point for Barbauld, as I will argue for Blake, is not to reject the world of knowledge; Blake's theory of innocence and experience works equally to abolish "foundationalist" and "intuitionist" conceptions of infancy.[73] Rather, natality presents the possibility of gestation, a site of continual recommencement, in which determinations of knowledge are not traceable to a single origin—the infant illumines the world of the mother and is illumined by the mother's light simultaneously, with neither figure predominating or preceding.

As the poets and poems encountered in this study demonstrate, something unique happens when subjects or partial subjects are reciprocally and responsively related in a contingent social space. The poem then becomes a field, again, a holding environment, in which we are induced to learn to encounter learning rather than mere knowing. Barbauld further suggests a linkage, one that will be explored throughout this book (especially Chapter 5), between the dynamic process of gestation and the process of poetic composition. Mutlu Konuk Blasing describes how poetic form returns us to the "crux" of the infant's pleasure and pain. She explains that poetry is emotional because it recalls, perhaps repeats, a scene of aesthetic education in which our encounter with language involves both the disciplining of the "organic body" and our "seduction into language."[74] This aspect of our experience (at once psychoanalytic and aesthetic), like the gestating infant in Barbauld's poem—senses "locked" from objects, mind freed from thinking—remains partial, unfinished, and in flux.

0.4 Some (Other) Versions of Pastoral

I wrote earlier that this work has two beginnings. The first, uncanny, intimate, and sketched in the opening of this book, was my own "Frost at Midnight" experience as a new parent. The second took place a few years later and was more institutional and conventionally literary in nature. While reading for exams in graduate school I came across a casual remark in William Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* in which he suggests that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the child or infant comes to take the place of the swain as the figure for the poet in the pastoral tradition.[75] It is clear that Empson, from a different perspective, shares with Lyotard and Nancy the understanding that there is something excessive in infancy and childhood, something that escapes mere representation. There is more, he writes, "in the child than any man has been able to keep."[76] This "something more" for Empson is not merely, or perhaps not at all, an immediate connection to nature; rather it is a complex of ideas, central to the way that the pastoral works. The pastoral, he writes, is a way of "putting the complex into the simple."[77] According to Empson, the "child," the "working class," and the "idiot" were all iterations of the complex-simple, through which the pastoral could perform its "tricks of thought."[78]

Although Blake is curiously missing from most of Empson's work, I suggest that the dialectics of innocence and experience are useful ways of approaching what Empson claims is too much or not enough in infancy: Blake's version of pastoral, in other words, has deep anticipatory sympathies with the versions of natality that I have sketched out previously. For Blake (I believe this is still the standard reading and not one with which I would disagree), innocence and experience are two necessary and interrelated aspects of the human soul, two ways of looking at the soul, ways that, on one hand, seem incommensurable and, on the other, seem to require one another.[79] To this, I would further suggest that what connects Lyotard and Nancy's conception of infancy to Blake's is their shared commitment to empirical accounts of experience. None of these figures is of course in a strict sense an empiricist—perhaps better to call them phenomenologists, in Blake's case, perhaps, a protophenomenologist. And yet it makes perfect sense to refer to infancy as a space of empirical investigation.

For while it is certainly true that in terms of literary representation the child takes over from the shepherd as the figure for the poet, across other discursive domains (poetics, philosophy, accounts of early childhood) the romantic child and the poet come to acquire many of the traits of the empiricist philosopher.[80] In this sense, while the child in nature is undoubtedly a central figure for romanticism, pastoral feeling more generally seems to move out of "nature" and into the nursery and library at roughly the same moment. Thus the romantic infant functions, like the empiricist philosopher, as the ultimate skeptic about the "naturalness" of what is given in our experience of the world. For empiricism, an idea—a certain idea, that the sky is blue, for example, or that the best form of government is democracy—is not a fixed fact about the world, nor is it an innate aspect of our experience. Empiricism takes as its central premise the notion that our ideas come from a place that is at once outside and inside our consciousness. As such, in romantic accounts of infancy (poetic, phenomenological, empirical, psychoanalytic) there is an ongoing and constant negotiation—happening primarily unconsciously—between insides and outsides. While reality testing helps to make sense of the world, for every empirical encounter there are parts of the experience that do not add up or correspond.[81] This failure of correspondence, having as it does its roots in infancy, imbues it with a sense of the uncanny that cannot be accounted for in sentimental depictions of the infant babe. As Lyotard writes, empirical representations of infancy "do not describe events from childhood; rather they capture the childhood of the event and inscribe what is uncapturable about it."[82] It is this essential yet uncapturable dialectic—forming, deforming, and re-forming ideas in a constant collaboration between internal and external objects, phenomena, and signs—that links the empiricist philosopher, the infant, and the romantic poet.

David Wagenknecht, in an attempt to connect Blake more specifically to Spenser and Milton (and to the Plato of the *Phaedrus)* identifies what he terms "pastoral ignorance," that is, "aspiration, or ambition, wearing the

pastoral disguise, or pretense, of pastoralism."[83] Building on Wagenknecht and Empson, one can trace a genealogy for Blake's pastoralism that is more than rhetorical or even allegorical. In Blake's imaginings of the infant, pastoral ignorance becomes a tool not only for the production of knowledge but also for the revelation of the limits of knowledge. We see these limits demonstrated, for example, in "Infant Sorrow" from the *Songs of Experience*:

> My mother groaned! my father wept.
> Into the dangerous world I leapt:
> Helpless, naked, piping loud:
> Like a fiend hid in the cloud
>
> Struggling in my father's hands
> Striving against my swaddling bands
> Bound and weary I thought best
> To sulk upon my mother's breast.

The poem is written in long meter quatrains, and offers us a phenomenological account of the world seen from the point of view of "experience." The baby, preternaturally aware of her separation from the mother, is neither guided nor even pushed from the womb. Rather she leaps. In the universe of "experience"—again, for Blake an essential aspect of the human condition—the internal and external world is filled with danger and anxiety. The infant recognizes and thus worries about her nakedness, not so much from a position of post-Edenic shame, but rather from the position of vulnerability, from her strangely a priori awareness of being a thing among things. From this perspective we can see that Blake's "innocence" is always a backstory. It only makes sense to talk about innocence once one has had an experience, only from the perspective of deprivation, trauma, or loss.[84] This is why anamnesis (whether it goes by the name of Lyotard's infancy, Freud's screen memory, or T. S. Eliot's theory of tradition) is so vitally important: it shows us that experience is somehow strangely prior to innocence.

Thus the infant is "unnaturally" aware of her thingness, her fall into a world of things. In Blake's metaphysics, experience designates a state of paradoxical knowledge, an awareness of difference and danger, but knowledge without the moderating influence of faith or hope. Blake's infant occupies at the beginning of the poem, as decisively as any literary figure I can think of, the space of Melanie Klein's paranoid-schizoid position, in which persecutory part-objects, internal and external, refuse any attempts at integration.[85] In a world filled with hidden dangers she is naked and exposed.[86] This fact makes the simile, "Like a fiend hid in the cloud," even more striking and powerful. Perhaps her "piping," the sounds of her own crying, seems strange and external to her, her own voice seeming to come from elsewhere. The inability to distinguish between internal and external part-objects creates for the infant a fantasy of her own fiendish power. This allows for a sense of differentiation, a distancing between the infant and the dangerous world.

As a result of these projections, the poem takes on an expansive, spatial, almost three-dimensional character, with the small bedchamber suddenly opened up to a sky filled with clouds. Within the world of the poem, as in our experience more generally, only differentiation (between outside and in) can lead to spatial awareness.[87] With her great act of leaping into the air, an act of helpless desperation—the line's doubled anapestic cadence [**In**to the **dan**gerous **world** I **leapt – Da** ta ta **Da** ta ta **Da** ta **Da**] adding to the circus-like atmosphere—the infant not only senses the immenseness of her world, but also creates it.[88] Yet when this frightening projected immensity in stanza one is almost immediately foreclosed upon in stanza two, the "dangerous world" having collapsed, rather than experiencing the world as comforting, enveloping, and safe, she experiences a sense of entrapment.[89] She escapes from a dangerous external world into an internalized world of foreclosure and struggle.

The second quatrain, like the infant, is constrained, almost claustrophobic. The two present participles (struggling and striving) collaborate with the noun form "bound" to create a sound-image of impingement and closure. From the perspective of the verse pattern, the poem's "received" long meter (quatrains of iambic tetrameter) expresses the position of experience—world weary, ideological, fixed—and contrasts with the nonce form (sestets of unequal line length) of "Infant Joy," an expression of the openness that characterizes the *Songs of Innocence*. Blake's illuminated print not only consigns the verse of "Infant Sorrow" to the top section of the image, but it also heightens the problem of the viewer's spatial awareness of and in the poem[90] (Figure 0.1). One's eye is drawn back behind the nurse or mother to the bedchamber in the distance, a second curtain and a secret perspectival vanishing point. Yet, as Wageknecht argues, the curtains also mask and impede imaginative movement into the poem. The folds of the curtains, a reticulated pattern, are reiterated on the mother's dress, on the pillows, and even on the baby's flesh.[91] Thus the illuminated print both solicits and refuses our entrance into the image and, thus, our identification.

Acoustically, the poem is similarly structured, cone shaped, the vowel sounds narrowing from the openness of "mother" and "world" to the diphthongs "loud" and "cloud," and finally giving way to the tighter and softer "best" and "breast." Picking up from my reading of stanza one, the transition between stanzas mirrors almost perfectly the Kleinian transition between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions.[92] The infant partially reconciles external and internal realities, and in the process begins to accede to the demands of the world of experience, but at the cost of her fantasy of power and escape. My point here is not to pathologize the poem so much as to show how the pastoral mode itself is interiorized in Blake, the two stanzas struggling with each other, the first in flight from and the second acquiescent to external social constraints.

Throughout the *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience,* the figure of the infant is not only closely aligned with that of the poet—the pride of place Empson shows us it had already assumed by the late eighteenth

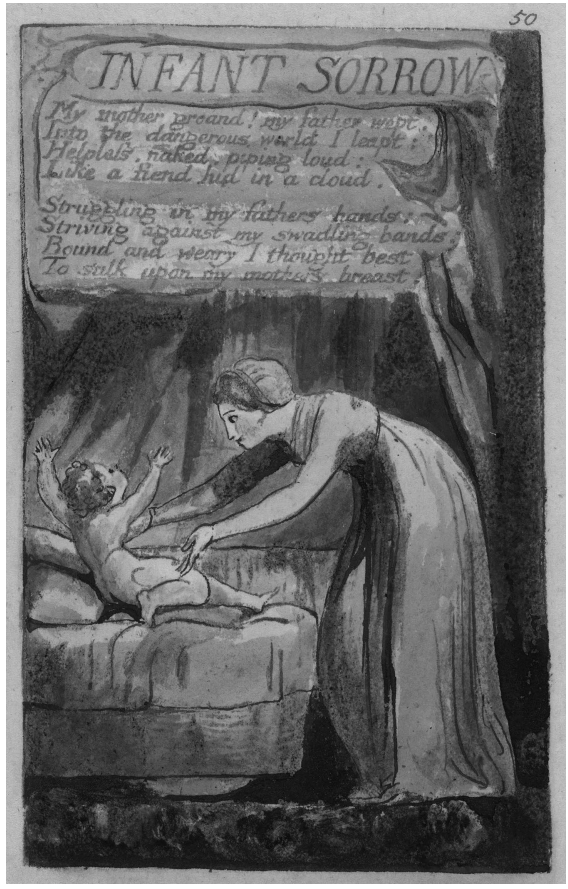

Figure 0.1 Blake's illuminated print: "Infant Sorrow." (Used with permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.)

century—but also continually presented as the site of ongoing struggle.[93] In fact, in the manuscript version, "Infant Sorrow" was originally the opening for a longer poem, "To my Myrtle." Blake decides against and cancels the longer "cycle" poem (from "birth to death or old age"), and in so doing he "de-narrativizes" the infant fragment.[94] Thus the infant body becomes for Blake itself a fragment and a symbol—it can be lost or found, communed with or alienated, etc. It cannot, at least in the songs, be inserted into one coherent narrative.

Of course, Blake's fragments do fit together in some sense, if only through a logic of repetition and serialization. Ballad measure or song seems perfectly suited for this dialectical work. Like Wordsworth and Coleridge in *Lyrical Ballads* and, later, Keats in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," Blake pushes ballad form into psychologically rich and complex new terrains.[95] It is not merely, as Wierda Rowland points out, that the "child is the ultimate

formalist," it is also, as I argue in the penultimate chapter on Tennyson, that ballad form itself in the long nineteenth century comes to be associated with childhood and infancy.[96] Not only does the infant's "piping" in "Infant Sorrow" conflate the suffering infant from the *Songs of Experience* with the piping shepherd from *Songs of Innocence* (who sings his song and "stains the water clear"), but the song-form also crosses over that divide. As with several songs of innocence and experience, Blake uses a repetitive AABB rhyme scheme in "Infant Sorrow," a verse-pattern that Paul Fussell suggests we call "the couplet quatrain."[97] Whereas in the *Songs of Innocence* this closely echoed repetition often has a quieting and soothing effect (e.g., "The Lamb" and "Echoing Green"), in experience (as in "The Angel" and "Infant Sorrow") it more often takes on a jarring, almost hectoring, quality.

It is hard, if not impossible, to think about the modern pastoral without also thinking about Blake. His unresolvable dialectic between experience and innocence mirrors the marriage of complexity and simplicity that Empson claimed was the hallmark of this new mode. As I have suggested, romanticism not only drives children into the wilderness, but it also brings wildness (animality, unresolved conflict, partial objects, emotional and psychic impasses—in short, the unconscious) into the nursery, the study, the poem, and the body of the infant. Blake announces this new paradigm clearly in the songs "There grows one [a tree] in the Human Brain."[98] Materiality and spirit, mind and brain, are brought together in the body of the infant. Anna Barbauld articulates both aspects of this new dialectical pastoral—child in nature, nature in child, retreat and engagement, acquiescence and agency—when she stresses in her essay, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror," the "relation between the moral and natural systems of man."[99] Each of these systems is in a reciprocal relation to the other. At its worst, arguing from nature means rationalizing forms of social injustice by reference to positivistic and systemic categorization and scientism.[100] This possibility, the proto-Darwinian one, which Barbauld clearly does not condone, has driven critiques of the aesthetic or "natural" morality from Edmund Burke to Terry Eagleton and Michel Foucault. Here again, empiricism gives us a way to understand the essential and unfinished relatedness between nature and mind. David Hume argues that the difference between an impression (nature) and an idea (morality) is only its degree of vividness.[101] If we take Blake's image of a tree growing in the mind seriously, and accept along with nineteenth-century poets and philosophers that nature is part and parcel of our material being, of our sensory selves, then we might begin to recognize in infancy a bodily and psychic state of intuitive relatedness operating alongside our raw animality, neither one predominating or preceding. Blake's songs on this reading may offer us a glimpse, if only momentary, of states of rhythmic becoming, states of being that belong entirely neither to nature nor to human culture, but present to us figures of de-differentiation, "momentary pauses of the thought," within which we might better learn to tolerate ambiguity, to learn to cope with loss, uncertainty, and change.

Whatever it is that we wait for when we wait for the child, to read this period of waiting as a period of gestation is to understand the importance of the figure of the infant, its close relation not only to "death," but also to forms of nonlife that would be of such importance to Coleridge and Keats: sleep, dejection, reverie, daydream, opium, and so on. Seen from this perspective, all desire for transcendence, for crossing a limit, is also an instinctual drive toward the origin—a drive I explore in relation to Wordsworth's concept of immortality in Chapter 1—that which is beyond and prior to "life's mysterious gate." Thus, in a reiteration of the trope of the eternal return, the infant comes to serve as a figure not only for the poet but also for all poetic inspiration as such. Blake and Barbauld's depictions of infancy show us that this drive toward origin (*telos* as well as *ontos*) will always in some sense be frustrated. That is, they reveal an ethical limit for personal as well as poetic transcendence.

The privileged position of the infant within nineteenth-century British poetry has profound consequences for the Anglo-American poetic tradition, not to mention for the human sciences more generally. The advantage that infancy confers on the romantic and postromantic lyric is that it opens up a space for a constantly renewed engagement with the world, a world that is never completely attainable, yet becomes available again for us in fragments and intimations through the process of recommencement. We find in these fragments, once again, the rhythm of Freud's "fort-da" game; reading in this way we can say that the child does not so much master space and time as occupy it—infancy as repetition, imperfect compensation, resistance, rhythm, *poesis,* and flow.

0.5 The Chapters

The Idea of Infancy begins by focusing on one of the most important poems in the Anglo-American canon, William Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode." Despite its popularity, countless commentators on the Ode have bemoaned the poem's failure to resolve its own internal conflicts. This chapter traces the reception of the Ode in the nineteenth century, focusing specifically on the inherent tension between "intimations" (feelings of immediacy) and "immortality" (a *modern* sense of timelessness). Wordsworth, by ascribing to the infant and child both of these irreconcilable attributes, stages a conflict between our desire for stasis or safety on the one hand and our desire for change and autonomy on the other. While the Ode works both formally and thematically to resolve this tension, infancy, as imaged in the poem and despite its intimations, resists both synthesis and closure. Moreover, as this chapter relates, readers such as Matthew Arnold saw Wordsworth's theory of infancy, with its claims of immediate connection to nature, as deeply flawed. This led Arnold in his own poetry to imagine a darker, more alienated image of the infant, one that is, ironically, prefigured elsewhere in Wordsworth's oeuvre, specifically in *Lyrical Ballads*. John Stuart Mill, on

the other hand, fully embraces Wordsworth's theory of infancy, an embrace that allows him strangely to reconstruct his own history, and thus to find new avenues out of depression.

These two readings of the Ode have a history within the literary tradition—infancy as salvation and infancy as mere melancholic or sentimental return. Thus the Ode's oft-cited and strange lack of synthesis remains a problem for literary history, at least insofar as the poem leaves us with two seemingly categorically opposed positions. The Ode's failure to resolve is especially problematic for a poem that is usually read as reflecting back an exemplary image of individual and collective progress and development. Through a reading of Arnold, Mill, and one of Wordsworth's "Upon Epitaphs" essays, this chapter argues for an ethics of "blank misgiving" in the Ode, a more flexible, contingent, and unfinished mode of relating, marking a constant alternation between immediacy and timelessness. At the end of the chapter I show how each of these positions (stasis and movement) becomes embedded in poetic form—specifically, a split in the definition of the Pindaric ode. By tracing how a kind of immortality—an implied dialectic procedure that will come to bear the name of "the greater romantic lyric"—gets imputed to the very prosodic form of the ode, we can see how infancy imbues literary formal history, not to mention the history of affect and ideas, with its own unspoken possibilities, for better and for worse.

While Chapter 2 focuses on less canonical work, it addresses one of the most powerful images in the Western tradition, the infant at the mother's breast. "'When I First Saw the Child': Reverie in Erasmus Darwin and Coleridge" begins by reading prose works by Darwin and Coleridge, specifically meditations on the nursing infant. In these texts I argue we can see the barest outlines of two competing aesthetic theories. Roughly speaking, these theories correspond to Darwin's organicism and Coleridge's theory of the symbol. Coleridge's schema of subjective and aesthetic development depends on the infant's benevolent connection to the mother as well as his split identification with the father, the "shape" being the earthly father and the "form" being God. Coleridge recognizes, perhaps more than any writer before Freud, the sense that humans are prematurely born. For Coleridge we are animals with a unique tendency toward humanness, and, as such, require constant care and nurturance to aid in our development. This leaves him with a deeply ambivalent attitude toward infancy. On the one hand, infancy represents a moment of transcendental becoming; on the other hand, it marks us all as animal to the very core. In contrast, Darwin offers us a neoclassical aesthetic, strangely lacking any psychological depth, and therefore free from the need for compensatory object relations.

Using terms borrowed from psychoanalytic theorist Maria Torok, I read the poetry of Darwin and Coleridge and find, especially in the case of Coleridge, an antithetical, more ambivalent current running underneath. Since Darwin's poetry and prose seem not to acknowledge any losses but rather glide along the surface of repeated pleasurable experience,

it is difficult to extract an ethics or imagine how any sociality can be derived from his poetics. Coleridge, on the other hand, displaces our losses onto a numinous realm. In his theoretical writings he does this somewhat seamlessly, God/father coming in to replace the love and comfort of the mother. Coleridge's poems, however, seem to wrestle with their own need for dependence and desire for closure. These poems make clear that whenever we close a gap in meaning, turning loss or raw experience into a conceptual narrative, we adopt a necessary fiction or persona, but one that is experienced as timeless and authentic. Perhaps in an attempt to resist that fiction, Coleridge's poetry, especially those poems considering the infant, dramatizes a deferral of closure. It suggests that although it may be impossible and even undesirable to keep the so-called objective world of received and even reified roles and positions (father, son, God, family) at bay, there is an ethical, spiritual, and psychic value of returning to the position of the infant so that we may hold the object—aesthetic, imagined, partial, or whole—outside us for as long as possible, so that we may know, at least provisionally, where we end and someone or something else begins.

With the first two chapters having dealt with ideological, aesthetic, and philosophical treatments of the infant and child, Chapter 3 focuses more squarely yet intimately with issues of the infant's body. It does so through a reading of the work of Sara Coleridge. Diagnosed with a nervous disorder—the nineteenth-century name was puerperal insanity—Coleridge, S. T. Coleridge's daughter, kept a journal of her children's early years. This still unpublished document is often read as exemplary of the growing fascination with and observation of infancy in the early nineteenth century. Yet it is also a deeply compelling study of her psychic, physical, and emotional disturbances and difficulties. Using the diary as its primary text, "Merging and Emerging in the Work of Sara Coleridge" examines the problem of merged and merging identities; specifically, it examines our identification with the infant. An accomplished poet in her own right, Sara Coleridge struggled to maintain her sense of self in the years immediately following the birth of her two surviving children. I show how Coleridge conceives of infancy and invalidism as related states in which the sensual or animal side of our natures is in constant contestation with our reason. Opium addiction complicates this struggle, especially insofar as it allows for fantasies of dislocation, dissociation, and escape—but it also, paradoxically, posits agency, and therefore ethical responsibility, inextricably in the body.

For Coleridge, in ways that surpass even her father, the body is essentially strange. Through a juxtaposition of her poems, diaries, essays, and letters—especially the diary of her children's early years—we see her rethinking the body and its relation to subjectivity. Tracking her children's as well as her own slow and incomplete journey from partial animality to human subjectivity, we see how she invents, appropriates, and refigures genres through which to literally write herself back into the world. She ultimately finds

a right relation to her children, as well as to her own embodied nature, but only by subjecting herself to a kind of extended asceticism. Coleridge's unpublished letters, journals, essays, and poems not only document her process of recovery but also offer us a model of ethical behavior, a way of extending into a world made dangerous, strange, and beautiful by our own embodiment, and its subsequent connections, disconnections, and circuitous returns.

Chapter 4 centers on the poetry and prose of P. B. Shelley, drawing together an account of Shelley being treated by a practitioner of animal magnetism in 1820 and a short fragment of elegiac verse written for his recently deceased infant son. Written at more or less the same time as the encounter with magnetism, the elegy imagines the body of the infant becoming a "portion" of all that surrounds him. "Bodies in Dissolve: Animal Magnetism and Infancy in Shelley" focuses on the interaction of bodies as they dissolve into others and into their environments. It considers the relation between the discourse of animal magnetism, especially as it was theorized and practiced in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the poetry and poetics of Percy Shelley—specifically, his adduction of infancy as a primary space of this aesthetic interconnectedness and resonance. Focusing on an obscure text on animal magnetism by George Winter of Bristol, whose arguments and even direct language would have been known to Shelley via Robert Southey's "Letters from England," this chapter exposes a common thread that runs through Shelley's poetry and poetics: namely, a sense of interconnectedness that Shelley suggests happens even at the molecular level.

Music is a constant subtheme in the chapter, in part because Shelley evokes musical terminology so persistently, but also because each of these discourses—magnetism, poetry, poetics—in different ways relies on complicated analogies to music. In particular, Shelley revises Coleridge's analogy of the harp in "A Defence of Poetry," also composed in 1820, in order to argue for an immanent rhythmic and vibratory interconnectedness. Shelley's barely submerged musical figuration links to infancy through an association of the lyre to the infant's body. Taking Coleridge's image even further, Shelley claims that we are atomized, "scattered," and dispersed, not just as a "portion" of all that we see, but also as part of an often dissonant "harmony," a vibratory responsiveness that is also always attempting to "prolong" a distant echo: "prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause." Working with a sketch from Shelley's notebook that accompanies the elegiac fragment, the chapter reads these late essays by Shelley and traces out this poetics of interrelatedness, a poetics more difficult and much deeper and stranger than the so-called music of the spheres.

The final full chapter of *The Idea of Infancy* picks up the image of infancy as it was conceived and received by mid-nineteenth-century poets. In 1850, Alfred Tennyson writes a touching poem to commemorate the stillbirth of his first son.

Chapter 5, "Stillborn Poetics and Tennyson's Songs," begins with the complicated reverberations emanating from that loss and examines the analogy of infancy and poetry throughout Tennyson's work. Tennyson, like many poets, uses the language of parturiency when discussing his poems, which is to say that he writes of his poems as his children. This extended metaphor—in which the poet appropriates the figure of the mother and through which discursive births replace fleshly ones—is used by Tennyson to express his doubts and anxieties about publishing his poetry and having it subjected to harsh critique. In this chapter, we see Tennyson working through his anxiety about poetic circulation, an anxiety that corresponds to a deep and over-determined melancholia, a relation to loss that culminates with the stillbirth of his first son. I theorize Tennyson's stillborn poetics through Otto Rank's early twentieth-century concept of birth trauma. Birth trauma, an important precursor for Freud's "death drive," pushes back the moment of separation and alienation—most often theorized as taking place later in the infant's development (the Oedipal moment, the mirror-stage, the "fortunate fall" into language, etc.)—to the moment of birth. Perhaps because it provides him with an figure for unameable trauma, the elegy Tennyson writes in 1850 marks an important moment in an ongoing process of learning to tolerate separation, loss, and distance.

What I call Tennyson's stillborn poetics is an aesthetic and psychic orientation toward experience that is made possible only by acknowledging and accepting loss as the price of full aliveness. But more is at stake than passive acceptance. Tennyson is also at work on *The Princess* during this period, obsessively revising the text even after publication. Specifically, he writes several songs concerning infancy and childhood and inserts them into the blank verse text. "The child," he writes, "is the link through the parts, as shown in the Songs, which are the best interpreters of the poem." Through the constant staging of his losses—the child now replacing Hallam as the emblem of that loss—Tennyson is able to find a figure able to bear the weight of his loss. Beginning in 1850, following the interpolation of songs into *The Princess* and the publication of *In Memoriam*, his serial elegy for Arthur Hallam, Tennyson begins to treat his poems as separate from his self. Evidence of this distance seems clearest in his claim that he can speak of the beauty of his stillborn son because he is a father *and* an artist: the two roles are no longer entwined because their objects—poetry and life—have begun to exist separately. Stillborn poetics allows Tennyson a relation to his poems that is neither melancholic nor isolated. Finally, I argue for a formal dimension to Tennyson's stillborn poetics through a reading of the songs in *The Princess*, songs whose forms hearken back to early border ballads at the same time as their psychology anticipates contemporary theories of trauma and loss.

The Afterword, "'Echo to the Self': Augusta Webster's Psychoanalytic Thought," weaves together and reiterates the various literary-formal, critical, affective, relational, and aesthetic arguments in the book. It does so through a sustained close reading of two poems in Augusta Webster's

Mother and Daughter sonnet sequence (ca. 1880s). This gorgeous sonnet cycle represents a unique moment in the history of poetic form. Arranged chronologically as though addressing her daughter as she grew from infancy to adulthood, but actually written when her daughter was grown, the relation between mother and daughter is literally inscribed in the break between octave and sestet. I argue that Webster is able to model in these poems an extremely ethical relation to the other, made more impressive perhaps in that she is able to resist the tendency—evident in many of the works touched on in the preceding chapters—for parental projection on the one hand and narcissistic identification on the other. Thus, having begun with Barbauld and Blake at the turn of the nineteenth century, I close with Webster at the turn of the twentieth. Not coincidentally, then, *The Idea of Infancy* ends in the same decade that Freud's work on infancy begins.

Notes

1. Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn, and Clement King Shorter. *My Diary: The Early Years of My Daughter Marianne (1835)* (London: Clement Shorter, 1923), 5.
2. See especially Coveney, Peter. *The Image of Childhood; the Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin books, 1967); Plotz, Judith A. *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and Wierda Rowland, Ann. *Romanticism and Childhood: The Infantilization of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
3. "The interiorised self [in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries], understood to be the product of a personal history, was most clearly expressed in the idea of 'childhood,' and the idea of 'the child,'" Steedman, Carolyn. *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 5; see also Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
4. Rousseau connected this infant stage, via a theory of recapitulation in which the individual "lives again each epoch in the history of civilization," to mere animal existence, Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Jean Jacques Rousseau: His Educational Theories Selected from Émile, Julie and Other Writings* (Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1964), vi, vii. Extending this state and focusing it on language, Philippe Aries, working from a medieval text, suggests that infancy ends at age seven, after which the child has not only acquired language but also can speak clearly: Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 21. This schema suggests that the transition from infancy to the next stage (*pueritia)* is predicated not so much on language acquisition as on verbal mastery.
5. In asserting that new literary forms accompany new structures of feeling I invert Williams's formula in his discussion of antipastoral in *The Country and the City.* Whereas Williams writes of the aesthetic and political ramifications of a waning pastoral tradition, I write here about the rise of a new pastoral embodied in the

form of the infant: Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 74; for the ideology of childhood, see Steward, James Christen. University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, and Joslyn Art Museum. *The New Child: British Art and the Origins of Modern Childhood, 1730–1830*. (Berkeley: University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, 1995); Donzelot, Jacques. *The Policing of Families*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979); and Brown, Marilyn. *Picturing Children: Constructions of Childhood between Rousseau and Freud*. (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

6. The "ideology of form" is the "third horizon" of the text in Jameson's schema. At the level of this third horizon, form itself becomes content, and as such, carries its own ideological messages. Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 99.

   I realize that, given the recent focus on "surface reading," my return to the language of structure and form might seem to some regressive. For me, these terms remain relevant. And while this book aims to be neither ideology critique nor structural analysis, it hopes to trace across surface *and* depth the ways in which the emergence of the specific figure of the infant was internalized. For "surface reading," see Best, S., and S. Marcus. "Surface Reading: An Introduction." *Representations*, no. 108 (2009): 1–21. For a critique of "surface reading" as both post- and pre-Marxian and Freudian, see McGrath, Brian M. *The Poetics of Unremembered Acts: Reading, Lyric, Pedagogy* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 108, 109.

   For a reading that seeks to correct the opposition of surface to depth by tracing Lacan's engagement with Marx, see Tomšič, Samo. The Capitalist Unconscious (London; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015), 22, 23. For a non-Lacanian structuralist account of psyche focused on "strata" and bilogical symmetries and asymmetries, see Matte Blanco.
7. Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 229, 345; also Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 98.
8. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood,* 32. For an argument about how the European eighteenth century transitions from the medieval Great Chain of Being to David Hume's psychological "chain of events" and finally to a "chain of becoming," see Keener, Frederick M. *The Chain of Becoming: The Philosophical Tale, the Novel, and a Neglected Realism of the Enlightenment : Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Johnson, and Austen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 15–32.
9. See Chapter 1, which traces Freud's logic of "splitting" back to Wordsworth.
10. Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004), 28.
11. Ibid., 28.
12. "Childhood is the monster of philosophers. It is also their accomplice. Childhood tells them that the mind is not given. But that it is possible," Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 100.
13. From Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality …": "Heaven lies about us in our infancy! / Shades of the prison-house begin to close / Upon the growing boy" (66–68).
14. Avital Ronell writes of "less *bildungs*-driven texts" by Wordsworth, claiming that their "muteness" and "mutilation" point "to something that is

unassimilable, stunted, incapable of being marked or mourned" Ronell, Avital. *Stupidity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 252. Ronell calls this idiocy and associates it, via Condillac, with the fact that "we cannot remember what is prior to language" (254).

15. Lyotard writes of the 'positivity' of the death instinct, something this book explores in its final full chapter, a force "outside the regulation of language but also outside the regulation of the instituted body," *Toward the Postmodern* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 15. Freud, especially in his later "meta-psychological" writing, gives primary explanatory power to the *determinative* dialectic of eros and thanatos, Freud, Sigmund. "Analysis Terminable and Interminable." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XXIII (1937–1939)*, 396, 397. See also Thompson, A. E. "Freud's Pessimism, the Death Instinct, and the Theme of Disintegration in 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable.'" *International Review of Psycho-Analysis* 18 (1991): 165–179.
16. Abrams emphasizes the importance of Hegel's spiral dialectic. Taking the reader through an overview of the biblical-recaptitualist philosophies of Lessing, Kant, and Schiller, Abrams shows how a narrative develops whereby the individual, as well as the collective, moves (through the processes of a fortunate fall) from innocence/instinct into reason, and finally into "reasoned innocence," Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism; Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), 199–217.
17. François, Anne-Lise. "'O Happy Living Things': Frankenfoods and the Bounds of Wordsworthian Natural Piety." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 63; for the "semiotic" see Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
18. Wordsworth, William, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and W. J. B. Owen. *Lyrical Ballads, 1798* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 156. Wordsworth adds this passage in 1802. He goes on to clarify that the successful translation of message from poet to reader depends upon an "intertexture," a subtle interplay of form / meter and idea / passion (172).
19. I am grateful to Karen Swann for suggesting "The Thorn" as an example of the link between formal and thematic repetition within romantic depictions of infancy.
20. For the differentiation of repetition and insistence see Stein, Gertrude. *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985) 166, 167. Corinna Russell reads the note to "The Thorn" through Deleuze's theory of repetition and difference, arguing that the repetitions in the text constitute a form of ritual, an inducement to "re-read," "A Defence of Tautology: Repetition and Difference in Wordsworth's Note to 'The Thorn.'" *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* 28, no. 2 (July 2005), 117. Eric Lindstrom uses the note to reflect on the prophetic aspect of repetition, "Prophetic Tautology and the Song of Deborah: Approaching Language in the Wordsworth Circle." *European Romantic Review* 23, no. 4 (April 2012): 415–434.
21. Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, 1789,* 140.
22. Ibid., 139.
23. Mahoney, Charles. "Wordsworth's Experiments with Form and Genre." In *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 537.

24. I lean here on two theories of lyric reading; the first is indebted to de Manian deconstruction, that is, its insistence that the poem "speaks" via prosopopoeia to the reader: see de Man, Paul. "The Epistemology of Metaphor." *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 13–30; also Johnson, Barbara. "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion." In *A World of Difference*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); McGrath, *Poetics of Unremembered Acts*; Caruth, Cathy. *Empirical Truths and Critical Fictions: Locke, Wordsworth, Kant, Freud*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

    The second comes from Veronica Forrest-Thomson, who argues that the semantic and formal contexts of a poem are "naturalized" by the reader, *Poetic Artifice: A Theory of Twentieth-Century Poetry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 16.
25. Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood,* 27.
26. Ibid., 58.
27. For romantic repetition, see, for example, Garofalo, Devin M. "'Drunk up by Thirsty Nothing': The Fissured World of Prometheus Unbound." *Essays in Romanticism* 22, no. 1 (2015): 53–72; and Larkin, Peter. "Repetition, Difference and Liturgical Participation in Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner.'" *Literature and Theology: An International Journal of Religion, Theory, and Culture* 21, no. 2 (June 2007): 146–159.
28. Hannah Arendt's concept of natality, which I touch upon later, is the clearest link between phenomenological ways of conceiving infancy and continental philosophical ones; see also O'Byrne, Anne E. *Natality and Finitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 78–106. Merleau-Ponty is yet another point of connection.
29. Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 101.
30. Ibid., 105.
31. Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3, 4.
32. Ibid., 4.
33. "Figuration, of some kind, is an irreducible exigency for thought in its relation to the infant body," Fynsk, Christopher. "Jean-François's Infancy." *Yale French Studies* 99 (2001): 55.
34. Lyotard, Jean-François. *Discourse, Figure* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 7.
35. Schwab, Gabriele. "Cosmographical Meditations on the In/Human: Beckett's The Lost Ones and Lyotard's 'Scapeland.'" *Parallax* 6, no. 4 [17] (December 10, 2000): 70.
36. For Lyotard, one figure for the emergence of the image is the baby viewing the mother's face: "A baby must see it's MOTHER's face as a landscape" says Lyotard, not because it has traversed it "blindly" or because of the mutual "symbiosis," but rather because "the face is indescribably for the baby," *The Inhuman,* 189. For the importance of the body, a body that is not equivalent with our empirical body, see also Lyotard, Jean-François. "Anamnesis: Of the Visible." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (February 2004), 112–113.
37. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Notebooks. 1794–1804*. Edited by Kathleen Coburn. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 919.
38. Christensen, Jerome. *Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 78.

39. Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 7, 8.
40. Ibid., 25, 26; see also Derrida, Jacques. "Freud's Legacy." In *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Lyotard, "Anamnesis: Of the Visible," 115.
41. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained,* 90, 91.
42. For Lyotard, since development is the core ideological structure, our only hope is to resist the inhuman (as a narrative of historical development) and embrace the "other inhuman," *The Inhuman,* 7.
43. Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9.
44. Izenberg, Oren. *Being Numerous: Poetry and the Ground of Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 17; Shelley in fact uses and then cancels a cognate term in a draft version of 'A Defence': 'nativeal.'
45. The concept of the "mneme," a kind of sensory memory image *materially* impressed upon consciousness, was developed in the late nineteenth century by Richard Semon and is vitally important to Freud's development of the death drive in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," as well as his earlier theories of memory and dream.
46. Partly as a result of his study of David Hume, Deleuze theorizes in *Difference and Repetition* the existence of passive or perceptual syntheses. These form the associational patterns of our experience: passive syntheses constitute "our habit of living, our expectation that 'it' will continue, that one of the two elements will appear after the other, thereby assuming the perpetuation of our case," Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 74.
47. Yousef, Nancy. *Romantic Intimacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013) 126.
48. Abrams reminds us that this pattern (problem, the work of resolution, blessing) is a recapitulation of seventeenth-century religious meditation, which tended to resolve in colloquy or prayer, Abrams, M. H. "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric." In *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*. Edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Norton, 1970), 225.
49. Kirsten Locke, writing about Lyotard's concept of infancy: "… the body of the infant figure is evoked as a site within the 'adult' body that is savage and unpredictable in its constitutive 'lack' …" Locke, Kristen. "Anima Minima: Lyotard's Montrous Infancy." *Kritikos: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sound, Text and Image* 10 (2013). http://intertheory.org/kritikos.
50. Newlyn, Lucy. "The Little Actor and His Mock Apparel." *Wordsworth Circle* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1983), 31; Ferry, David. *The Limits of Mortality; an Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems*. Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959; Taylor reads the predictions for the child as pessimistic and argues that they tharwt the imagination, Taylor, Anya. "'A Father's Tale': Coleridge Foretells the Life of Hartley." *Studies in Romanticism* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1991), 43, 44.
51. "Movement of mind" is the assignation famously given to Coleridge's imagination in Humphrey House's essay on "Frost at Midnight," House, Humphry. *Coleridge* (Philadelphia: Dufour, 1965), 151.

    For the mobility of the "child-subject," (a Foucauldian reading of the child) see Jo-Ann Wallace: "'The child' remains a mobile subject-position implying … a subject out of time; 'the child' is the subject to come—*not yet*

literate, *not yet* capable of reason, *not yet* fully agential—but also the subject before now—the primitive, the prehistoric, the presymbolic, the presocial," "Technologies of 'the Child': Towards a Theory of the Child-Subject." *Textual Practice* 9, no. 2 (1995), 297, 298.

For the mobility of the child as it is "becoming-music," see Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) 299, 300.

52. Wierda Rowland comments on the "strange, nonhuman qualities of the infant" in "Frost," arguing that the poem (along with "The Nightingale") "interrogate[s] the meanings and uses to which the father puts his infant son," *Romanticism and Childhood,* 120, 121.
53. See Mary Jacobus on Nancy, Derrida, and Wordsworth: "For Nancy, non-access and impenetrability [the skin of the infant forming a border even in the womb] have to exist in order for access and penetration to occur," Jacobus, Mary. *Romantic Things a Tree, a Rock, a Cloud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 64. See also O'Byrne, *Natality and Finitude,* 113. See also Nancy's use of *partage* to describe the soul's process of awakening—we are imparted (similarly a figure of separation and emergence), Nancy, Jean-Luc. "Identity and Trembling." In *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 14–15.
54. Nancy is glossing a passage in Hegel in which he theorizes the gestating (presubjective) infant, ibid., 25.
55. O'Byrne, *Natality and Finitude,* 111.
56. Nancy, *Identity and Trembling,* 33.
57. O'Byrne, *Natality and Finitude,* 137.
58. Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 65.
59. See Chapter 1 for my reading of immortality in the Ode; Lyotard refers to this aspect of infancy as immemorial, *Anamnesis,* 109.
60. "Of all relations the most universal is that of identity, being common to every being, whose existence has any duration," Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 14.
61. Yousef, *Romantic Intimacy*, 2, 3.
62. See Frances Ferguson on the "afterlife" and instability of the figure of the romantic child, which she locates within poststructuralist philosophy and debates about the sexual status of children, arguing that in the romantic era "children become the representatives of the inevitable limitation of the reach of doctrine, of belief, of being able to say what you mean and mean what you say in every moment." Through the figure of the child, liberalism "crucially replaces the question of meaning with the question of representation," "The Afterlife of the Romantic Child: Rousseau and Kant Meet Deleuze and Guattari." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 223.
63. Robert Kaufman captures perfectly the importance of apostrophe to lyric theory when he writes of it as the "constitutive gesture" of lyric. He claims that it "tries always to encapsulate or enact its movement of undetermined but somehow justified, felt-as-necessary articulation of address directed at once to self and other (a subjective and yet objectivating address that works in double direction by generally projecting the emergence of a formalized *O!*-space for thought, feeling, and engagement," "Poetry's Ethics? Theodor W. Adorno

and Robert Duncan on Aesthetic Illusion and Sociopolitical Delusion." *New German Critique: An Interdisciplinary Journal of German Studies* 97 (Winter 2006), 108, 109.

64. Both Paul de Man and Jonathan Culler claim that rhetorical tropes evoke a certain embarrassment for the reader or critic, Culler famously focusing on apostrophe, suggesting that its formal character, its "vocative" dimension is what leads us to disparage it. Culler, Jonathan D. *The Pursuit of Signs—Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981) 136; De Man, Paul. "The Epistemology of Metaphor." *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 13–30.
65. See Barbara Johnson, "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion," 185.
66. "All verbal communications are accompanied by paraverbal manifestations, which affect the meaning of the communication," Novick, K. K. "Access to Infancy: Different Ways of Remembering." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 71 (1990), 342.
67. Winnicott, D. W. "The Use of an Object." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 50 (1969), 711.
68. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 70–82; Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 55.
69. Rosenbaum, Susan. "'A Thing Unknown, without a Name': Anna Laetitia Barbauld and the Illegible Signature." *Studies in Romanticism* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 372.
70. de Man points out that prosopopoeia (in this case the poem addressing the reader) is a type of "masking" that paradoxically makes the "invisible visible," de Man, Paul. "Lyrical Voice in Contemporary Theory." In *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 57, 63.
71. For "preformation," the eighteenth-century theory that the organism was preformed and merely folded in the womb, see Henderson, Andrea K. *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774–1830* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 31–33; for a reading of its relation to development of romanticism see Sha, Richard C. *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750–1832*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. The poet to his interlocutor in Wordsworth's "Expostulation and Reply": "Nor less I deem that there are Powers / Which of themselves our minds impress; / That we can feed this mind of ours / In a wise passiveness" (21–24).
72. I scan the first line as containing six stresses; both lines begin with trochaic inversions.
73. Blake (1970), like Hume, without rejecting the possibilities for knowledge, recognizes that knowledge is revealed through negotiation and struggle, not through experiment or classical logic. Thus he rejects abstraction, as is evinced in the well known marginal note to Reynolds: "To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone distinction of Merit," Blake, William. *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 630; for a reading of Hume's rejection of foundationalist modes of knowledge and his insistence on the importance of particulars to knowledge, see Jacobson, Anne Jaap. "Introduction: A Double Re-Reading." In *Feminist Interpretations of David Hume* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 3.

74. Blasing, Mutlu Konuk. *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 13.
75. Empson, William. *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions Pub. Corp, 1974), 254.
76. Empson is tracing the Wordsworth–Coleridge version of infant feeling from the lake poets to *Alice in Wonderland*. Ibid., 260, 261.
77. Ibid., 17.
78. Ibid., 13. See also Forrest-Thomson, who, clearly building on Empson, sees the importance of the pastoral to what she terms "poetic artifice": "Pastoral is the genre which asserts connection on the conventional level, which is granted, by convention, the right to put the complex into the simple, to unify the natural with the highly artificial, to bring together the tribe and the poet," *Poetic Artifice,* 113.
79. Dike, Donald A. "The Difficult Innocence: Blake's Songs and Pastoral." *ELH* 28, no. 4 (December 1961), 357.
80. Avital Ronnell, Adriana Benzaquén, and Wierda Rowland argue that the empiricist philosopher and the infant are deeply related in romantic era writing: Ronell, Avital. *Loser Sons Politics and Authority* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012) 155, 156; Benzaquén, Adriana S. "Childhood, Identity and Human Science in the Enlightenment." *History Workshop Journal* 57 (Spring 2004), 38; Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood,* 36; see also Caruth, *Empirical Truths and Critical Fictions*.
81. See Laplanche on the "enigmatic message," Laplanche, Jean. *Essays on Otherness* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 93–98. When a child receives a message (a gesture, a word, a look) and cannot translate it adequately, the part that the child does understand (if even wrongly) becomes part of his or her conscious experience while the untranslatable part is repressed to the unconscious.
82. Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Explained,* 91.
83. Wagenknecht, David. *Blake's Night; William Blake and the Idea of Pastoral* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1973), 15.
84. Once again Blake anticipates the theorists. Claude Levi-Strauss argues, in 1969, that experience is paradoxically prior to innocence (the cooked before the raw); this is essentially a structuralist claim although it was later taken up as one of the foundational premises of deconstruction.
85. Klein notes that "the ego is incapable of splitting the object [into good and bad parts]—internal and external—without a corresponding splitting taking place within the ego," Klein, Melanie. *The Selected Melanie Klein* (New York: Free Press, 1987) 181.
86. See Isobel Armstrong's *The Radical Aesthetic* (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 09. Although Armstrong's general reading relies on object relations theory, she reads the first quatrain of "Infant Sorrow" as connected to (although she does not use this language) something like Otto Rank's birth trauma. Earlier in the book she reads "Infant Joy" in terms of the "emancipatory aesthetic" in Blake's version of infancy, ibid., 43, 44.
87. "What we call outer objects are nothing but mere representations of our sensibility, the form of which is space," Kant, Immanuel. *Immanuel Kant's Critique*

of Pure Reason (London; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press, 1929), 73, 74.

88. Some metricists might scan "dangerous" as two syllables (elision) flattening out the triple rhythms. I hear it as three, however, and believe that even if it were to be scanned as two there would still be something excessive in the rhythm, especially following as it does an incontrovertible anapest.
89. Blake's infant here, in an analogical pairing of which Blake would disapprove, is strangely resonant with Rousseau's claims about the infant in *Emile*: it should not be swaddled, *Jean Jacques Rousseau: His Educational Theories*, 44.
90. John Bender and Anne Mellor argue that the etching and the poem might not have been originally intended for one another, "Liberating the Sister Arts: The Revolution of Blake's 'Infant Sorrow.'" *ELH* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1983), 301.
91. Wagenknecht reads the curtains in the illustration as representing differing aspects of the poem—danger and concealment. He also comments on the impossibility of "reflection" for the infant: Wagenknecht, David. "Mimicry against Mimesis in 'Infant Sorrow': Seeing through Blake's Image with Adorno and Lacan." *Studies in Romanticism* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 342–344.
92. The paranoid-schizoid position precedes the depressive position and involves a series of psychic splits, in which "good" and "bad" objects and affects are managed in the imagination. The movement from the one to the other involves an integration of both aspects (the complete object). Thus the depressive position is akin to a state of (healthy) mourning. As I suggest elsewhere in the book, I take Klein's "position" to be a more fluid, less teleological concept than Freud's concept of "stages," *The Selected Melanie Klein,* 189.
93. For the social and cultural functions performed by the "idyllic shepherd," see Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Birth of Tragedy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47–58.
94. Blake, William. *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 69.
95. See my Chapter 5; see also Swann, Karen. "'Martha's Name,' or the Scandal of 'The Thorn.'" In *Dwelling in Possibility: Women Poets and Critics on Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 61, 62; and Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood,* 235–245.
96. See Newman, Steve. *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 188.
97. Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York: Random House, 1979), 134.
98. Blake, William. "The Human Abstract." In *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Edited by David V. Erdman and Harold Bloom. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970).
99. Barbauld, Anna. *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose by John Aikin, M. D. and Anna Lætitia Barbauld* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1792), 119.
100. Romantic moral theories are often aesthetic ones as well. Lyotard, for example, links Kant's theory of "taste," that which "demonstrates … an accord between the capacity to conceive and the capacity to present an object corresponding to the concept," to a stifling technoscientism, in which what is "real" is "confirmed by a consensus between partners on questions of knowledge and

commitment." The sublime, on the other hand, corresponds to an inability to present the object, *The Postmodern Explained,* 8–12.

101. "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call *impressions* and *ideas*. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind …" Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* (1).

1 "Blank Misgivings"
Infancy in Wordsworth's Ode

> Sensation emerges from that nothingness which is the "presence" of a *blank*, and it is threatened by being engulfed in it. Art is the vow the soul makes to escape from the senses' promise of death, all the while celebrating in these same sense data that which pulls the soul out from inexistence.
> —Jean-François Lyotard[1]

> I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality, my "all-soulness," if I may so speak.
> —Wordsworth on the Ode[2]

To what do we return when we return to the child? As we discussed in the introduction, for philosophers such as Lyotard and Nancy, infancy constitutes a site of perpetual beginning, the holding open of an imaginative space for anamnesis and working through.[3] Likewise for psychoanalysis, it involves (often unconscious) processes of repetition, revision, and revaluation. Returning to Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality Recollected from Early Childhood," an *ur*-text for psychoanalytic and philosophical conceptions of infancy if ever there was one, involves a return to a scene of origination, a scene that is itself constantly being rewritten through acts of reinterpretation. Wordsworth spoke of its conception continually throughout his career, as though the need to account for its existence was nearly as great as the need to explain its argument. "This poem rests entirely," he writes in a letter, "upon two recollections of childhood; one that of a splendour in the objects of sense which is passed away; the other an indisposition to bend to the law of death …"[4] Arguably the most interpreted poem in Wordsworth's canon, the majority of the scholarship of the Ode focuses on the first of his recollections, that is, on the passing away of "objects of sense." In order to establish how Wordsworth's theory of infancy gets received and refigured throughout the nineteenth century, this chapter attempts to focus equally on the poem's "indisposition." We know that the word means disinclination, but it also connotes, and did at the end of the eighteenth century, the sense of a mild illness, suggesting that Wordsworth's resistance to change and death was strong enough to be experienced as sickness in the body.

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In a sense Wordsworth's two recollections are at odds—the first, an intimation of impermanence, the second, a willful claim for immortality. Thus the poem's own language provides us with terms for its dialectic: intimation (which I propose we associate with intuition, intimacy, and touch) and immortality (which Wordsworth himself associates with the timelessness of infancy). This chapter tracks the reception of these ideas across the nineteenth century by focusing on critiques and revisions of the Ode by Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, and J. S. Mill. What all three men agree upon is that the philosophy in the Ode fails as philosophy. Matthew Arnold troubles over the figure of the child in the Ode, unable to accept Wordsworth's conflation of immortality and infancy. Nor can he accept its eternal connection to nature. John Stuart Mill contrastively finds salvation in the poem, specifically its elusive intimations. In this sense, Mill is the quintessential "Wordsworthian." By this I mean that his identification with the child in the Ode, and by extension the poet, makes it possible for him to reclaim a joyful childhood that may have, in fact, never existed. As I will argue, it is Mill's theory of lyric poetry, specifically his focus on lyric as an utterance in solitude, which allows him to read the Ode in this way, that is, to embrace its intimations without irritable reaching after fact or reason.

Building on these nineteenth-century accounts and responding to more recent readings that treat the Ode as a poem of progress and development, this chapter argues that Wordsworth's conception of infancy is actually profoundly resistant to narratives of development and is, in fact, de-temporalizing rather than progressive. To read the Ode in terms of an "indisposition to bend" does not mean that the poem itself is unbending or static; rather, it locates—in the figure of the infant and the child—at least one core determinant for the poem's oft-cited and strange lack of synthesis. Reading the poem in this way we find that infancy is paradoxically resistant to the law of death and mutability as well as deeply intervolved with it. Over and against sentimental depictions of the infant and child, at the heart of Wordsworth's immortality this chapter finds a figure of infancy overburdened by our projections. It finds, in other words, a figure as likely to intensify as to quell our continued "obstinate questions / Of sense and outward things."

Finally, as we will see, the poem's unique form—Stuart Curran calls it "the one ode of English Romanticism that reverts to the irregular Pindaric"—contributes to and complicates the issue of temporality and closure.[5] At stake in these readings is not merely the critical afterlife of the Ode or even the image of infancy that is its problem and answer; also at stake is the possibility of resolving traumatic loss through engagements with aesthetic form. Recent criticism on lyric theory, the affects, and the so-called "ethical turn" wrestles in its own way with more or less the same dialectic. It is my hope that the reading of Wordsworth's Ode that follows, specifically its theory of infancy, is able to add a useful perspective to these ongoing conversations.

1.1 An Indisposition to Bend

In Chapter 22 of his "Biographia Literaria" Coleridge famously writes of his friend Wordsworth's literary "defects," focusing for several paragraphs on the "Immortality Ode." He is particularly critical of the hyperbolic representation of the "six years darling of a pigmy size" (in manuscript, the child is 4 years old). According to Coleridge, there is no sense in which a child could be called a philosopher ("Thou best philosopher who yet dost keep / Thy heritage"). Coleridge calls these types of defects "thoughts and images too great for the subject."[6] Coleridge then attenuates Wordsworth's meaning, tendentiously but not unfairly, in order to suggest that the infant, because it is not yet conscious of its separateness from God, cannot be as "godlike" as it is presented in the Ode. Rather it is closer to "a bee, a dog, or a field of corn." Following Coleridge's logic—through an important and digressive anecdote—we are reminded that although our "thinking Spirit" is one with divine, we are not identical to God. For philosophical consciousness to exist there must be self-consciousness, that is, there is a necessary gap between our being and our awareness of being. No doubt, on some level, Wordsworth understands this demand as structural, and perhaps that is what motivates his stoic and melancholic celebration of the "blank misgivings" of adulthood in stanza eight of the Ode. Nonetheless, for Coleridge, it is not the idea of timelessness that rankles so intensely so much as Wordsworth's attribution of this awareness to the unconscious child. Yet it is equally clear that Wordsworth's painful sense of loss, separation, and acute self-consciousness in the Ode is what drives him to the "thoughts and images" of infancy and childhood that Coleridge considers hyperbolic. As we will see, it is precisely the unconsciousness of Wordsworth's infant, both its existence outside of and prior to human consciousness and its nonexteriority to God and nature, which makes it at once so attractive and so problematic for nineteenth-century readers of the Ode.

Coleridge extends his critique to what he sees as a morbid and "frightful notion," the association of the child with death:

> To whom the grave
> Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
> Of day or the warm light,
> A place of thought where we in waiting lie.

Coleridge identifies the problem of the Ode with the problem of the child and immortality. For Coleridge, to "form an idea of a thing's becoming nothing; or of nothing becoming a thing," is, he claims, impossible. In fact, Coleridge seems to find it horrifying. He reads Wordsworth literally and ungenerously on this point, implying that a properly educated Christian child would never have believed sleep and death to be such congenial bedfellows. Wordsworth clarifies his own intention in his later letters and explications suggesting that

his misgivings stemmed not from a position of doctrine or faith, but simply from an unwillingness to allow the thought of death to enter into consciousness: "At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body would moulder into dust."[7] In any case, Coleridge's criticism must have carried considerable weight for Wordsworth, because he cut the lines from all versions of the poem printed after 1815.

Coleridge recognized, as did many other critics of the Ode, that the poem's inability to resolve cleanly without remainder is at odds with its own rhetoric of closure. There are other Wordsworth poems concerning infancy and childhood that forcefully refuse synthesis: "The Thorn," "We Are Seven," "There was a Boy," "Anecdote for Fathers." But those poems—blank verse fragments and ballads—make no pretense of resolution, whereas the "Immortality Ode," both formally and thematically, does. It is precisely this lack of resolution and synthesis that drives the majority of twentieth- and twenty-first-century critiques of the Ode.[8] The vehemence with which the poem is singled out for criticism on this front is, I will argue, in part due to the fact that the ode is seen as a verse form perfectly suited for narratives of *bildung* and subjective growth, and thus its failure to resolve strikes one as more significant.[9] Moreover, as Wierda Rowland and James Chandler point out, because theories of individual and collective development and progression are deeply and inextricably linked in the romantic period, the poem's recalcitrance destabilizes a developmental narrative that is not only "reiterative"—to use Wierda Rowland's term—but articulated on at least three levels: the level of the individual subject, the level of the nation-state, and the level of a genealogy of poetry and poetic form.[10]

What does it mean then that critics and poets have staked so much on the Ode, and by extension its theory of childhood and infancy, when the working through the poem performs is so halting, partial, and fraught?[11] As Simon Jarvis writes, the end of the poem sounds as though it has reached a resolution when in fact "no progress has been made. No sublation has occurred."[12] Either the question is begged or a sleight of hand has been performed. Jared Curtis observes that "any one statement [in the final section of the Ode] could in itself conclude the poem; there is no real advance of thought in [the] final lines."[13] Even Chandler, who calls the poem "the most important lyric poem of an age known for its lyric poetry," acknowledges a tautology in the structure of the Ode's argument, what he calls a "sentimental redemption of a sentimental problem."[14] Furthermore, he locates the clearest moment of "anti-progress … within the larger narrative of progress" at the end of stanza seven: "The little Actor cons another part …"[15] The one thing about which both supporters and detractors of the Ode seem able to agree is its lack of a clear dialectical movement, what Geoffrey Hartman calls, echoing Coleridge, its "conjunctive-disjunctive progression."[16]

How does one address these impasses and indispositions? Hartman's reading of the Ode in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* opens one avenue of approach. He wonders why the poem would invest so much on the apostrophized and "vulnerable infant" of stanza eight and reminds us not only

of Wordsworth's symbolic investiture in the infant but also that the poem "elides temporality." Elsewhere Hartman meditates on the larger motif of time within the poem, associating Wordsworth's "blank misgivings" with its later, "darker moments": "—Not for these I raise / The song of thanks and praise; / But for those obstinate questionings / Of sense and outward things, / Fallings from us, vanishings, / Blank misgivings of a creature / Moving about in worlds not realized …"[17] Yet blankness and misgiving are central features of the early sections of the poem as well, and central features of Wordsworth's representations of infancy and childhood in the Ode more generally. Infancy's elision of temporality is explicable insofar as, as we have seen, Coleridge associates the infant with the unconscious, and unconscious processes by their very nature tend toward the timeless and eternal.[18] Yet, that timelessness should inhere in a verse form (the "Greater Romantic Lyric") whose primary drive, according to Chandler and Hartman, is toward development and change suggests a fundamental disconnect between the form of the poem and its so-called content.

The poem's resistance to progression is antithetical not only to its verse form but also to the nineteenth century's primary metaphors for growth and development: the sensitive plant (i.e., the natural unfolding of the person, the nation-state, etc.) and the mental or spiritual "traveler" (i.e., the soul moving through stages or stations in life). These are also, not coincidentally, the primary ways in which the poem is usually read.[19] Thus in resisting its own argument the poem opens up a space for later critiques of and resistances to narratives of growth and development, whether figured as biological or historical.[20]

Rather than reading the poem in a linear, developmental, and chronological fashion, therefore, this chapter reads the Ode as enacting an *incomplete* movement from a single temporality ("there was a time") to a social sense of space ("Hence, in a season of fair weather, though inland far we be …"), one that is brokered by an understanding of temporality that, for all of its promise of regularity, is nonlinear, fragmented, multiple, and recursive. The term "social space" comes from Henri Lefebvre. In using it in this way, I am suggesting on the one hand that the poem, through its recalcitrance, involves the reader in an act of *movement* and, on the other, that we might read the series "me"–"we" in the poem (strophe–epode) as points on a map, traversable in both directions connecting a lyric solipsism to a lyric sociality.[21] Guinn Batten, in her recent reading of this poem, also reads the poem as opening to the possibility of social being.[22] This incomplete movement—and perhaps this is why we continue to return to the Ode despite its many shortcomings—may resemble the arc of our own narratives—fragmented happenings (deaths, births, decisions, felicities, disasters, etc.) assuming over time not only the shape of a story, but often the form of a topography or map. These retroactive acts of narrative restructuring will come to be known in the early twentieth century as screen memories, associative compromises orchestrated by psychic drives. Thus Wordsworth's theory of infancy anticipates psychoanalytic and phenomenological perspectives on our historical

and embodied being in the world. It anticipates them, and us, so forcefully precisely on the one hand because it fails, because infancy cannot perform the psychic, emotional, social, and aesthetic work that it is continually being asked to do. On the other hand, as I believed my reading of Mill will show, Wordsworth's blank misgivings, his theory of infancy in the Ode, offer us an unparalleled formula for that failure, not merely a frame for our continued revisions and reformations, a way to learn to live with our failures without irritable reaching after fact and causation—but also a way of understanding "the glory and the dream" as themselves fictive back projections. Impermanence and mutability, Wordsworth teaches us, are encoded into the concept of immortality itself.

1.2 Matthew Arnold's Blankness

As Paul de Man and others have pointed out, nineteenth-century readers were deeply ambivalent about Wordsworth's Ode.[23] But it is not merely that these readers had blank misgivings about Wordsworth's theory of infancy. It is also that his new theory of infant freshness and interfusion turned out to be "blank," that is, not empirically provable, as well as a literal "mis-giving," that is, a gift that often seemed to miss its mark, often as much of a curse as a blessing.

This led some Victorian critics to distance themselves from what they saw as Wordsworth's "bad philosophy." Matthew Arnold's 1879 edition of Wordsworth's poems, for example, as Jared Curtis has shown, attempts a kind of revision, a cleansing or classicizing of Wordsworth's poetic legacy. Arnold's stated aim, nearly thirty years after Wordsworth's death, was to make his poetry available to readers of "common intelligence."[24] In the preface to the edition, Arnold refers specifically to the "'intimations' of the famous Ode, those corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth." He claims that the "idea of the high instincts and affections coming out in childhood" has "no real solidity" and therefore cannot possess the "character of poetic truth."[25] Wordsworth's philosophy, he insists, must be dismissed in order that the poetry itself might be appreciated. According to Arnold, the philosophy of the Ode is premised on this previously stated fallacy and fails because it is not universally true. Not everyone, says Arnold, possesses an immediate connection to nature as a child: "many people, perhaps the majority of educated persons" have no connection to nature at all as children, but rather find the love of nature "strong and operative" later in life.[26]

Arnold's refusal of Wordsworth's immortality shows us that he is a good historicist critic, interested in historicizing the particular conditions of childhood, the child, and love of nature. Yet it also shows us that the liberal "turn to nature," popularized though not inaugurated by the "Lake Poets," had already made its way so far inside of culture as to have effaced its point of entry; in other words, Arnold fails to acknowledge that the ways in which "educated persons" came to find the love of nature "strong and operative"

in later life was precisely through the methods and practices established and/or elaborated by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Clare, Shelley, and others.

Nevertheless, Arnold's critique is far-reaching and consequential. By repudiating the "child in nature" motif, Arnold not only repudiates the so-called "romantic notions" of childhood and infancy, he also refuses poetry its universalizing function. For Arnold, a deep skeptic of the romantic, there is no place for Wordsworthian "similitude in dissimilitude"; nor is there a Hegelian absolute subject who is the perfect marriage of universal and particular.[27] This is indeed the argument of *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*; the romantic poet could not produce lasting poetry because his or her culture could not provide the ground for such acts of genius.[28] Arnold's skepticism concerning the link between childhood, nature, and poetry forces a further break with the romantic tradition. In fact, given the close metaphoric relation between childhood, nature, and poetic voice and vocation in book one of *The Prelude* ("Was it for this / That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved / To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song … sent a voice / That flowed along my dreams?") one could even say that, in terms of Wordsworth's poetics, by denying the child its "interfused" relation to the world, and by further desublimating nature, Arnold banishes the possibility of poetic expression—of "lyric"—altogether.[29]

Yet, as with all banishments, there is concomitant return of the repressed. In fact, Arnold's verse is deeply haunted by Wordsworth. Furthermore, when one reads Wordsworth's theory of the infant back through Arnold's own poetry, one sees that the denial of a transcendental origin for the child leads us back to a vacant, vulnerable, and presubjective figure, one that is prefigured elsewhere in Wordsworth's poetry (chiefly, in the *Lyrical Ballads*).[30] This dual aspect of infancy (monstrous and familiar) continues to haunt Arnold and all of Anglo-American poetry down to the present. Arnold's critique allows us to see that it is precisely this gap between the particular and the universal, between experience and recognition, between intuition and concept, which childhood generally represents, and which infancy and, by extension, poetic vocation are miraculously meant to transcend.[31] From this perspective it becomes clear that these seeming incommensurables are not merely inherent to our received conceptions of infancy and lyric, but somehow constitutive of them. And it is this distance or gap that each poetic articulation attempts to bridge and mediate, most often aspiring to appear as one organic unity.[32]

For all of its shortcomings, perhaps the power of Arnold's verse is precisely its refusal of its own Wordsworthian premises. As U. C. Knoepflmacher has demonstrated, Arnold's poetry, especially the poems that wrestle with Wordsworth as progenitor and feature "the child in nature" motif, are marked by a refusal to stage a scene of reconciliation. Thus the poems are notable for their inconsistencies, malformations, and splits. For Knoepflmacher, the speaker in Arnold's poems projects onto the child in nature his own "adult despondency over a universe of fragmentation and pain."[33] Nowhere is this

clearer than in Arnold's 1849 poem, "To a Gipsy Child by the Seashore," in which the speaker anxiously catechizes a voiceless, enigmatic child. Here are its opening stanzas:

> Who taught this pleading to unpractised eyes?
> Who hid such import in an infant's gloom?
> Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise?
> Who mass'd, round that slight brow, these clouds of doom?
>
> Lo! sails that gleam a moment and are gone;
> The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier.
> Not idly Earth and Ocean labour on,
> Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near.
>
> But thou, whom superfluity of joy
> Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings vain,
> Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy—
> Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain;
>
> Thou, drugging pain by patience; half averse
> From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee;
> With eyes which sought thine eyes thou didst converse,
> And that soul-searching vision fell on me.

In what seems like a literary-formal Wordsworthian nightmare, the heroic or elegiac quatrains seem to recall *Lyrical Ballads*, thus collapsing the ode form with the hymn—a hybridization to which I'll return at the end of the chapter.[34] Similarly, the disenchanted Gipsy child with its "pleading" and "unpracticed eyes" seems an impoverished echo of the "blessed babe" of *The Prelude*. Yet unlike its predecessors in Wordsworth, it is refused both voice ("We Are Seven" and "Anecdote for Fathers") and generalization in nature (*The Prelude*, "There Was a Boy," "Nutting," the Ode, etc.). In fact, despite the preposition in the title of the poem—"Child *by* the Seashore"—the child seems entirely denied spatiality or embodiment;[35] its only context is its noncontext, its alienated particularity.[36]

Arnold's question, "WHO taught this pleading to unpracticed eyes," responds to and reframes Wordsworth's earlier question, "WHERE is it now, the glory and the dream?" The child's ontology—its "where-ness"—is not an issue for Arnold. Unlike the "Ode," "To a Gipsy Child" can never situate or posit the child, and thus can never grant it subjectivity.[37] Neither can it adduce, discover, or even quite admit its origin—perhaps this is what constitutes its "gipsy-ness." It does not speak and neither does the poet directly interpose. The poem does, however, attempt several implied identifications. Arnold, in a series of similes rather than apostrophes—refigurations rather than concrete symbols—compares the child to a hermit, an exile, an angel, and, finally, to a stoic (lines 21–32).[38] For Knoepflmacher, these "fictional stereotypes" are "recited to counter Wordsworth's own fiction of the child as Mighty Prophet," its rehearsed fictions of "business, love, or strife."[39]

Since for Arnold the universalized infant is merely a mark of Wordsworth's failed philosophy, nature "naturally" recedes from the child, denying the poet his received authority. In its absence, the child itself becomes a dark emblem of that philosophy. Threatening and haunting rather than comforting, the child suggests a kind of impermeability; it neither embodies nor reflects, and it cannot incorporate nature, voice, origin, or identity. In this way, then, the question of causation or determination asked in the opening strophe ("Who taught this suffering …?") becomes not only an unanswered question about origin and identity, but also an unanswerable one of historical specificity, about belonging and place. Whereas Arnold could argue for a more historically accurate accounting of the child in Wordsworth's Ode, his historicizing project breaks down when it comes to his own poetry and the child. In other words, the poem is unable to recognize or represent the conditions (social, economic, political) that might have produced the pleading eyes of the Gipsy child. While it is certainly possible to read "Gipsy Child"—and Wordsworth's own "Gipsies" ("Yet are they here the same unbroken knot / Of human Beings"), for that matter—in light of their all too palpable orientalism and prejudice, it is also possible to ascribe the sense of alien difference to the strangeness of infancy rather than to the strangeness of ethnicity or culture. In fact, when one reads in this way it becomes clearer that infancy makes gypsies of us all.

These questions get reframed a few years later in Arnold's 1852 poem "The Youth of Nature." Whereas "Gipsy Child" was written when Wordsworth was still alive and could be imagined/catechized in the guise of the gipsy child, "Youth of Nature" comes two years after Wordsworth's death. In a letter, Arnold calls it "Wordsworth's Pindaric," placing it directly in the shadow of the ode.[40] It is not so much an homage to Wordsworth's Ode as an inquiry into what Arnold sees as its problematic premises: on the one hand, its faith in the transcendental and universalizing possibilities of the child in nature and, on the other, the related question of Wordsworth's style. The poem enacts a walking tour of Wordsworthian loci and tropes—for example, "spots" of time or "The sheepfold of Michael." Midway through the poem, the speaker suddenly apostrophizes nature. The questioning is more staged and rhetorical, less anxious than in "Gipsy Child." Arnold acting the inquisitor—of nature this time rather than of the child/poet:

> For oh! is it you, is it you,
> Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,
> And mountains, that fill us with joy,
> Or the poet who sings you so well?
> Is it you, O beauty, O grace,
> O charm, O romance, that we feel,
> Or the voice which reveals what you are?
> Are ye, like daylight and sun,
> Shared and rejoiced in by all?
> Or are ye immersed in the mass

> Of matter, and hard to extract,
> Or sunk at the core of the world
> Too deep for the most to discern?
> Like stars in the deep of the sky,
> Which arise on the glass of the sage,
> But are lost when their watcher is gone.[41]

The openness of the question is accentuated by the apostrophic repetitions of "O" juxtaposed against the repeated "Or." According to established theories of lyric voice, the figure of apostrophe would ordinarily open up a self-reflexive dialogue, constituting the poet as speaking subject in relation to its object.[42] Here those reciprocating gestures are refused. In fact, apostrophe figures in both of the poems we have looked at by Arnold, and in each case its self-authorizing functions are frustrated. Whereas a blank stare answers the speaker in "To a Gipsy Child"—apostrophe rebuffed by a look—the next verse paragraph in "Youth of Nature" actually features nature's reply, a response that carries until the end of the poem. Thus, what first appears to be a Wordsworthian apostrophe ("Thou best philosopher") turns out in Arnold's poem to be a weaker form of invocation. The questions enumerated by the speaker lose their philosophic character and become flat and rhetorical. Nature, by virtue of its immortality, wins: "They [the poets] are dust, they are chang'd, they are gone. I [nature] remain."[43] Thematically Miltonic (one hears echoes of "Lycidas"), the poem reproduces the tropes of heaven and hell, but does so only within a strictly Platonic schema.[44]

In Arnold's aesthetics the poet and nature do not collaborate: "There is not a line or an image in 'The Youth of Nature' that enacts, or even speaks of fusion or combination between the mind and the natural world."[45] "The lost "watcher" of line 74 is certainly Wordsworth—but also the empiricist philosopher who cannot quite guarantee matter's existence in the world, as well as the child-as-poet, who, if the language of the *Prelude* is to be believed, experiences an "intellectual intuition" that transcends the merely sensual.

By refusing Wordsworth's universalization of the child, Arnold's nature must either be conceptualized as mute matter, speaking only via divine/poetic "discernment," denied to us "at the present time," or as having a voice of its own that requires only transcription, as opposed, that is, to translation. The hyperbolic voice at the end of "Youth of Nature" in berating the speaker makes the case for a complete separation between the natural and the human realms:

> Race after race, man after man,
> Have dreamed that my secret was theirs,
> Have thought that I liv'd but for them,
> That they were my glory and joy.—
> They are dust, they are chang'd, they are gone.
> I remain. (129–134)

By making nature speak directly, the poem disempowers the figure of the child/poet/interpreter. Thus, prosopopoeia loses its power as a trope and becomes an argument for stoicism, a revelation of our powerlessness in the face of an all-powerful nature. Here Arnold grants to nature its immortality. But in so doing, because there are no intimations, no avenues of communication, there is only dull oratory. Imagine Wordsworth's infant "best philosopher" answering back at the end of the Ode and you get the sense of empty rhetoric here.

In this way, the poem reveals an ultimate blankness at the core of Arnold's subject. Wordsworth's "spots of time" are recreated by Arnold ("The spots which recall him survive"), but they are now only geographic, textual, and characterological particulars, or rather traces of the particular: "The sheepfold of Michael survives … By the favourite waters of Ruth," but it has no narrative function outside of metalepsis.[46] According to this logic, "moonlight, and shadow, and lake, / and mountains" (i.e., material aspects of the world) cannot be abstracted by poetic or philosophical work as "Beauty … Grace … Charm … [and] … Romance." They are thus forever external, not only to the domain of poetry, but presumably to all human endeavors, philosophy and history as well.

I think it is reasonable to attribute at least some of Arnold's blank misgivings to his rather narrow theory of history. That is, he treats history with a capital "H," as a "natural" process of cyclical change rather than as anamnesis, negotiation, and struggle.[47] As is evident in "The Function of Criticism," Arnold expresses an absolute faith that the power of the moment and the power of the man at certain moments perfectly align, and only under such circumstances can lasting art be produced.[48] Perhaps this absolute faith in the separateness of man and moment blinds him to the possibilities of Wordsworth's construal of infancy. Furthermore, perhaps it is this inability to grant or even conceive of the possibility of natality, of something new being born into the world through struggle, that leads him to say, rather churlishly, "It might seem that Nature not only gave him [Wordsworth] the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him. He has no style."[49] We will return to the style of the Ode at the end of this chapter, but I want to at least hold open the idea that infancy—in the form of retranscription, anamnesis, struggle—might bear more importantly than we have so far been willing to concede on our capacity not just to reimagine our personal history, but also to reimagine literary history (genre and form as well as style) and social relatedness more generally.

1.3 Moving About in Worlds Not Realized

We have seen that Arnold's engagement with Wordsworth's poetics results in a poetics of blank intimations. The nightmare of culture for Arnold, and perhaps for all of us, is a world where intimations are separated from their objects. An intransitive intimation is akin to a neurological misfire, a feeling

cut off from all conception. Arnold's refusal of any meaningful connection between intimation and immortality not only situates infancy and adulthood at opposite unbridgeable extremes, but also sets the stage for Arnold's own ultimate retirement from poetry, his own surrender to the "power of [a] moment" unsuited for poetic expression. Wordsworth himself must have wrestled with this blankness. For nearly two years he was unable to finish the Ode. When, after a period of gestation, he was finally able to give not merely a voice to his intimations but also a name, he not only establishes a new relation between the lyric and the infant, but, through the twin topoi of immortality and infancy, he also encodes timelessness into the modern conceptions of lyric temporality.

But if immortality needs intimation in order to be experienced or accessed, how are we to understand what Wordsworth means by intimation? Daniel Ross usefully suggests that Wordsworth's inability "to explain, rationalize, or articulate his intimations" reveals his uncanny relationship to death, the maternal, and the domestic realm more generally.[50] As Ross points out, Wordsworth's use of the term is complicated and over-determined from the start. We know the word means something like "to announce"; it also can signify an "expression by sign or token, an indication, a suggestion, a hint" (all definitions from the OED). This first definition—announcement—I take to be operative in Arnold's critique of the Ode. Wordsworth's intimation of a connection to the natural world is interpreted by Arnold as prophetic, which perhaps explains why he takes such pains to disprove its universality.

However, there is another usage, connected to the Late Latin (possibly borrowed from Italian): *intimare*—to make intimate, to familiarize—and I suggest that we read the Ode as responding to and expressing this intimate dimension as well. Wordsworth uses the word elsewhere in connection to childhood and infancy, perhaps most notably in "Fly some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale," written in the intermediate year (1803) between the composition of stanzas I–IV (1802) and the remainder of the Ode (1804). The sonnet describes a day of homecoming for the speaker, in which he returns to his infant son after a walking tour of Scotland. The sestet contains the reference:

> And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
> Yea, let our Mary's one companion child—
> That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
> With intimations manifold and dear,
> While we have wandered over wood and wild—
> Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

That the infant expresses intimations—manifold, dear, beguiling—seems immediately clear. The child, the poet's son John Wordsworth, was only three months old when the poem was composed. It strains credulity to ascribe to the infant any sense of announcement or proclamation here. It seems equally unlikely that the baby means to hint or suggest anything.

What we are left with, I argue, is intimation as an aspect of intimate communication.[51] This communication takes the same imperative mood (*let* Joy appear … *let* the infant smile) that Wordsworth favors in the Ode: "let the young Lambs bound," and so on. Notice also that intimations are "beguiling" as well as "manifold" and "dear," suggesting that the infant interrupts Mary's solitude with a form of communication that is at once familiar and strange. I suggest therefore that we read these intimations as extra-linguistic or paraverbal forms of communication, not just as openings onto new discursive realms, but also as a presage of new forms of lyric intimacy.

In fact, Wordsworth opens his first "Upon Epitaphs" essay from 1810 with a disquisition on the necessity of these types of intimations. Working from a book by John Weever on funeral rights in England, ca. 1767, Wordsworth comments on the natural existence of "forefeelings of immortality": "the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance."[52] He is at pains to explain the unique mechanism within us that would cause us to desire to be remembered. "Mere love" he writes, could not have produced it. For Wordsworth, it seems that this longing to be remembered marks a limit between the animal and the human. A dog or a horse, which "perishes in the field," cannot anticipate the sense of sorrow that his death will cause for his fellow animals. Yet even our faculty of reason, when added to the principle of love, "which exists in the inferior animals," is still not enough to account for this desire.[53] Some other force or principle is at work. There must be some "intermediate thought." Wordsworth names this the "intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable."[54]

Wordsworth imagines and addresses an interlocutor, an "unfolder of the mysteries of nature," a pre-Arnoldian disenchanter of the child: "… though he may have forgotten his former self, [has he] ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination?"[55] Notice the repetition of "obstinate" from stanza 9 of the Ode: "obstinate questionings / Of sense and outward things."[56] He uses a running stream, his own signature trope for poetic origination, voice, and rhythm in Book One of *The Prelude*, in order to express the inseparability of the child's correlation of questions of origination and tendency. Never, he argues, does the child wonder whence without also wondering whither. And since implied in the "spirit" of any answer must be that the river runs to infinity, the child's curiosity, unlike the river, flows in both directions—to the *ontos* as well as the *telos*. For Wordsworth, as the "Immortality Ode" makes clear, origin and tendency answer the same question; the whither and the whence are inextricably entwined: "God, who is our home" is the soul's one true destination.

These two dimensions, past and future, are reproduced spatially for Wordsworth—not as *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, but rather as forms of relation to a dynamic world of objects that surrounds the infant and seem

to interpenetrate her/his sphere. Our sense of imperishability and desire to be known after death, to be inscribed on an epitaph, develops more or less at the moment that we begin to love, and to develop worldly desire, once the "*social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects."[57] "The sense of immortality," he continues, "if not a coexistent and twin birth of Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out."[58] Thus, somewhat uncharacteristically for Wordsworth, he claims that, in this account, reason precipitates feeling and affection—but it is reason twinborn or pregnant with a sense of intimate and affective assurance.[59] For Joan Copjec, this modern sense of immortality is synonymous with the body and its drives, specifically the death drive. On this reading, Wordsworth's "human affections" are the by-products of a constant process of sublimation ("influxes" and "modifications," he writes in the "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*"), whose goal it is to "bridge the gap between singularity and sociality."[60] Wordsworth suggests that all of our affections spring from just such an "intermediate thought," an intimation that from the beginning we are connected with (reliant on) external objects. Here again we have a double bind: we enter into a dream of timelessness at the precise moment that we emerge from our fantasy of in-separateness from others.[61]

In Wordsworth's speculations on infancy we see again a presage of psychoanalytic theory; he suggests that there is something terrifying as well as comforting in our infantile states of enmeshment and interconnectedness. Remembering decades later the important factors in the Ode's composition, Wordsworth writes in a well known note to Isabel Fenwick that as a child he simply could not accept the brute fact of his mortality. Because of his inability "to think of external things as having external existence" he would begin to imagine he was interpenetrated by and interpenetrating with external objects: "Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality."[62] If we read this famous note with a conventional understanding of the terms "reality" and "idealism," then it makes some sort of strange sense. An imaginative boy, having an intense fantasy of being one with all external objects, might reach out to a wall or tree in order to ground himself in the objective world. Yet Wordsworth's own theory argues that an intimation of immortality is "conjoined" with the sense of reason at precisely the moment when the subject begins to differentiate and connect to "a wide range of objects." Following this logic, external objects would be a part of the subject insofar as they are, in Wordsworth's words, "inherent" in his own nature. Therefore, when Wordsworth reaches back to touch the wall, he is not so much recalled to reality (the interconnectedness of all things—i.e., immortality) as he is to ideality (the dream of a purely autonomous being—the possibility of finite separateness). The trunk of the tree or the plaster of the wall recalls the boy from the timelessness of immortality to the bounded touch

of intimation. So whereas on the one hand immortality is the answer to the problem of mutability and death, it is also, when unbounded, abyssal and terrifying. This, I think, is why Coleridge finds the link between immortality and the unconscious infant so horrifying. The infant's unconsciousness of its difference from God or mother means not merely that it is incapable of philosophic reflection, but also, through a reversal of the metonymy, infancy itself might come to take on the abyssal and terrifying aspect of the unbounded divine.

Consider in this regard Wordsworth's aforementioned child gazing at the river in "Upon Epitaphs," wondering not only where it is going but also from whence it came. As Adam Potkay's recent reading of this passage suggests, Wordsworth's concern here is less the afterlife than what he terms an "impersonal immortality."[63] The child receives intimations from the river. He or she understands in a flash the concept of immortality. The water that falls as rain and snow and feeds the river is only different in form, not substance, from the sea into which the river flows. Thus, the child understands that the flow of time works in exactly this way—recursively. Wordsworth images this temporal recursivity in the first lines of his sonnet "Mutability": "From low to high doth dissolution climb, / And sink from high to low …" Every moment, like every objective form, is mutable, transient, and reversible: as the Ode suggests, our moments are part of the "eternal silence." Our experience in a world of objects is precious because we intimate that moments and objects pass away almost before they can be registered. Yet it is terrifying because of our intimate connectedness; when a moment passes, part of us seems to pass as well. Wordsworth makes this link explicit in "There was a Boy". The death of the Winander boy seems to follow almost naturally from his interpenetration with "silent" nature. When a moment returns in memory or vision—in a spot of time—then we are confronted with a synchronous repetition. Levinson hints at this possibility in her reading of the Ode, suggesting that the "Immortality Ode" depicts a traumatic return of revolutionary feeling, an intimation of Wordsworth's earlier self (his "glad animal movement all gone by"), and it is this earlier self that must be regulated or integrated in the epode.[64] It seems to me that it is precisely this darker intimation—what will come to be theorized as the death drive, our ambivalence about immortality, our *disposition* "to bend to the law of death" rather than our indisposition—that causes the youthful Wordsworth to instinctively reach out, to latch onto the "unreality" rather than the "reality" of the world, to latch on perhaps even to language, that most unreal thing, to "con another part."[65]

1.4 Trailing Clouds of Glory

The turn from Arnold to J. S. Mill represents a turn from a reading of Wordsworth's Ode that denies it its transcendental character to one that wholeheartedly embraces it. Mill's narrative of overcoming his depression,

which resulted from an "unnatural" and "experimental" education, by reading Wordsworth's poetry is one of the most well known and fascinating accounts of the salutary effects of verse. Faced with a painful depression, Mill turned to poetry to help to break the "dry heavy dejection of the melancholy winter of 1826–1827."[66] He begins by establishing a triad of poets for consideration. Byron, whom Mill knows and acknowledges is the superior poet, cannot relieve Mill of his dejection. Coleridge proves perfect for describing his dilemma but is unable to effect a cure. Mill ultimately gravitates toward Wordsworth, whose poems and, more to the point, philosophy seem tailor-made for Mill's recuperation.

> What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed, not outward beauty but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty"—i.e., it is already conditioned beauty—its value is precisely that of mediation, an immediate mediation. …—they seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which I was in quest of.[67]

Although he specifically praises the Ode and its evocation of the child, it is ultimately neither with the child nor with nature itself exactly that Mill identifies so completely, but rather with the nature of the poet:

> I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it.[68]

While Mill finds an allegory and an analogue in Wordsworth, it is useful to remember that what first began to "cure" the philosopher of his dejection was not Wordsworth or poetry at all. Rather, Mill had been "reading, accidentally, Marmontel's memoirs," when he "came to the passage where [Marmontel] relates his father's death … and how he, then a mere boy, by a sudden inspiration, felt and made them feel that he would be everything, would supply the place of everything to them." From this moment, writes Mill, his "burthen grew lighter."[69] Perhaps it is not surprising that Mill, who in many ways was haunted and shadowed by his father's life, should be moved or "lightened" by the story of the death of the father. Yet the prose narrative merely opens Mill's imagination, making room for another object to enter in. Through Wordsworth, Mill discovers, in his mourning, not just the mediating power of intimation, but also its structure. The immortality of the infant is the unconscious ground of intimation precisely because of its paradoxically singular universality. What Coleridge calls the "absurdity" of the infant in the Ode, its complete conflation with timelessness and vastness, gives to Mill a way to organize his fragmentary intimations into what will prove to be a redemptive narrative.[70]

Here I am pointing to a correlation between the structure of Mill's account of coming to "accidentally" embrace Wordsworth (through reading Martmontel) and the synthetic structure of the romantic ode more generally. Abrams writes that these types of poems are attempts to "transform a segment of experience broken out of time into a sufficient aesthetic whole."[71] Like screen memories, they provide, in other words, a posteriori syntheses. The point for these lyric forms is not merely to "return" in the form of a rondo or dance, but to put "experience broken out of time" to specific (personal and collective) aesthetic, psychoaffective, and psychosocial use. It seems that Mill, writing many decades after the fact, uses Martmontel and Wordsworth in the construction of a new history.[72]

In keeping with the constructivist logic of screen memories, Mill's evocation of a "first freshness of youthful enjoyment" seems entirely fictive, given that there does not seem to be any trace of these feelings in Mill's descriptions of his early life in the autobiography. As I have intimated, it is almost as if the poem and the figure of the child make possible a reclamation of a history that never was. Perhaps this is not surprising given that the "Immortality Ode" (and the romantic lyric more generally) plays out its redemptive themes on the razor's edge of seeming and being: "There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, / the earth, and every common sight, / To me did *seem* / Appareled in celestial light."[73] This Platonic qualification of appearance—remember Wordsworth's injunction against the "tyranny of the eye"—begs the question of whether the "lost" glorified state of awareness was original or merely the psychically necessary "working over" of memory.[74] Later, in the poem's penultimate stanza, Wordsworth grounds his invocation of the philosophic mind in the essentializing logic of "primal sympathy": "having been, [it] must always be."[75] Thus, employing a similar formula ("if you miss something you must have had it"), Mill is able to construct an idealized childhood indirectly through his triangulated identification with the "best philosopher of the poem," the incorporated child within the textual voice of the poem and the imagined poet-surrogate.

As the slippage from *being* to *seeming* in the poem's opening suggests, there is an explicit tension in this passage between the remembered spatiotemporal idea of infancy ("there was a time") and that of a secondary displacement or "re-positioning"[76] (the "now" of the first strophe). As Cathy Caruth has written, infancy and childhood have important structural roles to play in forming an idea of the self: "Childhood is indeed nothing other here than the name of the threatening relation between the mind and itself, conceived as a past and a present, a present mind threatened by a past one."[77] Infancy then forms an a priori condition, necessary for the ideological or mythical a posteriori functioning of the poem. In fact, most commentators read the ambivalence that Wordsworth expresses as precisely the cost of such compensation, effects of the strain the reality principle dictates. Mill himself, in the course of defending Wordsworth in debate, understood the "mere animal delights" of an earlier time to be irrecuperable and in time

were replaced by others.[78] For Mill, the culture of feeling must be established through an active (i.e., aesthetic) reconstruction of a *fictive* childhood, a "now" that, as it were, constructs its own constitutive "then." At another point in the autobiography, Mill echoes Wordsworth's philosophy in "Lines Written in Early Spring" ("To her fair works did nature link / The human soul that through me ran"): "… the destiny of mankind in general was ever in my thoughts, and could not be separated from my own. I felt that the flaw in my life, must be a flaw in life itself. …"[79] Mill's claims for these (nature–human) links as well as the therapeutic use of Wordsworth's "immediate mediation" argue for the mediative function of poetry in general and the romantic lyric in particular. Read against Arnold's skepticism, Mill revalues poetic practice, placing its universal and transcendental aspects, rather than its estranging and particularizing ones, at the apex.[80]

The point, my point, is not to privilege one or the other readings or responses to the Ode. Rather, I think that Arnold and Mill, when taken together, allow us to register the full impact of Wordsworth's conception of infancy as indexical to his concept of immortality. Paul de Man refers to the "enigmatic aspect of Wordsworth," what is "unnamed and undefined" in his poetry, and what interpreters, through their narrowness, want to domesticate.[81] Arguably, both Arnold and Mill seek to domesticate immortality and intimation respectively; that is, they each instrumentalize the poem, as all readers must. Mill's reading of Wordsworth's intimation, closer to the second definition given—an "indication"—is perhaps easier to put into practice. It helps to explain Mill's emphasis on Wordsworth's depictions of "states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling."[82] Borrowing from Mill's famous distinction between eloquence and poetry, we might say that he reads Wordsworth's intimations as poetic utterances, mixtures of internal concepts and external perceptions, affect and cognition.[83] Arnold, on the other hand, read him literally, "eloquently," and thus reveals for us a positivism and paradox at the heart of his thought. Whereas Mill's reading of the Ode reveals for us the structure of working through, Arnold reveals the repetition compulsion at the heart of our conceptions of infancy. This should not surprise us. As nearly every commentator on the Ode has pointed out, the poem eludes our grasp precisely to the degree that we take its propositions seriously.

1.5 Our Souls Have Sight: Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defense

Wordsworth and Coleridge's warning concerning the tyranny of the "bodily eye" has been commented on thoroughly in the literature. In psychoanalytic language, this could be phrased: what seems self-evident and crystal clear to us is most often the opposite of the truth.[84] The Fenwick note on the Ode demonstrates the obverse, a typical Wordsworthian paradox: that which is experienced as lost or vanishing is simultaneously experienced as

unnaturally present, that is, nostalgically longed for *and* traumatically excessive. Given this paradox and despite the speaker's repeated complaint of a loss or diminishment of experience, I have suggested that it is at least as terrifying to encounter the infinity of experience, its complete abyss of "shadowy recollections," as it is to contemplate its absence or loss. We might read this double bind as the double bind of modernity. Giorgio Agamben, for example, locates this difficulty in what he calls the "historico-transcendental dimension" of infancy.[85] Wordsworth describes this imaginative dimension within in the epode of the Ode:

> Hence in a season of calm weather
> Though inland far we be
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the Children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
>
> 165–171

Countless critics have seen this passage as vital.[86] What is being offered here I would argue is neither synthesis nor return, but rather the intimation of an unnamable origin. The immortal sea here is a synonym for infancy, a state that can be accessed (seen, heard) at any time, at any point. As its position in the Ode suggests, this crossing over—a return, which is not quite a return—does not constitute a resolution. And while the synchronicity of "in a moment travel thither" suggests something like transcendence, it further suggests unhindered transport (back and forth) between the socialized world of semantic "meaning" and an earlier state of intimate, paraverbal communication.[87] Part of Wordsworth's innovation is to spatialize this split, giving it a timeless geography, in several shorter poems, including "There was a Boy," "Anecdote for Fathers," and "The Thorn," as well as in the epode of the ode ("Hence in a season of fair weather, though inland far we be …"). This collapse of space and time is dynamic and responsive. As we have seen, infancy arises in precisely this theoretical way in order to deal with the problem of the universal and the particular ("But there's a Tree, of many, one, / A single Field which I have looked upon, / Both of them speak of something that is gone"). Intimations of this reading permeate many critiques of the Ode. Wimsatt's reading, for example, suggests an "imposition" of the imagination through which infancy/experience can be imagined spatially, as a site that is not external;[88] the distance between the sea's edge and the island center, which can be traveled (by the soul—thus internally) in an instant, presents us with an image of the collapsed immediacy of experience. Whereas Arnold's "To a Gipsy Child" holds everything in abeyance, locked into a forbidding universe of empty signification, the Ode's "bad philosophy," its recurring intimations or apertures, allows for

movement, mutuality, and modification, as indicated by the privileging of the murky, qualified, and vertiginous states of "vanishings" and "blank misgivings."

Yet I believe that we should resist reading the Ode as inscribing a threshold (semiotic, psychoanalytic, or otherwise) in the development of the child: on one side are heaven, nature, and freedom; on the other are forgetfulness, earthly distractions, and the entrapment of culture. It seems truer to the poem and more productive to think along with Agamben and other postclassical psychoanalytic thinkers in terms of positions, movement, and rhythms rather than of fixed, hierarchical stages. At the end of his life, Freud himself begins to move beyond thinking in stages. The central metaphor in this revision is his influential yet brief description of ego "splitting" in "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process." The child chooses not to choose between pleasure and reality, or chooses to have them both (Freud says this amounts to the same thing).[89] Object relations theorist Melanie Klein both anticipates and extends Freud's theory. Thus begins an ongoing process of revising Freud's nineteenth-century notion of stages, development, and *bildung* in the direction of "position." Rather than pass through developmental stages, Klein argues that we occupy "positions," such as the depressive position and the paranoid-schizoid position.[90] As with Agamben's theory of infancy, the threshold of a position is traversable in either direction without necessarily constituting a negative regression. As Juliet Mitchell writes, Klein's theory of position suggests "an always available state, not something one passes through."[91] As Andre Green suggests that splitting allows us to imagine a nonrepressive way of working through a problem. This is because "in splitting, the relationship is horizontal; the reason of the ego and the reason of the instinctive demands coexist in the same psychic space."[92]

In part, what I am suggesting is that we read the imaginative and affective mobility at play in Wordsworth's Ode—"Hence in a season of fair weather …"—as evincing the possibility of movement across or shuttling between these emotional and psychic states or positions. John Turner and Mary Jacobus each read the Ode similarly, that is, in terms of Winnicott's area of play.[93] In this aperture or opening, we are able to reimage but also to reposition, to begin again. Agamben further suggests that in order to understand this renewal and repositioning, we must move beyond our received understandings of origin: "The origin of a 'being' of this kind [the infant] cannot be *historicized,* because it is itself *historicizing*, and itself founds the possibility of there being any 'history.'"[94] In this way, the Ode demonstrates the power of this process of anamnesis, again, a process that Lyotard opposes to history: we are able to traverse various (but not innumerable) positions or intimations, recombining our fragments improvisatorially into a myriad of patterns that we call the self. As Freud's late essay on interminability in psychoanalysis suggests, our individual histories and struggles contribute only partially to our restlessness. He argues that our constant

remaking of the self also involves instinctive fusion and diffusion.[95] On this reading, to have an intimation of immortality would mean to unconsciously and compulsively touch upon our limits, borders, and origins, with an understanding that they are always shifting and in flux. Wordsworth reveals for us therefore yet another distance, seemingly immutable but traversable in the imagination just the same, in this case between the "inland-ness" of our present position and the imagined shore "which brought us hither."

1.6 Epiphanic Abortions

I want to end this chapter by looking more closely at changes in the Pindaric ode form and its relation to the term "lyric." Recently, in her long and strongly argued note on "Lyric" in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Virginia Jackson reads Coleridge and Wordsworth as participating in an effort to consolidate all poetry as lyric, but which resulted instead in confusing genres and opening a space for the philosophical idealization of all lyric—that is, all lyric contributes to the production of subjectivity; all lyric is dialectical, etc. Along with Yopie Prins, Jackson has argued that the history of "lyricization of all verse genres" begins as an "abstraction that could contain various verse genres" and by the twentieth century becomes, for better and for worse, a "real genre."[96] If, as Jackson argues, Wordsworth is an important player in this drama, then the Ode, especially given its pride of place in the pantheon of the "greater romantic lyric," is an absolutely essential text. We have already seen how the story that I recount here gives credence to the arguments of those in historical poetics who see a confusion of, if not a flattening out of, generic difference in nineteenth-century criticism. Yet we have also seen how resistant, recursive, and resilient the poem itself proves to be. It seems clear not only that infancy/anamnesis plays an important role in the history of the hybridization of genre, form, and feeling, but also that it in some sense destabilizes our critical attempts to name and categorize what lyric is and how it functions.[97]

Indeed, we have seen how the "Immortality Ode" so often seems at odds with itself. Hartman calls the pseudo-Pindaric poems written in the tradition to which the Ode belongs "interesting epiphanic abortions."[98] Paul Fry calls the ode form a "refuge for confusion; it both reflects and deepens uncertainties that will not lend themselves to forthright treatment."[99] I take both of these figures (abortion and refuge) as fortuitous to my reading. As we have seen, the infant in the Ode enters—initially in stanza V—in order to perform a linking function, connecting past and present, life and death, distance and proximity. And yet as Jarvis argues, the triadic cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (turn, counterturn, stand) both does and does not take place in the Ode. This leads Francis Ferguson to comment on the poem's ultimate failure to make connections.[100] It seems as though the ambiguity that results from anamnesis/remembrance/retranscription—an idea of the

self as movement and change—is reinforced by a correlative ambiguity embedded in the very form of the ode itself. As Hartman makes clear, "the irregular rhythms, a privilege of the ode form, work independently of specific stanza or stage of argument to express the flux and reflux of a mind for which reversal is no longer simply the structure of experience but its own structure, its very *style* of thought."[101]

Mill and Arnold contributed, in differing degrees and ways, to our understanding of the Ode's prosodic form. Mill, a critic whose argument about "overheard" speech versus eloquence is perhaps the most responsible—for good and ill—for our contemporary conceptions of lyric, does not speak about the ode form directly. He does claim, however, in "Two Kinds of Poetry" that, unlike Shelley's, Wordsworth's poetry is "deliberate" and linked by thought rather than feeling.[102] For Mill, the dialectical procedures of the ode are deliberately fashioned by Wordsworth, part of a movement of thought that the reader can follow and emulate.

In contrast to Mill's oblique references to the genre, Arnold used his role as editor to make more specific, if implicit, formal claims about Wordsworth's Ode. In his attempt to improve on Wordsworth's own mode of categorizing his poetry—he termed it a "scheme of mental physiology"[103]—Arnold relocated the Ode, moving it from Wordsworth's chosen position as the culmination of his *Collected Poems* to a section entitled "Poems Akin to the Antique, and Odes." This points therefore to a deeper problem of categorization. As Curran and others have noted, the use of irregular line lengths in the English ode is an effect of attempting to translate the form from the Greek. Yet, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, irregular line lengths, rhyme schemes, and other structuring features begin to detach themselves from the classical Pindaric form and take on their own force and meaning within the history of the English ode. We see this in Wordsworth's Ode to the extent that the alternating sections intimate a kind of formal resolution in the poem. While a more general dialectical synthesis, as Abrams has famously argued, was already inscribing itself in the romantic lyric during this period, Wordsworth's Ode retains the prosodic structure of the classical Pindaric. Arnold's repositioning of the poem, not merely denying it its pride of place as the ultimate poem in the collection but also banishing it from the "lyrical" poems, suggests that for him its "kinship" is formal or generic rather than psychological or spiritual. Mill, on the other hand, clearly reads the poem as lyric, as "feeling confessing itself to itself."[104] Furthermore, although, as we have seen, he speaks openly of the poem's defects, acknowledging, for example, its "bad philosophy," Mill hears in the poem "more than [Wordsworth's] usual sweetness of melody and rhythm."[105] Since elsewhere Mill refers to Wordsworth's genius as "essentially unlyrical," I want to suggest that this "more than … usual sweetness" is in fact an aftereffect of the ode form—specifically the reiterated rhyme sounds of the dimeter and trimeter lines—as opposed, say, to the ballad, sonnet, or blank verse forms that Wordsworth tended to favor in Wordsworth's 1815 selected edition, which Mill preferred.

I am arguing, following Levinson, Hartman, and Curran, that the ode form itself works as a spur for personal synthesis, that is, the production of new tentative subjectivities or selves, an effect that Mill's account of the Ode seems to validate.

So what we are left with in the Ode is a hybrid form, one that both does and does not resolve.[106] In this sense it mirrors the argument of the poem, which has the form of resolution without the effects of ideational, psychic, or emotional closure. The great nineteenth- and twentieth-century prosodist George Saintsbury, in his history of English prosody, identifies what he calls "modern" or "quasi-Pindarics" arising in the eighteenth century.[107] These are "staves varied in line-length but destitute of rhyme."[108] And while the Ode is in no sense "rhyme-less" (although Arnold's Pindarics certainly were), it is nonetheless neither a nonce form nor a serious attempt to reimagine the classical form. As is quite clear in other contexts, Saintsbury (like Abrams after him) would sometimes refer to the prosodic aspects of the Pindaric—rhyme-less-ness, varied line lengths, irregular stress patterning, etc.—and sometimes to the triadic form of argument and thought, a kind of dialectical vestige of an earlier, more classical form. The tension between these two definitions—a prosodic structure versus a rhetorical one—suggests a certain unconscious hybridization of form and feeling. On this reading, what has often been taken as Wordsworth's disparagement of poetic form might be better understood as a privileging of forms of intimation (constant "influxes" of sensation and thought, writes Wordsworth in the *Preface*) over received literary form, and that this, as much as anything, accounts for the production of Wordsworth's "style of thought." Furthermore, if, as has been argued, the romantic lyric begins its movement toward codification with *Lyrical Ballads,* then perhaps there's a way to understand the collapse of genre and form as related to the argument about the Pindaric and lyric more generally, and thus an argument about the codification of the lyric subject, related, I argue, to the figure of the infant. After all, the lyrical ballads were not all ballads; especially with the addition of Coleridge's "conversation" poem "Nightingale: an Ode" and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," the genre lines within the project were intensely and, it seems, purposely blurred.[109] Perhaps after *Lyrical Ballads* on some level, all Anglo-American poetry is, to some degree, "lyric," promising not so much fullness and completion but rather partial acts of making and remaking a self. Similarly, after the Ode, on some level this poetic subjectivity, especially as imaged in the romantic and postromantic ode, has infancy and anamnesis as part of its backstory, if not at the core of its structure.

Therefore, I am not talking about "mixed genres," at least not primarily.[110] Instead I am talking about blended structures of feeling, the ways in which certain ideological thoughts and feelings get formally expressed in the poetry of the period. Infancy's relation to literary history, considered along these lines, communicates a formal as well as ideological effect. Consider that Coleridge responded to Wordsworth's Ode by writing "Dejection: an

Ode." It has the same irregular form and, while seemingly quite different in tone and tenor, infancy—here in the form of the "little child"—functions in a more or less identical fashion, rushing into the epode in order to suture over, in both form and idea, a seemingly irresolvable problem:

> It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
> A tale of less affright,
> And tempered with delight,
> As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,—
> 'Tis of a little child
> Upon a lonesome wild,
> Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
> And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
> And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

In a way, then, and in these poems perhaps more than in any other, we witness the codification of Abrams's argument about the "Greater Romantic Lyric," his recognition that a certain dialecticism begins to permeate lyric, the overcoming of "dualism" that he sees being attempted in the transition from Cowper, Bowles, and Gray to Wordsworth and Coleridge. In this penultimate stanza in "Dejection," not only is the image of the child smuggled in—reimaged—in order to save the speaker from solipsistic self-pity (and thus allow the "blessing" that Abrams claims for poems of this type), but the splitting required in the subject (to occupy both the "position" of the speaker and the "position" of the infant) is doubled in the splitting of the line through the shortened line lengths: "A tale of less affright, / And tempered with delight." This otherwise "interlaced" or "caesural" rhyme (imagine the line uncut: "A tale of less affright, and tempered with delight …") intensifies the musicality in the line, driving "fright" and "delight" together (ideational if not categorical opposites), at once amplifying pathos and calming the anxiety of the situation. Wordsworth's Ode drives infancy as object and infancy as form together in precisely the same way, that is, in the space of a line break, except here with the balladic feeling of a split fourteener: "**Migh**ty **Proph**et! **S**eer **blest**! / On **whom** those **truths** do **rest**."

According to Nathaniel Teich, Pindaric odes were traditionally meant to serve as a "bridge between the human and the spiritual world" and romantic-era poets "radically appropriat[ed] certain classic elements … reinvesting them with a new spirit."[111] Teich's argument is completely consistent with Wordsworth's practice: in his preface to the 1815 poems, he de-differentiates the ode form by subsuming it under the "Lyrical," thus linking modern and classical structures.[112] Furthermore, I have argued throughout this chapter that Wordsworth's formal linkage of classical and modern structures is inseparable from his "bad philosophy," which links the human and the spiritual through the mediation of infancy. The Ode thus similarly invites the reader to traverse personal, period, and genre boundaries. The very form

of the ode structure itself becomes a kind of frame for containing blank misgivings—a holding environment if you will. Thus Arnold's inability to find a place for the infant in his poetry, to suture the modern and the classical, becomes not only a lament for something lost in our experience, but also a meditation on the changes within the ode form itself. Perhaps the recent attention to the lyricizing of all poetic genre and form, by responding to a similar conflation of forms, feelings, and genres in flux, can be read similarly, as a call not only to historicize, but also to map out these new lyric territories.[113] If so, it behooves us all the more to study these epiphanic abortions (to take Hartman's metaphor seriously), to read the link to human infancy within a broader and more diverse—and precisely poetic—set of social and cultural contexts.[114]

Notes

An early version of this chapter was invited and appears as "Reforming the Child: Infancy and the Reception of Wordsworth's Ode" in *Romanticism and Parenting: Image, Instruction and Ideology*, edited by Carolyn Weber. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007.

1. "Scriptures: Diffracted Traces." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (February 2004), 102.
2. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (London: E. Moxon, 1876), 464.
3. Writing about the paintings of Bracha Ettinger, Lyotard associates anamnesis with psychoanalytic "working through" (*perlaboration*); opposed to "history," it is "immemorial" and "interminable." Lyotard, Jean-François. "Anamnesis: Of the Visible." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (February 2004), 109.
4. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 619.
5. *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 78.
6. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Biographia Literaria or My Literary Life and Opinions." In *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 398.
7. Quoted in Wordsworth, Christopher. *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (London: E. Moxon, 1851), 476.
8. See Harold Bloom. *The Visionary Company; a Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963); Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 206 pp. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Ferguson, Frances. *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit*, xvii, 263 pp. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Hartman, Geoffrey H. *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1814* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964); Jarvis, Simon. *Wordsworth's Philosophic Song* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Levinson, Marjorie. *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
9. I will return to the "problem" of the Pindaric—that is, its claims for formal closure—at the end of this chapter.
10. See Chandler, James. "Wordsworth's Great Ode: Romanticism and the Progress of Poetry." In *The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 151; Wierda Rowland, Ann. *Romanticism and Childhood: The Infantilization of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 57–60.

11. Cleanth Brooks asserts that the "woeful anticlimax" of the poem contains "some vagueness" and "loose ends," "Wordsworth and the Paradox of the Imagination." In *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), 186.
12. Jarvis, *Wordsworth's Philosophic Song,* 136, 213.
13. Curtis, Jared R. *Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition: The Lyric Poems of 1802 with Texts of the Poems Based on Early Manuscripts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 136.
14. Chandler, "Wordsworth's Great Ode," 150.
15. Ibid., 145.
16. Hartman, Geoffrey H. *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 203. Fred Hoerner reads the habituation of the child (the "prison house shades") in the Ode as part of an ideological Bordieuian "fall into history," with much of the essay hanging on a "revisionary" reading of the word "deep," "Nostalgia's Freight in Wordsworth's Intimations Ode" *ELH* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 643.
17. Lines 142–148.
18. "The processes of the system *Ucs*. are *timeless*; i.e. they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all. Reference to time is bound up, once again, with the work of the system *Cs*." Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV (1914–1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works* (1915), 187.
19. Curtis suggests Spenser's *Faerie Queen* as a progenitor poem, the "traveler" Red Cross Knight being correlative to the child in the Ode, "Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition," 129–130.

    Chandler claims that the "Immortality Ode" should be read as a revision of the eighteenth-century "progress poem," the product of "an age when progress has been largely recast in temporal terms," "Wordsworth's Great Ode," 151. In his 1984 *Wordsworth's Second Nature,* Chandler reads Wordsworth as following Edmund Burke's triadic—and, it seems to me, "developmental" path—rather than dyadic schema: not nature vs. custom, but rather nature into custom into a "second nature" (which combines nature and habit), *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 74–81.

    Hartman has read the poem similarly, as a movement of stages from self-love to the love of nature and of man—in other words as a process of personal and societal *bildung* or development, *Wordsworth's Poetry,* 276, 277. Wierda Rowland, although she differentiates the "Scottish Enlightenment developmental framework" from Hartman's German historicism, reads Wordsworth's general project along the same lines, *Romanticism and Childhood: The Infantilization of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 48, 49.
20. David Simpson sees these resistances as built in to Wordsworth's project; on the one hand he offers writers like Mill and Arnold a poetics of "nature

and elementary feeling"; on the other his "doctrinal and experiential positions are underpinned and shadowed by darker intuitions which do not lend themselves to ready consolation," *Wordsworth, Commodification and Social Concern: The Poetics of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

21. Christopher Bundock reads Wordsworth's temporality similarly, as strangely "discontinuous" and tending toward a "prophecy … [that signals] the suspension of presence and linear historiography," "'A Feeling That I Was Not for That Hour / Nor for That Place': Wordsworth's Modernity." *European Romantic Review* 21, no. 3 (June 2010): 385, 388.
22. Batten, Guinn. "Ethical Supernaturalism: The Romanticism of Wordsworth, Heaney, and Lacan." In *A Companion to Romantic Poetry* (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 582.
23. de Man, Paul. "Wordsworth and the Victorians." In *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 83, 84; for a reading of Mill's defense of Wordsworth, see Wandling, Timothy J. "Early Romantic Theorists and the Fate of Transgressive Eloquence: John Stuart Mill's Response to Byron." In *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); for a reading of the Victorian reception of Wordsworth's ethics, see Potkay, Adam. *Wordsworth's Ethics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 1–7.
24. Curtis, Jared. "Mathew Arnold's Wordsworth: The Tinker Tinkered." In *The Mind in Creation: Essays on English Romantic Literature in Honour of Ross G. Woodman* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 48.
25. Arnold, Matthew. *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth, with Matthew Arnold's Essay on Wordsworth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), 16.
26. Ibid., 16.
27. See Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism; Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), 394, 395, for the "condescension of the Incarnation" in Wordsworth's poetics. For the reconciliation of particular and universal, which is exemplified in the person of Christ, see Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 77.
28. Arnold, Matthew. *The Portable Matthew Arnold* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 234–266.
29. Also from Book One of *The Prelude,* the famous "blessed be the child" passage: "Along his infant veins are interfused / The gravitation and the filial bond / Of nature that connect him with the world."
30. Marjorie Levinson points out this central difference between the child in the *Lyrical Ballads* and the Pindaric or odal child in *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, 96, 97.
31. For an overview of the uses of the child in the eighteenth-century sciences see Benzaquén, Adriana. "Childhood, Identity and Human Science in the Enlightenment." *History Workshop Journal* 57 (Spring 2004), 35–57. For a critique of the ways in which Rousseau and others use the figure of the child to epitomize the transposition of "natural man" to the "I" of common unity, see Yousef, Nancy. *Isolated Cases: The Anxieties of Autonomy in Enlightenment Philosophy and Romantic Literature*, xi, 253 pp. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

32. Perhaps no single concept has been as vital for the discipline of romantic criticism as organicism. For an overview, see Gigante, Denise. *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 1–47; for an (infamous) critique of organic form, see McGann, Jerome J. *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 4–10; for a dissenting view, see Armstrong, Charles I. *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); for an early canonical critical description also focusing on Coleridge, see Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 60–67; see also Wolfson, Susan J. *Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10–28.
33. Knoepflmacher, U. C. and G. B. Tennyson. *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 396.
34. Charles Mahoney provocatively suggests that certain poems fail to do the psychological and aesthetic work of the greater romantic lyric because of their formal structure; he argues that "it may be that the 'greater Romantic lyric' works best in blank verse (or at least the heroic line)," "Greater Romantic Lyric." In *The Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature* (Chichester, England; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 544.
35. Arnold did try in a failed revision to orient the reader and mute the hyperbolic power of the first stanza's questions: "The port lies bright under the August sun, / Gay shine the waters and the cluster'd pier; / Blithely this morn, old Ocean's work is done, And blithely do these sea-birds hover near," Arnold, Matthew. *The Poems of Matthew Arnold.* Edited by Kenneth Allott (London: Longmans, 1965), 23.
36. In this sense the gipsy child resembles Margaret's unnamed baby in "Ruined Cottage," who catches the "trick of grief" from Margaret and dies (line 410).
37. As Merleau-Ponty writes, our perceptual experience suggests that our "being is synonymous with being situated," *Phenomenology of Perception* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 294.
38. Throughout Arnold's poetic corpus, the stoic philosopher as well as the liminal figure of the gipsy occupies a privileged place (e.g., "Thyrsis" and "The Scholar Gipsy").
39. Knoepflmacher, *Nature and the Victorian Imagination,* 397. S. C. Gill astutely points out that Arnold and Wordsworth each approached their respective cultural moments—times that both poets diagnosed as "inimical to true [poetic] feeling"—with different assumptions about their own embeddedness in that culture. Whereas Wordsworth—in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads,* for example—could diagnose "causes and effects from a secure centre, in his poetry Arnold invariably included himself within the diagnosis," *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1998), 179.
40. See Kenneth Allott's note in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, 244, 245.
41. Lines 59–74.
42. For a discussion of the role of apostrophe as outlined by Culler, de Man, and others and its relation to the figure of the infant, see my earlier introduction.
43. Lines 133, 134.
44. Gill continues: "The poet questions across a gulf and answers return. But the gulf remains and it is in the existence of the gulf that Arnold finds the only kind of consolation possible," *Wordsworth and the Victorians*, 181.
45. Ibid., 181.

46. Lines 21–24.
47. Cf. Engel's letters on historical materialism; see also Lyotard's distinction between history (researching the past) and anamnesis ("establishing its truth"), "Anamnesis: of the Visible," 108.
48. "Two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment," *The Portable Matthew Arnold,* 38.
49. Arnold, *Essays on English Literature,* 104. London English Literature Series, 220 pp. (London: University of London Press, 1965).
50. Daniel Ross's reading of the Uncanny in the Ode uses psychoanalytic theory to shift the speaker's encounters from the sublime to the uncanny; Ross reads the child as anxiety producing for the speaker insofar as it represents a "double," a concept borrowed from Otto Rank. "Seeking a Way Home: The Uncanny in Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode.'" *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 32, no. 4 (Autumn 1992), 629.
51. Dorothy's journal reports that they "arrived at home between eight and nine o'clock, where we found Mary in perfect health, Joanna Hutchinson with her, and little John asleep in the clothes-basket by the fire," "Recollections of a Tour in Scotland." In *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1904), 150.
52. Wordsworth, William. "Upon Epitaphs." In *Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (London; New York: MacMillan, 1896), ix, 127.
53. Ibid., 126.
54. Ibid., 127.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., lines 144, 145.
57. "Upon Epitaphs," 127.
58. Ibid., 128.
59. Cf. Wordsworth's claim in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that our feelings are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are, in turn, representatives of our earlier feelings; in other words, thoughts and feelings are reciprocally intervolved through an endless process of modification, *William Wordsworth: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 598.
60. Copjec, Joan. *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 24.
61. To be synonymous with the body is not to say that the drives preexist our social being, although this is theoretically arguable. Rather, I take Wordsworth's theory of an "endless process of modification" (of feelings and thoughts) to suggest that drives are also "beginning-less." Of course it may be true that the first touch (of the mother) sets everything in motion. But, as Nancy points out (following Hegel), since we cannot remember that touch and since what it sets in motion preceded even the mother, we are, in a certain sense always being born, "Identity and Trembling," 33. While cognitive approaches can be of some help here, especially so-called "embodied" theories, in my view mirror neurons are too narrowly embodied and biologically determined to capture the full range of Wordsworth's concept of immortality; see Miall, David S. "Wordsworth's 'First-Born Affinities': Intimations of Embodied Cognition." *Poetics Today* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2011), 703.
62. Wordsworth, William. *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*. Edited by Jared Curtis (Bristol, England: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 61.

63. *Wordsworth's Ethics*, 174; see also 178–181.
64. "Glad animal movements" from "Tintern Abbey"; Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems,* 98, 99.
65. Batten's reading of the Ode locates the death drive (via Lacan) at the center of Wordsworth's theory of immortality, "Ethical Supernaturalism: The Romanticism of Wordsworth, Heaney, and Lacan," 576–580; for the death drive proper, see Freud, S. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920–1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works,* 1920; also Jean Laplanche. *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 103–124.
66. Mill, John Stuart. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); Mill (1944), 98.
67. Ibid., 104.
68. Ibid., 105.
69. Ibid., 99.
70. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*. Edited by H. J Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 401.
71. Abrams, "Structure and Style," 532.
72. "It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all from our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, emerge; they were formed at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves" (my emphasis), Freud, S. "Screen Memories." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. III (1893–1899): Early Psycho-Analytic Publications,* 1899, 322.
73. Lines 1–4; Wallace Stevens famously reverses this movement in "The Emperor of Ice Cream": "Let be be the finale of seem."
74. For the tyranny of the visual sense: "The state to which I now allude was one / In which the eye was master of the heart, / When that which is in every stage of life / The most despotic of our senses gained / Such strength in me as often held my mind / In absolute dominion. Gladly here, / Entering upon abstruser argument, / Would I endeavour to unfold the means / Which Nature studiously employs to thwart / This tyranny, summons all the senses each / To counteract the other and themselves …" (1805 Book XI, *Prelude,* 170–180); see also Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry,* 106–115.

    Freud, who had studied Mill, argues that, "Whenever in a memory the subject himself appears in this way as an object among other objects this contrast between the acting and the recollecting ego may be taken as evidence that the original impression has been worked over," *Screen Memories,* 321.
75. Line 183.
76. Freud writes of the temporal/spatial adjustments (dynamic compromises) that structure memory's functioning: "the essential elements of an experience are represented in memory by the inessential elements of the same experience. It is a case of displacement on to something associated by continuity; or, looking at

the process as a whole, a case of repression accompanied by the substitution of something in the neighborhood (whether in space or time)," "Screen Memories," 307. Thus, memories function like dreams, shaped by the processes of displacement and condensation.

77. Caruth, Cathy. *Empirical Truths and Critical Fictions: Locke, Wordsworth, Kant, Freud* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 12–17; see also Hartman's "Timely Utterance, Once More" in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth,* 152–162.
78. "He has painted all the successive states of his own mind. 1. the mere animal delights received from the beauties of nature. 2. the decay of those feelings, and their being replace[d] by those others which have been described." Mill, J. S. *Journals and Debating Speeches: The Collected Edition of the Works of J. S. Mill.* Edited by John M. Robson. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 441.
79. Mill, *The Autobiography,* 102.
80. For more on the "linking" function of Wordsworth's poetry and its importance to Mill, see S. C. Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians,* 43–51.
81. de Man, "Wordsworth and the Victorians," 84, 86.
82. Mill, *Autobiography,* 104.
83. "The peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener," Mill, John Stuart. "What Is Poetry?" In *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory* (Peterborough, Ont.; Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1999), 1216.
84. Freud, Sigmund. "Negation." In *Collected Papers,* V: 181–185. (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953).
85. Infancy is the theoretical crux because, as the "transcendental origin of language," it precedes discourse. Yet Agamben does not idealize this state. There is no "pre-subjective 'psychic substance'" any more than there is a "prelinguistic subject," Agamben, Giorgio. *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience* (London; New York: Verso, 1993), 48. Language and experience coexist and are mutually constituted. The change or difference that infancy signals is the move from the semiotic (babble/nature/experience) to the semantic (discourse/culture/history). Although inevitable, Agamben imagines this transition (not a "fall") as reversible, open, and nonteleological. Rather, he suggests (following and building on Émile Benveniste) that the semiotic and the semantic are "the two transcendental limits which define and simultaneously are defined by man's infancy," ibid., 55.
86. Harold Bloom, in an early reading of the Ode, is primarily focused on the disjunction between sight and sound, *The Visionary Company; a Reading of English Romantic Poetry,* 187, 188; in a later reading of the passage, he reads this same moment as a collapse back into solipsism, *A Map of Misreading,* 146, 147; Lionel Trilling, like Arnold, avoids the passage altogether, yet uses Ferenzci and Freud to speak of a kind of undifferentiated space of the child, and even follows Freud (via *Civilization and Its Discontents* [Freud was himself following Otto Rank]) back into the womb of the mother, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: Viking Press, 1950), 140.
87. For the semiotic and the semantic, see Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) and Agamben, *Infancy and History*.

88. Wimsatt, William K. "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery." In *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism* (New York: Norton, 1970), 87.
89. Freud, S. "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXIII (1937–1939): Moses and Monotheism, an Outline of Psycho-Analysis and Other Works,* 1938, 275.
90. Foucault also notes this important shift, although he does so as part of an explication of the subject with the emergence of the sciences, a movement from the "classical continuity of being and nature" (a temporal "linked" mode) to the modern, discontinuous spatial mode: Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 274.
91. *The Selected Melanie Klein.* Edited by Juliet Mitchell. (New York: Free Press, 1987), 116.
92. Green, André. *On Private Madness* (London: Karnac Books, 1997), 25. Green sees splitting as a nondualistic "solution" on the part of the ego. The unconscious is now part of the conscious. The work of interpretation is no longer recognizing what is hidden and working with the analysand to "accept" unconscious thoughts and wishes; rather, the analyst must "train himself to use kinds of thought further and further removed from rational logic," ibid., 26.
93. Turner, John. "Wordsworth and Winnicott in the Area of Play." In *Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces: Literary Uses of D. W. Winnicott* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 161–187; Jacobus, Mary. *The Poetics of Psychoanalysis: In the Wake of Klein* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148–169.
94. *Infancy and History*, 49.
95. "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," 246.
96. Jackson, Virginia Walker. "Lyric." In *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 831; Jackson, Virginia Walker, and Yopie Prins. *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 4.
97. It is worth noting here that the efforts of those in historical poetics to reveal the historical construction of modern "lyric" mirrors in a certain sense the efforts of those who wish to reveal the historical construction of the modern (psychoanalytic, Hegelian, etc.) "subject." If Wordsworth, Mill, and Hegel are the nineteenth-century culprits, then the New Critics, phenomenologists, and Romanticists would seem to be their twentieth- and twenty-first-century counterparts.
98. Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, 206.
99. Fry, Paul H. *The Poet's Calling in the English Ode* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 138.
100. Ferguson, Frances. *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit,* 96–125.
101. *Wordsworth's Poetry,* 273.
102. Mill, John Stuart. "Two Kinds of Poetry." In *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*, 1223.
103. Quoted in Curtis, Jared. "Mathew Arnold's Wordsworth: The Tinker Tinkered," In *The Mind in Creation: Essays on English Romantic Literature in Honour of Ross G. Woodman*, 48.
104. "What Is Poetry," 1216.

105. *The Autobiography,* 104.
106. See David Duff's useful meditation on the ode form in romanticism in which he complicates Abrams's claims about the greater romantic lyric, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 202–212.
107. Saintsbury, George. *A History of English Prosody, Vol. III.* (London; New York: Macmillan and Co., limited, 1910), 67.
108. Ibid., 38, 39.
109. Duff argues that ideas of organic unity obscure the work of genre in the period, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre,* 93, 94.
110. Ibid., 92.
111. Teich, Nathaniel. "The Ode in English Literary History: Transformations from the Mid-Eighteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century." *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 107.
112. Wordsworth lists "The Lyrical, [as] containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their full effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable," forms that "cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment," *William Wordsworth: The Major Works,* 627, 629.
113. Jackson comments that the work of historical poetics should not be considered an attack on lyric; how, she wonders, can one attack a moving target, *The Lyric Theory Reader,* 6.
114. See Barbara Johnson's great essay, "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion." In *A World of Difference* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

2 "When I First Saw the Child"

Reverie in Erasmus Darwin and Coleridge

> In the implicit conception, therefore, of life as unity, as plastic, and as invisible, the human mind commences. With the awakening of self-consciousness, the first sign or representative of which is not its own bodily shape but the gradually dawning presence of the mother's, the conception of life is elevated into that of personeity.
>
> —S. T. Coleridge[1]

> A baby must see its MOTHER's face as a landscape. Not because its mouth, fingers and gaze move over it as it blindly grasps and sucks, smiles, cries and whimpers. Not because it is "in symbiosis" with her […]. We should assume, rather, that the face is indescribable for the baby. It will have forgotten it, because it will not have been inscribed. […] This mother is a mother who is a timbre "before" it sounds, who is there "before" the coordinates of sound, before destiny.
>
> —Lyotard[2]

> It is, above all, an intersubjective space which, like the "trance" state of consciousness just prior to entering sleep, allows both wakefulness and dreaming to coexist. Here, in the interpersonal field constructed by patient and analyst, such a space is opened in the service of therapeutic growth, wherein the implacable enemies, "hope and dread," because they can each find voice, can potentially find dialogue.
>
> —Bromberg[3]

> Our ideas are animal motions of the organs of sense:—they do not come from within but from without …
>
> —E. Darwin[4]

What do we see when we look at the child? In the first issue of *The Friend*, ca. 1809, Coleridge claimed that his whole system of beliefs was "not suggested to me by Books, but forced on me by reflection on my own Being, and Observation of the Ways of those about me, especially of little Children."[5] Critics have tended to focus on Coleridge's use of *The Friend* in order to promulgate or amend his political, religious, and aesthetic views. Considerably less attention has been paid to Coleridge's claim for an empirical basis for

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those views. He claims to arrive at his system through the "force of his [internal and external] observations" rather than through deduction or argument. For Coleridge, children are special not only for their immediacy of experience, but also because they have not yet been contaminated by the world, and are on that basis less self-conscious about being observed. They present for the empiricist a version of the human closer to its origin. This creates a gap or schism between what we observe in infancy and what we experience in our own adult society and culture. As Avital Ronell writes, "Childhood enters a breach into the very concept of the human and makes us ask, once again, what it means to be human."[6]

Coleridge dramatizes this difference in "The Conclusion to Part II" of *Christabel*. Immune to the pressures of the adult world, the "little elf" sings and dances to and for itself, presumably not for the pleasure of others. Perhaps it is for this reason that it "always finds, and never seeks." This may also be why the son provokes "words of unmeant bitterness" from the father:

> And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
> Upon his heart, that he at last
> Must needs express his love's excess
> With words of unmeant bitterness.

A perverse economy of love seems to drive the passage, the thick and fast pleasure forcing bitter words from the father's lips. The metrical structure of the passage mirrors this economy, beginning in playful semiregularity (Celeste Langan comments on the anapestic nature of the first line) and ending in a deflationary pyrrhic, so that the "pleasure" of the child's song is accompanied by a skipping meter in contrast to the father's "bitterness," the unstressed syllables combining with the sibilance of the line to create a sense of almost total degradation and loss: "words of unmeant bitterness" (– x – x x x – –).[7] In a common romantic trope, the father is here "taught a lesson" by the son, not directly, but rather through his incomprehension of what it is in himself that the child brings to the fore.

As we will see, Coleridge believes wholeheartedly in the tabula rasa of the infant. He believed to such a degree that when planning for Pantisocracy, the ill-fated utopian community that he hoped to establish in the Susquehanna River valley with Robert Southey and others, he worried that the small children they had planned to bring over from England might already be too ideologically tainted by English culture. In 1794, he writes to Southey:

> These children—the little Fricker for instance, and *your* Brothers—Are they not already *deeply* tinged with the prejudices and errors of Society? Have they not learnt from their Schoolfellows *Fear* and *Selfishness*—of which the necessary offspring are Deceit, and desultory Hatred? *How* are we to prevent them from infecting the minds of *our* children?[8]

The fear of this possibility leads Coleridge to concede that Pantisocracy, if it were ever to be carried out, would indeed be "an *imperfect* system."[9]

This chapter looks at poetic and philosophical observations of infancy by Coleridge and Erasmus Darwin. Specifically, it reveals the ways in which the mother–infant dyad comes to be an especially powerful emblem for arguments about natural progress, development, and aesthetic taste. Furthermore, it explores how these texts deploy mothers and babies as the privileged metaphor for the subject/object problem as well as for social relations more generally. In a story that will eventually serve as the model for philosophical accounts of "becoming" as well as psychoanalytic narratives of "working through," the mother serves as the primary object for the infant, whose desire is then refracted onto a wider range of objects.[10]

My method is comparative. Looking at a chapter from Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia*—originally published in 1794—and reading it against another from Coleridge's *Opus Maximum*—probably written between 1819 and 1823—I hope to establish a partial genealogy for two competing versions of the aesthetic.[11] In particular, I show how the primary object in each of these discourses—the maternal body, and more specifically, the breast—becomes the ultimate figure for ideal beauty.[12] Not only does the mother–baby dyad establish a model for aesthetic production as a kind of absolute emersion (Darwin's aestheticism, for example), but it also serves a political function, mediating between the burgeoning ideal of the liberal individual on the one hand and the increasingly threatening realm of the social on the other. The social is threatening, at least as defined by poets and philosophers of the period, insofar as it threatens to erase what is unique in us and sweep us up into a discourse that seems to precede us; as such, it brings with it Wordsworth's "shades of the prison-house." The mother–infant dyad becomes the signature trope because, as Julie Kipp writes, "the maternal body seemingly represented a form of union that nonetheless allows for separateness." Thus, "mother–child bonds" form "the natural underpinnings of a civil society or even a global Republic," thus characterizing a "sense of coordinated diversity."[13]

This description seems to hold well for Coleridge's theory of infancy in which the infant transforms the world by interpreting its semiotic structures, that is, by ascribing significance to the perceived internal and external movements of the mother. For Darwin, on the other hand, beauty simply equals pleasure and vice versa; they are more or less interchangeable and neither functions in a symbolic, signifying, or compensatory way.[14] As we will see, Darwin treats the mother as simply an appendage, a mechanism for the baby's needs and desires. Furthermore, Darwin suggests that our tastes are formed for us by our animal nature, by instinctually triggered pleasure rather than by memory or socially prescribed taste. They are thus encoded in our senses rather than our understanding. Whereas both authors ground their aesthetic and ethical thinking in very similar depictions of the enclosed world of the mother–infant pair, they use them to articulate significantly different theories. Roughly, these differences can be read as exemplary of Darwin's organicism,

on the one hand, and Coleridge's theory of the symbol on the other.[15] I explore these aesthetic theories first by juxtaposing them, and then by reading short passages of poems by Coleridge and Darwin. The poetry complicates the theory, revealing deep fissures in both writers' explanatory apparatuses, illuminating their limitations as well as their possibilities. Ultimately, this may lead us to question the usefulness of thinking the aesthetic and ethical exclusively through the body, as Darwin does, or exclusively through the symbolic mediation of reason or the soul, as is the tendency in Coleridge.

Not only does the poetry of these writers amend and complicate their theories, it also uncovers new cognitive, affective, and ethical paths to follow. Aspects of Darwin's poetry and poetics, for example, can be traced back to his neuropsychological theories. Darwin shows, for example, how treating ideas and affect as neurological processes rather than as signifying events makes possible what he terms aesthetic reverie. Coleridge's poetry, on the other hand, provides us with a glimpse of an in-between position, an aesthetics of detachment, dissociation, and ambivalence—Coleridge's own, more psychologized version of reverie. By introducing the triad of detachment, disorientation, and ambivalence I mean to suggest an association with Coleridge's own triadic description of the secondary imagination: it "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate."[16] Coleridge's aesthetic practice I am arguing subverts, to a certain extent, the narrative of personal growth that he offers in his criticism and that many accounts of romanticism claim as fundamental. This leads me in the final section of the chapter to explore the importance of loss, complication, and distance to Coleridge. Articulated in the tension between aesthetic theory and poetic practice, these more ambivalent aesthetic feelings and forms remind us that we often see what we expect to see when we look at the child. But when we can see a bit more clearly, or even have cognizance of our ambivalence, they also challenge our received theories of romantic subjective and aesthetic manufacture, while at the same time reminding us that all of our judgments are, or perhaps should be, partial and necessarily in flux.

2.1 Partial Object Love

Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles, was already well known as a physician, inventor, and poet by the time he wrote his great work of natural science, *Zoonomia; or The Laws of Organic Life*. He conceived of *Zoonomia* as an attempt to consolidate all of his thinking into one comprehensive system, which would "contribute to the interest of society."[17] It is widely acknowledged that Darwin's protoevolutionism anticipates the theories of his grandson Charles. In a similar vein, recent studies on Darwin have demonstrated the influence of *Zoonomia*, specifically its claim that nature equals motion, on the poetry and poetics of Wordsworth and Shelley.[18] But not only do Darwin's empirical speculations anticipate a strain of romantic poetics, but his neuropsychology also anticipates Freud's theory of the instincts.[19] The section "Of Instinct," for example, opens by

alternately describing animals and human infants: they swim in the womb, they ingest amniotic fluid, they learn to suck, etc.[20] For Darwin, while our human uniqueness is importantly related to our capacity for language, our more astonishing powers are primarily animal, especially our visual capacities, our ability to represent:

> Our perception of beauty consists in our recognition by the sense of vision of those objects, first which have before inspired our love by the pleasure, which they have afforded to many of our senses … and secondly, which bear any *analogy of form* to such objects.[21] (my emphasis)

This shift in the passage from perceptions of pleasure to a concept of beauty operates in accord with psychoanalytic theories of displacement as well as psychological theories of association. Yet it also marks the entrance of "love," which, for Darwin, who is following Hume, is an affect-idea, not an a posteriori concept:

> The characteristic of beauty therefore is, that it is the object of love; and though many other objects are in common language called beautiful, yet they are only called so metaphorically, and ought to be termed agreeable.[22]

Note that Darwin's aesthetic theory, like Coleridge's "system of beliefs," is rooted in a concomitant theory of infancy. The infant shifts its desire from objects of direct sensual satisfaction to objects of aesthetic pleasure, from use to exchange; it shifts from what is present to what is absent and thus requires another level of representation. Love plays an important role insofar as it connects the aesthetic object with the original object of pleasure. In this way it occupies a similar place in Darwin's aesthetics as the sublime plays in Kant's third critique.[23]

Darwin then goes on to explain both human consciousness and the aesthetic consequences of our sense perceptions through the topos of the nursing mother and infant. The "babe," once put to the mother's breast, experiences a panoply of sensations, beginning with touch and ending in vision. He writes that

> All these various kinds of pleasure at length become associated with the form of the mother's breast … And hence at our maturer years, when any object of vision is presented to us, which by its waving or spiral lines bears any similitude to the form of the female bosom, whether it be found in a landscape with soft gradations of rising and descending surface, or in the forms of some antique vases, or in other works of the pencil or the chisel, we feel a general glow of delight which seems to influence all our senses; and, if the object be not too large, we experience an attraction to embrace it with our arms, and to salute it with our lips, as we did in our early infancy the bosom of our mother.[24]

In addition to its blending of oral and visual fixations, what is striking in Darwin's aesthetic account, and this bothered his contemporary Thomas Brown as well, is that there is no acknowledged sense of loss or mourning in the absence of the "original" object.[25] Darwin does acknowledge that the subject feels "love" as "a sensation, when the object is present; and a desire, when it is absent."[26] Yet desire in Darwin's text is a term that needs qualification. Rather than describe a particular wish, such as in "I desire a raise" or "I desire to be wise," it is used to describe purely physiological or instinctual impulses, as in "A certain quantity of sensation produces desire or aversion …" Darwin thus argues that our subjectivities are formed by pleasure and by associations of pleasure, and that the desires that arise from these infantile pleasures form the basis for love in later life. "Animal attraction," he writes, simply "is love." Although Darwin qualifies this somewhat by stating that to be purely motivated by pleasure is the province of the brute and the child, with very few exceptions in the text, instinctual gratification also equals love, without any acknowledgment of loss. [27]

Here, in a nutshell, is Darwin's great difference with the majority of moral and psychological theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In nearly every Western theory of human development, loss and alienation are important in that they precipitate desire and signal retrospectively the importance of the object, all of which authorize and subtend our acts of becoming a subject.[28] This has continued to be true in the aftermath of psychoanalytic thinking. Loss, memory, distance, differentiation—in short, the ability to symbolize—characterizes Klein's depressive position. The depressive position is distinguished on the one hand by the acknowledgment of the loss of the mother's breast and the other by different forms of anxiety. More than a mere stage of development, we return to the depressive position throughout youth and adulthood whenever anxiety and loss need to be managed and overcome. It is the ground for all acts of mourning and working through, and may well form the ground for much of our creativity.[29] Darwin's account of the infant's experience, read alongside his theory of our acquisition of aesthetic taste, suggests that desire performs primarily a mechanical and physiological, rather than developmental and processual, function. In short, there is no mourning and no depressive position in Darwin. On this reading, Darwin's account of desire is distinctly premodern.

Of course, the question of desire is even more vexed in Western aesthetic theories than it is in theories of psychology. Yet while there is critical disagreement about the precise meaning of Kant's concept of "disinterestedness," surely to place an aesthetic object in one's mouth is an appetitive interest and is thereby disqualified according to the principles of the third critique.[30] Darwin's supremely untroubled narrative of aesthetic development suggests that the mother's breast serves primarily as a template. It bears an "analogy of form," after which, presumably, objects of related beauty (curved, shapely, etc.) take its place.

For Darwin, because desire takes a metonymic rather than metaphoric route ("analogy of form" as *pars pro toto*), and because there is seemingly no remainder of loss, unfulfilled desire can exist only in a dream world of

absolute ugliness or, rather, only in a hypothetical world of absolute dissimilarity to the breast. Because his aesthetic appears to refuse all meaningful difference between object and representation, Darwin removes anxiety from the category of desire altogether.[31] This elision of loss when taken together with Darwin's insistence that desire and love are located in the body has important cultural and societal ramifications. By giving us a primarily oral aesthetic, one that completely eliminates the need to tolerate ambivalence and further mechanizes desire, Darwin sidesteps the need for conceptual growth in the subject or, importantly, for the corresponding theories of *bildung* and development that form the core of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberal thought. Stages and sublimation give way to easily recuperable pleasures.[32] For Darwin, the breast is never transfigured, but rather merely mimetically reproduced. It stays separate from the mother. Meanwhile, the mother qua mother—that is, as another object whose existence exceeds its pleasure-giving capacities for the infant—never fully materializes in Darwin's theory. Thus, Darwin's infant assumes a fetishistic relation to the object.[33]

Psychoanalyst and theorist Maria Torok offers a useful and important distinction between fantasies of incorporation and processes of introjection. Typically, introjection is a process that accompanies *growth* in the subject; it uses an object to mediate between the unconscious and the ego.[34] Put another way, introjection (as well as projection) links us to the world. It is simultaneously an introjection of the object and an introjection of the drives. In contrast, incorporation is primarily a fantasy of ingesting the object. It is a way of having one's cake and eating it too.[35] It is neither compensatory nor predicative of growth. Deeply melancholic, it is, in a sense, a failed introjection or a failed act of mourning.[36]

Darwin's aesthetics, I claim, is primarily incorporative. The desire to put art objects into one's mouth (what Abraham and Torok call "de-metaphorization") reveals the intense ways in which objects are not introjected ("cast into" the ego) in a rhythm of projection and introjection, but are rather magically reproduced, swallowed, saved, hidden, and disguised.[37] In Darwin we witness the loss of the mother's body in ways that anticipate and even challenge Freud's intervention one hundred years later; the form it assumes is that of a shape, a contour, an empty signifier.[38] The love, protection, and care it might otherwise have come to signify are reduced to sensory traces and metonymical afterimages: "we feel a general glow of delight which seems to influence all our senses."

As I mentioned briefly before, in Section XVI of *Zoonomia*, Darwin links his theory of the aesthetic to a materialist theory of human love. What separates human "sentimental" love from animal love is its capacity to desire, to appreciate beauty:

> Sentimental love, as distinguished from the animal passion of that name, with which it is frequently accompanied, consists in the desire or sensation of beholding, embracing, and saluting a beautiful object.

The distinction Darwin makes between animal passions and human desire is tenuous. As we have seen, for Darwin, our social feelings for one another are not what make us human; rather, it is our ability to appreciate beauty. However, we have also seen the ways in which our aesthetic capacities in Darwin are derived solely from our animal sensorium, from pleasurable sensations. Moreover, in place of the capacity to remember and work through, Darwin attributes to the human only instrumental differences with animals: "acquiring of languages, making of tools, and … labouring for money."[39] Insofar as the desire evinced in Darwin's account is merely structural and barely present, our humanity seems to be premised on the slightest, and most sensual, of desires. For Darwin, love, as aesthetic presence (fulfillment, pleasure, etc.), continually foregrounds and privileges its own materiality. In this way, then, Darwin makes our animality (sensation, the infantile, the unconscious or id) integral to all of our social, aesthetic, and interpersonal functioning. Social love is thus reduced entirely to the level of instinct. Brown writes in 1798 that Darwin's:

> *[s]entimental love* … [seeks] Beauty [a]s its sole object; and wisdom, and virtue, having no resemblance to any of the immediate objects of sense, which we have before embraced, and saluted, can have no influence, in exciting love.[40]

Darwin concedes in the general preface to *Zoonomia* that "[t]he words idea, perception, sensation, recollection, suggestion, and association, are each of them used in this treatise in a more limited sense than in the writers of metaphysic."[41] They seem in fact to be used interchangeably. The result is that the reader comes to feel that all perceptions and ideas of things not only originate in external stimuli but also continue to be triggered and associated in only this limited sense. Thus we build up a feeling of "love" that derives from animal pleasure, "vegetative" neurological responsiveness, and sympathetic and parasympathetic processes. The "other" fails to show up for us as anything other than a potential source of pleasure … or nothing. Likewise, the breast stands neither for the mother nor the beautiful objects that mimetically come to take its place, but rather for pleasure itself. The story of the human, then, as a mere chapter in the story of the animal, becomes a story of the body—its pleasures and its drives.

2.2 Reverie as Aura

As in his theoretical writing, in which he insists on the strict materiality of the passions and a related refusal of mourning in the absence of the object, Darwin's poetry also radically revises metaphor. In fact, a large part of Darwin's achievement in his poetry concerns his reworking of metaphor, in whose place we find a metonymic linking of the trope of infancy to the tropes of allegoric personification. In the process, he gives birth to an organicism

that is all mouth, a consuming if not a capitalist mouth, a ravenous mouth that could stand as a symbol for our time as much as Darwin's own.[42]

Yet there is another, perhaps ameliorative, aspect to Darwin's aesthetic theory. In one of the prose interludes to "*Loves of the Plants*," Darwin claims that poetry's primary role is to bring forth the object, revealing its "ideal presence."[43] This act of bringing forth an ideal object presents a problem for Darwin's incorporative aesthetics, at least the model I have explained here. The object must be brought back "from" somewhere, but from where? From memory? Not only does Darwin's language suggest a metaphoric movement—metaphor meaning literally to carry over—but it also reminds us that all metaphors require abstraction and displacement. Yet in the same interlude Darwin grants prose, not poetry, the work of abstraction. Poetry's sole purpose is the reproduction of the object. Thus poetry for Darwin is nonmetaphoric. Ironically, this seems an apt description of Darwin's poetry. His metaphors work as so many "vehicles"—no referent or tenor (however unstable) comes into play.[44]

How then do we bring forth an ideal object? Presented with this difficulty and needing a way out of a strictly mechanistic view of the passions, Darwin introduces the concept of reverie, what Martin Priestman refers to as "an area of mind–body crossover."[45] Reverie, rather than memory or loss, does the work, however slight, of mediation in Darwin, of connecting the vehicle and the tenor, of linking us, through dissociation and affect, to aspects of a larger social realm. By means of reverie, a variety of sensorial experience—which is produced either through intense sensual pleasure, as we have seen with the babe at the mother's breast, or through engagement in volitional activity such as reason—we find ways out of Darwin's hermetic organicism, if only for moments at a time.

Reverie, although theorized elsewhere in his writing, is presented most clearly and forcefully in Darwin's poetry. As Jerome McGann points out, the thought of Darwin's poetry finds expression in affect rather than reason, largely through the use of transformational terms, "self-sustaining process[es] of energy." [46] By making human infancy exemplary of vegetative sensibility or animal instinct, Darwin flattens out narratives of human exceptionalism at the same time as he grounds poetic production, connected to reverie and association, in the body rather than in the intellect or reason. Maurizio Valsania further claims that reverie, a gap or fissure in consciousness, is synonymous for Darwin with the imagination.[47] Catherine Packham writes about the blurred distinction between body and reason, science, and poetry in Darwin and marks its continuance in Wordsworth's famous preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.[48] Claiming that personification and analogy become more acceptable in scientific discourses as a result of Darwin's use of them in poetry, she suggests that Darwin's intertextual and interdisciplinary aesthetic thus shifts the focus in poetic production away from the faculty of imagination toward the act of reverie.[49] This shift, I would argue, moves us away from the image of the contemplative poet as

the model for poetic production toward the image of the receptive infant and the sensitive plant.

Consider section X of canto III of *The Economy of Vegetation*, the first of Darwin's three long poems collectively called *The Botanic Garden:*

> NYMPHS! YOU first taught to pierce the secret caves
> Of humid earth, and lift her ponderous waves;
> Bade with quick stroke the sliding piston bear
> The viewless columns of incumbent air;—
> Press'd by the incumbent air the floods below,
> Through opening valves in foaming torrents flow,
> Foot after foot with lessen'd impulse move,
> And rising seek the vacancy above.—
> So when the Mother, bending o'er his charms,
> Clasps her fair nurseling in delighted arms;
> Throws the thin kerchief from her neck of snow,
> And half unveils the pearly orbs below;
> With sparkling eye the blameless Plunderer owns
> Her soft embraces, and endearing tones,
> Seeks the salubrious fount with opening lips,
> Spreads his inquiring hands, and smiles, and sips.[50]

As one of four cantos organized around the elements, this canto is expressly centered on the element of water—clearly analogizing milk within the controlling metaphor of nursing. As elsewhere in Darwin's poetry, industrial metaphors of pistons and columns sit side by side with images of infant joy.[51] Colonial exploration and ecological plundering also find expression, and perhaps a "natural" justification, here as well. The poem suggests a hybrid body, part maternal machine, part golem, built up of water and earth (i.e., from mud from "humid earth"). But it is not exactly one body that is formed, but rather two that are enjoined and mutually mastered or "owned." To plunder means to usurp, but the adjective "blameless" in "blameless Plunderer" absolves the poet/"nurseling" of guilt.

The "natural" upheaval described is rewritten as a confusing orientation of bodies. What results is a vertiginous sense of spinning top to bottom to top again. The metrical upheaval is slight but significant—a series of trochaic reversals, the majority verb forms, placed at more or less even intervals: "Nymphs," "Bade," "Press'd," "Foot," "Clasps," "Throws," "Seeks," and "Spreads." The effect is a kind of intermittent punch or thrust, mimicking the sound of machinery: "*Press'd*" by the incumbent air the floods below": X – – – X – X – X – X.

Reverie would seem to be induced here by a disorientation of the senses. The first spatial orientation evolves from the point of view of the nymphs who view the water shooting up from the earth. Next we are thrown into a strange pronomial and syntactic confusion of an object

bending over a subject: that is, the mother (in the subject position) is not the subject in the long sentence that makes up the second half of the passage. We are quickly in the point of view of the infant. Somehow, water rising up has become the breast descending down. The plundered mother clasps her plunderer—delightedly. The secrets of the earth and water are like the secrets of the mother's body offered, disclosed (unveiled) to the babe. The reader then similarly becomes the plunderer of the text and the mother's body.

Maximizing the reader's pleasure, suggested by and inscribed in the maternal body, is a significant, if not the prime, focus of Darwin's Botanic Garden. Accordingly, Darwin recapitulates in the poetry his aesthetics of volitional pleasure and pain. In *Zoonomia* Darwin attempts to describe diseases of "volition" (mania, phobias, etc.) as deriving from a surplus of volitional motion, something like a tension produced by a will that has no direct object, it therefore returns to the body as a symptom. Similarly, the pleasure and pain that poetry and art provide cause us to:

> cease to attend to the irritations of common external objects, and cease also to use any voluntary efforts to compare these interesting trains of ideas with our previous knowledge of things, a compleat [*sic*] reverie is produced: during which time however short, if it be but for the moment, the objects themselves appear to exist before us.[52]

Hume also believed in the power of art to shock the system, resulting in an inversion of his schema for experience; when one is confronted with powerful art, the representation of an event (a drawing, a poem, etc.) may be more "vivid" than the original.[53] In a similar way, reverie involves the collapse of temporality—an intrusion of another time into our present tense—and an opening of spatial awareness accompanied perhaps even with dissociation, similar to that which happens in psychoanalytic transference: "but for the moment, the objects … appear to exist before us."[54] In its extreme form it verges into mania. And while Darwin gives little thought to the anxiety suggested in reverie, the pure rhythmicity of psychoanalytic transference fits perfectly with his neurophysiology. The relation of reverie to incorporation is clear: the object that is taken "inside" (i.e., the mother's breast) cannot be named and carries with it the fantasy that the object "appear[s] to exist before us." What is more, the incorporated object may also "operate by means of representations, affects, or bodily states."[55]

Incorporated objects and fragments recur throughout Darwin's poetry. This repetition takes the form of obsessive repetition and repurposing—intertextual, metrical, and thematic. In this way, the formal repetitions and interpolations work to reproduce the object as always present and available. Because, as I stated before, incorporation is a failed introjection and introjection of the object is also the introjection of the drives, Darwin's subject is disconnected in an a priori way from the world of objects—disconnected,

that is, from a larger social structure. This is because the role of the drives is to connect the subject to the world.[56] Part of Darwin's genius is to fold incorporation into his compositional strategy. He creatively reuses and sometimes directly incorporates several of the passages from *Zoonomia* and uses them as footnotes in the poetic texts. All of this textual production and reproduction foregrounds its materiality and not only works to reproduce a poetics of pleasure, but also works, however clunkily, to connect the subjective material (the poetry) to the objective world (represented in the notes). Alongside the notes are long disquisitions, etchings, and hand-colored illustrations, including work by Fuseli and Blake, creating an even richer experience of hybridity.

The frontispiece to *The Temple of Nature,* for example, by Henri Fuseli (Figure 2.1) not only reproduces a neoclassical ideal of the maternal. It also suggests, through a series of gestures, rhythmic lineation, and pointing hands, the many "waving or spiral lines" that bear "similitude to the form of the female bosom."

Figure 2.1 Fuseli etching: frontispiece in the book *Temple of Nature*. (With permission of the de Young Museum, San Francisco, California.)

Throughout his work, Darwin uses textual and intertextual hybridity to connect classical imagery and infantile fantasy to theories of aesthetic production and reproduction. One of the notes, for example, attached to the line "lift her ponderous waves" explains:

> The invention of the pump is of very ancient date, being ascribed to one Ctesebes an Athenian … but it was long before it was known that the ascent of the piston lifted the superincumbent column of the atmosphere, and that then the pressure of the surrounding air on the surface of the well below forced the water up into the vacuum … the foamy appearance of water, when the pressure of the air over it is diminished, is owing to the expansion and escape of the air previously dissolved by it, or existing in its pores. When a child first sucks it only presses or champs the teat, as observed by the great Harvey, but afterwards it learns to make an incipient vacuum in its mouth, and acts by removing the pressure of the atmosphere from the nipple, like a pump.[57]

The slide from the discourses of industry and scientific explanation to infant observation is as transparent and unadorned here as it is in the stanza itself. The earth is personified as having "pores," and the infant's mouth becomes a pump.[58] In *Zoonomia* the infant is primarily analogized as animal; here, its instrumentality, its structure and design, analogize tools for technological advancement. Darwin not only turns the infant body into a proto-robotic machine, but also participates in the constant innovations in late eighteenth-century landscape lyric by displacing the mother's body back out onto nature, and thereby makes not one but two implicit arguments for the ubiquity of organic form—infancy equals industry equals nature.

On one level, organicism arises (as a theory and worldview) as an attempt to undo the rift created by the perpetuation of ever-new narratives of the fall in the eighteenth century, and as a counternarrative that seeks to bring just-developing societal structures under the umbrella of the "natural."[59] Accordingly, organicism, at least Darwin's version, does not end at the body's limits. This connectivity between the body and its environments opens up a pathway to the social, however slight. As in eighteenth-century theories of the sublime, aesthetic production and reproduction are dependent on somatic rather than psychic aspects of perception.[60] Thus, in Darwin's organicism it is not so much that our minds remember as that our body is marked by memory—not only our individual body but also our collective body.

Zoonomia describes how the body comes to associate certain ideas, thoughts, and feelings, all of which are connected by and organized into "tribes." Thus, although the direct impact of the social world is minimalized in Darwin, to the extent that these processes are registered directly on the body in reverie or on a collective body, and to the extent to which they are universalizable through the figure of the infant, we can see the contours of a social theory latent in Darwin's solipsism. Nevertheless, what Darwin calls

the "animal sensorium" is always in the driver's seat of subject development as well as in aesthetics. Since we remain forever infants (i.e., human animals) in Darwin's schema, even when we are habituated, organic material processes continue to motivate and drive us:

> By the various efforts of our sensations to acquire or avoid their objects, many muscles are daily brought into successive or synchronous actions; these become associated by habit, and are then excited together with great facility, and in many instances gain indissoluble connections.[61]

Avoidance or acquisition, pleasure or pain—here we see the neuropsychological as well as associational basis for Freud's dynamic theories.[62] Yet habit and association are also social and even aesthetic processes. We might say, for example, that the social recurs in Darwin's footnotes, in his strange asides and obsessive intertextuality. In this way Darwin's insistence on innovation—he was, after all, a member of the Lunar Society—subverts his own attempts at a pure poetic materialism (i.e., to bring nature under the banner of science). On this reading, poetry displays a unique tension between external causes and internal anxieties that threatens the "organic" identification of infant to nature.

A kind of excess sociality—which I'm claiming is an aspect of Darwin's reverie—intrudes and complicates "pure poetry," connecting and disconnecting us from the surrounding world.

> The clear ideas furnish'd by the hands
> Beauty's fine forms attract our wondering eyes,
> And soft alarms the pausing heart surprise.
> Warm from its cell the tender infant born
> Feels the cold chill of Life's aerial morn;
> Seeks with spread hands the bosoms velvet orbs,
> With closing lips the milky fount absorbs;
> And, as compress'd the dulcet streams distil,
> Drinks warmth and fragrance from the living rill;
> Eyes with mute rapture every waving line,
> Prints with adoring kiss the Paphian shrine,
> And learns erelong, the perfect form confess'd,
> IDEAL BEAUTY from its Mother's breast.[63]

As in *Zoonomia,* we see that ideality and representation have their origin in a naturalized "language of sight." Here are the same spread hands, the same sucking lips, the same ample, always available breasts. But notice that the poem presents us with the obverse of the *Zoonomia* description. Rather than work from the breast to the aesthetic object, here, reverie directs us toward the aesthetic. Like Schiller's aesthetic in "Letters on Aesthetic Education,"

which leads us to forms of "freedom," and precisely like the etching by Fuseli, Darwin's poem leads us full circle back to the mother's breast. This description has the added advantage of showing the maternal space in stark dialectical relation to the "cold chill of Life's aerial morn."

On the one hand, by organizing subjectivity in this machine-like way, incorporatively, without drive or desire, lack or ambivalence, memory or sublimation, humans begin to resemble something like protoconsumerist plants in Darwin's poetry or proto-Deleuzean subjects articulating lines of flight.[64] On the other hand, the experience of reading Darwin's poetry—its endless flow of irregularly stressed heroic couplets, its interpolated notes and illustrations, which often occupy more room on the page than the verse—is interruptive; the reader is placed in the position of the infant, offered textual objects which are then supplemented and supplanted with other objects of pleasure. In the same prose interlude quoted previously, Darwin claims that poetry expresses temporality differently than prose, and therefore may be more suited for relating the experience of life as it is lived on a daily basis. For Darwin, verse (in contrast to prose) is more conducive to interruptive gaps, gaps that signal a constitutive lack, albeit present only in the reverie and only in partial glimpses.

If, as I have just suggested, we are all infants in Darwin's aesthetic, at least in the sense that we all ingest and process images and objects according to an economy of pure pleasurable exchange, it is also the case that we belong to a culture that is equally unable to acknowledge primary losses—the mother's body, our planet, the dream of economic opportunity and fairness—all of these serving as primary and privileged, if often unconscious or preconscious, objects. The unwanted images recur to us in various forms; likewise, other images devolve back to an original, unnameable, and unaccounted for object. It is, as Darwin writes in volume I of *Zoonomia*, as though the object has invaded our body. Many motions and "catenations of motion" (trains of thought or actions of the body—ideas and objects being synonymous in this schema) are termed involuntary when in fact they are the result of an "excess of volition."[65] In order to free ourselves from the mania that accompanies excessive volition, Darwin suggests that we must "*think without words*" (my emphasis)—thus the emphasis on the senses as well as our instinctual responses to or passive syntheses of art.[66] Aesthetic activity provides a letting go of correspondences between the object before us and "our previous knowledge of nature."[67] Thus Darwin's "reverie" and "thinking without words" form for us a kind of psychobiological sublime. Perhaps it is not surprising that the good doctor, who routinely prescribed massive doses of opium to his patients, would argue for such dissociation: aesthetics as simultaneous closure and reopening, a partial anesthesia for our collective and yet uncognized loss of the maternal bond, recreated for us as ideal beauty.

What do we see when we look at the child? Erasmus Darwin would say a world of repeatable pleasures and raw desire, interrupted only by a reverie that may or may not contain traces of "our previous knowledge of nature."

2.3 Coleridge's Lessons in Displacement

Although Coleridge thought Darwin had "a greater range of knowledge than any other man in Europe," he also acknowledged that he "absolutely nauseate[d] Darwin's poems."[68] In fact, there is clear evidence that Coleridge not only read but also studied *Zoonomia*.[69] Coleridge's chapter, "On the Origin of the Idea of God in the Mind of Man," in fragment II of *Opus Maxium,* offers a narrative of infant development in many ways similar to Darwin's, but one which begins and ends with the mother.

> Even in its very first Week of Being, the holy quiet of its first days must be sustain'd by the warmth of the maternal bosom. The first dawnings of its humanity will break forth in the Eye that connects the Mother's face with the warmth of the mother's bosom, the support of the mother's arms. A thousand tender kisses excite a finer life in its lips, and there first language is imitated from the mother's smiles.[70]

Notice the imitated "first language" of which Darwin wrote in *Zoonomia*. Yet very much unlike Darwin, Coleridge does not see the lineaments of a "natural" aesthetic in the mother's body; rather, he reads in her motions the origin first of love, then of thought, then of all epistemological distortion and alienation (Coleridge's term is "alterity"):

> [F]or the infant the mother contains his own self, and the whole problem of existence as a whole; and the word "GOD" is the first and one solution to the problem. Ask you, what is its meaning for the child? Even this: "the something to which my mother looks up, and which is more than my mother."[71]

The orientation of gazes goes from infant to mother, who does not return the infant gaze, but rather looks toward God in prayer. Coleridge calls this moment the beginning of thought. Some outside form, some otherness places demands on the attention of the mother, and the child is forced to comprehend for the first time its individual existence.[72] Thus, the severed connection of mother to child becomes the prototype for all subsequent linguistic and cognitive situations. Suddenly the mother is a text that the infant must "read." Open to hermeneutical interpretation, she is structured like a language that precedes the written word and exists prior to her constituent letters or parts. Only by positing the presence of God, an alterity that is the "first and one solution," whose *shape* for the infant is the earthly father, and whose *form* is the heavenly one, only by this mediation can meaning be ascribed to the mother's distraction and the consequent sense of loss the child suffers in the broken gaze.[73] Coleridge thus theorizes that the gap set up by the mother's distraction allows for a substitution, for an interpretive code to enter in. Through an act of metaphorization, the child is able to recognize forms, rather than mere shapes.

As Murray J. Evans writes in his study on the *Opus Maximum,* Coleridge's theory of human subjectivity is founded on the principle that there is "No I without a Thou."[74] These scenes of aesthetic education and human subjectivation are, of course, synonymous with romanticism, part and parcel of a project that aims to enlighten us by strengthening and purifying our affections.[75] Yet Coleridge anticipates more recent theories of psychic structuring as well. Psychoanalyst Andre Green writes of a similar scene of education, a moment of maternal distraction, but one in which the mother, due to grief or loss, is unable to help the infant bear the disappointment; the mother's bereavement creates among other things a "*quest for lost meaning*" for the infant, and the "*early development of the fantasmatic and the intellectual capacities of the ego*." The infant feels a "*compulsion to imagine*" as well as a "*compulsion to think*."[76] For Green, this process can come about too early, resulting in a "frantic need for play." There is a need, in other words, for Coleridge as well as for Green, for gradual rather than abrupt disappointment. Without this simple assurance, a child may experience a desperate need to escape, into thought or language, and may find itself "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge."[77]

Coleridge, by stating that the "whole Problem of existence" is "present" within the mother, inscribes a boundary or limit to the perception of self and other. Thus, in this one vignette, we see that spatial differentiation as well as the imagination of internal objects begins to take shape for the infant. The baby imagines an inside and outside to her own consciousness, as well as an inside and outside to the mother's body.[78] This recognition for the infant is simultaneously its recognition of another (the mother), a recognition of the self (as separate from the mother), and a recognition of the other *of* the other (God or the father). Thus, Coleridge presents us a protopsychoanalytic text, an early imagining of what constitutes insides and outsides for the subject.[79] The child experiences the mother as a space to inhabit, yet one that always already "contains his own self." Of course, these early markings of boundaries are attempts at reality testing, attempts to understand the world. For Coleridge, the role of the parent is to help the child connect to objects in the world, not as static, lifeless things, but rather as material forms that:

> … finally become connected with the form of the bodily organs which are appropriate to them. They [external objects of pleasure or interest] must find their last unity in the self, which is, in truth, no other than the feeling of life, its desires, and its functions, with that image which, being always present to the senses, constitutes the sole person of which the sensual being is capable.[80]

The function then of the parent—in this case, the mother—is to be the earthly agent of divinity for the child, the shape that mirrors the form, to encourage human development, which is roughly equivalent to love, faith, and a sense of the permanent.[81] What Darwin describes as the "living principle or spirit

of animation" automatically available to the individual sensorium is here described as the "feeling of life, its desires, and its functions," and attainable only through the image *and the care* of the mother (or, presumably, someone acting as mother). What Coleridge implies but does not fully develop is that the mother, through God, helps direct the child away from its fixation with her and back into its "last unity in the self." The beauty of this formulation is that the mother in fact helps direct the child "back" to a unity that did not exist before love was born in the connection with the mother. The process of becoming a subject—and this is the Hegelian story as well as the psychoanalytic or religious narrative—begins with the recognition of another person. Furthermore, we see that symbolization is only possible when a part of the image of the mother is internalized, either repressed to the unconscious or in some other way introjected.

As Jean Laplanche explains, expanding on what is only latent in Freud, when the child cannot translate an "enigmatic message" from the parent—for example, when a mother turns her attention away to pray or to attend to the needs of her husband—the child designates the untranslatable part of this situation to the unconscious where it simply "is," a thing-presentation.[82] So it is that this "leading in" that the mother performs is also a "projecting out." Unable to translate the enigma of the mother's distraction (and, importantly, for Laplanche, the message is also enigmatic for the sender—in this case, the mother), Coleridge explains that the child has to interpret—to fill up with meaning—the gap created by the father, by God, by any interruption of the mother's love.

These are all potentially chaotic and traumatic situations for the infant, something that Coleridge seems to realize. The work of the "understanding," the power in us that strives to know and be known, even in the midst of "the endless flux of sensible things," must continue for the child, an ongoing rhythm of hermeneutic relating.[83] For Coleridge, translation and the possibility of mistranslation of the mother's image are paramount concerns:

> [A]nd hence, through each degree of dawning light, the whole [of the mother's image] remains antecedent to the parts, not as composed of them but as their ground and proper meaning, <no> otherwise than as the word or sentence to the single letters which occur in its spelling.[84]

The mother thus "contains" the problem of existence, the problem of having, and failing, to mean. Again, like a word that does not rely on the arrangement of its letters for meaning, but rather restores language to meaning from chaos, the mother is set up as a transcendental limit and ground for the child. Philosophy, says Coleridge, operates on a similar principle—a habitual and irreligious "breaking down" of the soul, not toward meaning—*logos* or the word—but toward the salvation of language through the adequation of letters to word, or partial human constituent fragments to the total image of the divine. One way of understanding the desire to return to a ground before

"composition," to a "proper meaning," is to correlate it with the desire to be undifferentiated with the mother.

Yet the passage turns away from this deconstruction of the mother's image in order to reiterate the importance of translation as a model of personal development:

> Let it not be deemed trifling or ludicrous if I say that our modern philosophy is spelling throughout, and its lessons as strange, or but for the gradual breaking down of the soul by force of habit, and by the very faith which it is intended to subvert—it is as strange, I say, as the assertion is to a child when he is first told than A B is *ab,* or W H O is *who.*[85]

The words Coleridge uses as examples are instructive: "*ab*" (from the Latin meaning "from") and "who." If we read these terms together—correcting for the use of the interrogative pronoun in the nominative case—then Coleridge's questions can be reiterated as "from whom do we come?" The answer comes obliquely; "for the infant the mother contains his own self, and the whole problem of existence as a whole; and the word "GOD" is the first and one solution to the problem." Moving by associative logic, Coleridge uses the disorientation of the child, or rather its surprise—the mother was thought of as a whole; how shocking to learn that she is merely bits and pieces—in order to describe, ask, and answer the "whole problem of existence." Resembling a Chinese box or Russian nesting dolls that contain progressively smaller yet identical versions of themselves, we are contained in the mother who is herself contained in God. All linguistic and philosophic attempts aimed at solving or even describing the problem then are doomed, if only because they cannot solve for an antecedent word or phrase that is impervious to changes in its composition, the unconscious idea of a mother or God. God or the father—that to which the mother turns, or worse (harder, more threatening for the child to imagine), that which is "inside" the mother—is a problem that contains its own solution.

Coleridge then reiterates this recursive structure in terms of the family romance. Not only is the mother conceived of in linguistic terms, but also the child itself is like a word that no longer resembles or recognizes itself:

> In such a state of mind has many a parent heard the three-years child that has awoke during the dark night in the little crib by the mother's bed entreat in piteous tones, "Touch me, only touch me with your finger." A child of that age, under the same circumstances, I myself heard using these very words in answer to the mother's enquires, half hushing and half chiding, "I am not here, touch me, Mother, that I may be here!"[86]

The cry for an unmediated touch reproduces a desire for a poetic language of experience—an antecedent and inviolable word or phrase—that Coleridge

seems to desire nearly as much as the touch, a language that would itself be tangible, that would guarantee existence. For Thomas Pfau, these passages confirm that:

> In the beginning … there is not an autonomous Cartesian self; nor indeed is the young child of three years some embryonic anticipation of it. Rather, there is the reciprocity and acknowledgment of one person by another in a dynamic of ipseity, alterity, and community that is as profound as it is fragile.[87]

The movement of mind in these passages is at once a movement toward God, toward Pfau's community, and toward identification with the earthy shape of the father.

> The witness of its [the child's] own being had been suspended in the loss of the mother's presence by sight or sound or feeling. The father and the heavenly father, the form in the shape and the form affirmed for itself are blended in one, and yet convey the earliest lesson of distinction and alterity. There was another beside the mother, and the child beholds it and repeats, and as light from light, transferring, not diminishing, carries onward the former love to the new object. There is another, which it does not behold, but it is above; and while the mother's eye is turned upward, the pressure to her bosom is yet closer, and the kiss which her returning lips impress is longer, and a steadfast gaze and a silence had preceded it.[88]

To "be," the passage suggests, requires another to witness us. In the "suspension" of that act of witnessing, the child "beholds," "repeats," and "transfers" love to the "new object." For Coleridge, the ability to transfer love without diminishment saves us from a melancholically structured subjectivity.[89] The child's love, originated in the mother, is returned to the self in a moment of "becoming" and is now vouchsafed by the father/God. Coleridge is careful to guard against the perception of overtly diminishing the importance of the mother–child bond. Thus the mother's love for the infant—after having traveled the circuitous route of a mediated, triangulated relation between mother, father/God, and the child—is strengthened; the "pressure to her bosom is yet closer, and the kiss which her returning lips impress is longer. …"

While the father and God are initially "blended," dis-integrating them over time is essential. In fact, the infant's ability to distinguish between shape and form is crucial for Coleridge. Shapes can delude and satisfy us only so far; attention to form allows us to slip the confines of personality—what Coleridge calls a "phantom self"—for the larger and roomier space of what he terms personeity—the ontological realm of incarnation.[90] In terms that anticipate Marx's explanation of the fetishism of commodities in

volume one of *Capital,* Coleridge continues throughout the section to foreground the linguistic or abstracted nature of these processes, and to show the necessity for children to be surrounded by people or forms as opposed to things or shapes; the threat for the infant, says Coleridge, is that she herself will become a thing.[91] By imitating the mother's turn toward the divine, we learn to avoid the reification of shapes through the introjection of the other's other as a process or stage of our development.

Each of these moments requires symbolization, acts of interpretation. Maria Torok makes clear that introjection is primarily a linguistic phenomenon: "learning to fill the emptiness of the mouth with words is the initial model for introjection."[92] Naming, interpretation, and translation—all tropes of aesthetic production as well as subjective origination—become instruments for the processes of normative introjection. Coleridge's depiction of a hermeneutics of infancy leads to a discovery/recovery of signification, arguably the opposite of Darwin's demetaphorization. Coleridge's alterity—whether figured in the form of Lacan's "subject who is supposed to know" (the therapist in analysis) or God mediated by the mother in Coleridge's narrative—allows for a theory of personhood as well as an aesthetics that does not stutter and get stuck on shapes, but rather sees deeply into forms.

What do we see when we look at the child? For Coleridge we see ourselves, or rather the divinity in ourselves, but only in and through the process of being witnessed by another.[93]

2.4 Ambivalent Erasures

Turning finally to Coleridge's poetry, the limits of an introjective aesthetics can perhaps best be seen in the excision of the final passage of "Frost at Midnight."[94] While the published version of the poem ends with the famous passage of the eave-drops "quietly shining to the quiet moon," the Quarto edition continues:

> Like those, my babe! which ere tomorrow's warmth
> Have capp'd their sharp keen points with pendulous drops,
> Will catch thine eye, and with their novelty
> Suspend thy little soul; then make thee shout,
> And stretch and flutter from thy mother's arms
> As thou would'st fly for very eagerness.

The excision of these lines, says Coleridge, cut to "save the rondo," do indeed save the rondo or dance of father and son, but only by cutting the mother entirely from the poem. That the final pairing of father and son is preserved at the expense of the mother, while perhaps regrettable, should not be surprising. In each case—the narrative of becoming in *Opus Maximum* and the lyric treatment of spiritual rebirth in "Frost at Midnight"—infancy represents a ground of possibility, a place, as Lyotard will remind us, to begin

or begin again. While development or *bildung*, perhaps the signature conceptual framework in the romantic period, we've been discussing, whether economic or infantile, requires constant movement from one stage to the next, it seems also to require an erasure of the means of its production, that is, an erasure or diminishment of the earthly other that made possibility possible in the first place. As I hope will be evident in this final section I am not sanguine about the erasure of the mother (for the sake of the maternal) in Coleridge's poetics. Yet I think the cuts auger something more, a deeper displacement than has tended to be cited in critiques of the cancellation.

Typically, earlier critics praised the cuts, noting that the "new domestic detail" ("informal and conversational as family talk") threatens to encroach or overpower what is conventionally seen as the poem's main theme, the "movement of the mind."[95] Yet the cancelled lines, by extending the metaphor of mutability (the eave-drops assuming various forms) to the domain of the domestic—that is, to the maternal presence in the poem—trace a greater arc or "shape" to the movement of mind, even if they do threaten to infect the poem with an aesthetic shapelessness. There is a flight from the mother's body here—first, the excised lines describing the child fleeing from the mother's arms, and second, Coleridge's excision of any mention of the mother. Whatever she may signify (nature, origin, protection, etc.), surely the mother must be read as more than a mere synecdoche for the "domestic."

Judith Plotz reads the excision as an attempt to "quiet Hartley down" to equate him with nature itself.[96] It is also, of course, a silencing of the mother and wider aspects of the family milieu. It is in fact an erasure of an erasure. In other words, the cancelled lines depict the child flying from its mother's arms only to be captivated by the "sharp keen points" of the icicles. The "actual" mother is projected onto nature, to use Coleridge's terms, her shape but not her form. What is more, there is a clear correspondence not only with Darwin's concept of a fleshly, "breast-like" aesthetic (the "sharp keen points") but also with an unfortunate mode of mid-twentieth-century psychoanalytic criticism, the kind that could speak of Coleridge's "orality."[97] Remember Darwin's assertion that we desire to place these aesthetic, secondary objects in our mouths. The "pendulous drops," which have not yet fallen, are insistent mimetic forms, which pull the child away from the mother and toward the suspension of soul, and simultaneous soul-making processes. Thus Coleridge excises Darwin's aesthetic along with any image of the mother, and I think for this reason, if for no other, Coleridge's excision of these lines may be fortuitous.[98]

Coleridge's introjective symbolization differs from Darwin's incorporative organicism insofar as it names our personal and collective losses—"I was reared / In the great city, pent mid cloisters dim." These losses are not transcended so much as abided and compensated for. But introjection has its limits. What I have been describing could also be seen as a movement toward a masculine aesthetics, as Alan Richardson and Anne Mellor have noted.[99] According to Torok, who is building on Sandor Ferenczi, introjection

"operates like a genuine instinct."[100] In introjection, the subject includes a part of the unconscious in the ego, therefore enlarging and enriching the ego. Yet, as theorists of unconscious have pointed out, the drives themselves are socially shaped and constructed.[101] We may think we revise (reiterate, remember, reinterpret, repeat) in order to "save the rondo," when what we have done is to repeat without knowing it certain ideological structures. The erasure of the mother, and her subsequent dispersal and reification into "nature" (the maternal) is only one (albeit extremely persistent) example.

2.5 Standing in the Spaces

Thus far we have explored two competing aesthetics both in terms of their theories and their practice. Each offers us a theory of our beginnings, that is, of our infancy. In a rather loose way, these could be articulated slightly differently to produce, on the one hand, an aesthetic of the beautiful (Darwin) and, on the other, an aesthetic of the sublime (Coleridge). Darwin's incorporative aesthetics seek to romantically preserve the object, whether that object is a romanticized idea of nature as recapitulated aesthetic forms or designs, or whether it is a dream of endlessly recuperable and commodifiable pleasures. I have also put pressure on the idea of a normative "healthy" cycle of introjection and projection, at least so far as it is reflected in Coleridge's conversation poems. If introjection of the object is also introjection of the drive, it is also the introjection of the ideology that produced the concept of the drive.[102] Implicit in any critique of the normalizing tendencies of introjective growth must therefore be a critique of certain aspects of psychoanalytic discourse as well. Torok writes that "the introjection of desire puts an end to objectal dependency," clearly an important stage in individuation.[103] Yet we may want to consider closely whether our narratives of independence, desire, autonomy, and closure are not themselves potentially alienating, especially if the object we are discarding/transcending/displacing is indexical of an entire mode of human relating, as is, for example the intimacy of the mother–baby relation. The discourses of independence, duty, sacrifice, and exchange are well known romantic tropes. But they are also, not inconsequently, the tropes of early and late capitalism.

Along these lines and as a way of beginning to bring this chapter to a close, I want to look at one of Coleridge's sonnets, a poem that I think offers us a model of ambivalent introjection, moments of resistance inside a narrative of development. Famously, when Coleridge first saw his first son Hartley, he wrote in a letter to Thomas Poole, "… my mind was intensely contemplative & my heart only sad."[104] He did not feel the joy he expected to feel. Instead, he spent two hours in this painful state unable to cathect the child and his new role as a father. It was only when he saw his son at its mother's breast that he could give to it the "Kiss of a Father."[105] Coleridge seems to need to contextualize the child, to see it placed at its mother's breast, in order to feel his connectedness to the child. This allows, as we can

see in the finished sonnet sent to Poole one week later, for a ternary sense of relatedness, father to son to mother and back again.

> CHARLES! my slow heart was only sad, when first
> I scann'd that face of feeble infancy:
> For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
> All I had been, and all my child might be!
> But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
> And hanging at her bosom (she the while
> Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile)
> Then I was thrill'd and melted, and most warm
> Impress'd a father's kiss: and all beguil'd
> Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
> I seem'd to see an angel-form appear—
> 'Twas even thine, belovéd woman mild!
> So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
> And dearer was the mother for the child.

Unquestionably, Coleridge projects himself into the role of the infant at the end of the poem, at the mother's breast. Ashton and Carlson have each written in different genres (biographical and literary critical, respectively) of Coleridge's intense need for motherly love.[106] The problem in the poem is, on one level, the father's inability to "show up" in the moment. It is as though the slow, sad heart—that is, his affect or feeling—must be brought under a concept—a thought, a nameable relation. This inability to name, to control, or to categorize feelings or relations seems a kind of hell in the poem. The father's own fear of feeling becomes a contagious spirit in the room so that past, present, and future collapse into a single synchronic moment: "For dimly on my thoughtful sprit burst / All I had been, and all my child might be!" From the letter to Poole we know that this inability to understand his feelings is predicated on an expectation, a received cultural and social notion of what a father is supposed to feel when presented with an infant, especially a father of the "new type," that is, trained in the school of "sensibility": "When I first saw the child, I did not feel that thrill and overflowing of affection which I expected." Poole's letter also informs us that Coleridge spent a full two hours in this pensive and confused state.

The sonnet differs in another sense from the letter: it appends a secondary epiphany. There is a turning away from the mother–child dyad similar to that which we witnessed in *Opus Maximum,* in which the child's loving gaze toward the mother is redirected toward God. The letter ends with the Coleridges' kiss. Yet the sonnet continues: "… and all beguil'd / Of dark remembrance and presageful fear, / I seem'd to see an angel form appear." This angel form replaces, merges with, and/or subsumes the mother-wife. Thus, the turn toward God, as in *Opus Maximum,* results in a reification of the mother's cultural meaning. In the sonnet, her holiness obviates the

speaker-father from any responsibility toward the child, even, apparently, as the third presence whose role is to take on the earthly form of the divine. Another way of saying this is to note that idealizing the mother may be simply another form of erasure.

Coleridge's ambivalence toward the demands of parenthood is well known. He writes elsewhere that a "parent—in the strict and exclusive sense a parent!—to me it is a *fable* wholly without meaning except in the *moral* which it suggests—a fable of which the moral is God."[107] Thus we see that there are two interpretive problems at work in the poem, one for the father, and the other, presumably, for the infant. God (as form) and father (as shape) confound the infant and frustrate his or her desire to be one with the mother. Adopting the social role of "parent" is a problem for Coleridge, as it is for all of us. The solution for both parent and child is the recourse to the divine. Yet Coleridge, according to his own philosophy, bears responsibility as a father to be the shape of divinity here on earth for the child. He is able to evade that responsibility only so far as he is able to project onto the mother—we might say back into the mother—the recursive turn toward the divine. Remember that, for Coleridge, love begins in the mother, can be reciprocally experienced by the infant in a moment of subjective becoming, and is finally triangulated with God and/or the father.

Most readings of this episode and sonnet argue that Coleridge's initial discomfort is the result of his projection of his past onto the child.[108] My reading takes the opposite tack, suggesting that at least a part of the discomfort and ambivalence Coleridge feels are aspects of an ethical desire not to leap into the role of "the father." In this way, the sonnet resists both Darwin's incorporative model of aesthetic pleasure as well as the model of introjective, consolatory subjectivity Coleridge will come to articulate twenty year later in *Opus Maximum*. It seems to me that the sonnet invites us to read it topologically, that is, as a kind of diagram for the affective working through of a problem. My model here is D. W. Winnicott's notion of object *usage,* which he contrasts to object *relating*. Winnicott explains the concept like this: there are two babies at the mother's breast, one that is feeding on the self (i.e., one that has not yet differentiated itself from the mother), and one that is feeding on the mother (i.e., one that recognizes itself and its mother as separate beings). The movement from relating to the object to using it involves imaginatively:

> placing the object outside the area of the subject's omnipotent control; that is, the subject's perception of the object as an external phenomenon, not as a projective entity, [is] in fact recognition of this as an entity in its own right.[109]

Winnicott, in another essay, argues that culture exists precisely in this transitory, in between state.[110] He argues that a key component of object usage is that the child is able to imaginatively destroy the object and that the object must survive the infant's anger. Perhaps it is only by means of an aesthetics

of cultural ambivalence rather than disinterest, one that recognizes, however uncomfortably, objects (people, nature) as "entities in their own right" that we can return, if not to our "original" objects, then to the objects that surround us now. (Ambivalence, from a psychoanalytic perspective, does not mean "take it or leave it"; rather, it means equal parts love and hate.)

In this reading a kind of ambivalent identification develops so as to place the father in the role of the baby in Winnicott's formulation, struggling to see his son as both separate from and a part of himself. Reading the sonnet in this way, we can say that Coleridge's resistance to role of father allows him to recognize his son as "an entity in its own right." His disorientation is the effect of experiencing his son as fully separate from himself. Equilibrium finally comes for Coleridge, but it comes at a price. He does not destroy the object or the ideology of sentiment that produced it. Rather, he relinquishes his ambivalence for the certainty of an introjective role.

I'm interested in prying open and occupying the two hours that Coleridge spent unable to decide. For I believe it may offer another form of aesthetic and ethical reverie, a way to retain some of the ambivalence, the "sad heart" and the "thoughtful spirit" along with the joy of the "father's kiss." Coleridge's introjection of the child at the mother's breast comes replete with an introjection of the ideologies of fatherhood and bourgeois sensibility. Perhaps our own introjections (of nationalism, family values, etc.) are inevitable, but an aesthetics of object usage suggests periodic breaks and discontinuities in these processes. As these texts suggest, getting objects inside us is the most "natural" thing in all the world; getting objects back into the world, seeing them, and leaving them there for as long as possible seems the more difficult and ethical option.

2.6 Afterward as Epitaph

Coleridge was even farther away, in Germany, when his second son Berkeley died. A letter from, again, Poole containing the news reached him over a month after the fact. It seems that Poole was concerned that Coleridge's German studies would be adversely affected by the news.[111] Coleridge wrote back the following:

> But Death—the death of an infant—of one's own infant! I read your letter in calmness, and walked out into the open fields, oppressed not by my feelings, but by the riddles which the thought so easily proposes, and solves—never … My baby has not lived in vain—this life has been to him what it is to all of us—education and development! Fling yourself forward into your immortality only a few thousand years, and how small will not the difference between one year old and sixty years appear! Consciousness!—it is no otherwise necessary to our conceptions of future continuance than as connecting the present link of our being with the one immediately preceding it … But I cannot truly say

> that I grieve—I am perplexed—I am sad—and a little thing—a very trifle—would make me weep—but for the death of the baby I have *not* wept![112]

Just as when he first saw Hartley, Coleridge searches himself and finds that he cannot feel the appropriate feeling. Holmes reads the lack of emotion in the letter as a case of displaced guilt.[113] However psychologically accurate this reading may be, there is also a sense in which Coleridge's inability to connect with the infant Hartley and his inability to grieve Berkeley's death are directly related to what I have termed his ambivalence. No one to my knowledge has commented on Coleridge's core concern in this letter, namely, his inability to accept the brute *fact* that his baby has died. The riddle that oppresses him in his letter to Poole is not unlike the riddle the infant in *Opus Maximum* considers when its mother looks away to God. Remember that God is both the problem and the solution in the infant narrative of maternal abstraction.

After writing to Poole in the same letter of the impossibility of being "in the strict and exclusive sense a parent" unless the moral of the earthly fable is God, Coleridge writes, "Be it so—my dear, dear friend! Oh let it be so!" The sudden, prayerful interjection reflects Coleridge's desperate need to believe, to ascribe some meaning to his son's death. Not just theologically but philosophically and psychologically, Coleridge must align his own will with the will of God. To be a parent (strictly and exclusively) is to assume responsibility for another person's well-being beyond what is humanly possible. The same doubt that haunted him at Hartley's birth recurs to him now at Berkeley's death. Parenthood, strictly and exclusively speaking, is impossible. Not only is he unable to protect his son, but the distance between his own will (to have his son live) and the will of God (to have his son die) is a gap that must somehow be abided or breached (like the guilty distance that separates him from his wife and dead child and the temporal distance between the event and his awareness of his son's death).[114] Remember that, for the infant in *Opus Maximum* as for Coleridge, each of these distances simply is God: it is the problem and the solution in one.

I believe that Coleridge's theory of infant reverie provides for us a model—a temporal and spatial interval, if you will, a space that can be occupied and abided in, until the gradual acceptance and acknowledgment of God's will come of their own accord. They act as holding environments akin to Darwin's reverie but within the realm of the social. Upon receiving Poole's letter, Coleridge walked along the river throwing stones as he had done as a child. Like Winnicott's infant, he places ("flings") the object (the rocks are the *unacceptable fact* of his son's death) *outside* his omnipotent control. All objects (rocks, angel-forms, bodies, poems, and letters) become, in the transitional state of the thinking, feeling, reading, and writing forms—ways of knowing the world. Real and unreal, they teach us where we end and the world begins. Eventually, Coleridge will write back to Sarah. He will take in her sadness. He will try to console her, even if his consolation often

takes the strange shape of angel-forms, as when he tellingly confuses a memory of Hartley, his living son, with Berkeley, his dead one.[115] Even this confusion seems another form of object usage, what Winnicott elsewhere terms "the task of reality acceptance," something that is "never completed."[116] It involves entering an "intermediate area of experience which is not challenged" (art, religion, etc.), which brings us relief from the "strain of relating inner and outer reality." In a strange way, we might even consider Coleridge's ambivalence an aspect of love.

In a notebook entry that Kathleen Coburn dates from February–September 1798, before he would have left for Germany, Coleridge makes a list with the heading "Infancy and Infants." One of the listings reads as follows: "Στοργη—the absurdity of the Darwinian System—Birds—Allegators [*sic*]."[117] The Greek word Στοργη, *storgé*, means love, specifically familial or parental love. Love, then (*storgé*), is not merely one of a number of concepts that distinguish the human from the animal—love, faith, and belief in the eternal. It is also that which makes our animality, our continuity with the bird and alligator, absurd. For Coleridge, human infancy is saved from a state of animality, from an incorporative aesthetics and ethics, by a powerful and persistent love. Presumably, he takes implicit issue with Darwin's system for its insistence that love is in fact merely animal attraction and that desire alone is what marks the human.

Coleridge ends his letter to Poole by copying out Wordsworth's "A Slumber did My Spirit Seal," a poem that Coleridge (strangely? brilliantly?) assumes Wordsworth wrote from fear of losing his sister Dorothy. The two stanzas face each other on the page, immutable. The lines, "She seemed a thing that could not feel / The touch of earthly years," recall Coleridge's warning in *Opus Maximum* that a child raised surrounded by shapes would herself become a thing. Berkeley, too, is now a thing, "moved round in earth's diurnal course." When he first received Sarah's account of the death, Coleridge writes that "there was nothing to *think* of—"[118] Here, in grief, Coleridge's traumatic reverie (there was nothing to *think* of) intersects with Darwin's aesthetic reverie (*thinking without words*). Perhaps Coleridge's use of Wordsworth's poem marks an entrance into a space between introjection and incorporation; it gives him an object on which to think.

Notes

A condensed version of this chapter appears as "Romantic Objects in Coleridge and Erasmus Darwin" in *Essays in Romanticism* XVI, (2008), 51–71.

1. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Opus Maximum: The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Edited by Thomas McFarland and Nicholas Halmi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 134.
2. *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 189.

3. Bromberg, P. M. "Standing in the Spaces: The Multiplicity of Self and the Psychoanalytic Relationship." *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 32, no. 4 (1996), 519.
4. Darwin, Erasmus. *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life,* vol. I (Philadelphia: E. Earle, 1818), 18.
5. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Friend II." In *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* ([London]; [Princeton]: Routledge and K. Paul; Princeton University Press, 1969), 8.
6. Ronell, Avital. *Loser Sons: Politics and Authority* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 158.
7. Langan, Celeste. "Pathologies of Communication from Coleridge to Schreber." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 146.
8. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume I, 1785–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 119, 120.
9. Ibid., 120.
10. For several years now critical discourse has been focused on "things" rather than objects. "Thing theory" conceives of things as what is excessive in objects, as what "exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects," Brown, Bill. "Thing Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001); see also Brown, in which he defines things as excess meaning and matter, "How to Do Things with Things (a Toy Story)." *Critical Inquiry*, Summer (1998), 954. Coleridge also differentiates between objects and things; for him, the distinction is crucial and there is always a danger in confusing one with the other. Darwin's aesthetic theory, on the other hand, tends to turn all objects into things. I use the term "object" if for no other reason than that the authors I am writing about use the term, but also because objects, notoriously and obsessively, seem to find their way inside us in a way that things—and perhaps this is their attraction for contemporary critics—do not.
11. These works have never been paired to my knowledge, but the editor of *Opus Maximum,* Thomas McFarland, identifies E. Darwin (ostensibly his materialism) as the prime impetus behind Coleridge's desire to articulate an answer to what McFarland terms "the question of immortality." Coleridge, *Opus Maximum*, cxi, cxii.
12. See Kipp, Julie. *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23–54; Henderson, Andrea. *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774–1830,* 18–23; for the revolutionary meanings the maternal body acquired after the French Revolution see Mary Jacobus. "Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution." In *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 54–75.
13. Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic*, 27.
14. See Peter Heymans for an account of Darwin's reinterpretation of Burke's sublime in *The Temple of Nature*: *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 169–183.
15. As Alan Richardson points out, "organic" as used in Darwin's subtitle (*The Laws of Organic Life*) means in some ways the opposite from what Coleridge's more idealistic usage means: roughly, materialistic, of the body: *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5. Unlike Darwin's material usage, Coleridge drives

together an account of semiotic language structure and the relation between the infant and the mother. This symbolic structure aims at a similar holism as that which underwrites Darwin's organic metaphors—but it does so in a way that acknowledges and even privileges mediation.

16. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Biographia Literaria or My Literary Life and Opinions." In *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*. Edited by H. J. Jackson. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2000, 313.
17. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* vol. I, viii.
18. See section 1, vol. I of *Zoonomia*; see also Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind,* 12–16; more recently, see Fara, Patricia. *Erasmus Darwin: Sex, Science, and Serendipity*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Priestman, Martin. *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin: Enlightened Spaces, Romantic Times*. (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2014).
19. For more on Darwin's "neuropsychology" and "neurophysiology," see Smith, C. U. M. "All from Fibres: Erasmus Darwin's Evolutionary Psychobiology." In *The Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2005) 135.
20. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* vol. I, 101–108.
21. Ibid., 108.
22. Ibid., 104.
23. Darwin replaces existing aesthetic theories, for example, Edmund Burke's, which claim that we can only show and describe an "efficient cause" or relation between mind and body, beauty and perceiver, with one that claims to be able to locate a single origin for all forms of beauty: *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*. 6 v. (London; New York: George Bell & Sons, 1889), 241, 242. What is more, this origin is inscribed in our bodies, carried in our sense memories or inner sensorium. Beauty is not produced by ideational association, but rather is connected to associated movements of habitual sensorial motion. In this way, Darwin's biologism resists the basic tenets of more idealizing aesthetic theories. In Kant's aesthetic, for example, agreeableness can never be a precondition for beauty. For Kant, neither the beautiful nor the sublime can depend on a sensation (pleasure or pain) or on a definite concept (such as the Good) but rather must be founded on "indeterminate" concepts: Kant, Immanuel. "From Critique of Judgment." In *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998), 269.
24. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* 109. Melanie Klein, in her essay "Love, Guilt, and Reparation," builds on Darwin's symbolization, but describes an already normalized process. She begins by acknowledging along with Darwin that "any round object may, in the child's unconscious mind, come to stand for his mother's breast." But she then modifies this and characterizes it as a gradual move toward "growth," adding that by "a gradual process, anything that is felt to give out goodness and beauty, and that calls forth pleasure and satisfaction, in the physical or in the *wider* sense, can in the unconscious mind take the place of the ever-bountiful breast, and of the whole mother" (my emphasis), *Love, Guilt, and Reparation: And Other Works, 1921–1945* (New York: Delacorte Press/S. Lawrence, 1975), 333.

    Romantic criticism has long acknowledged these displacements. For example, Joshua Wilner uses psychoanalytic theory to suggest the "integration … between the infant's gazing eye and nursing mouth" in Wordsworth's *Prelude*. *Feeding on Infinity: Readings in the Romantic Rhetoric of Internalization* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 11.

25. Brown, Thomas. *Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin, M. D.* (Edinburgh: Printed for Mundell & Son, 1798), 294–302.
26. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* 109.
27. Ibid., 109.
28. Judith Butler sees Hegel's unhappy consciousness, Althusser's interpellation, and Freud's sublimation as different articulations of this one problem, that is, the problem of desire as that which precipitates subject formation as well as that which returns stubbornly to the subject in the form of loss or guilt or "the body," *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 2–29; see also Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 31–51, esp. 34–44.
29. Klein, *The Selected Melanie Klein,* 89–90; 147–148. Klein uses the term "incorporation" to describe the internalization of objects in a text from 1940. She then adopts the term "introjection" to describe the seemingly identical processes in 1947.
30. In *The Metaphysics of Ethics* Kant differentiates between a "practical pleasure"—that which is "connected with desiring"—and "contemplative pleasure," which is not connected to pleasure per se, and roughly synonymous with taste. He further describes what he terms an "appetitive interest," which entails the "combination of pleasure and desire." The crucial difference for Kant involves whether an interest is "of reason" or of sensation—"sensitive" interests being problematic insofar as they are not "free," that is, they are driven exclusively, tyrannically it seems, by the senses. He does, however, allow a role for appetite and desire. When pleasure is previously *determined* by the "appetitive faculty" and has become habitual, it may be determined to be grounded in a rational *interest*, given that we experience "no pleasure in the existence of the object of the representation, but singly in the representation itself," Kant, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), 160–162.
31. It is also possible to imagine an opposite, although potentially related, aesthetic response, in which the percipient feels intensely disgusted by the object. We see versions of this response in debates about "inappropriate," "vulgar," and "tasteless" art. Typically, psychoanalytic theory has interpreted such violent and visceral responses as signs of reaction formation: "The impulse to spit or vomit at the sight of 'disgusting' things is only the reaction to the unconscious desire to take these things into the mouth," Ferenczi, Sandor. *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 66.
32. Darwin's refusal of the now-familiar story of Hegelian/psychoanalytic subject-formation here performs a useful intervention. His materialist organicism, the claim that the mind and body function identically (ideas are "animal motions of the organs of sense"), treats breasts and artworks as comprising similar bundles of sensual information, simply analogous forms, Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind,* 12–16. In this way, Darwin's theory might be said to liberate the aesthetic object from the stranglehold of melancholic loss. Yet, while we might find Darwin's theories critically useful, for me they give rise to certain ethical and even aesthetic misgivings that I hope will become clearer as the chapter progresses.

33. Psychoanalytic theory would say of Darwin's aesthetics that it is "pre-ambivalent," insofar as it "does not put an end to the existence of the object," Abraham, Karl. *Selected Papers of Karl Abraham, M. D.* Edited by Ernest Jones. (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979), 450.
34. Abraham, Nicolas, and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 110–124.
35. Whereas introjection is a fantasy of taking the object inside the boundaries not only of the body but also of the "psychical apparatus," incorporation, in this view, is a kind of swallowing and preserving involving a literal and limited "bodily frontier," Laplanche, Jean, and J.-B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 230.
36. Torok notes that "the very fact of *having had a loss* would be denied in incorporation," Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel,* 129.
37. For more on the processes of introjection and projection, see Ferenczi, Sandor. "Introjection and Transference." In *Essential Papers on Transference.* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); also *The Selected Melanie Klein,* 116–145.
38. Freud's account, like Coleridge's, relies upon a triangulation—baby–mother–father (in Deleuze and Guattari's critical rephrasing, "mummy, daddy, me"), Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 51–55. In Freud, the incest taboo and/or fear of castration leads to the displacement of the girl's desire onto the father and the sublimation of the boy's desire in the direction of paternal identification. Darwin's account is different in at least two ways. First, it is dyadic rather than triadic. Second, it begins and ends in pleasure—no sublimation. In a sense it privileges the maternal body (by setting it up as an explanatory aesthetic model) while at the same time derogating it (by emptying of any of its symbolic/cultural significance). As such, Darwin's incorporative model anticipates the "aesthetic dimension" of Schiller and Marcuse by connecting the aesthetic to our origin in childhood, yet subverts those theories by leaving the subject or percipient firmly attached to the pleasure principle.

    On the other hand, for all of its so-called essentialism, Freud's theory, unlike Darwin's, places great weight on cultural values and mores, as well as the realm of social habituation—including such sites as what Althusser terms the family "milieu," Althusser, Louis. *Writings on Psychoanalysis Freud and Lacan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 45–47. In other words as Freud's "meta-psychology" makes clear, complexes (Oedipal or otherwise) have their origin in culture and society, and thus are contingent and culturally/socially malleable.

    Laplanche recognizes the externality of complexes (as narrative structures) when he claims that they cannot exist in the unconscious as the result of primary repression, but rather must have their origin in culture, *Essays on Otherness,* 71–81.
39. Ibid., 142.
40. Brown, *Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin, M. D.*, footnote, 294, 295—italics in original.
41. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* ix.
42. As followers of Erasmus Darwin's grandson, Charles, have shown, one way to rationalize unpopular forms of social organization is to equate them with "natural" forms of organization and development. In 1972, perhaps concerned

with what he perceived to be extreme forms of literary criticism, William Wimsatt wrote that we should refuse the "organicism of the extreme biological analogy" as well as that of the "a priori or transcendental absolute" in favor of a "homelier and humbler sort of organicism … empirical, tentative, analytic, psychological, grammatical, lexicographic," "Organic Form: Some Questions about a Metaphor." In *Organic Form: The Life of an Idea* (London and Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972), 78. For Wimsatt, Darwin personified the extreme biological model. Without subscribing necessarily to Wimsatt's prognosis, it is clear that Darwin's biologism occupies one pole within a field of possible relations to our experience, and one that, in many ways, is still the norm. In Darwin's formulation, "habit" is the mortar from which "indissoluble connexions" are built, *Zoonomia,* vol. I, 35. For Darwin, habit is an organic flowering forth, neurologically determined rather than a constructed and contingent form of individual and collective organization.

Darwin, an expert in the discourse of science as well as poetry, was able to argue persuasively on two fronts for human "nature": he used the scientific text in order to categorize human difference; in the poetic text, he relied heavily on the trope of personification, which ironically de-differentiates, collapsing the boundaries between human, animal, and machine.

43. Darwin, Erasmus. *The Poetical Works of Erasmus Darwin … Containing The Botanic Garden … and The Temple of Nature* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1806), vol. 2, 71. Darwin derives his concept of ideal presence from Kames, who thought ideal presence, as a literary concept, needed always to be distinguished from the "real" presence and recollection, Kames, Henry Home. *Elements of Criticism,* 7th ed. (Edinburgh: Printed for J. Bell and W. Creech, etc., 1788), vol. 1, 88–94.
44. For an argument about the literalness of metaphor, see Davidson, Donald. "What Metaphors Mean." *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978), 43; for a more structural (and psychoanalytic) view, see Ricoeur, Paul. "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." In *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 156.
45. Priestman, Martin. *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin*, 128. Darwin may be again borrowing from Kames, who describes "reverie" as a state in which "a man, forgetting himself, is totally occupied with the ideas passing in his mind, the objects of which he conceives to be really existing in his presence," *Elements of Criticism,* 93.
46. McGann, Jerome J. *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), 134.
47. Valsania, Maurizio. "'Another and the Same': Nature and Human Beings in Erasmus Darwin's Doctrines of Love and Imagination." In *The Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2005) 338–341. Hassler further points out the importance of Darwin's notion of organic imagination, and Wimsatt (1972) concurs. Hassler, Donald M. *Erasmus Darwin* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973). McGann connects Erasmus Darwin to the larger movement of sentiment and claims that "sentiment functions as the conscious eroticism" of his poetry." According to McGann, Darwin's poetry functions differently than his philosophic and scientific texts in that "thought" appears as energy rather than a concept, *The Poetics of Sensibility,* 134.

48. Packham, Catherine. "The Science and Poetry of Animation: Personification, Analogy, and Erasmus Darwin's Loves of the Plants." *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism* 10, no. 2 (2004), 205, 206. From Darwin: "… Poetry admits of very few words expressive of perfectly abstracted ideas, whereas Prose abounds with them. And as our ideas derived from visible objects are more distinct that those derived from the objects of our other senses, the words expressive of these ideas belonging to vision make up the principal part of poetic language." Darwin, *The Poetical Works,* vol. 2, 63.
49. Heather Glen, in a reading of Wordsworth's "Reverie of Poor Susan," reads Darwin's concept of reverie as both a form of mental illness and as a poetics, but, as is clear from the poem, it is also a form of illusion—psychic and ideological. This, I would argue, is yet another register of reverie—a defensive hallucination capable of displacing unacceptable reality. In this way, it is clearly in Wordsworth's elegiac key rather than in Darwin's soberer mode, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 104–105.
50. Darwin, *Poetical Works,* vol. 1, 162–163.
51. For a reading of the "hedonistic, enterprise of the enlightenment … vividly expressed" in Darwin's allegories, see Teskey, Gordon. *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 107–116.
52. Darwin, *The Complete Poetical Works,* vol. 1, 71.
53. In the appendix to the Treatise, Hume distinguishes between the different feelings of the passions produced by poetry and so-called reality. While he complains that poetry is always a "fiction," akin to madness, he concedes that it carries the weight, force, and fixity of belief, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1888), 629–631.
54. As A. H. Modell writes, "… transference is both in the here-and-now and a repetition of the past," "The Psychoanalytic Setting as a Container of Multiple Levels of Reality: A Perspective on the Theory of Psychoanalytic Treatment." *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 9 (1989), 84.
55. Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel,* 133.
56. See footnote 102 for more about the drives and their relation to society and culture.
57. Darwin, *The Poetical Works,* vol. I, 162, 163.
58. See my Shelley chapter for contemporaneous writing in animal magnetism—"pipes and pores, beyond conception," quoted in Winter, George and Jean Boniot De Mainauduc. *Animal Magnetism: History Of, Its Origin, Progress, and Present State* (Bristol; London: Printed by George Routh; Sold by E. Newberry, 1801), 24. Both from Bristol, it is likely that Winter knew Darwin.
59. As Charles Armstrong writes, "Romantic organicism was … an attempt to transcend [the] dichotomy" between subject and object, which underlies linguistic attempts at holism. For Armstrong, organic structure and the linguistic/rhetorical/symbolic aspects of romanticism require and should be studied in relation to one another, *Romantic Organicism*, 3, 4.
60. Recall Darwin's definition of "idea" at the beginning of *Zoonomia:* "those notions of external things, which our organs of sense bring us acquainted with originally … a contraction, or motion, or configuration of the fibres, which constitute the immediate organ of sense … Synonymous with the word idea,

we shall sometimes use the words *sensual motion* in contradistinction to *muscular motion*," *Zoonomia,* vol. I, 6.

61. Darwin, *Zoonomia,* vol. I, 34, 35.
62. Barbara Larson points out that Darwin is following associationist principles here—namely, Hume and Locke, "Darwin, Burke, and the Biological Sublime." In *Darwin and Theories of Aesthetics and Cultural History*, (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2013), 25. Yet, as Bernard Burgoyne has demonstrated, Freud also read Hume, and it is arguable that British empiricist logic plays a part in the development of such psychoanalytic concepts as displacement, identification, the fetish, and transference. Burgoyne, Bernard. "Love of the Real." In *The Pathology of Democracy: A Letter to Bernard Accoyer and to Enlightened Opinion*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (London: Karnac Books, 2005), 11.
63. Darwin, *The Poetical Works,* vol. 3, 107.
64. Peter Heymans links Deleuze to Eramus Darwin obliquely, through the aesthetics of Edmund Burke, to whom both are (positively) opposed, *Animality in British Romanticism*.
65. Darwin *Zoonmia,* vol. I, 143–152.
66. Ibid., 97.
67. Ibid., 151.
68. (LII To Josiah Wade; LVII to Thelwall) in vol. 2.
69. See Vickers, Neil. *Coleridge and the Doctors, 1795–1806*. (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2004).
70. Coleridge, *Opus Maximum,* 120–121.
71. Ibid., 131.
72. Ibid., 126–127. Here Coleridge anticipates the work of object relations theorist Wilfred Bion, who claims that thinking for the infant is a defensive gesture or mechanism, in no way a priori or essential: "thinking has to be called into existence to cope with thoughts … thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts and not the other way round," *Second Thoughts; Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* (London: Heinemann, 1967), 111.
73. For "form" and "shape," see Evans, Murray J. *Sublime Coleridge: The Opus Maximum* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 81–82.
74. Ibid., 63.
75. See, for example, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads,*" in *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*. Edited by Stephen Gill. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 598, 605, 614.
76. Green, *On Private Madness,* 152.
77. Keats's well known criticism of Coleridge, *John Keats: Selected Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 42.
78. This description of spatial rather than temporal orientation of experience is reminiscent of Lacan's mirror stage. But unlike that account, in which the *imago* orients the subject in a "fictive" direction, Coleridge's child recognizes another (not its own imago) *at the precise moment* that he recognizes its turn away.
79. Writing about these passages, Thomas Pfau remarks that they presage "modern object-relations theory and childhood psychology (Ronald Fairbairn, Melanie Klein, and D. W. Winicott in particular)," *Minding the Modern: Human Agency, Intellectual Traditions, and Responsible Knowledge* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 574.

80. Coleridge, *Opus Maximum,* 123.
81. Ibid., 122.
82. Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness,* 93. For Laplanche, a "message" captures an aspect of communication that a "signifier" cannot—namely, that messages are not only signifiers "of" something, but also messages "to" someone, ibid., 97.
83. Coleridge, *Opus Maximum,* 122.
84. Ibid., 131.
85. Ibid., 122.
86. Ibid., 132.
87. Pfau, *Minding the Modern,* 575. Pfau's book is an important and convincing argument for and performance of an alternative genealogy for human relatedness, not based on the Cartesian model of self (and all that follows from it). Perhaps because of this, he asserts a stronger distinction than I would make between, for example, Coleridge's treatment of the child "attaining a grasp on its own Personeity" and Wordsworth's more "expressivist" mode in the *Prelude* (2013) 576, 577. I am more interested in both cases in the *retrospective* construction of the self in the texts and the role that infancy is given to play in those processes.
88. Ibid., 575.
89. Lyotard understands displacement, which he conflates with the death drive, in precisely this way: "the slow or lightning-quick displacement of investments is precisely positivity insofar as it escapes the rules of language and is without reason." It is "undoubtedly the model of the anaphora," *Toward the Postmodern.* Edited by Robert Harvey and Mark S. Roberts. (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 15.
90. Coleridge, *Opus Maximum,* 31.
91. Iblid., 126. Andrea Henderson theorizes the flight from the mother's body as such: "In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a child must, of necessity, resist a strong connection to its mother in order to establish itself as a self-made subject … The child that does not resist possession by the mother finds itself unable to become a complete subject precisely because it is positioned as an object, as a possessed being, in both the economic and the gothic sense," *Romantic Identities* (37).
92. Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel,* 128.
93. "There could be no "*He*" without a previous "*Thou,*" and I scarcely need add that without a "*Thou*" there could be no opposite, and of course no distinct or conscious sense of the term "*I,*" as far as the consciousness is concerned, without a "*Thou*," Coleridge, *Opus Maximum,* 75.
94. We might associate these limits with earlier critiques of Coleridge: for his "self-mystifying tendencies" see Rajan, Tilottama. *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 225–227; for his "masculinism," see Carlson, Julie A. *In the Theater of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 126–133; see also McGann, *The Romantic Ideology,* 40–49.
95. "Once the vista of new domestic detail was opened there was no reason why it should not be indefinitely followed, with increasing shapelessness," House, Humphry. *Coleridge* (Philadelphia: Dufour, 1965), 82, 83. For more on the excisions, see also Taylor, Anya. "'A Father's Tale': Coleridge Foretells the Life

of Hartley." *Studies in Romanticism* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1991), and VanWinkle, Matthew. "Fluttering on the Grate: Revision in 'Frost at Midnight.'" *Studies in Romanticism* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2004).

96. Plotz, Judith A. *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 220. Plotz's focus in the chapter on Hartley Coleridge, which ends her book, is the poet's/parent's solipsistic and narcissistic usurpation of the child's life or autonomy. Plotz provocatively uses attachment theory to bolster claims that Coleridge did not, could not, give Hartley what he needed because he was overly identified with him. She calls these kinds of parents "pre-occupied empathists."
97. See, for example, Beres, David. "A Dream, a Vision, and a Poem: A Psycho-Analytic Study of the Origins of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.'" *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 32, no. 2 (1951).
98. Coleridge's odd descriptions—the child "shouts, stretches, and flutters"—contribute to the strangeness of the passage and approximate the language Coleridge uses in the letters and journal entries concerning Hartley, in which he is depicted as whirling, being blown by wind, or as the wind itself.
99. Mellor, Anne K. "Possessing Nature: The Female in Frankenstein." In *Romanticism and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Richardson, Alan. "Romanticism and the Colonization of the Feminine." In *Romanticism and Feminism*, 13–25.
100. Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel,* 113.
101. Laplanche helps to differentiate between Freud's use of drive (*Trieb*) and instinct (*Instinkt*). He elaborates what he calls the "derivation in man of drives from instincts" (1976: 10). The sources of the latter are merely somatic and biological in Freud's thinking, whereas the former (drives) are psychical "representations" of the instincts, ibid., 12. This allows Althusser to bring Freud's theory of the drives together with Marx's theory of social formations: each introduces "revolutionary forms of thought"; each is a "*topographical model without center*, in which the various instances have no unity other than *the unity of their conflictual functioning,*" *Essays on Psychoanalysis,* 121. More specifically, given the language I've been using, Torok reads Ferenczi as conferring on the analyst and the object (in the external world) the role of "mediation toward the unconscious," *The Shell and the Kernel,* 113. See also the conclusion to Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 281–299.
102. Ironically, in *Aids to Reflection,* Coleridge himself recognizes and comments on the constructed nature of our infantile connections: "The great fundamental Truths and doctrines of Religion, the existence and attributes of God, and the Life after Death, are in Christian Countries taught so early, under such circumstances, and in such close and vital association with whatever makes or marks *reality* for our infant minds, that the words ever after represent sensations, feelings, vital assurances, sense of reality—rather than thoughts, or any distinct conception. Associated, *I had almost said identified,* with the parental Voice, Look, Touch, with the living warmth and pressure of the Mother, on whose lap the Child is first made to kneel, within whose palms its little hands are folded, and the motion of whose eyes *its* eyes follow and imitate—" *Coleridge's Aids to Reflection: With the Author's Last Corrections* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1854), 178. Coleridge's rhetoric here is arch. He does not *almost* say

"identified"; he says it. By putting the focus squarely on the pedagogical nature of the messages that make and mark our reality, Coleridge marks our own seemingly unending acts of imitation and introjection.

103. Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel,* 111.
104. *The Collected Letters,* 236.
105. Ibid., 236.
106. Ashton, Rosemary. *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography* (Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) 26; Carlson, Julie A. "Gender." In *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*. Edited by Lucy Newlyn. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
107. *Collected Letters,* 478.
108. For example: Judith Plotz, *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*; Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter,* 1980.
109. Winnicott, D. W. "The Use of an Object." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 50 (1969): 713.
110. Winnicott, D. W. "The Location of Cultural Experience." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 48 (1967): 368–372.
111. Holmes, Richard. *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 223.
112. *The Collected Letters,* vol. I, 478, 479.
113. Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions*, 225. See also Brian Caraher's account, which contextualizes Coleridge's letters within the content and language of Wordsworth's Lucy poems, *Wordsworth's "Slumber" and the Problematics of Reading* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 123–130.
114. Adam Potkay provocatively connects Coleridge's desire to his pain as part of a medieval poetics of *joi*. We might think of Coleridge's grief here in a similar way, an ambivalence that shuttles between birth and death, *The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50–72.
115. *Collected Letters,* vol. I, 484, 485.
116. Winnicott, D. W. "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena—." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 34 (1953), 96.
117. Coleridge, *Notebooks. 1794–1804,* 330.
118. *Collected Letters,* vol. I, 478.

3 Merging and Emerging in the Work of Sara Coleridge

Sunk was my frame—heavy that weight must be
That keeps a mother's love from springing free
—S. Coleridge (cancelled lines)[1]

What is writing but continuing.
Who knows what needs she has?
—Susan Howe[2]

I concluded the last chapter by discussing S. T. Coleridge's theory of the symbol, which I recast in terms of the psychoanalytic concept of introjection. Attention to Coleridge's depictions of infancy shows us that to the degree that the symbol founders, it does so precisely because it tends to reproduce the ideology that produces it. This chapter pushes deeper into the nineteenth century and focuses on the life and work of Sara Coleridge, S. T. Coleridge's daughter.[3] Like her father—in fact like the majority of the poets in this study—Sara Coleridge was deeply attracted to imaginative states of detachment from the world. This tendency, along with several other factors, made it difficult for Coleridge to embrace aspects of her domestic role as mother and wife. In a sense, it put domesticity in conflict not only with professional aspirations, but also, perhaps more importantly, with poetic feeling. In what follows, I explore the tension in Sara Coleridge's writing between a desire to engage with others and solipsistic retreat into self. Of course this opposition is reminiscent of, but not reducible to, the opposition between romanticism's "wise passiveness" and a Victorian sense of duty. Yet, paradoxically, the poetic feeling at issue here is, in the logic of Kant's "What is Enlightenment?" a public rather than private phenomenon. In fact, Coleridge's case reveals a potential reversal at the very core of these terms. In other words, because for Coleridge the life of feeling is mediated through acts of writing—that is, staged public expressions—poetic retreats into self have a surprisingly public character, whereas social engagement with others in the domestic realm, especially when it is reduced to the mere birthing and raising of children, is stultifyingly private.[4]

In the particular permutations it takes in Coleridge's writing and thought the tension between these terms is tremendously productive, not only

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because it produced a valuable body of work (much if not most of which remains unpublished), but also because it demonstrates the power of alternative genres and spaces of writing, such as the nursery or the sickbed. I have argued throughout this book that romantic theorizations of infancy work specifically to mediate the opposition of public and private realms, and that they do so by recalling us to a place of perpetual beginning and anamnesis; in Sara Coleridge's case, this is essentially a discursive, that is, textual, practice. Finally, I argue that Coleridge's struggle to emerge—from the shadow of her father, from the social restrictions imposed on women writers, as well as from a nervous disorder and opium addiction—results in workable ethics, a revision of her father's philosophy and theology that is fluid, improvisatory, and (to use yet other nineteenth-century buzzword) useful.

I focus primarily on the years 1830–1835, years in which Coleridge's "nervousness," diagnosed at the time as puerperal disease, the nineteenth-century's term for postpartum depression, kept her mostly debilitated. Criticism on Sara Coleridge has suggested that her illness was primarily an unconscious "form of protest" against the sexism of the day, which Coleridge then negotiated "on her own terms."[5] Although I focus primarily on her writing practice rather than biography, and although I generalize out from Coleridge's identity as a woman writer rather than using it as proof or explanation, I see my reading as extending these earlier feminist readings. This is because I read Coleridge's distain of the "merely bodily" or fleshly self, something that she shares with her father, as sounding from within a culture that attributes bodily processes and unreason to the feminine. On this reading, the Victorian "angel in the house" is not merely a response to the structuring demands of capitalism (the feminine domestic angel in dialectical opposition to what would soon be understood as the masculine social Darwinism of the marketplace), but it also acts as a reflexive repudiation of a latent animality that was already labeled hysteria.

Nervousness then, as Hilary Marland and others have pointed out, is a cultural and social phenomenon as well as a personal one. Furthermore, regardless of the motivation or etiology of Coleridge's illness, her nervousness plays a paradoxically essential role in her ultimate emergence and identity as a writer. As such, her specific and in some sense over-determined experience of nervousness has important literary-formal and literary-historical implications. Coleridge brings together a strand of nervous poetics (Keats, Tennyson, the spasmodic school, etc.) with new hybrid genres of writing, forms that are only now being fully appreciated.[6]

Coleridge herself explicitly associates her nervous illness with a state of infancy.[7] Bringing together these two realms, her oft cited but not yet published, "Diary of Her Children's Early Years," is pivotal for my argument in this chapter. It is a strange text, filled with accounts of her children's bowel movements, teething, breastfeeding, weaning, and runny noses. It is also an account of the weather as well as (her own) sleeplessness, nervousness, morphine addiction, and depression. The boundaries between separate states and bodies (Coleridge's and her children's), as well as the unique

signification we tend to ascribe to individuals, become progressively fungible as the journal progresses. And although the process is more discontinuous, fraught with reversals and regressions, than I make it sound at present, her surviving children's slow progression from human animals to reasoning subjects mirrors and precipitates Coleridge' own recovery from a debilitating depression, her merging and her emergence, her journey, that is, from dejected housewife-mother to editor-scholar-poet.

3.1 Child as Father of the Woman

In the last chapter, we saw the importance of empirical observation of infancy for S. T. C. and Erasmus Darwin. Like her famous father, Sara Coleridge continually oscillates in her writing between small, vivid details and universal principles on a grand scale.[8] One result of this zeroing in and widening out is a proliferation of genres; Coleridge's writing, again like her father's, assumes several forms in order to accommodate her dual interests in close empirical observation on the one hand and philosophical speculation on the other. We can hear her ruminate on the problem of the "universal particular" in the following passage.[9] The context of the quote is a letter to her brother Hartley, himself the object of his father's intense observation and a character in several of his most famous poems. She acknowledges, in the process of describing her own children, the tendency for parents to project all of their desires, wishes, and unfinished business upon their children.

> My father says that those who love intensely, see more clearly than indifferent persons; they see minutenesses which escape other eyes; they see "the very pulse of the machine." Doubtless, but then, don't they magnify by looking through the medium of their partiality? Don't they raise undue relative importance by exclusive gazing—don't wishes and hopes, indulged and cherished long, turn unto realities, as the rapt astronomer gazed upon the stars, and mused on human knowledge, and longed for magic power, till he believed that he directed the sun's course, and the sweet influences of the Pleiades?[10]

The passage asks several core questions, many of which continue to drive, sometimes even haunt Sara Coleridge's writing and thought: "who orbits whom?" Does the object exist externally from the percipient? And do love, desire, and drive obscure or clarify their objects? Coleridge's citation of her father, "the very pulse of the machine," is itself a presage of her own concept of a disordered machine or "deranged body," a critical construct to which I will turn later. Despite the affirmative "doubtless," Coleridge convincingly refutes her father's claim that love heightens objectivity. On the contrary, love would seem to obscure clear judgment rather than authorize it. Of course, on a closer, more biographical level, the passage can also be read as a critique of her father's apotheosis of Hartley to the role of the

prototypical romantic child, a role that unfortunately Hartley performed brilliantly if somewhat pathetically to the end.[11] Yet despite the power and prescience of these critiques and judgments, in the next paragraph of her letter, Coleridge herself describes an account of observing her son Herbert's first "attempt at recollection" in a way that reproduces almost exactly a passage from her father's notebooks describing an exchange with the childhood Hartley (to whom she is writing). In the original passage (about which I write in my introduction), S. T. C. claims to have induced in the boy "an Abstract of *Thinking* as pure act & energy, of *Thinking* as distinguished from *Thoughts*."[12] The multiple and unstable, intergenerational repetitions here are intense and resonant.

These temporal and subjective displacements, in which children and parents echo one another, set up a kind of reverberation—a generational superposition or "folding over" of persons, places, and histories.[13] Coleridge's writing, especially "The Journal of Her Children's Early Years," intensifies the reverberation by inscribing the materiality of an unfolding present (daily mundane bodily observations) even as it acts to rewrite Coleridge's own early childhood. It achieves this revision in at least two ways. Formally, it resists her father's empiricist observation of children (his "exclusive gazing"), while alternatively embarking on a phenomenological project of experiencing (not merely observing) her children, not as protosubjects, but rather as co-presences, part animal and part human. Coleridge's writing in the diary, insofar as it describes a "trans-subjective" position, overcomes the singularity of perspective in associationism, and anticipates other postempirical attempts to explain our experience.[14] In the years this chapter covers, several factors, including nervousness, breastfeeding, and opium use, conspire to cause Coleridge to feel that she is subjected to her children's needs at the same time as she is subjugated by her own body, and therefore forced to come to grips with her own part-animality and inescapable embodiment.

As she works through the consequences of this recognition, Coleridge revises and extends a number of concepts originally articulated by her father.[15] Reflecting on his theological writing for example, she pays particular attention to his distinction between spiritual seeing and literal sight.[16] In her essay "Nervousness," she argues that spiritual inspiration often comes aurally or, as she says, via the ear; elsewhere in that essay, riffing, it seems, on Kant's first critique, she writes of the "sensuous part of the mind."[17] Ultimately, Coleridge rejects any epistemology that does not include a myriad of forms of sensation.[18] In this way, Coleridge's embodied and "felt" impressions of her children resonate with recent feminist critiques of philosophical traditions that privilege vision over sound and touch.[19]

Unlike her father's strictly empirical observations of infancy, Sara Coleridge, by recognizing how the bodily processes of her invalidism resemble the infancy of her children, places herself at a child's level, in a sub-subjective space, from which she is able to intuit, record, and send back messages. The distinction Sara Coleridge gives us—between empiricist and

protophenomenological modes—is subtle but important. She obviously built on her father's foundational work, and there are several correspondences. For example, neither S. T. C. nor Sara Coleridge accepts in any *absolute* sense the Cartesian split between mind/spirit and body. Instead, as we will see, Sara Coleridge arrives at her own idea of the self, in part through intense engagement with her father's work; personhood for Coleridge is a complex arrangement, a field of possibilities that contains sensation and reason at opposite poles. As in this passage of her father's, which Coleridge quotes in a letter to Aubrey de Vere, the two elements are integrated and mutually reliant: "man is the unit, the prothesis, and body and soul are the two poles, the positive and negative, the thesis and antithesis in man."[20] Often, the difference between S. T. C.'s philosophy and his daughter's is one of exemplification and practice. Perhaps because she remained engaged in intimate relationships with her children, siblings, and spouse, even though they were, at times, immensely difficult, she was able to test her theories and revise them when they could not account for what she confronted in experience.

The second way in which Coleridge rewrites her own history is by reproducing in her journals the poems, projects, and even children's names from the past, thus intertextually revising her own complex biography. (I work through this formulation more thoroughly in the following sections on asceticism and mourning.) Coleridge's unique method of textually embodying her biography, that is, of writing herself—tenuously to be sure—out of illness and into relationship with the world, is informed by her unique understanding of spiritual regeneration.[21] For Coleridge, regeneration or rebirth is a necessarily ongoing practice, "active" rather than passive. While authorized by the event (baptism, for example), it is not reducible to it. Rather, it is "outside of time altogether."[22] This processual/textual relation of the self to the world resembles her father's work in many ways—compare his notebooks, for example, to her many journals. Yet, whereas S. T. C. arguably was unable to reconcile his philosophy with his religious and moral beliefs, I argue that Sara Coleridge gives us a model whereby we might be able to reconcile body and belief. What makes this reconciliation possible, I believe, is her attention to the body. She does not, in practice or in theory, reject the body outright in any of its senses, which is not to say that she does not experience abjection in relation to her body. In fact, the site of reconciliation is at once her nerve-racked body *and* the writing that emerged from her engagement with it.

Placing the locus of meaning in the body means that, for Coleridge, there may be a positive aspect to her illness. It makes more visible and palpable a basic epistemic condition that obtains for all of us—namely, that all of our sensations and perceptions happen, only and always, in one place. Full awareness of this fact, although doubtlessly painful, allows Coleridge a fluidity and mobility of thought and feeling that might not be available otherwise. Illness produces a state whereby she is dissociated from and yet trapped within her body. The body as contested territory thus becomes the

staging ground for her observations. According to Bergson's phenomenology, what allows a sense of self to develop is the recognition that the body is a "privileged image" among other not-me images.[23] Of course, at the beginning of her illness—when she felt that she was being merged with her children—recognition of this difference was clearly denied. That is, since her body was no longer a privileged image, but rather merged with the images around her, to a certain extent her observations of the children and her own condition did not come from a fixed place, but were rather percepts without a percipient.[24] However, this initial regression to nondifferentiation (between me and not-me images) was absolutely essential for Coleridge's recovery. It made regeneration possible. Moreover, when conceptualized after the fact, that is, when theorized, this sense of being trapped in the body anticipates what I will address as Coleridge's extended asceticism, an ethical precept at the center of her thought as it develops in the 1840s. It represents what will be an ongoing commitment to engage the world, always aware of the fact that we are prisoners in particular bodies. In a later essay, she argues that our essential humanness derives from the fact that we *choose* (through reason) to acknowledge and act from awareness of our imprisonment.[25] Paradoxically, this awareness of corporality, our physical embodiment as well as our socially embedded subjectivities, allows Coleridge a sense of aesthetic and relational freedom.

This space between freedom and imprisonment (between the fixed role of the mother and wife, for example, and the amorphous role of the poet/critic) is precisely where Coleridge's textual regeneration occurs. As we have seen throughout this book—in texts by Wordsworth, S. T. C. and Erasmus Darwin—this crux is often figured in terms of infancy. Just as the infant must develop the capacity to symbolize in order to move out into the social realm, so too must Coleridge, sunk down into a state of near infantile confusion, begin to reintegrate aspects of herself and her world. She does this through writing, which is her unique form of regeneration. Writing allows her to bring together self and world. Coleridge's illness, figured as akin to infancy, opens for her a spatial and temporal gap. Abiding in this gap is not easy. Writing, like infancy, involves acts of splitting and "distancing," and rupture and disruption are inevitable.[26] As Coleridge learns, children, especially infants, are themselves often experienced as interruptions. They create spatial and temporal displacements, not only because they require immediate and constant attention or because they seem to exist in a slowed-down perceptual state in which spatiality and temporality are in flux, but also because they evoke (for the percipient of infancy) the future and the past simultaneously.

We touched upon one example of this superposition at the end of the last chapter when, gazing upon his infant son, S. T. C. recalls "all I had been, and all my child might be." Deleuze, building a theory of repetition and in this case borrowing from Hölderlin, refers to such moments as caesurae. A caesura, for Deleuze, is part of a three-stage structure of repetition … the before, the caesura, and the after.[27] The first repetition is a

"before"; the second repetition is a "during"—the "during" is where the negative (the before) meets the "identical" (which is the "I" in the during). The caesura, a rupture in temporality, happens when the before and the during "no longer rhyme." According to Deleuze, caesurae are productive in that they allow for what he would later call a "re-territorialization" of the self. S. T. C's initial inability to bond with his own newborn son Hartley is a moment of caesura. While no doubt harrowing and painful, it is also productive insofar as he experiences the strangeness of the interruption—its ambiguous signification—for a full two hours—before, that is, he sentimentalizes the child at the mother's breast. Sara Coleridge, on the other hand, perhaps due to her illness, remains at the same bodily level with the children, that is, within the caesura, in entry after entry of the diary, off and on, for years. While she experiences her children as others, sometimes even threatening others, she writes of them as indistinct from herself. Her own subjectivity gets rewritten from the ground up, so to speak, in this text. To borrow from Luce Irigaray, the children return her to the "zero" of her body.[28] While this return is not a retreat—she never ceases to care deeply for and love her children—there is nonetheless a strange medial flux that she maintains throughout many of her other texts of this period: poems, letters, diaries, and criticism. In her journal entries, essays, and poems we witness Coleridge's attempts to slow time, to arrest or reverse it. She imagines death. She encounters death. These real and virtual encounters and imaginings are themselves handled at a discursive remove that at times may seem cold, classically Victorian. Yet I argue that this ambivalence and distance, when placed in a larger context, should not be read as chill at all—it is rather warm, potentially ethical, and intensely engaged.

* * *

Mapping these psychic ambivalences and interruptions makes visible four related problems, which I address in four interrelated sections. I say that the sections are interrelated not only because they connect thematically, but also because they articulate a pattern of emergence. Each section tells a part of the story of Coleridge's merging and ultimate emergence—by merging, I mean a sense of undifferentiated or mutable subject boundaries, specifically the kind of confusion that occurs when self and object are fused.[29] Emergence I define as simply the other end of this process, an untangling, as it were, a moment of regeneration, although perhaps neither pole is ever absolute or pure.

The first section deals with this confusion at the level of address. To whom is the poem/journal/essay addressed? This is a twofold problem. It is psychological insofar as apostrophe and direct address in Coleridge's poems often seek to correct the past by addressing a doubled or uncertain addressee. In this way, yet again, nineteenth-century lyric poetry anticipates

psychoanalytic theory, showing us that address can often be a form of redress or re-encounter (as in the transference). The second section deals with boundaries and distancing. Coleridge needs to find a way to relate to her children without remaining identified with them or projecting onto them, without feeling subsumed or haunted by her history. Thus, aesthetically and spiritually, she undertakes the work of finding and maintaining a proper distance or interval. She seems to need to be close enough to the transforming power of people, thoughts, and beliefs in order that she may be affected but not be overpowered: from her father and his methods; from the animal nature of her children; from melancholia; and, finally, from her own debilitating sense of guilt for needing to practice this psychological and physical distancing in the first place.

The parent–child relation, especially the mother–child relation, itself heightens and makes problematic the issues of boundaries and distance. Biographers have argued that S. T. C. remained anguished by his inability to perform his duties as a parent. Perhaps in order to escape her own sense of guilt, Sara Coleridge needs to conceive of her children as separate from herself—"stars" and "suns" (as I quoted earlier) that have their own paths, powers, and, one would imagine, salvation. So it is that the complex twinning of children, bodies, illnesses, and memory affects not only the content of her observations and critiques, but also the generic form those observations and critiques assume.

As we will see, Coleridge's journal of her children's early years becomes a space for her to constitute herself—as a writer, as a mother, and as part of a symbiotic relational system. It begins with a strange mix of indistinctness and impartiality and even pseudoscientific rigor. Her commitment to an inclusive and evenly observed process—motivated perhaps by the sheer bodily fact of breastfeeding—means that she includes herself within the circle of observation. What results is a disorienting sense of being merged with her children. At times, there is no objective distance, except for the minimal distance required to make her daily notes. Yet the collapse of that distance happens not in the direction of projecting onto her children (as her father arguably does), but rather in the direction of feeling her children as animal presences, "snatching" at her and draining her of her spiritual and mental well-being.[30] In spite of her intense devotion to and love of the children, that is, her own "medium of partiality," the simultaneity of her invalidism and her children's infancies results in a painful and, for her, untenable merging, at the level of the derationalized body, which is to say, at the level of sheer *unreason*.

This leads us to the problem of the body, the third section of this chapter. Other critics have rightly focused on this issue—especially as it concerns maternity in the nineteenth century—from the perspective of gender. I focus specifically on the philosophical/psychological/aesthetic consequences of making the body a part of, yet somehow exterior to, the self. Insofar as feminist criticism has shown how enlightenment philosophy makes women's

bodies identical to all that lies outside the realm of reason, Coleridge's strange ambivalence about her embodiment provides a unique perspective from which to document the intense effects of these discourses. Furthermore, Coleridge's use of opium—or, more specifically, her concern regarding exposing her children to her use of opium—points to an anxiety about the mutability of body boundaries in ways that, to my knowledge, has never been treated in the criticism.

The fourth and final problem concerns Coleridge's psychic and theological economy of pleasure and pain, life and death, flesh and spirit. Often framed in religious terms, Coleridge argues that it is morally more difficult and, therefore, of greater value to remain engaged in human affairs than it is to retreat into spiritual or artistic seclusion. Her theory of "extended asceticism" keeps affect at the heart of what it means to be human. Coleridge's unpublished essay on asceticism suggests that the past (regret/loss) and future (death/unknowingness) thoroughly infuse the present to such a degree that, often, to remain in the present is painful. And while Coleridge's moral and religious values require precisely such forbearance, her addiction to opium, as well as her ambivalence about embodiment, makes it difficult to live up to her own creed. Paradoxically, I argue that Coleridge's failures, self-corrections, adjustments, and self-forgiveness are precisely what give her model credence and make it tenable as a workable aesthetics as well as an ethical practice.

3.2 "Foreshaping All Thy Looks and Wiles": The Indeterminate Addressee

For all of her insistence on the body, unreason, for Coleridge, is often situated corporeally in flesh and seems to stimulate an impulse to retreat, either into "pure reason" or into deathlike states or fantasies. This is especially so in her early life and is clearly at work in several of her poems. In November 1833, Coleridge lay sick and despairing in her mother's bed in Hampstead. She was pregnant for the third time in as many years. She had been, in her own words, waging an unsuccessful "campaign" against morphine addiction. It was in this state that she dictated to her mother a poem, ostensibly a verse epistle to her unborn child.

> My babe unborn, I dream of thee,
> Foreshaping all thy looks and wiles,
> But Heaven's light may close on me,
> Ere I thy real face can see
> Ere I can watch thy dawning smiles.
>
> My older children round my heart
> For many a day have been entwined:
> Yet dear to me, e'en now, thou art;
> Fain would I do a Mother's part
> Ere life and love are both resigned.

You will not droop, my precious dears,
When I am numbered with the dead:
You ne'er can know my cares and fears:
Your eyes will fill with childish tears,
Which o'er my grave will not be shed.

When others weep and mourn for me
That I no longer must be here,
Ne'er may they quench your childish glee;
No sadness ever may you see
To check the laugh of thoughtless cheer.

But when you gain reflection's dow'r
O ne'er thus joyless may you pine!
Ne'er may you know the anguished hour,
The sickening fears that overpower
This crushed but struggling heart of mine.

In dreams an airy course I take
And seem my tedious couch to fly:
Or o'er the bosom of the lake
Ere to captivity I wake,
My skimming boat I swiftly ply.

But nought my waking hours can bless—
I strive to sweeten Sorrow's cup;
'Tis all in vain, for ne'ertheless
I find it dregged with bitterness,
When to my lips I lift it up.

My griefs are not to be expressed:
Affection's voice can charm no more:
I ne'er shall find a steady rest,
Till, torn from all I love the best,
I seek the distant unknown shore.

Part proleptic love letter in the vein of Anna Barbauld's "To a Little Invisible Being Who is Expected Soon to Become Visible" and part suicide note, in fact, only the first two stanzas are addressed exclusively to her unborn child—children, it turns out, twins who lived only a few days. The next two stanzas seem to be addressed to all of her children, including Herbert, then aged three, and Edith, only one. The remaining three stanzas, a meditation on death, appear to be outside the mode of direct address altogether.

The difficulty in ascertaining precisely to whom the poem is addressed is further complicated by the fact that it exists in two versions. The first version, copied out by Coleridge's mother, bears the title "Verses by Sara Coleridge in Nervous Illness before the Birth of the Twins—November 1833 Hampstead.

Copied by her dear mother." The second version, copied by Sara into her "Red Book" of poems, bears the title "Verses Written in Sickness 1833, Before the Birth of Berkeley and Florence."[31] Yet in that same book she also addressed it: "Sara Coleridge to her Husband, Mother and Children. Written on my Mother's bed, November 7th 1833, Hampstead." The specificity of this last dedication, including in the address her husband and mother, suggests that indeed it was written as a presage of death, as a good-bye letter of sorts. The fictive revisions are striking. Coleridge, with each new iteration, subtly shifts the argument of the poem. The foreshaping she imagines (I read "foreshaping" not merely as a dream-state but as dream *work*—that is, an active act of imaginative labor) begins with a dream-vision, a conjuring of the face of her unborn child. Yet it quickly extends to a kind of stage-managing or directive to her mother and husband. That is, there are two ways to read, "Your eyes will fill with childish tears, / Which o'er my grave will not be shed." Either the children should not cry, should not show public emotion, or they should not be allowed at the funeral at all. The argument for the second (proscriptive) reading is strengthened by the weight of the meter of stanzas four and five: "Ne'er may they quench your childish glee" and "Ne'er may you know the anguished hour." The triple meter and trochaic inversion ("**Ne'er** may they **quench**") that open the lines are unique in the poem and emphasize the force of the dictate.[32] Furthermore, Coleridge amended these lines when she copied them out, changing "Ne'er *can* you know" to "Ne'er *may* you know," making an even stronger case for reading them as proscriptive message, an appeal from a dying woman to her mother and husband to spare her children the suffering that comes with knowledge.

Coleridge correctively "fore-shapes" her children by imagining herself dead, her poem being read, and her wishes as fulfilled—thus effecting a sort of reach from beyond the grave. The ambiguity of the addressee seems over-determined in this poem; she imagines her death, it seems to me, almost as a kind of comfort. Of course, the emendation (*can* to *may*) may also have been a kind of reverse construction, whereby the poet solves (in retrospect) for the difficult fact that she was not to die before her children, but the other way around. But this explanation makes little sense if the poem were still primarily addressed to Berkeley and Florence, as surely they cannot know anything. And that they "may" know makes no sense within this context either.[33] What establishes and guarantees the grounds for knowledge is a crucial question for Coleridge, especially as her entire philosophical and theological system argues that firsthand knowledge is required for salvation.[34] This reading then suggests that the addressees are more likely her remaining children, the point being that the reader cannot be certain.

Reading the poem in this way, as an unstable document precariously poised between complete openness (an unabashedly honest letter to her children) and emotional decorum or secrecy (a deathbed instruction to her husband and mother to protect her soon-to-be motherless children),

foregrounds a pattern that recurs throughout Coleridge's oeuvre—namely, a constant alternation between a wish for connection and a need to be disconnected. This tendency toward self-exile was something she shared with her father. And, of course (according to at least one literary-historical narrative), it is a basic tenet of romanticism more generally. Think of Shelley's "Alastor" or Byron at the opening of Book III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* separated from his infant daughter Ada, yearning for connection but turning away from the "herd" of humanity. The tension produced by this double desire is evident in the final stanza of the poem: "My griefs are not to be expressed," means that her grief is inexpressible—that is, that it is too immense or complicated to find expression in language—and that it should not be expressed, presumably because its expression would be injurious to the children—and, finally, that it will not be expressed because having found the other shore, she will have died. As we will see, Coleridge's Christian discipline also requires that such expressions of grief be limited, contained within the humility required by forbearance. Of course the grief is expressed discursively through the medium of the poem—an expression that Coleridge cannot seem to resist. There is an additional suggestion in the following line that affection—emotion, pain, complaint—is charming, in the archaic sense of that word—literally, that it charms, arrests, or fastens us. The turn away from life is also, in Coleridge's system of thought, a turn away from reason, figured conventionally and often in her writing as "light": thus, "Heaven's light may close on me" suggests not only death but also loss of reason or madness. It follows then that Coleridge is not merely undecided as to whether to connect or disconnect, but also literally trapped or fastened between two types of connection—the fascination of life (figured as enlightenment reason) and the fascination of death (figured as flesh and a fleshly critique of instrumental reason).[35]

This tension between connection and disconnect, binding and unbinding, expression and stasis, is not merely sophistical—it is tied inextricably to Coleridge's alignment of nervousness, pain, anxiety, and hysteria with the animal nature of the body, whereas reason, spirit, and free will are located deep within the mind. In the essay "Nervousness," Coleridge acknowledges a "sensuous part of the mind" that can be affected, but this part generally corresponds to mood; the judging part of the mind is left intact.[36] It is this sensuous part of the mind that is susceptible to "sickening fears that overpower" the heart. Coleridge, again like her father, places extreme importance on objects actually existing and affecting from "without," that is, outside the self. Spirit, for example, comes from without, addressing itself to the judging part of the mind; fear and anxiety also seem capable of intrusion (illness heightens this danger), but address themselves to the mind's sensuous rather than rational nature. Fear, in other words, is not only sickening (that is, disgusting), but it is also, or can be, an *external* cause of sickness, an infection.[37]

And while Coleridge argues in that same essay that free will is untouched by "nervous debility," there seems, in fact, little agency or will in "Verses Written in Sickness" at all. To the extent that there is conscious action in the poem, it takes the form of the Tennysonian heroism that closes the final stanza: "I seek the distant unknown shore." Her leaving, in other words, seems the result of a resigned choice to quit the bitterness of wakeful existences, yet she stages herself as a victim, again in the vein of Shelley's "Alastor" or Byron's "Manfred." The poem's disappointment makes itself felt in the phrase, "When I no longer *must* be here" (my emphasis). Once again, the true irony, of course, is that it is not she who will be gone in a few short days but rather her twin children, the ostensible objects of her address. This inversion of child and parent points to a confusion that is at the center of Coleridge's experience of motherhood; she cannot seem to easily distinguish where her children stop and she begins: consider the construction, "My older children round my heart / For many a day have been *entwined*" (my emphasis). It seems as though the (bodily) feeling of being the locus of her children's powerful need—what she herself, sunk in her nervousness, called their "greediness"—was suffocating to Coleridge. As I have already suggested, her need to differentiate herself from the pull of her futurity (i.e., her children) is counterbalanced by a need to differentiate herself from specters of the past (most significantly, her father).

Coleridge's case in these texts is unique insofar as she feels all of these pressures, remembered and imagined, as external, as surface. Even her body is included within this circle of externality; it is, in other words, *res extensa*. As Earl Griggs comments, Coleridge believed that it was "[her] nervous system, not her rational being, [that] was temporarily deranged. As a matter of fact, her illness seems to have stimulated her imagination …"[38] Indeed, Coleridge speaks of her "nervous debility" as affecting an earthly animal subject. It acts on the sensuous mind and is exterior to the self. Like the weather to which her sickness is so often compared and related in her "Journal of Her Children's Early Years," nervousness merely happens.

Thus, Coleridge could claim that her awareness remained intact and untouched by her illness. She grounds this claim in the distinction between mania and delirium, the latter corresponding to her state of nervousness.[39] This hermetic awareness (a kernel of consciousness untouched by psychic or physiological disturbance) shares many of the attributes of her father's definition of reflective subjectivity proper: the subject takes itself as an object. Furthermore, the comparison between delirium and mania was a favorite and famous one for S. T. C.: mania corresponding to imagination and delirium to fancy. In the "Biographia Literaria" this distinction is not spelled out in much detail. But in an account from *Table Talk,* S. T. C. makes it clear that fancy and imagination could actually tip over into delirium and mania if the "checks of the senses and the reason [were to be] withdrawn."[40] S. T. C.'s long history of psychological and physiological illnesses and Sara Coleridge's invalidism encourage us to read this relation nonmetaphorically. To do so is to engage nineteenth-century natural philosophy on

its own terms, in which the body is connected to the mind through the sensorium, a complicated system of related faculties.[41] When the link between body and mind is severed or damaged, when "reason fails, the animating principle which remains in man, the mere life, appears endowed with evil, bestial qualities, malice, treachery, ferocity, unmitigable cruelty. …"[42]

Especially in their infancy and perhaps due to Coleridge's state of nervousness in which, absent reason, "mere life" also governs, her children appear to her as animalistic and unreasoning, an abject reminder of her own "damaged" state. The drift of "Verses Written in Sickness," when read against journal entries and contemporary prose fragments, suggests that Coleridge's need to detach herself from her children is indistinguishable from her need to detach herself from her own debilitated body. Her places of refuge (like her father's) are the opposite poles of pure, hermetic reason and opium-induced intimations of mortality. Her writing suggests that even in the most extreme moments of dissociation, she is desperately searching for a reasoning, willing self at the center of her experience. Paradoxically, as we will see, she is only able to find that center by openly addressing and engaging her unreasoning body and children directly, that is, by turning toward rather than away from the problem.

3.3 "Disordered Machines": The Indeterminacy of Self

Begun in 1830 and continued intermittently until 1837, Coleridge's journal of her children's early years documents Herbert's and Edith's breastfeeding, fevers, teething, and sleeping patterns. Most accounts of the journal treat its "obsessive" character as evidence of a strict adherence to the dictates of the child-rearing manuals of the day.[43] Typically, Elizabeth Gaskell's journal of her daughter's infancy is read along similar lines. Yet Mudge notices that, at a certain point, Coleridge's detailed attention to her children's health seems to shift so as to incorporate more and more reports of her own nervous disorder. For Mudge, there seems to be a tipping point in the journal, after which it "becomes devoted almost wholly to her own [health]."[44]

Yet it is also possible to read the journal differently, that is, as it is labeled in her archive (by the looks of the handwriting, written by her daughter Edith), as the "Private Journal of S. C. in Married Time."[45] Read in this way, as a hybrid genre without a set agenda, Coleridge does not merely insert herself into the narrative of her children's early years. Rather, the children appear as an inseparable part of an unfolding sequence, an ongoing notation of the workings and malfunctions of bodily machines—"disordered machines" being Coleridge's own term for bodies under distress. If we read this indeterminacy, this constant circuit of projection and internalization, as related if not intrinsic to romantic lyric consciousness ("but what if all of animated nature be / but organic harps diversely framed …" her father famously mused), then the journal becomes, as S. T. C.'s letters and notebooks were, part of an inclusive poetics, what Sara Coleridge calls a "social service … of

man to man."[46] As in the romantic lyric, places, times, people, thoughts, and feelings intersect in the journal; they reverberate and merge until "baby," "child," and "mother" are less and less distinct and separate categories.

This generic ambiguity reflects Coleridge's own conception of her illness. She uses infancy as an analogue for invalidism, in which new states of bodily being must be learned, attained through a process of orientation, care, and slow development that is similar to early childhood.

> [T]he patient's bodily frame is in a new state, a state of which he has not learnt to judge; an infant knows not its strength or its weakness or the capabilities of its body in any respect; in some sort a person whose nervous system is thoroughly deranged is in the same state …[47]

Notice that the controlling conceit for the invalid is not healing or even "organization," as the term was used in nineteenth-century natural sciences, but rather rebirth.[48] Coleridge's word, as we have seen, is "regeneration," imagined as an ongoing process, a constant, and often ineffable state of being born. The identification of the invalid and the infant, with its insistence on "new capacities," suggests some potential spiritual or philosophical gains or compensations for invalidism; the invalid may learn not to be "deluded" by sensation in the future.[49] Just as the infant must learn to distinguish between reality and fantasy, so must the invalid distinguish between sensation and reason.

By erasing or blurring the boundaries between infant and nervous adult, Coleridge is then able to reinscribe boundaries between sensation and reason, between animal, bodily processes, and mental ones. A split happens in the nervous subject, dividing her into rational and instinctual aspects. But the boundaries between these, too, are also in flux. Or rather, there is mutability and reciprocity across them. The mind of the nervous patient, or at least one part of the mind, is trapped inside a "process" that the mind of the sufferer has "not yet learned to judge." I say trapped in a process rather than a body because, as I indicate earlier, Coleridge, like her father, rejects the Cartesian split between mind and body in favor of a continuum in which reason and sensation, spirit and matter, are both contained within us. The difference that both Coleridges propose between maladies of the mind (mania) and those of the body (delirium) creates the space for an internal and implicit analogy, in which reason is linked with maturity, and sensation with infancy. But even here the typical hierarchies are complicated if not overturned. The sufferer's situation is complicated because he must *rely on sensation*, something unreasoning and therefore inherently untrustworthy, made even more so by nervous disorder. The sufferer who is emerging from illness still relies on sensation as "his guide first & last, but he has learnt to interpret his new sensations more fairly than he did in the beginning. But he must never confound a morbid state of sensation with aberration of Reason."[50] The patient, like an infant, moves (progresses) from one bodily

"state" to another. In the best-case scenario, the person who "learns" is guided by a fixed and reasoning part of her subjectivity so that she may shuttle between these bodily states more or less unchanged. In other words, reason (the parent) remains in charge, even as sensation (the infant) learns and adapts. In a sense then, Coleridge reverses the direction of Freudian identification.[51] Rather than moving from child to parent, Coleridge's identification (in which reason learns from sensation) moves from parent to child. And while all parenting may be said to contain the possibility for the recuperation and healing of past trauma, Coleridge's case seems an intense instance of self-parenting.[52]

In reading Coleridge's writing from this period, one might even say that she escapes obscure and useless suffering by universalizing it into theory. Not surprisingly, given her addiction to opium, this same essay, "Nervousness," condones taking the drug, but only if all other avenues have been "tried fully & fairly."[53] Here, as elsewhere, Coleridge is rigorous and unsparing in her judgment. It is as though, by obsessively notating and inscribing the minutiae of the body in her journal, she hopes to "learn" to judge her new bodily state as well as her children's. On this reading, she is attempting to "read" her own and her children's "messages," material excrescences, which, acting like signifiers, turn the body itself into a text. What necessarily take precedent in any such hermeneutic are extreme bodily processes, those more likely to signify—feces, teething, fevers, rashes, nervousness, sleeplessness, and feeding.

Granted, Coleridge's symptoms do overtake the journal for a period. Yet even in periods during which she describes her condition as "hysterical," there are always reports of the children and the detritus of their physical/animal natures. In fact, moments of extreme emotional distress (and remember that, for Coleridge, extreme emotions, while connected to rationality, are separate and on the side of the body) are exceptionally well documented, and the important facts of the children's development are nearly always alluded to, even if they do not always receive the same exhaustive documentation as her own ailments. Two typical entries from 1833 read:

> Feb 1. Last point of Herby's back tooth … through. I am very weak but not in bad … spirits. Baby well. Feb 2. Darling [Herbert] well. Baby had a good night. I slept very well—appetite good. Spirits middling … general languor greater than ever.[54]

Mudge's general claim, a strong and supportable one, is that Coleridge's journal should be read as yet another instance of her feeling hemmed in by her limited role as mother and housewife. Yet this picture gets complicated when we consider the means by which Coleridge negotiates this difficult passage from an ideologically prescribed or received position within the culture to a sense of literary and personal autonomy—namely, writing. Although she may feel hemmed in, she does not retreat from her children (although, as the preceding poem suggests, death does seem at times attractive in this

regard), but rather she initially identifies and merges with them, only to subsequently and slowly *write* her way into a separate autonomous self.

In the beginning, Coleridge's identification with her children is made possible, if not determined, by a splitting of the self into an affective/bodily animal half and mental/spiritual reasoning half. Her description of her nervous debility suggests that she sees herself as hemmed in by the bodily/affective side, that is, by her invalidism. Although extreme, Coleridge's dilemma is a universal one. She continually argues for a hybrid structure: every one of us is part human animal/part spirit. We need simply to be more rational than sensual, if only by slight degrees.[55] This hybridism authorizes Coleridge's association of illness with infancy (infants are, after all, the most obvious example of human animality) while at the same time it condemns Coleridge to a seemingly irresolvable paradox. On the one hand, it is only through her regression to a state analogous to infancy and her exhaustive and minute recording of those shared states that she is able to begin to overcome her illness. On the other hand, her initial collapse into identification with her children, her merging, makes it difficult for her to perform her maternal duties. As her own mother noticed in a letter, Coleridge often appeared to be a distracted and diffuse parent.[56] To be fair, this diffusion seems to have been isolated to certain aspects of Coleridge's parenting, or perhaps, in addition, isolated to certain particularly difficult times of her illness. In fact, she was completely dedicated and attentive to her children in most regards. The point is that she seemed to others and herself to have lost a certain foothold or foundation from which to parent and to see her situation clearly. And while this loss of self, this merging, is painful, emotionally and spiritually, it is not until her merging with the children becomes a formal or bodily concern that she is able to begin to find a way out of her enmeshment. By being returned to the caesura of infancy, she is able to occupy a position flexible enough to engage with the world without losing herself in the bargain.

3.4 "Poppies Blooming All Around"

According to nineteenth- as well as twentieth- and twenty-first-century discourses of early childhood development, a feeling of merging, for both mother and child, is an essential part of a healthy mother–child bond. Marion Milner points to the importance of having a "framed space and time and a pliable medium" to which the infant or small child can return, in order to feel temporarily a feeling of oneness.[57] And while this merging, also made possible by certain aesthetic experiences, is said to be an essential component of the child's development, it is equally important for the mother's well-being to facilitate and tolerate merging. Winnicott sees psychological merging for the mother as an "extraordinary condition which is *almost like an illness*, though it is very much a sign of health" (my emphasis).[58] Early enmeshment between mother and infant is similarly recognized by nineteenth-century philosophy and psychology to be

essential for the later development of sympathy in the child, and thus for the political and social well-being of the culture.[59]

The apotheosis of this ideal, as we saw in the previous chapter, is the tableau of the baby at the mother's breast. Above and beyond the medical importance placed on breastfeeding in the nineteenth century, it also played an important social and cultural role. Coleridge's generation was among the first to embrace the social and psychological value for the child of breastfeeding, specifically with its mother, rather than with a wet-nurse.[60] Undoubtedly, a kind of parental narcissism is inscribed in the fascination with the baby–mother dyad. Coleridge herself scans her children for signs of her own image. This is what she critiques in her father but also owns in her letter to Hartley quoted previously. Yet this pattern of projection and internalization takes on special meaning when we consider that breastfeeding literally connects the mother and child internally through the medium of her milk. This physical reliance of infant on mother complicates conventional philosophical accounts in which infancy is seen as a staging ground for interpersonal relations or subject development.[61] When milk is literally flowing from mother to baby ("what a fountain I was" writes Sara Coleridge to her husband), there is no outside to the connection. It would be more accurate to describe the nursing mother–infant pair as an intrapersonal relation.

This enmeshment may not always be experienced as pleasurable or even desirable by the mother, especially if it obliterates rather than facilitates individuation, or if the fullness felt by the child comes at the expense of an emptying out of the mother. It is then possible to recognize a protofeminist critique whereby a woman is reduced to her role as mother. On that reading Coleridge rejects the "archaic … sense-relation to the mother's body," an empty ideology, or what Luce Irigaray calls a "regressive emotional behavior," simply the flip side of the law of the father.[62] While Coleridge's merging at some points risks becoming complete immersion, it seems she cannot tolerate the stereotypical relation of mother to infant, precisely insofar as it is an *exclusive* "privileging of the maternal over the feminine."[63] For Coleridge, the body qua body, often put forward as the space of radical heteronomy and difference, when it is defined as exclusively a maternal (i.e., mechanistic, sensual) body, indeed seems to be oppressive. Over and against this exclusive maternal body, "understanding"—what Kant calls sensuous cognition[64]—takes on added significance. It designates the ability to choose. In this way understanding presages and forms the ground for Coleridge's concept of extended asceticism, which I introduce and examine toward the end of this chapter.

The understanding can be distorted of course. Opium, for example, insofar as it insinuates itself to the point of addiction, occludes reason and thwarts the understanding, again defined as the ability to choose. Infancy and illness, like opium addiction, operate outside the parameters of reason, and ultimately outside the possibility of choice. Yet we would no more judge an infant for not possessing reason than we would a sapling because it was

not yet a tree. Rather, we reserve judgment for human adults, addicts certainly, invalids occasionally. What makes the nursing infant, as opposed to the addict, such a powerful and conflicted image is that it represents what is most essentially human about us, our vulnerability, even as it shows us at the limits of our animality. This animality, as I have stated before, is a problem for Coleridge, insofar as bodies, animals, emotion, and nervousness all exist on the other side of rationality. Maternal enmeshment with the infant, as Winnicott writes earlier, primarily involves an instinctual connection to the infant. For Coleridge this means relinquishing her tenacious hold on reason. This is doubly risky insofar as this particular form of merging entails the becoming-human of the infant while at the same time it suggests a reciprocal becoming-animal of the mother.

Clearly, Coleridge's abjection includes her nursing children, although, as we will see, her reasons for giving up breastfeeding are complicated.[65] When she stops breastfeeding, earlier with each child than she initially had planned, she feels immense guilt over failing in her maternal duties. Two years after she stopped breastfeeding she writes a poem that revises her *choice* to stop feeding into a material *fact* of her infirmity, writing that "weakness laid me low / And dried that fount and bade mine eyes o'er-flow / With fruitless tears that on thy couch I shed / And wish'd them pearls to crown thy precious head."[66] A contemporaneous letter to her husband suggests that nothing dried the "fount" of breast milk. Rather, she made a difficult choice, one that caused her "eyes" to overflow.[67] In an imaginary hydraulic displacement (remember her own claim to be a fountain for her children), the usefulness of breast milk is exchanged for "fruitless" tears. Later in this poem she imagines herself unable to care for the children in any fashion. Her one wish is that her children see only reflections of beauty in her tears and not her sorrow. The wish is paradoxical insofar as she writes these wishes in the form of poems for her children. Surely, just as in "Verses Written in Sickness," they will read them when they are older and have the knowledge from which she wishes to keep them safe.[68]

This double wish (to be known and unknown, to be separate and enmeshed) is crucial to understanding her sense of alienation, especially from her children. As her most well known shorter lyric "Poppies" suggests, her children, in their innocence (which is now made identical to their ignorance), cannot know her unhappiness or ill health—a knowledge, in this case, indexed by poppy flowers.

> The Poppies blooming all around
> My Herbert loves to see;
> Some pearly white, some dark as night,
> Some red as cramasie:
>
> He loves their colours fresh and fine,
> As fair as fair may be;

But little does my darling know
How good they are to me.

He views their clust'ring petals gay,
And shakes their nut-brown seeds;
But they to him are nothing more
Than other brilliant weeds.

O! how shouldst thou, with beaming brow,
With eye and cheek so bright,
Know aught of that gay blossom's power,
Or sorrows of the night?

When poor Mama long restless lies,
She drinks the poppy's juice;
That liquor soon can close her eyes,
And slumber soft produce:

O then my sweet, my happy boy
Will thank the Poppy-flower,
Which brings the sleep to dear Mama,
At midnight's darksome hour.

The emphasis is different than in "Verses Written in Sickness." There, the children were capable of the knowledge of her imagined death. That poem, tending toward the performative, uses the imperative *may* they ne'er know. But in "Poppies," Herbert *cannot* know his mother's addiction to opium, not because of secrecy or edict, but rather because the "sorrows of the night" are beyond his happy comprehension. He is, in other words, categorically different. His happiness stems from his animal—that is, physical—ignorance. Mudge asserts that the "issue is not simply one of knowledge." Rather, he reads in the poem evidence of "maternal self-sacrifice," which "suggests a causal relationship between Herbert's health and his mother's illness, between his pampered innocence and her misery."[69] This interpretation is in keeping with Mudge's general reading of Coleridge's ambivalent relationship toward domesticity and motherhood. He reads the final stanza, in which Herby thanks the poppies for his mother's sleep, as suggesting that he finally "ironic[ally]" understands the "parental price paid" for his happiness.

Yet it is also possible to read the ironic reversal at the end of the poem as not primarily an exchange of innocence for knowledge, but rather one in which animality is traded for reason. Implicit in that reversal is an exchange of features and figurations between mother and infant. Beginning with the penultimate stanza, the poem switches subject position. We are no longer watching someone looking; rather, now we see from Hebert's eyes. Herbert's main perceptual mode in the poem is visual. He "loves to *see*" the flowers and *views* them with eye and cheek so bright. Just as the narrative voice in

the poem slides toward an objective third-person perspective ("poor mama long restless lies"), the scene of the poem also shifts from outside (garden) to in, presumably to Coleridge's bedroom. I want to suggest that the reversal becomes complete when the narrator drinks the "poppy juice," here associated with Herbert (his love, his touch ["he shakes" them], his look).

The key to this reading, which will be fleshed out in the following sections, is Coleridge's concern in her letters and diary about her own administration of opium to Herbert via her breast milk: as she writes with some relief in the diary, "It [the opium she took to sleep] answered without acting like medicine on him." In "Poppies" it is almost as though he administers the opium to her, in order to bring sleep to "dear mama." She is asleep. In the temporal procession of the poem, he is awake: "O' then my sweet my happy boy / Will thank the poppy flow'r / Which brings the sleep to dear mama / At midnight's darksome hour." In an abrupt reversal in which Coleridge is the infant and Herbert the anxious parent, Coleridge suckles the flower (opium), which like her breast milk, is a metonym for the animal/vegetal aspect of infancy and invalidism. Mudge is right in recognizing a relationship between Herbert's health and Coleridge's illness. Yet I would shift the focus slightly, from resentment to merging. The merging between mother and child still happens in the poem, but it happens differently than in the journal. It is a second-order representation, aestheticized and imagined, rather than merely reported. In "The Poppies," Herbert feeds his mother, much as she had done him. Or, in the psychoanalytic logic of fusion, Coleridge imaginatively regresses in order to feed herself.

3.5 "What a Fountain of Milk I Was"

Very early in her nursing of Herbert, her first child, Coleridge expresses concern over the transmission to the baby of something harmful in her breast milk. She writes of the baby's bowel movement's being "copious" and "discolored … owing to *my* state no doubt" (my emphasis). She reasons that she must "wean him sooner than I wished," even though the "milk is still good and abundant," because he is dissatisfied with breast milk and wants solid food. Why she must wean him in that case is unclear—especially since elsewhere she acknowledges that there are non-nutritional advantages to breastfeeding, such as comfort, pain management (as with teething), and general psychological development. She could, of course, simply supplement the breastfeeding with solid food. Yet she writes at about this time of feeling unwell and having to take the "clectuary," which, she reports, "answered well." Even in 1830, the term was archaic and reserved for combinations of poison.[70] Mudge reports that Coleridge had been using morphine regularly since 1825, and by the mid-1830s would have been "addicted." So it seems fair to assume that is was not her "state"—that is, her nervousness or anxiety—that she worried about passing on to her children but, rather, her cure.

While it is true that Coleridge, and others, worried about how breastfeeding impacted her fragile health, potentially sapping her already wan inner strength, it seems likely from the evidence that she was also worried about passing the laudanum and morphine on to her children. Quoting more fully from the letter cited previously: "I have a slight cold which may affect him. I took morphine with cream and tartar on his account. It answered without acting like medicine on him." Granted, any virus or infection could be harmful to infants during this period. And yet her logic here is still quite dizzying. She must take the morphine to treat the cold, which may affect him. But of course the accompanying concern is that the morphine may affect him "like medicine." Not surprisingly, then, she writes next that "he sleeps now from 20 minutes to eight till 6 or 7 in the morning."

These types of notations in the journal, anxiously remarking the symbiotic relationship between baby and mother, are constant throughout. Coleridge registers her nervous "spells" in the journal by writing that she is "taken." In many of these accounts, reports of the children follow: "This morning I was taken after nearly 5 weeks [presumably 5 weeks without any nervous spells]. Baby's motions were dis-colored on this account."[71] The discoloration of his bowel movements "on account" of her being taken must surely be a reference to the opium that she *takes* in response to being *taken*, a treatment that surely passes via breast milk from mother to child.[72]

As Marland points out, Coleridge, like other mothers suffering from puerperal sickness, was advised to separate herself entirely from the household routine and from her children in order to recover. It was such a journey "westward," one that incidentally did nothing to cure her sickness, which provided the fortuitous occasion for Herbert to be weaned.

Edith's breastfeeding was even more difficult: "My nervous debility and other unpleasant symptoms increased so much that I was obliged to think seriously of feeding my darling (she now takes milk and oates [*sic*] with a little sugar in it) out of the bottle." Coleridge seems worried about how not nursing will affect Edith, but consoles herself with the fact that the opium was not having *too* negative of an effect: "her bowels are right—though her motions are often windy." Finally, "Edith sucks no more today alas! Since the 12th I have been going on very badly. Disordered bile accompanied with derangement of the nervous systems is my complaint."[73] When she speaks of her concern over Edith, it is difficult to tell whether the concern centers on Edith's adjustment to the bottle or the affects of the morphine or on both:

> Not knowing when my confinement will go I resolved yesterday evening to give up nursing her—I had begun again to do so three times. Missed the third sucking and today she had and will have nothing from me. May God protect and help her. I think I have done the best for her and perhaps also for myself. …[74]

The intensity of her connection with the baby, the comfort and health-giving properties that breastfeeding represents—all of these are only replaceable by God's protection and help. She writes to her husband at this time that she takes as consolation the fact that Edith had not started teething yet, at which point, stopping nursing would have been an even greater loss to the child. Yet even two days after weaning, Coleridge is still concerned over what might have passed from her to the child: "Yesterday morning baby had another very green motion … I trust it was only the remains of my bile."[75] In a strange reversal, her own mother (Sarah Fricker Coleridge) was called upon to drain the milk from her breasts. Signs of Coleridge's guilt are clearly evident in a note from later that week, which remarks that Edith, although "go[ing] on well," is "greedy in sucking" the bottle and is "scarce satisfied" with it.[76]

These concerns are expressed obliquely in a children's poem, never published, and written at about this time:

To Baby Edith

Good morn to Darling Edith
Whom Nurse so fondly feedith:
May all she eats
Be filled with sweets
And sweet the life she leadeth!

The Cow must be no rover,
But she shall feed on clover,
And cowslips sweet
Her lip shall meet
Whose milk for thee runs over.

Thy bread shall all be wheaten,
Well soak'd before 'tis eaten:
And white as pearl
For my baby girl:
The baker must be a neat one.

The Elves in fire who frisk it,
Shall ne'er burn baby's biscuit:
Nor give it a scorch
With fiery torch,
Nor into the ashes whisk it.

Presumably, this poem is one of the poems excluded from publication in *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children*. She repeats several of the rhymes and ideas in the poem "Herbert's Beverage" from *Pretty Lessons …*[77] Purity and hygiene are the main concerns of the poem, recurring concerns that I read as over-determined in origin. Coleridge, by stopping breastfeeding,

relinquishes control over what goes into her daughter. Besides the understandable worry about her daughter's safety and well-being, there is an added element of danger in the poem. I argue that Coleridge's concern about her own becoming-animal on account of her connection to the children gets refracted into a concern about her daughter's becoming-human.[78] Will Edith receive the requisite comfort and support (that which nursing is supposed to supply) from Nurse and Cow and Baker and Elf? Notice that the mother is written out of the scene. The recursivity implied by a cow that eats cowslips (we hear "cow's lips" in part because of the "lip" in the following line) points to an obsessive doubling evident elsewhere in the poem—primarily in the double, triple, and quadruple rhymes. Notice how the dimeter couplets—"And white as a pearl / For my baby girl"—are enfolded by the trimeter lines with their triple rhymes. Perhaps this doubling is a mimetic inscription of the missing mother–child couple.

To my knowledge, there is only one version of this poem. In the manuscript, Coleridge begins with the scratched-out line, "*Farewell* my dear little Edith" (my emphasis). The change to "Good morn to Darling Edith" is striking. What type of farewell is being offered in the first iteration? It is as though the bond of enmeshment is so strong that to wean Edith is tantamount to leaving her. The fantasy of disconnection, of leaving, is similar to the fantasy of dying in "Verses Written in Sickness. …" Yet here, Coleridge imagines releasing Edith into a world of increasing strangeness and danger—from nurse to cow to baker to elf. The final stanza of the poem revives the figure of the spirit in the flame from her father's "Frost at Midnight."[79] But unlike the flickering ember, these are not elves half-created by fancy; they are ominous figures that threaten to whisk the biscuit into the flames. The alliteration in the line "burn baby's biscuit" makes it almost seem as though they could burn the baby and whisk her into the ashes as well.

At the same time as Coleridge recognizes the therapeutic effects of nursing, she also sees her role as the mother to the infants as contributing to her nervous condition. In fact, she seems much happier and better suited for motherhood once the children are verbal and can be appealed to rationally. In the same letter to her husband in which she announces weaning Edith, she writes that the "darling Edith has sucked her mama's strength indeed!—for two months what a fountain of milk I was!"[80] As though concerned that she had imputed to the children the cause of her illness, she quickly follows, "But other untowardnesses conspired to weaken me." Grammatically, it is hard to determine whether or not the children are contained with the appellation "untowardnesses."[81] Either way, the anxiety of passing nervousness and/or opium from one generation to the next ironically doubles her own situation vis-à-vis her opium addict father.

In fact, Coleridge engages through much of this period in dual struggle to resist over-identification with her children while at the same time resisting intergenerational identification with her father. It is undoubtedly the case that Coleridge felt intensely identified with her father, and experienced

the identification at the level of the body as well as the mind: she writes in her unfinished autobiography that, "more that any of them [her siblings] I inherited that uneasy health of his, which kept us apart."[82] So it is that she must practice vigilance on both fronts. She must free herself from the becoming-animal that her infant children represent while she works to be free from the pull of the past. Each of these identifications is rooted in the body and is experienced as self-erasing. Yet in each of these struggles, Coleridge refuses a simple dualism. Although she is made extremely uncomfortable by her bodily symptoms, she insists upon "affectivity" as a crucial aspect of all human existence. As we will see in the next section, the distinction between the animality of infantilism/invalidism and human reason is a difference worked out by Coleridge in a religious, moral, and aesthetic refusal of conventional ascetic practice, one that reveals a paradoxical commitment to the physical world.

3.6 "Some Bodies": Extended Asceticism in Theory

So far I have been arguing that Coleridge often finds herself trapped between two competing yet interrelated modes of being—a rational/spiritual mode, and an animal/bodily one. The first yearns to disconnect and flee all things of the body; however, the difficult fact that to flee the sensual side of her being means also to abandon her children makes any embrace of pure spirit an ambivalent one at best. Pure sensual being, on the other hand, is, for Coleridge, not being at all but rather a state of unreason tantamount to imprisonment inside an insatiable and unknowing body. In a religious sense, when this sensual being predominates over reason, sin is the inevitable result, a "subserviency to the carnal, finite, and human."[83] Slowly, however, Coleridge begins to embrace a middle position. At times she calls it knowledge or principle; at other times, as I have already suggested, following her father's reading of Kant, she terms it "understanding." The understanding forms a crucial bridge in Coleridge's thinking between these two dichotomous modes of being. In an unpublished essay entitled "Thoughts on Asceticism," Coleridge writes of an asceticism "extended" into the world, which can mediate between these positions through the activity of writing, witnessing, and abiding—acts that foreground process and principle over and against habit, dogma, and the capriciousness (i.e., the instantaneity) of the body. It is as though, in a move similar to Kant's revaluation of discourse in "What Is Enlightenment?" writing *is* extended asceticism.

Opium stands in a strange relation to this type of writing: at once its double and its opposite, insofar as it is often associated in her poetry with a kind of imaginative *knowing* that would seem to exclude the body (the corpus, the social) rather than relate it to the spirit.[84] That is, opium takes Coleridge out of the world. So, whereas, in the medical discourses of the nineteenth century (Thomas Brown, E. Darwin, etc.), nervous debility is located on

the side of the body and therefore can be effectively treated with opium, for Coleridge, opium is itself connected to what we might call "pure reason," a kind of bodiless flight toward interiority and spirit. In a late letter in which she is clearly self-critical about her opium use, she claims that the first night she takes it she is "wholly sleepless … but quiet, not turning restlessly from side to side. On the next night I sleep heavily, & wake very relaxed and comfortable."[85] This state of which she writes—on the first night—is reminiscent of Wordsworth's claim for the imagination in "Tintern Abbey": when "even the motion of our human blood suspended, we are laid asleep in body, and become a living soul." Coleridge wishes during this period to obtain something like pure reason without opium, but feels that her nervous illness interferes: "But I aught to confine myself to the discourses of pure reason, *siccum lumen*, which is not of the body, though sadly dependent on it at present for the conditions of existence of action."[86]

This doubled desire—for pure isolative reason (which, after all, is merely formal) and engaged (though not enmeshed) social connection—is never entirely resolved in Coleridge but rather forms another site of contention for body and spirit, extension and retreat. Yet it seems that writing can do what opium cannot.[87] Whereas opium cuts off all ties to sociality, her writing connects her with others. Furthermore, writing seems to have a structural advantage for Coleridge. It represents the discursive production of knowledge and understanding. Specifically and paradoxically, the writing that Coleridge does in order to map the emotional, psychic, and bodily territory of her illness and the children's infancy saves her from what she experiences as the bodily pull of her children. She can merge with them through the medium of books and writing (as she does with her father), yet she can also *emerge* in her own right. The hundreds of poems she writes for her children are an aspect of this desire to connect. Yet, again like her father, Coleridge cannot be satisfied with a merely secular philosophical or aesthetic method, but must always theorize in moral and religious terms as well.[88]

"Thoughts on Asceticism" outlines a philosophy that addresses precisely the ethical dilemma of one's relation to the body.[89] In that essay, she foregrounds the problems of lived experience—that is to say, the problems of bodies, which is also the problem of relating to other people. The longer title, "Thoughts on Asceticism by a 'Rationalist,' in Search of True Religion, or Rather in Search of a True *Form* of Faith Already Found," points directly to the emphatic importance Coleridge places on the problem of form, where form is defined as both rationale and practice. Writing in response to a quote from her friend Aubrey De Vere, Coleridge allows that there are "two essentially different kinds of Christian excellence." The first, and the one De Vere aligns himself with, is physical asceticism, the typical renouncing of bodily pleasures that we generally have come to associate with the term. Coleridge affirms that we must all seek Christian perfection, and must, if it is required for salvation, "absolutely abandon … the good things of this life." She calls this model, the traditional one, "formal" asceticism. But, perhaps because of her long history of physical

and emotional illness, Coleridge is quick to point out that the "bodies of some require more rest and nourishment than others."[90]

This qualification opens up the space for a second kind of Christian excellence, one that is more nuanced and, arguably, more difficult to practice. It involves "extending" into the world, into the social realms; as Coleridge writes, it entails "having all things as having them not." In other words, it models an ontology and ethics in which the "prison of the flesh" is always operative in our experience. Rather than banished, desire must be acknowledged and addressed, and this according to the particular abilities of the particular individual.

> [Our] carnal nature is subdued to the uttermost when it is kept down to the minimum in each particular case that is compatible with the continuance of an earthly existence & the corporeal conditions of mental sanity.

Notice the inextricable relationship put forward here between "corporeal conditions" and "mental sanity." The reason that the "extended" asceticism is preferable is because, on the one hand, pure asceticism, complete renunciation, is not possible; it is only pure if it leads to complete abandonment of the world—in other words, death (and here we see the stakes for Coleridge inasmuch as I have already commented on her deep attraction to this form of martyrdom and escape, the death-as-excellence/excellence-as-death chiasmus).[91] On the other hand, extended asceticism is harder that formal asceticism. It requires more of the will. It requires surrendering attachment in a way that formal or pure ascetic practice does not: "to hold the good things of our present estate with so temperate a hand as never to abuse them, ever to be prepared to forego them" is "a more refined and complicate scheme of asceticism." Furthermore, she writes, extended asceticism is "seldomer carried out" than its formal version.

It is possible to read this theoretical construction back over Coleridge's difficult period of illness and merging with her children.[92] In other words, there is a sense in which her aversion to the animal aspects of being (hysteria, unreason, etc.) resembles, were it to result in a *complete* renunciation of the body, a formal asceticism. Yet, Coleridge rejects the rejection of the body as being "too easy" and, in modern life at least, ethically questionable. She argues that the "formal ascetic," presumably for ethical reasons pertaining to his duty or responsibility, "cannot leave houses and lands & wife & children for his heavenly master's sake." It is also not morally superior, and I take this to be the crux of Coleridge's argument, to "decline possession" of worldly goods "from the first," because to let go without knowledge of what you are releasing would not be as "salutary & searching an exercise as to resign them when once enjoyed."

Here I think we can hear an echo of how *knowledge of what is lost*—the fundamental difference in psychoanalytic thought between mourning

and melancholia—functions in Coleridge's thought. In "Mourning and Melancholia" Freud suggests that it is not merely that we mourn the loss of the other, but also that we cannot know quite what it is for us *in* the other that we have lost.[93] Thus we can only truly experience loss once we have "worked through" and entered the realm of reason. By redefining this relation Coleridge is able to implicitly redefine what it means to be human. Mere reason is insufficient. Furthermore, absolute reason is impossible except in theory. While we do progress (spiritually, emotionally, personally, professionally), what makes our progression meaningful is our ability to recognize and tolerate our losses. As we have seen, Coleridge drives this point in many of the poems to her children: "little does my darling know"; "Ne'er may you know." Herbert and Edith cannot know the depths of spiritual loss and suffering because they are still closer to human animals than to human subjects. Coleridge's attempts to reach and teach them, to inform them of what is lost (to "foreshape" it for them or them for it), fall short precisely to the degree that communication with infants happens primarily at the level of the body—breastfeeding, holding, physical nurturance, etc. Neither can reason reach them directly. Instead, she must reach her children from some mediated location, from the realm of knowledge or understanding—that is, through the futurity of her writing. For Coleridge, "all connection is the work of understanding."[94]

To abide in the understanding, to be connected but not enmeshed—these are Coleridge's greatest challenges. Her essay on asceticism reverses conventional terms in such a way that what we would normally consider the more spiritually and physically demanding path—that is, formal asceticism—becomes, in a sense, a retreat from bodies, specifically the human-animal bodies of other people. And, as a result, formal asceticism short-circuits the need for spiritual principles and growth. However, again in a stunning reversal, extended asceticism demands "being with" others, extending oneself socially and physically into their space, the common space of mother and child being only one example.

> A spiritual education must be one of continued effort and struggling—a contest with our merely human self must be forever going on & can only cease to be painful when self is annulled & then the contest is over—But the question is whether this strengthening struggle, this purifying pain, may not go on even more efficaciously & with safer and more edifying accompaniments in a soul that has entered into human life in its most extended scale …

The most extended scale is that of embodiment. For the infant, the soul "enters" human life once it is perceived by another and can return that recognition. For the Christian, extended asceticism means connections with others, and, if we are to follow Coleridge to the next logical step, then connection with those we love is even more important because those relationships teach us what it is we must be prepared to renounce.[95]

Thus, when Coleridge must give up breastfeeding, she follows each mention in her journal—for Herbert as well as for Edith—with "may God protect and keep" them. What makes this interaction so painful is that Coleridge *knows* how beneficial breastfeeding is for Edith, both physically and emotionally. Yet she makes a conscious choice, informed by her extension into human life. As "Farewell my darling Edith," the rejected first line of "To Baby Edith," suggests, the sacrifice, if we may call it that, that Coleridge makes is so painful as to feel like a kind of death or leave-taking. "Strengthening struggle" then becomes a middle position, a principle. So if the merging of breastfeeding is in part interrupted by fears of injuring her children by her opium addiction, then to renounce that connectedness is, for Coleridge, to enact a struggle. It is an ascetic and Christian act. It insists on recognizing the embodiment of spirit (its extension) even as it recognizes the ethereal and safe dimensions of formal or pure bodily asceticism.

3.7 "Edith and the Hairbrush": Extended Asceticism in Practice

In practice, Coleridge's version of asceticism responds to the needs and wills of other people as well as to the vicissitudes of specific situations. For although Coleridge finds a more workable relation to her children through language and learning—that is, in and through reason instructed by principle—the day-to-day demands of Coleridge's extended asceticism, the readjustments necessary when a soul enters into human life in its most extended and social scale, require her to constantly renegotiate her relationships, principles, and methods.

This improvisatory ethics also informs her approach to the children's education. She writes to her husband in an undated letter from 1835 that Edith, then a mere four years old, would not cooperate in her evening lesson.[96] She would not say the word "the," "which she had said a hundred times before." Frustrated, Coleridge gave the child "a rap on her hand with the brush handle." Still, the child "continued in her obstinate mood" and would not say the word, although "she sobbed … hysterically." Coleridge is obviously pained by the exchange. In one sentence, she is unapologetic about her stern measures. Yet four lines later, she writes, "I quite sickened at the sight of that brush when I came up here again—I think I will throw it away." Adopting a more philosophical tone, she writes that if the punishment does not yield results, she must take a "different tack," a "slow method" that makes "no *point* of her [Edith] saying certain words." What should interest us here is not the harsh discipline, per se, or the subtler shift toward a more patient and gentle pedagogy; rather, we should be interested in Coleridge's reasoning, how she allows affect to help her to arrive at her decision. (Remember that in "Nervousness" she argues that sensation can guide the faculty of reason.) She writes that later that night "Dear Edy" came to bid her good night. "She looked perfectly affectionate and sweetly

free from all resentment. This makes my tears flow—but they are tears of relief and comfort." The change in tense—"she *looked* … this *makes*"—suggests that Coleridge cries when recalling the incident, but not in front of Edith. In other words, her feelings center primarily not on what Edith might think of her, but rather on her concerns about Edith's well-being and the nature of her moral education.[97]

Yet even Coleridge's relief and comfort are not resting places for her principles. To decide permanently on corporal punishment simply because it appears to have done no harm to Edith would be to close down or concretize judgment in an act resembling formal asceticism. Coleridge describes such philosophical closure derogatorily in the letter to her husband as "a regular routine which [is] never correct[ed] by principle." In contrast, Coleridge's own extended asceticism responds not merely to outcomes but also, and most importantly, to principles. In the case of Edith and the hairbrush, the adjustment is so decisive and quick that although Coleridge writes the night of the incident that she will try punishing Edith in this way for "3 months at least," the following day she writes her husband that she will forgo the punishment, put her trust in "no method of discipline," and that her "whole aim is … the growth of [the children's] souls in goodness and holiness." She accepts that she must put her "faith in no ways and means which I have power over," but rather must trust "the influence of good example." As Griggs comments concerning Coleridge's theory of parenting, "If self-control on the part of adults were lacking, what good … would religious instruction be?"[98]

The principles of a strictly formal asceticism when extended into domestic relations would suggest retreat, either from hairbrushes or elocution lessons, or both. Yet that is precisely the point: formal asceticism *cannot* be extended to domestic relations. Rule-bound and rigid, it would not be able to change and adjust, to manage the difficult and painful corrections and surrenders that relationships in a family require. Instead, formal asceticism exists on the level of hermetic dogmatism. It does not and cannot enter into human life. Put another way, formal asceticism cannot enter into life because it denies the body, and therefore denies death. For S. T. C., as well as for Sara Coleridge, one cannot have life without the possibility of death: "Stop its [the body's] self-destruction as matter, and you stop its self-reproduction as a vital organ."[99]

So it is that in a strange reversal, Coleridge ends up with bodies and soul, outcomes and principles, engaged in an improvisatory dialectic, never coming to rest, but inching forward through what she terms the "indwelling" spirit or "Reason," which paradoxically extends into the lives of other people.

3.8 "The Book of Mourning" and the Role of Reason

On the one hand, the domestic turn in Coleridge's theology, poetics, and philosophy are part and parcel of what Mudge describes as her "attitudes about

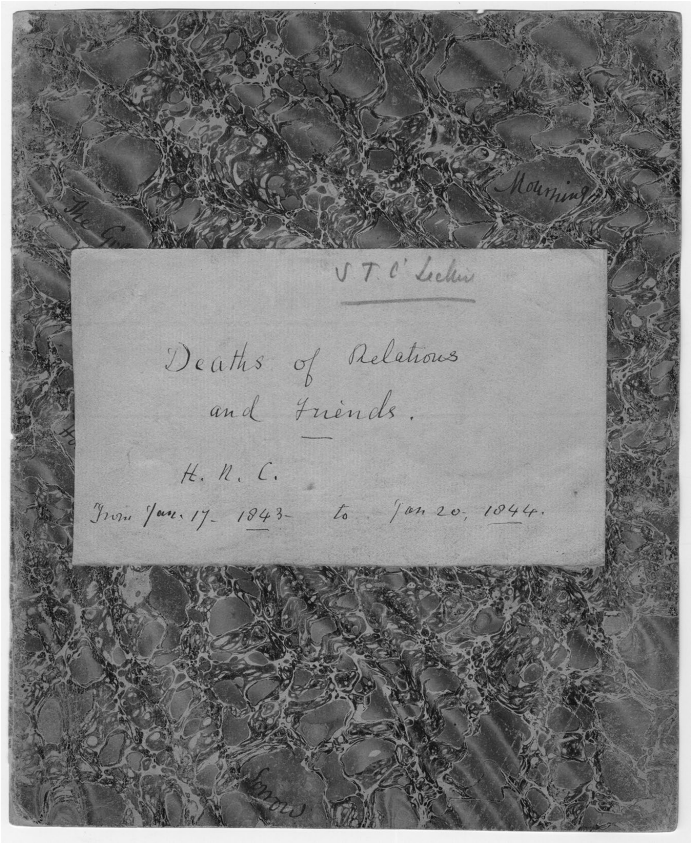

Figure 3.1 Front cover of Sara Coleridge's "Book of Mourning." (With permission of the Harry Ransom Library, University of Texas, Austin.)

female authorship," that is, her tendency to defer to her father or others when literary accomplishment was to be acknowledged.[100] Yet, paradoxically, as we have seen, these deferrals allow for a more deeply engaged ethics, while also making possible the creation of new genres of writing. Among Coleridge's literary remains are two volumes that bear the title "Book of Mourning" (Figure 3.1).

These "commonplace" books, into which Coleridge copied several poems (her own and, as we shall see, others') as well as remembrances of the recently dead, begin with her husband's death and continue on registering the deaths of family members and notable friends through to the end of her own life. Of course, mourning seems to imbue all of Coleridge's writing; arguably any of the texts we have looked at in this chapter could easily have been included in a volume called the "Book of Mourning."

In "Verses Written in Sickness," Coleridge mourns the loss of her children, not because they would die soon after childbirth (which they did), but rather because she believed that she would die and thus would not be

present in their lives. More to the point, as I have stressed, neither mother nor child would know *what it was* that had been lost. She would not have seen them, except as foreshaped, and they would not have knowledge of her suffering. Thus a sort of double mourning takes place, which can easily shift into melancholy. Likewise, the journal of her children's early years, recording as it does Coleridge's daily suffering and sense of loss, could also be called a book of mourning precisely because the illogic of its epistemic grammar—a confusion, that is, about who or what is the subject and who or what is the object.

The question of confusion or superposition extends to Coleridge's literary afterlife as well: exactly to what genre do these works belong? The back cover of volume 1 of "Book of Mourning" is covered with writing and design. Written in what looks like a cross between a schoolgirl's doodling and an exercise in free-association are the words "Loss of friends … death … Grave" and "mourning" (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Detail from back cover of Sara Coleridge's "Book of Mourning." (With permission of the Harry Ransom Library, University of Texas, Austin.)

Again, one expects that Coleridge would extensively mourn the death of her father here. Instead, we have only a short mention of S. T. Coleridge. There are quite a few entries on the death of her husband and mother. Yet when Hartley dies, she writes, "but for the children, I should long to go too." This qualification is telling. She does not, as she did earlier in "Verses Written in Illness," imagine some distant shore for which momentarily she will sail. Instead, she measures the distance between one desire (to be with the dead) and another (to be among the living). Coleridge remains and enters into human life by choosing to stay with the children. In the logic of extended asceticism, making a *knowledgeable* choice makes all the difference. In other words, we must assume that she knows the pleasure that would result from a cessation of suffering, or as she puts it, of "longing to go" (notice she does not say she would die "but for the children," but rather that she would "long to go"). Only with this knowledge does her decision to remain assume a moral aspect. Mourning acquires an ethical character only insofar as it knows what is lost in the object; then and only then can one make a conscious choice to enter into human life. This must be done over and over again. It is not a system with a priori rules or an absolute formal structure to be applied: asceticism does not "belong inseparably to any system of outward acts." Rather, these principles, essential to Coleridge's theology, must be considered as part of an ongoing process.

Coleridge's "Book of Mourning," like the concepts of "extended asceticism" and "regeneration", reaches across temporal boundaries to address past, present, and future aspects of the self.[101] A desire to reach back to one's past, to actively mourn, but, more importantly, to "discern" what has been lost is evinced in the final two entries in "The Book of Mourning." Coleridge copies out two poems by her mother, Sarah Coleridge, from before her birth. The first was written during the sickness of Berkeley Coleridge, Sara Coleridge's brother who died three years before she was born. The second concerns his death at eleven months old. (It is important to recall Coleridge's own poem "Verses Written in Sickness …," in which she names one of her unborn twins Berkeley, presumably after her deceased brother.) The series of associations and connections between these poems is tangled and thick. Consider that Sarah (Fricker) Coleridge copied out her daughter's poem and was presumably present at the death of her grandson, named after her own beloved Berkeley. After her mother's death, Sara Coleridge then copies her mother's poems into her *own* book of mourning, poems in which her mother details her suffering over the loss of her (Sara's) older brother. In her autobiography, Coleridge writes more about Berkeley, dead before she was born, than about any of her other siblings. All the other children, it seems, were compared to him.[102] In the "Book of Mourning," she seems, in fact, uncannily like the little girl in Wordsworth's "We are Seven"—tenaciously numbering the dead with the living.

I am suggesting here that we consider extended asceticism as extending in a temporal and spatial sense as well as a figurative one. Like productive

mourning, extended asceticism reaches into the immemorial past, but not in order to change it ("God's will be done"); the poems that mourn Berkeley's loss neither melancholically incorporate their loss nor repudiate it. Both poems by Sarah (Fricker) Coleridge insist on letting go of their object (that is, of Berkeley), the logic being that if an event truly is God's will, which is to say, if it *happens*, one must accept the brute fact of its occurrence. Retreating from the physical plane, that is, giving oneself over to formal asceticism, saves one from the pleasures and pains of attachment. At the risk of belaboring what seems obvious, to suffer loss, one must first be attached. This is the logic of extended asceticism: "to hold the good things of our present estate with so temperate a hand as never to abuse them, ever to be prepared to forego them."

Her mother, in "On the Lamentable Sickness of Little Berkeley during his Father's Absence in Germany, 1799," writes:

> Oh, interpose, kind heaven, thy succors lend!
> Put forth thy hand, my drooping infant save,
> In mercy spare what thou in mercy gave!—
> But if his doom is that of David's son;
> I from the earth arise, and say thy will be done. (14–18)

Clearly, Sarah Fricker Coleridge is the poetic equal of neither her husband nor her daughter. Yet the lines contain the barest contours of her daughter's extended asceticism, in this case offered for the sake of her dying son. There is, of course, an internal echo in this book insofar as the previous chapter treated the facts of this infant death from the point of view of S. T. C., the father. "Thy will be done," Coleridge's own prayer in her journal, now takes on an added valence or at least it assumes a longer timeline. Berkeley's death in many ways marked the death of her parents' marriage, at least insofar as her mother seems never to have forgotten her grief or her father his displaced sense of guilt. The continuation and generation of this loss, its specificity, is connoted by these poems' strange inclusion in Coleridge's book of mourning.

In the last poem copied out, "On the Death of Little Berkeley Coleridge—11 months old," Sarah Fricker Coleridge transposes something like extended asceticism into accusatory wrath:

> Samuel, thy dire for[e]bodings are fulfilled;
> Death's clay-cold hand our beauteous boy hath chilled.
> Ah, where art thou, unconscious father, where?
> Whilst thy poor Sarah weeps in sad despair?" (13–16)

Does daughter Sara mourn or scorn her father by including this poem in her diary of loss? Does she mourn the brother she never met? her parent's happiness? her own dead children? Does she mourn the past that she did not have? In a certain sense, the inclusion of this poem—in many ways,

an indictment of her father—in her own book of mourning means letting the "unconscious father" go. Yet it is difficult to read these lines without imagining Sara Coleridge desiring to speak them herself to S. T. C. at several moments of her life: "where art thou, unconscious father?"

Extended asceticism requires entering not only into human life (spatially, imaginatively, and temporally), but also into certain conventions and genres. As we can see, the genres themselves are changed as part of this activity—so, I would argue, are concepts such as "illness," "faith," and "hope." Consider Coleridge's later poem, "For My Father on His Lines Called 'Work Without Hope'":

> Yet Hope still lives, and oft, to objects fair
> In prospect pointing, bids me still pursue
> My humble tasks:—I list—but backward turn
> Objects for ever lost still struggling to discern.[103]

Clearly, Coleridge's professional anxiety is still with her. She has no more lost it than she has retreated from the full extension of human activity. Her tasks are "humble," and she both lists (that is, catalogues) and lists (that is, drifts without purpose). Hope lives. But what she dares to hope for in this state is still to be determined. The struggling, of which she so approves, speaks of a desire to discern objects. Whereas her merging with her children seemed to arrest or seal up time altogether, now, addressing her father and, in a sense, emerging—partially, tentatively—from his shadow, time collapses objects present with those "for ever lost." An alternative final line from the fair copy of this poem reads "but backward cast / Mine eye still seeks <to find> the Future in the Past."[104]

To find the "future in the past" suggests the hand of God or fate or some innate unfolding scheme at work in objects. Yet, unlike her father, Coleridge does not put her faith in symbols, which he claimed could mediate between the literal and the metaphorical. Instead, she opts for a certain literal mindedness and a commitment to principle as a flexible and contingent process. Writing on the "indwelling of spirit," for example, she insists that God does not dwell *in* us. She knows better than most that our bodies are neither eternal nor inhabited by spirit. Further, she argues that "the soul has no direct relation to space." Her evidence for this—and we see again her literal mindedness—is that the "souls of the ancient saints" were not possessed of "supernatural" sanctity. This would mean that the spirit of God was a matter of degree. For Coleridge, God either is or is not, yet God is not a matter of degree, any more, she argues, than "being within the house or without the house is [a] matter of degree."[105] She insists upon these egalitarian principles in nearly all of her work. The limitations imposed on a person by gender, by invalidism, or by circumstance of any sort cannot affect that person's divinity. This is the principle that informs Coleridge's extended asceticism, her parenting, her religion, and her poetics.

For Coleridge, the work of the body, of the spirit, and of mourning is related yet discontinuous, fraught with interruptions, sudden stops and starts. The work consists largely in being patient and willing to remain connected to the world, open to the possibilities of the understanding, until "Reason" (for Coleridge, a divine "light" rather than a faculty of the mind) ultimately enters in.[106] To read through her letters and journals is to witness Coleridge exchanging her own metaphor of "foreshaping" and her mother's characterization of her father's "foreboding" in favor of a literal forbearance—a principle she learned through her illness, through mourning, through writing, and through her engagement with her children. This waiting is not always easy. For Coleridge, loss is a conscious part of the experience of being with others. The loss of a child, a father, a mother, or a husband—or even a way of discerning the self—is specific, yet—when it is written (i.e., embodied)—it can be made usable. It can chime, repeat, and reverberate with others. A new "state"—of affective being, of anamnesis, of extending more fully into human life—can always be learned.

Notes

1. Coleridge, Sara. "Children's Verses," n.d. Harry Ransom Center (hereafter HRC): Austin, TX; cancelled lines to a poem that will be published in Swaab entitled "Sara Coleridge for Herbert and Edith April 19th 1834," *Collected Poems*. Edited by Peter Swaab (Manchester, England: FyfieldBooks/Carcanet, 2007), 87.
2. Howe, Susan. "Postscripts to Emily Dickinson." In *Dwelling in Possibility: Women Poets and Critics on Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 81.
3. From here forward in this chapter I refer to S. T. Coleridge as S. T. C. and to Sara Coleridge as Coleridge.
4. Kant defines the public use of reason (not to be restricted if enlightenment [social/cultural/political maturity] is to be brought about) as discursive, whereas the private use of reason, no matter how many people are involved, is always a "domestic" issue (and may therefore be restricted).
5. Mudge, Bradford Keyes, and Sara Coleridge. *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter: Her Life and Essays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 63; Marland, Hilary. *Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 91.
6. See Joanne Wilkes's "Snuffing Out an Article," for Coleridge's reading of "Keats as a significant forebear to Tennyson," Wilkes, Joanne. "Snuffing Out an Article: Sara Coleridge and the Early Victorian Reception of Keats." In *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 190.
7. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter*, 204.
8. "I am thankful I am one of the abstracters and generalizers myself, and am rather weary at times of the perpetual concretes of some people—they do not give you examples in actual life—for they have nothing in their hands to exemplify …" Swaab, Peter. *The Regions of Sara Coleridge's Thought: Selected Literary Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 23.

9. Theorizing the relation between the universal and the particular is a recurring obsession in S. T. C.'s philosophical, poetic, and theological thought as well. See, for example, his "Lectures on Shakespeare": "The smallest fragment of his mind not unfrequently [*sic*] gives a clue to a most perfect, regular, and consistent whole," Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Lectures on Shakespeare." In *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 653.
10. Coleridge, Sara Coleridge, and E. Coleridge. *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge*. 2 v. (London: H. S. King & Co., 1873), 60.
11. See Plotz for the relationship of Hartley to S. T. C. Specifically, Plotz makes an important disctinction between empathizing with the chilld and projecting one's own worries and fears; *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood,* 239.
12. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Coleridge's Notebooks: A Selection* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.
13. I borrow the concept of the fold and superposition from Jacques Derrida (although he no doubt borrowed the term from Deleuze and Leibniz), a term translated from "*repliez,*" the imperative of *replier* (to fold up again; withdraw back; roll back; pack away; double over). The specific usage that motivates my appropriation is Derrida's brilliant reading of a footnote in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." Derrida suggests that the *fort/da* (gone/here) game gets reduplicated in Freud's own recent loss of his favorite daughter Sophie, and that the personages in the essay (grandfather, son-in-law, grandson) get folded over or superimposed so that position becomes spatial and temporal, genetic and associated, and, most importantly, discursive, "Freud's Legacy." In *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 292–337.
14. See Deleuze (1991) for phenomenology's critique of empiricism, specifically Bergson's suggestion that associationism fails to tell us why things are associated, only that they are. This work of explanation, suggests Deleuze, is picked up by phenomenology on the one hand and psychoanalysis on the other, Deleuze, Gilles. *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 102, 103.
15. See Ruwe, Donelle. "Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of Biographia Literaria." In *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 229–251; and Vardy, Alan. "Her Father's 'Remains': Sara Coleridge's Edition of Essays on His Own Times," also in *Nervous Reactions,* 207–227.
16. See, for example, her letter to Aubrey de Vere: "We walk by sight when we attend only to the things, which appear without, and take no heed to the things that are spiritually discerned," Coleridge, *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge,* vol. II. 304, 305.
17. "Nervousness," reprinted in *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter*, 203.
18. Ruwe writes that Coleridge uses the eighteenth-century concept of the sensorium (see my previous chapter on Erasmus Darwin) in order to mediate between the body and the soul, "Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians," 231.
19. "As the wind is known by its sound, so is the regenerating influence to be heard by all that have spiritual ears to hear it," *Memoir and Letters,* 305. For later feminist evocations of embodiment, see Grosz, E. A. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and

Olkowski, Dorothea. *The Universal (in the Realm of the Sensible): Beyond Continental Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

20. S. T. C. in a commentary on the sermons of John Donne, *Notes on English Divines*. Edited by Derwent Coleridge. (London: E. Moxon, 1853), 96, 97.
21. For the religious implications of Coleridge's theory of "regeneration," see Barbeau, Jeffrey W. *Sara Coleridge Her Life and Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 129–148.
22. "Coleridge, Sara. "On Rationalism." In *Aids to Reflection*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. 2 v. (London: W. Pickering, 1848), 295; as I discuss in Chapter 1, the language of immortality (that which is "outside of time") anticipates Freud's claims for the unconscious; regeneration, therefore, can be productively considered in a genealogy of concepts reaching from Augustine to Freud.
23. "Here is a system of images which I term my perception of the universe, and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged image—*my body.* This image occupies the center; by it all the others are conditioned; at each of its movements everything changes, as though by a turn of a kaleidoscope, Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 25, emphasis original.
24. We might say that what is missing for Coleridge is what Kant calls the "synthetical unity of apperception," the "I think" that accompanies all our representations, *Critique of Pure Reason,* 61. I cite Bergson here alongside Kant because it seems to me that Bergson's phenomenology clarifies something inferred but left unpacked in Kant's epistemology—namely, that the "spontaneity" (ibid., 62) experienced by the subject in the "synthesis of unified apperception" can in fact be broken down into smaller, more discontinuous (temporal and logical) fragments. It is with these fragments or part-objects that the dissociated person must work.
25. This logic is most clearly articulated in her religious writings, in which she argues forcefully that neither sacraments nor "mere understanding" is sufficient to obtain grace: "It is only in thinking, a function of the intellect, that we enter into the use of reason: it is only when reason comes into play that the will, the constituent of humanity, begins to act or be actualized; it is only in willing conformably to right reason, when that has been potentiated from above, that man commences a religious course, a walking in the Spirit," "On Rationalism," vol. II, 24. See also Barbeau, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought,* 116–127.
26. Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure,* 127.
27. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 89. Also see Lambert, Gregg. *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 106.
28. Irigaray, Luce. "The Sex Which Is Not One." In *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 366.
29. I understand fusion in a psychoanalytic sense as a search not merely for what is lost, but also for the self that feels that it can only exist in relation to the absent object: "… the idea develops that the primary 'object' that the infant seeks to find again is a fusion of self and object, it is mouth and breast felt as fused into one. Thus the concept of fusion is present, both in the primary situation, between self and object, and in the secondary one, between the new situation and the old one," Milner, Marion. "The Role of Illusion in Symbol Formation." In *Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces: Literary Uses of D. W. Winnicott* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 18.

30. "He [Herbert] is very hungry … in a snatching way …" Coleridge, *Diary of Her Children's Early Years,* HRC.
31. I am working here from two sources: Coleridge, Sara. "The Red Book," n.d. HRC; and *Collected Poems,* 62, 63.
32. Line 9 exhibits the same rhythmic pattern: "**Fain** would I **do** a **mo**ther's **part**."
33. See later discussion of what it means for Coleridge to include the names of her dead children, an action which takes on added significance given that Berkeley was the name of her brother, whose death preceded her birth.
34. For Coleridge, knowledge is never absolute; at each juncture a choice must be made. This is an important religious distinction as well as an epistemic one. And choice is only possible after the dawn of reason, that is, after infancy: infancy⇒ reason⇒ability to choose⇒knowledge⇒salvation.
35. This double bind reiterates a basic psychodynamic paradox. Andre Green argues that the primary function of the death drive is "unbinding"; yet it is possible to imagine the drive facilitating rather a binding to death itself, or to escape, or to retreat, *The Work of the Negative* (London; New York: Free Association Books, 1999), 85.
36. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter,* 203.
37. We see this situation (whereby one is infected by powerful emotions) clearly demonstrated in Wordsworth's "Ruined Cottage," in which Martha's sole remaining infant child catches "from his Mother … the trick of grief" and dies.
38. Griggs, Earl Leslie. *Coleridge File; a Biography of Sara Coleridge* (London, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1940), 116.
39. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge: A Victorian Daughter,* 203.
40. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London; New York: G. Routledge, 1884), 266.
41. See, for example, the first section of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia.* Also see Ruwe for an account of the importance of the sensorium to Sara Coleridge.
42. Coleridge, *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge,* vol. 1, 163.
43. Steedman, *Strange Dislocations,* 70.
44. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 56.
45. See *Dangerous Motherhood* for another account of Coleridge's "puerperal insanity," in which Marland refers to the journal as Coleridge's "diary," 80–94.
46. The context for the quote is a poem renouncing professionalism and greed: "What are professions? Means to gather wealth / At risk of conscience, comfort, calmness, health?—" Coleridge, *Collected Poems,* 175.
47. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 204.
48. On "organization," see William Lawrence (intensely influential on S. T. C.): "Organization means the peculiar composition, which distinguishes living bodies … Thus organization, vital properties, functions, and life are expressions related to each other; in which organization is the instrument, vital properties the acting power, functioning the mode of action, and life the result," *An Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology; Being the Two Introductory Lectures Delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, on the 21st and 25th of March, 1816* (London: Callow, 1816), 120, 121; see also Richardson, Alan. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23–29.
49. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 205.
50. Ibid., 205.

51. Freud's most sustained description of identification is in the superego chapter of *The Ego and the Id* (New York: Norton, 1962), 23–30.
52. This reading is continuous with Mudge's thoroughly convincing claim that by editing and revising her father's work, Coleridge would be able to "alleviate [her] own nagging doubt about her father's paternal neglect," *Sara Coleridge,* 101. See also Bollas, C. "On the Relation to the Self as an Object." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 63 (1982): 347–359.
53. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 210.
54. Coleridge, Sara. "Diary of Her Children's Early Years," HRC.
55. As I explore later, Coleridge comes to this philosophy through an intense engagement with her father's writing. Martin Luther's interest in the body and Kant's epistemology are central to her understanding. From Kant, through her father, she gets the notion of a sensual mind and an active understanding. From Luther, again through her father, she gets a notion of body and spirit.
56. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 57.
57. Milner, "The Role of Illusion in Symbol Formation," 31. Milner's essay focuses on the relation of the frame to the picture, that is, she focuses on her experience as a painter as well as a psychoanalyst. Each person requires a "pliable medium," which, for psychoanalysis, is speech; perhaps for Coleridge, it is writing.
58. Winnicott, D. W. *The Family and Individual Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1965), 15.
59. See Julie Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic*; and Sully, James. *Studies of Childhood* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1993).
60. See Gelpi, *Shelley's Goddess,* 3–17; Kipp, *Romanticism*; Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*.
61. "But, if we consider both partners (mother and child) simultaneously, we can speak with Ferenczi of mutuality. This mutuality is the biological, the naïve egoism the psychological aspect. The biological interdependence makes the naïve egoism psychologically possible. Every disturbance of this interdependence calls forth a development beyond the naïve egoism," Balint, Michael. *Primary Love, and Psycho-Analytic Technique* (New York: Liveright Pub. Corp., 1953), 120.
62. Irigaray, "The Sex Which Is Not One," 365.
63. Ibid., 367.
64. Quoting Kant almost exactly, Coleridge, in an explanation of her father's theology, calls understanding "the spontaneity of the representing mind; that which puts together the multifarious materials," "On Rationalism," 38, 39.
65. Coleridge was being advised that too much nursing could contribute to her nervous condition. She herself seems uncertain: "I have never got quite strong since my confinement. I know not whether nursing keeps me down," *Diary of Her Children's Early Years*, HRC; see also her mother's letter of 10/18/1832: "Our poor Sara is reduced to a very sad state of stomach & nerves by over-nursing; and her disease, which by the Medical-man is called Puerperal is of the most distressing kind Coleridge," Sara Fricker, and Stephen Potter. *Minnow among Tritons; Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's Letters to Thomas Poole, 1799–1834* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1934), 169, 170. It is much more likely that her stomach symptoms were caused by laudanum, as Coleridge well knew: "I long for Laudanum but that would be destruction to my stomach," to husband, 9/22/1832, HRC.

66. Coleridge, *Collected Poems,* 87.
67. Sept 20, 1832, HRC.
68. Edith, in fact, became her editor, just as she had been her father's.
69. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 66.
70. The word is not in the OED, but appears in medical journals, usually referring to medieval medical practices.
71. June 27, 1832, HRC.
72. Marland points out that Coleridge's "daily preoccupation" with her own bowel movements results from constipation as a result of her heavy use of laudanum and opium, Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain*, 88.
73. Sept. 20, 1832, HRC; see also Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 56.
74. Sept. 30, 1833, HRC. Barbeau claims that Sara stopped breastfeeding because of an unexpected pregnancy, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought,* 52.
75. Sept. 20, 1832, HRC.
76. Sept. 24, 1832, HRC.
77. "The excellent fluid that comes from the cow / Is better than wine for my Herbert just now; 'Tis whiter than pearls, and as soft as fine silk—/ There's both meat and drink in the nourishing drink," Coleridge, Sara. *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (London: E. Mathews & Marrot Ltd., 1927), 43.
78. See "The Boy Who Won't Lie in His Crib," in which Herbert is compared to a cow, a tiger, a sheep, an elephant, etc., ibid., 35–37.
79. Making this connection more explicit ("Frost" to "Baby Edith," Hartley to Edith, SC to STC) reveals how thoroughly and consistently Sara Coleridge relives as she revises (and vice versa) images, themes, ideas, and phrases, not only from her father's poems, but also from unpublished poems of her mother's (see following discussion).
80. Tuesday, September 21, 1833, HRC.
81. The letter also suggests that the "atmosphere," by which she means the gloomy weather, also conspires against her.
82. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 250.
83. Coleridge, "On Rationalism," 19. Coleridge is commenting here on the problems of religious rationalism, as she understands it, within the Catholic Church. There are two related problems in religious rationalism—both issues of extremity—(1) the kind that judges religion in terms of mere "understanding"; (2) the kind that operates as though there were no need for understanding (i.e., that believes that spiritual life consists primarily in the carrying out of sacraments).
84. See Andrea Timár's recent book, in which she deals with opium addiction, and argues that, for STC, the "threat" that addiction poses to "the human" can "only be prevented and/or remedied … through the process of cultivation," *A Modern Coleridge: Cultivation, Addiction, Habits* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9. I see Timar's argument as quite consistent with my reading of Sara Coleridge, especially insofar as Coleridge's cultivation of a writing practice allows her a degree of agency and hope.
85. Reproduced in Mudge; he guesses 1849, *Sara Coleridge,* 147.
86. To husband—13, Nov. 1834, HRC.
87. This point seems to me essential. Ruwe, writing about Coleridge's nervousness, associates opium with the sensorium and imagination—she claims all three

form an interval that allows Coleridge to "specify an ethical place for opium" (2004), 243. While I agree that Coleridge thinks of the imagination as an ethical interval or gap, it seems to me that her letters and journal entries disprove any claim that Coleridge can "control" her use of laudanum (242). See, for example, her letter to her husband (3/19/1833): "[Sunday night] I thought the victory over morphine augured a successful end of the campaign." She writes later, on Tuesday morning, "My love, I was again obliged to take morphine last night being in a terrible state—," HRC. Furthermore, her religious writings explicitly argue against it, not from a prohibitionist point of view, but rather because it eliminates the capacity for the believer to choose. That is, opium, insofar as it is used medically or as it allows for a "different form" of reason, is fine. Her addiction to it, on other hand, which she herself describes in terms of a battle, disallows extended asceticism because it *negates choice* and is simply habitual and formal. See also Timar, *A Modern Coleridge,* 1–11; for the relation of opium to memory, see Paxton, Amanda. "Romantic Flashbacks: Coleridge, De Quincey, and Duration." *European Romantic Review* 26, no. 5 (2015), 664–665.

88. After the death of her father, and especially after the death of her husband (S. T. C.'s literary executor), Coleridge began what amounted essentially to a rehabilitation project of her father's work and its significance. According to her, contemporary readers of S. T. Coleridge misread him to the extent that they failed to recognize the importance of two figures on his thought: Luther and Kant. The necessity to ground Kantian epistemology in Christian ethics thus becomes in some sense Sara Coleridge's rasion d'etre as well.
89. Coleridge, Sara. "Thoughts on Asceticism by a 'Rationalist' in Search of True Religion, or Rather in Search of a True Form of Faith Already Found," n.d., HRC.
90. This attention to particularity, to the different circumstances, abilities, and challenges of each individual, is essential for Coleridge. She writes in "Nervousness" that we have a duty to be as cheerful as we "can," but she recognizes that not everyone can be happy all or even most of the time, Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 203.
91. "… formal asceticism can never be complete in this world," HRC.
92. The Harry Ransom Center manuscript has no date on this essay, but we can presume that it dates from the 1840s in that it responds directly to a comment by Aubrey de Vere.
93. "… one feels justified in concluding that a loss of the kind has been experienced and may the more readily suppose that the patient too cannot consciously perceive what it is that he has lost. This indeed might be so even when the patient was aware of the loss giving rise to the melancholia, that is, when he knows whom he has lost but *what* it is he has lost in them," Freud, *Mourning and Melancholy.* In *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953), 155, emphasis original.
94. "On Rationalism," 29.
95. Barbeau writes of the importance of suffering in Coleridge's theology: "The true meaning of a fast" for Coleridge was not to deprive the body of nourishment; rather, it "involved 'abstaining from self indulgence for the sake of doing good to others … Contracting our wants into as narrow a compass as possible. …" *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought,* 175.

96. HRC.
97. See also Gaskell's *The Early Years of my Daughter Marianne*, in which the parents try a similar technique and, like Coleridge, end up crying themselves: "… we were trying to teach her [Marianne] her letters, more by way of occupation of these long winter evenings, than from any anxiety as to her progress in learning. She knew all the vowels, but refused to say A. All the others she would say, but would not once repeat A after us. We got the slate and drew it for her; but she persevered. Meta [the nanny] was asleep, so we were unwilling to provoke the violent crying, which generally ensues when she is taken upstairs; so William gave her a slap on her hand every time she refused to say it, till at last she said it quite pat. Still, I'm sure we were so unhappy that we cried, when she was gone to bed. And I don't know if it was right. If not, pray, dear Marianne, forgive us" (31, 32). … Since then we have not attempted any more lessons till she shows some desire to resume them; and I think she is coming round, for she delights in getting a book, and saying to herself 'This is A' or 'O,' as the case may be, &c," 32.
98. Griggs, *Coleridge File,* 81; see also Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 64.
99. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Literary Remains: Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (New York: [publisher not identified], 1884), 221.
100. Mudge and Coleridge, *Sara Coleridge,* 10.
101. See Gentile, Katie. "Generating Subjectivity through the Creation of Time." *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 999 (2014) and Cabre, Luis J. Martin. "The Psychoanalytic Conception of Trauma in Ferenczi and the Question of Temporality." *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 68 (2008): 43–49.
102. Sara Coleridge's unfinished autobiography (dictated to Edith) is full of her memories of Berkeley's image—"Mama used to tell me that as a young infant I was not so fine and flourishing as Berkeley who was of a taller make than any of her other children …," 250.
103. Coleridge, *Collected Poems,* 156.
104. Ibid., 226.
105. Coleridge, Sara. "Argument on the Meaning of Spiritual Indwelling," n.d. (probably 1840s), HRC.
106. Barbeau, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought,* 121.

4 Bodies in Dissolve

Animal Magnetism and Infancy in Shelley

> When two human bodies are situated within each others atmosphere, the emanations and atmospherical atoms of each, will be blended together, and received into each others pores.
> —George Winter (1801)[1]

> … distance is not the contrary of this proximity, it is deeply consonant with it, it is synonymous with it … the thickness of flesh between the seer and the thing is constitutive for the thing of its visibility as for the seer of his corporeity; it is not an obstacle between them, it is their means of communication.
> —Maurice Merleau-Ponty[2]

> The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it
> "A Defence of Poetry"[3]

In December 1820, Percy Bysshe Shelley underwent mesmeric treatment for painful gallstones. A few months later he finished a draft of "A Defence of Poetry." At more or less the same moment he wrote the following poem in remembrance of his recently deceased son.[4]

> My lost William, thou in whom
> Some bright spirit lived, and did
> That decaying robe consume
> Which its lustre faintly hid,—
> Here its ashes find a tomb,
> But beneath this pyramid
> Thou art not—if a thing divine
> Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
> Is thy mother's grief and mine?
>
> Where art thou, my gentle child?
> Let me think thy spirit feeds,
> With its life intense and mild,
> The love of living leaves and weeds

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> Among these tombs and ruins wild;
> Let me think that through low seeds
> Of sweet flowers and sunny grass
> Into their hues and scents may pass
> A portion——[5]

The lyric, usually considered a "fragment" and unpublished in Shelley's lifetime, can easily be read as further evidence of Shelley's neo-Platonism. Most commentators assume that the poem was left unfinished due to the poet's grief.[6] Yet I think it is also possible to read the final line ("Into their hues and scents may pass / A portion—") as finished, or at least to read its openness, its diffuseness, as a purposeful refusal of closure and solidity. In fact, when the poem was copied over with other poems in the fair-copy notebook (in his hand, not, as with the majority of the poems, in Mary Shelley's), the ending appears just as it does in the draft and printed editions, as an abrupt ending.[7] In the fair-copy notebook Shelley adds a final dash nearly the length of the entire line, which Mary Shelley retains when she publishes the poem. The effect I argue is to leave the poem, the speaker, and the reader suspended in an imaginative space, a space created not only by grief, but also by the rhythmically dense and even iambs, as well as the almost stifling sensuous description that constitutes the previous lines: "The love of living leaves and weeds," etc. Consider also that the second line of the second stanza originally read "dissolved into the living weeds" before it was cancelled:

> Where art thou, my gentle child?
> ~~Dissolved into the living weeds,~~

The cancelled line not only abruptly answers the question asked in the previous line ("Where art thou, my gentle child"), but had Shelley let it stand, it would have unambiguously and prematurely ended the poem.

The line "Dissolved into the living weeds" suggests that in the rhythmicity of death and life the corporeality of the (dead) infant has atomistically become a part of the (living) nature that surrounds it. On the one hand, by cancelling "dissolve," we appear to reject the world of bodies in order to remain in the world of spirit. On the other hand, the spirit that Shelley imagines is a "feeding" spirit, consuming and consumed (depending on how you read the line) and thus also in some sense capable of dissolving and being dissolved. Within this context, spirit and body seem both unthinkable one without the other; each seems to call upon the other. Clearly this enveloped and enveloping aspect is at odds with a Platonic reading whereby the infant's essential spirit emerges triumphantly from a world of appearance. Furthermore, by thinking the child dissolved into nature, Shelley makes the ambiguity of the final line even more striking: is the child a portion of nature, or nature a portion of the child, or both?[8] Here we might stop to consider

that, although the child was named for William Godwin, Shelley's intense (positive and negative) identification with Wordsworth is doubled in the name of his dead son "William." In a typical elegiac and Wordsworthian way, the poem comforts itself by recalling the cocreative and coextensive nature of the infant. The revised line, "let me think …"—perhaps an unconscious echo of Wordsworth's "I must think, do all I can"[9]—suggests that the speaker is merely reassuring himself of the nature of nature, of its goodness, of its porosity as well as its reciprocity. Not only are the two imperatives trochaic inversions (**Let** me **think** [11, 15]), which trip up the meter, but the idiom Shelley uses is also strange. While "let me think 'X'" might imply "let me not think 'Y,'" in this case it also indicates a barely conscious prohibition against thought altogether, against the very self-soothing that it hopes to accomplish. In other words, by casting these lines in the imperative mood ("let me think") Shelley implies that some force (surely not the "gentle child") is making the thought difficult to think, either because another thought is overpowering or because some internal dynamic, some economy requires that the thought be kept at bay. Perhaps the intimation of dissolution with its uncanny mixing of vegetable life and human spirit, even if cancelled, is shocking even to Shelley. What results in any case is intermixture.

Forest Pyle suggests that at this late point in Shelley's young life, his theory of the creative imagination had reached an impasse, and, from roughly this moment forward, he began to embrace a more materialist conception of the imagination, and consequently of the subject and its relation to its environments. Accordingly, a person is an effect rather than a cause; the imagination, like "magnetism" and the "wind," "remains immanent in its effects."[10] It seems to me that death functions much in this way in Shelley's poem for William, as a cause that not only affects its objects (for example, the body of the boy), but also is itself somehow affected and changed. It will be the argument of this chapter that Shelley increasingly sees infancy as the prime example of this interaffective sphere, and the body of the infant as the preeminent site of these affecting and affected powers, where the imagination, history, and death make and leave their respective marks.

On the same page of the draft notebook, Shelley begins to draw, as if to conjure up the imagined scene of intermixing. It is a small drawing, a doodle really, a group of curlicue markings, just to the left of the lines depicting the "love of living weeds" and "among these tombs and ruins" (Figure 4.1). It appears to be the beginning of a canopy of trees or one of his many cloud formations. Either way, it serves to heighten the sense of atomization and interconnectedness.

Nancy Goslee suggests that the partial drawings or doodles in the notebooks are related to the text primarily in a sense-perceptual or kinetic way.[11] Yet just as the drawing threatens to blend into the words in the notebook, so too, nature feeds on the literal body of the child—recalling Jonson's "This grave partakes the fleshly birth; / Which cover lightly, gentle earth!"—while at the same instant the child's spirit feeds "on" the living weeds. As I say

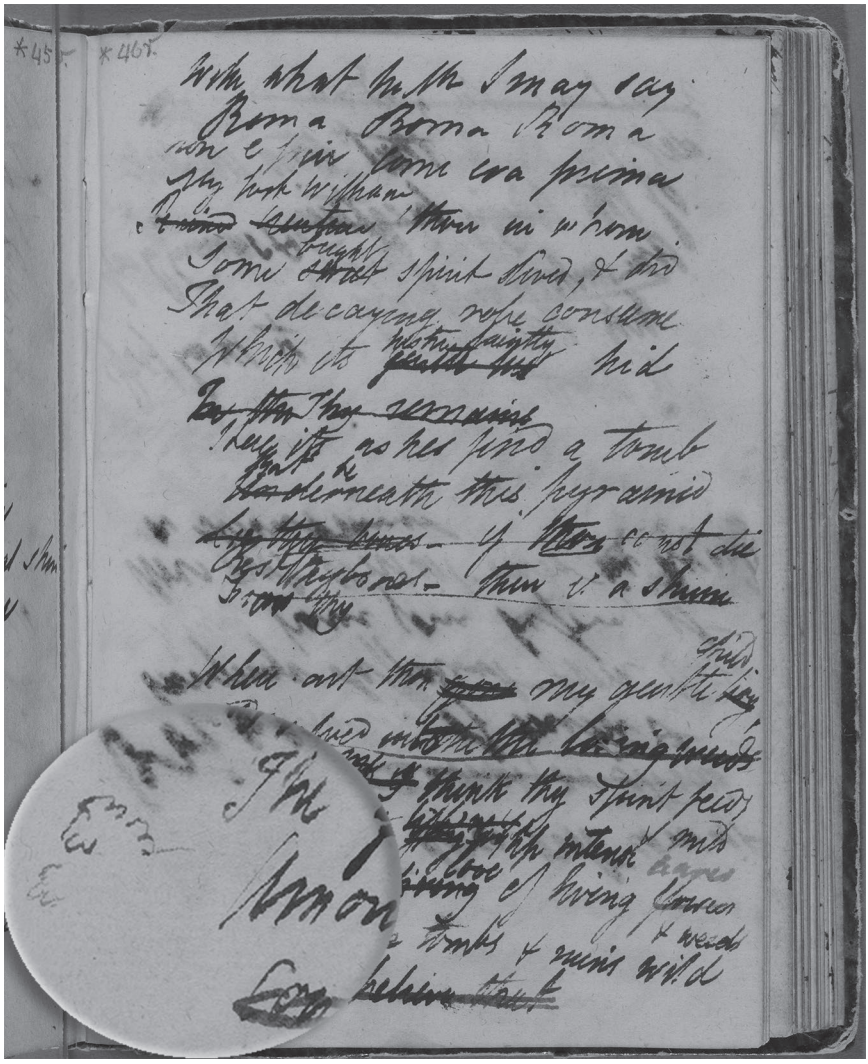

Figure 4.1 Detail from Shelley's notebook (Huntington notebook 2177). (With permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.)

earlier, it is almost as though Shelley cannot decide on which side the portion belongs, child or nature, death or life—or, just as likely, they are each a portion of the other, a flickering of figure and ground. While we will return to the theme of Shelley's sketching at the end of this chapter, this unfinished jotting somehow stands for this indecision and impasse.

A draft of "To Heaven" precedes the poem in the notebook. This seems appropriate, as though the dead child might be apostrophized in either his earthly or his heavenly form. In between "To Heaven" and the early draft of "To William, I" is a page with only a few lines scratched out, lines seven

to nine in the so-called final draft, presumably the first lines of the poem to be written:

> Thou art not—if a thing divine
> Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
> heart
> Is thy mother's ~~heart~~ and mine?
> grief

Shelley cancels heart and writes grief below. This also makes sense since the fair-copy book retains the word "grief." But Shelley then rewrites the word heart above the cancelled word. It is as though, in a protodeconstructive move, he wants both meanings to be operative.[12]

Shelley's uncompleted cloud or tree, the doubling of "grief" and "heart," as well as the ambiguous ending in the draft manuscript of "To William, I," serve as apt points of entry for this chapter. In what follows I juxtapose Shelley's poetry and poetics, his figurations of infancy and childhood, and contemporaneous discourses of animal magnetism. I read these discourses as intricately related especially insofar as they each foreground, thematically and formally, states of bodily dissolve. Music is a constant preoccupation, in part because Shelley evokes musical terminology so persistently, but also because each of these discourses (poetry, infancy, and magnetism) relies, in different ways, on complicated analogies to music. Orrin Wang writes about the pressure Shelley puts on temporal and spatial categories of experience through the "nonconceptual force of lyric's musicality." This musicality, especially when attenuated as it is in so many of Shelley's poems (sound seeming to subsume semantic sense), tends to complicate clear narrative progression.[13] I understand "lyric's musicality" to mean in this case not only poetry's nonsemantic or hypersemantic (rhythmic, tonal, paraverbal) elements, but also its alternative forms of logic and communicability. This book has argued throughout that at the same time as nineteenth-century poetic theories of infancy create openings for new configurations of personal and collective history, they also create blocks or problems for narratives of development and progress.

This chapter traces a related poetics of dissolve in Shelley, from nervous communications, to dissonant intervals, and, finally, to a theory of love. As Jerrold Hogle's canonical study suggests, Shelley offers us a relational theory of the imagination.[14] Attention to his thinking about infancy opens up new possibilities for understanding the constant negotiations that happen in Shelley's work between poem and poet, poet and world, reader and text, subject and object, and so on. These concepts and processes, essential for readers of Shelley, have important ethical and political implications, not just for the study of Shelley and for nineteenth-century poetics more generally, but also perhaps for our more daily and mundane moments of interconnectedness and dissolve.

4.1 Atmospherical Nerves

Shelley's interest in animal magnetism has been traced back at least as far as 1816.[15] For the purposes of this chapter, and in order to connect it to other romantic poets (Coleridge and Southey, for example) who took an interest in its theories, I want quickly to sketch out its beginnings in England. In 1788, J. B. De Mainauduc, a disciple of Mesmer, arrived in Bristol, England, and began to lecture on the therapeutic and spiritual benefits of animal magnetism. Animal magnetism argues for the existence of a vital fluid that courses through our bodies as well as for the "universal" connectedness of all animate and inanimate objects. According to contemporary accounts, De Mainauduc also began to magnetize patients, and to "cure" a great many of them. Although controversial, one of the earliest and most complete accounts of magnetism in England is written by George Winter (1801).[16] The line from Winter to Shelley is direct and easily documented. It runs through Robert Southey, who, in his "Letters from England," appropriated huge portions of Winter's text without attribution. Dawson and Leask convincingly argue that Shelley was familiar with Southey's text and therefore had a working knowledge of magnetism. Dawson claims that Winter's text is "uncomprehending": it seems equally accurate to say that Winter comprehends certain aspects of magnetic theory more completely or, at least, to have privileged some over others, specifically, those aspects that can be made to resonate with Priestly's "rational Christianity."

As such, Winter's text distances itself from the radical political connotations associated with continental discourses of magnetism and includes religious aphorisms that would not have been out of sync with Unitarian theology of the period.[17] There is no real mention of tubs of water as conductors or of people being magnetized in groups as there are in the French and German accounts.[18] Rather, Winter's text elides descriptions of somnambulism and crises and focuses instead on the interrelatedness of bodies.

> All animate and inanimate beings are attached to each other by similar atoms in their respective forms, and all these attachments are formed by atmospherical conductors or nerves.

Winter goes on to describe the human body as:

> composed of pipes and pores, beyond conception, and formed of particles, between which, the most minute, and extensive porosity is admitted; through which the passage of atoms and fluids of various denominations, circulate in every direction.[19]

Not only, says Winter, are we porous to our environments, we are literally permeable to each other. This permeability is further theorized in spatial terms. M. Caullet de Veaumore, in a text on Mesmer's aphorisms, writes that it is better to "almost" touch (i.e., "at a small distance"): "The contact

at a small distance is stronger because there exists an invisible fluid betwixt the hand or the conductor and the patient."[20] In other words, just as an instrument or a singer may sound better in a room with the proper acoustics, so too is there a precisely mediated and spatially calibrated distance for optimum psychic–physiological connectivity, all of which makes the magnetic cure more effective, if not possible in the first place.

Shelley's poetics and romantic aesthetics more generally share with animal magnetism an insistence on a finely tuned and intensely regulated proximity between individuals. This attention to the environment and its applicability for certain psychic, emotional, aesthetic, and therapeutic outcomes reproduces discourses of early childhood development just becoming prominent in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, the insistence on an intimate, prescribed proximity, as well as the whole set of choreographed movements that accompany it, looks back to Anglican church rites of baptism and communion, while at the same time looking forward to the psychoanalytic "setting" whereby the analyst sits behind the patient, who, lying down on the couch, cannot see the analyst.[21] Although psychoanalysis has in some sense moved away from classical (Freudian) technique, the practice of talking and listening, not to mention calibrating psychic, if not physical, distances, remains at its core.[22]

The commitment to listening and being attentive to environments is fundamental to Shelley's poetics as well as to the practice of magnetism, with a specific emphasis given to aural/tactile dimensions rather than merely visual ones.[23] In this sense, these related practices and forms of life seem consonant with a reformed aesthetics, away from Catholic spectacle toward individual and felt Protestant experience. The focus in each of these cases, although it is relational and horizontal rather than hierarchical, is also always mediated (by atmospherical conductors or nerves in magnetic theory, by sound and memory in Shelley's poetics, etc). In this sense, magnetic treatment seems to work along the lines of the Kantian sublime.[24] For Kant, although the experience of the aesthetic sublime feels immediate and bodily, it is in fact "indirect," happening primarily in the mind. Yet it is made possible by a "relation" between the mind and the senses.[25] In precisely this way, magnetism and psychoanalysis might be productively conceived as early and late forms of romantic aesthetics.[26]

Theorists of magnetism in the nineteenth century were well aware of the correspondences between their theories and poetic discourse and were not shy about exploiting them. Thus we see Colquhoun, in one of the most popular midcentury defenses of magnetism, refer directly to Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." He quotes the famous "burthen of mystery" passage so important to Keats, suggesting that to be laid "asleep in body and become a living mind" is tantamount to suspending "the ordinary functions of the animal organization."[27] That is, the poem's descriptions of subjective experience accurately describe phenomena occurring in both poetic and magnetic practices and—this is important—each is grounded in physiology, in the shared fact of our animal organization.[28]

Similar analogies were made between the performative roles of poet and magnetizer, for example, when William Hazlitt mentions the "chaunt" in the reading styles of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the sense in which it casts a "spell" on the listener:

> There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment.[29]

Hazlitt's phrasing is arch—"habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment." He means that the poet is in a position not merely to impress the auditor, but also to unduly influence her. Coleridge himself writes that, like the relation between magnetizer and the patient, the auditor of poetry lives "for a time within the dilated sphere of [the poet's] intellectual being."[30] The fact that this statement comes after a reference to "Christabel" is instructive, but not because of its representation within the poem of Geraldine's mesmeric gaze, a point that Fredrick Burwick usefully makes, but rather because of the poem's self-conscious and insistent rhythmic patterning—its balladic structure.[31] Coleridge informs the reader in the preface to "Christabel" that its rhythmic "variation," as well as its balladic regularity, are at all times "in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."[32]

Anne DeLong suggests that we might rethink the subject positions that underwrite the mesmerism—poetry comparison. She argues that rather than thinking of the poet in the position of the mesmerizer, a la Hazlitt, we might think of him or her in the position of the mesmerized. She further suggests that this mesmerized poet would "naturally" be coded feminine.[33] Indeed, women were considered more easily magnetized. Alfred Binet quotes the king's commission on animal magnetism in France, 1784: "Women have, as a rule, more mobile nerves; their imagination is more lively and more easily excited; it is readily impressed and aroused."[34] Yet if we extend DeLong's gender analogy even further, we arrive finally at the mother–baby dyad as the primary figure for the magnetized–magnetizer couple.

Given the complexity of Shelley's poetics, which, as we have seen, involves reciprocity across constantly shifting and dissolving subject and object boundaries, it seems to me that the psychoanalytic theorization of the infant–mother pairing allows us a way to think through the relation between magnetism and Shelley's poetics. Classical Freudian theorizations or even the object relations school (Klein, Winnicott, etc.) seems perhaps too schematized and structured. But there are recent theorists bringing together phenomenology and psychoanalytic theory. Consider, for example, Bracha Ettinger, Israeli artist and psychoanalyst. Her work builds on Guattari and Lacan, but moves in a feminist direction. Thus, her theory of subjectivity is based on the womb rather than the phallus. She calls this subjective field the matrixical borderspace.[35] This intermediate theoretical space is where

cultural exchange happens.[36] In it partial subjects rather than whole subjects interact and take turns being "I" or "not-I" for the other. It is not an intersubjective field but rather a trans-subjective and sub-subjective one: "sub-subjective" because the defenses and boundaries are less fixed and rigid; trans-subjective in order to designate the nonhierarchical and yet asymmetrical relation between partial subjects. Subjectivity on this model would be always in process, never complete, and never reducible to an origin or an original—it is always "co-emerging."[37]

This more fluid and constantly dissolving and emerging mode of relating seems completely consonant with Shelley's poetics. Ettinger's focus on the body and bodies interacting relates also to the role of the body in the composition and reception of the poem. I am suggesting that the chaunt in the recitation styles of Coleridge and Wordsworth might be read as encoded in the very meter of the poems themselves, and that the spell cast on readers and poets has this formal, extralinguistic dimension. Prosody, rhythm, meter—because they are experienced at the level of the body and are primarily auditory as opposed to visual, all have the capacity for what Coleridge calls "correspondence," and what Winter terms "the astonishing power of sympathy," and that we might think of as the capacity for dissolve.[38] On this reading, poem and poet, reader and poem, poet and world are involved in a process of constantly shifting and exchanging positions and roles, a trans-subjective and sub-subjective experience. Ettinger locates this shifting involvement, via a passage from Freud's 'Uncanny' essay, in our fantasies of intrauterine existence, that is, in our infant sensations.[39]

4.2 "Our Sensations as Children"

Shelley himself uses the infant as the exemplar of this trans-subjectivity. In fact, in the years this chapter addresses—1820 and 1821—nearly every time Shelley wants to ground an important political, social, or aesthetic claim in his prose he uses our experience as children and infants as evidence.[40]

> Let us recollect our sensations as children. What a distinct and intense apprehension had we of the world and of ourselves! Many of the circumstances of social life were then important to us which are now no longer so … We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt, from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass. There are some persons who, in this respect, are always children … [they] feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being …[41]

Shelley brilliantly uses chiasmus, the poetic trope of intertwining, in order to suggest the intertwining of the infant's dissolution: dissolved / universe ‖ universe / absorbed. Here is the same feedback loop of origin and cause that we observed in the elegy to William.[42] Atmospherical nerves connect us with the "surrounding universe," and it to us. He goes on to suggest that this pattern

of chiasmatic dissolution and absorption plays itself out at the level of identity and subjectivity.

> The words, *I, you, they,* are not signs of any actual difference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts thus indicated, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the one mind.

Shelley's use of the child and childhood is neither accidental nor capricious. In the passage cited previously and in his poetry and prose of the period more generally, the child functions as a unique and privileged signifier.[43]

As the previous chapters bear out, Shelley's claims for the child share an affinity with similar claims made by the generation of romantic poets immediately preceding him. Wordsworth, for example, claims in the Fenwick note to the "Intimations Ode" that in childhood he would commune "with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature."[44] Similarly, Coleridge claims that the poet's task is to "carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of Manhood."[45] Yet although Shelley begins with definitions and descriptions left to him by the earlier generation of poets, he then extends them into quite other realms.

Importantly, Shelley anticipates the critique of a nostalgic, sentimental view of infancy. In its place, he works to articulate and construct, in personal and phenomenological terms, a theory of the imagination as metonymic, paratactic, constantly shifting *and* inherently social. Whereas the Wordsworthian child is connected to itself and to nature, the child in Shelley is connected to other people. As he states in "A Defence," the imagination respects the similarities of things, whereas reason respects the differences.[46] In this "distinct and intense" apprehension of the world the child constantly seeks similitude in difference. That is, although the child/poet lives primarily in the realm of the imagination, as we have seen, Shelley insists on the social ground of the imagination.[47] The child, who recognizes that "*I, you,* [and] *they* … are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the one mind," is exemplary of the combinatory and collectivizing powers of the imagination, its creative and destructive powers of articulation and construction, not of its autogenesis.

Neither is Shelley advocating a return to solipsism or an escape from personal and political engagement. As Shelley's "Alastor," especially its anti-Wordsworthian preface, makes clear, he is intensely alive to the distinction that Arnold Clough would make later in the century between "childlikeness" and "childishness."[48] The latter would have been anathema to Shelley, an infantile narcissism and political regressivity that he (sometimes) associated with the Lake Poets and condemned unambiguously. The question for Shelley and, in some sense for the romantic more generally, is how to deploy the figure of the infant without getting caught in its already powerful ideological and gravitational pull.

To counter this, Shelley suggests that theorizations of infancy can easily take two tracks. They can lead toward interconnectedness and social being or into superstition and selfishness, what Shelley elsewhere terms "unreflecting infancy": "Selfishness is thus the offspring of ignorance and mistake; it is the portion of unreflecting infancy, and savage solitude." He continues:

> Thus an infant, a savage, and a solitary beast is selfish, because its mind is incapable of receiving an accurate intimation of the nature of pain as existing in beings resembling itself.[49]

This distinction is extremely important. It is not enough to embrace one's "inner child." This is bad Wordsworthianism and leads one into the mire of "unreflecting infancy." Reflection for Shelley involves the external as well as the internal. Mere internal reflection results in a mechanistic narcissism. Mere external reflection is chaos and chintz; representation, in and of itself, is empty and dead, and the Platonic "music of the spheres" is simply a projection of the self into the heavens.[50] Consider, for example, the boy depicted in Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," a poem about which I will have more to say in a moment. At the beginning of the poem, the boy seeks for "ghosts" and lives in a constant state of excited fear. Intellectual beauty, the goal and subject of the poem, answers to the imagination, not reason. As such, it is encountered outside the self. Yet, as with all creative and destructive powers in Shelley's thought, it collaborates in the self's continual constitution. Therefore, it is only when the shadow of intellectual beauty falls on him that the speaker learns to "fear himself [not ghosts], and love all human kind." He learns, in other words, to reflect.

Despite its pernicious effects, unreflecting infancy in no way parallels original sin. It is better, perhaps, to think of it as an ideology of sameness projected backward from the perspective of the adult. Even infancy for Shelley can be "habitual," leading to what Hogle calls "'mechanically' forced" thought-associations.[51] Over and against original sin, Shelley, a deep reader of Rousseau, argues that we are born in a state of purity and grace, even of natural health. As he writes in "A Vindication of a Natural Diet," "young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit to the flesh of animals" until their digestive organs are gradually depraved by the introduction of meat and alcohol.[52] What is true for the individual (personal) body is true for the social (political) body as well:

> Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly, suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain.[53]

Here we can feel the full force of Shelley's utopian project. It intervenes at the level of the body as well as at the level of sociality and polity. Our responses

are innately harmonious, and can be further developed, as he writes in "A Defence of Poetry," through "internal (~~instinctual~~) adjustments." The nature of all of these developments, helpful and harmful, is social. Although we are born (as individuals) naturally responsive, it seems that society and culture deaden that responsiveness. It is only when we neglect the internal and instinctive imperative to harmonize with our community and surroundings, to sound out our environments even if the resulting song more closely resembles a caterwaul than a sonata, that we begin to get in trouble. These lines from "Episychidion" testify to Shelley's commitment to a theory of sympathetic vibration:

> We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
> For one another, though dissimilar;
> Such difference without discord, as can make
> Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
> As trembling leaves in a continuous air? (142–146)

The initial caesura sets up a pattern of falling, a cadence ("We—are we not formed, as notes of music are"), a stopping and starting, to which the ensuing caesurae and enjambments respond. "Difference without discord" suggests a utopian harmony, an evolving tonal structure, which is mirrored in a semblance of Old English alliterative meter (sweetest sounds / spirits shake). The figure of the "trembling leaves," where the word "leaves" functions as a noun and a verb, recalls the doubled nature of a note that is singular yet part of a chord. Following this harmonic and marital logic back to "My Lost William," it hardly matters if William Shelley is a portion of nature or nature a portion of him. Like the relation of father and son, each sounds and is resounded in the other.

4.3 Refiguring the Lyre

Music and magnetism are powerful figures for reanimation and anamnesis for Shelley because they are experienced and theorized as at once external and internal to the self. In this vein and famously, Shelley begins "A Defence of Poetry" by revising and extending Coleridge's analogy of poetic imagination and music. In "Eolian Harp," Coleridge figures spirit as an "intellectual" breeze, that is, as an external figure of reason that forms the individual in particular and universal ways. The body/mind is an "indolent and passive" receptor, across which blows, "plastic and vast," an intellectual spirit, which acts as a rational corrective.[54]

In Coleridge's formulation the imagination = the body = the harp. Opposed to this is its antithesis: reason = the wind = inspiration/agency. For both Coleridge and Shelley, the body/mind is responsive, in flux and constant motion. The passivity that Coleridge ascribes to it is a moral passivity (that is, indolence), not a mark of inactivity.[55] For Shelley, on the

other hand, the movements of the body/mind are neither good nor bad. In fact, Shelley reverses Coleridge's schema so that reason is on the side of this purely instrumental and instinctual body/mind, and the imagination is the external and active element, a spiritual and animating force that moves across and through us, thus resulting in poetry and song.

In Shelley, in other words, reason = body = instrument, which opposes imagination, wind, and agency. He further grounds and historicizes this process, arguing that poetry is connate with the origin of man, and is—"in a general sense"—"the expression of the imagination."[56] Reason is the passive and imagination the active force. Yet, Shelley understands that the impetus for creation comes from both internal and external impressions.[57] In this way, while Shelley locates the so-called origin of poetry as external to human reason, and the origin of human communication as always outside the delimited sphere of our intellect, he suggests reciprocity between the inside and outside of consciousness. Yet even at this introductory stage in Shelley's thinking, we come to a paradox. Shelley, the atheist, believes that the uniquely agential (creative, revolutionary) force (the imagination) is external to the human, and, this is potentially the more radical factor; it lies outside the realm of reason.

Since, for nearly every enlightenment philosopher, language is what separates us from the animals, the aspect of unreason that Shelley places at the heart of the most original linguistic act (i.e., poetry) suggests that something other than reason lies at the core of human difference and subjectivity. Rousseau and Herder had similarly claimed poetry as the earliest and most foundational speech act. But Shelley goes farther, claiming that the infant is the primordial figure for the poet. As such, it bears scrutiny that he initially writes and cancels the word "nativeal" ("imagination is 'nativeal' with the origin of man"), replacing it with "connate." The apparent neologism of nativeal is striking in that it conjures images of infancy and birthing as well as aboriginality. It also points forward to Arendt's theory of natality, touched on in my introduction and important to the larger arguments of this book.

As we have seen, for Shelley, in positive and negative ways, the infant and the savage (precursors no doubt to the id) are ideationally linked. Thus human infants, poets, animals, and savages are all closely related.[58] He goes on to write of the musical responsiveness of all sentient bodies—humans certainly but animals perhaps—saying that they produce "not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them," a claim that I will return to shortly. In the Bodleian manuscript he uses the word "instinctive" rather than "internal" to describe the adjustments.[59] I think that this cancellation makes it clearer that, for Shelley, ordinary physiological responsiveness happens below the level of conscious agency.[60] As Shelley writes, poetry is "not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind."[61] And although infancy is not the sole province of the imagination, it does seem to delimit or encircle poetic power in a unique way, identifying it with a space of compulsive repetition, call and response.

> A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflection of tone and every gesture will bear exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind has died away, so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause.[62]

Notice that Shelley does not say that the child repeats words. Notice also that it repeats motions as well as sounds. The child in this scenario is not so much prelingual as paraverbal. This distinction is crucial. Shelley does not value infancy as an idealized space outside of or prior to language (*enfans*); rather, for Shelley, the infant has not yet lost its connection with and attunement to modes of communication and aspects of language that are hyper- or subsemantic. It is musical, or perhaps it is better to say it *is* music insofar as it connects primarily through sound, which, while communicative, has not yet been fully separated into signifier and signified.

The connection between the poet and music (from the Greek *mousa* for muse) is essential for Shelley, as it is for all poets. And yet Shelley's conception cannot be reduced to the "music of the spheres," whereby an exact and mathematical order in the universe corresponds to an exact and reciprocal order in the human. Shelley's theory of the imagination places asymmetry and absence rather than fullness at the heart of human desire. Therefore, although Shelley again and again takes up Coleridge's figure of the lyre or the lute as a metaphor for the poet's receptive and productive powers, he does so only to reverse the normative power relations so as to radically redefine and relocate power as something no longer hierarchical but always just out of reach.[63] Here Shelley borrows a figure from Coleridge's "Nightingale," a poem that also hinges importantly on the figure of the infant:

> A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why.[64]

Shelley initially writes, in a Keatsean manner, that "a poet is a sleeping man arrayed in a royal mantle."[65] But a sleeping man is in no real relation to any actual other. So he cancels this and tries again:

> a poet is as a ~~person child who walks through~~ nightingale who sits in darkness, & sings to ~~delight~~ cheer ~~fill~~ his own solitude with ~~sweet~~ notes, & his auditors are as men ~~who are~~ unconsciously entranced by ~~his~~ the melody of ~~the~~ an unseen ~~(~~) lutanist ~~bird &~~ feel that they are moved & softened; yet know not why.[66]

Notice first how Shelley tries on several similes (sleeper, person, child) before finally settling on the bird. Notice too how Shelley ideationally and grammatically opposes the poet to the reader in a nearly identical way as he had earlier opposed the infant to the sounds that moved and motivated him, the so-called "corresponding antitype." In fact, the poet is rarely mentioned in "A Defence" without a corresponding mention of the auditor or reader, usually described in some mode or another of responsiveness, and usually with some ambiguity as to the source of the inspiring sound. This ambiguity is central to grasping Shelley's poetics. The other we confront in an ethical encounter such as the reading of a poem is not easily assimilated into our psychic economy. We need each other, Shelley often warily admits. But people are often terrifying—not merely their ethnic, cultural, or religious otherness, but also their needs, desires, demands, and less explicable differences.

4.4 "Otherwise Than in the Lyre"

Readers of romanticism are familiar with claims concerning the permeability of subject/object boundaries; readers of Shelley further recognize that this porosity forms the basis for his politics. Winter and De Mainauduc's texts make it equally clear that magnetism relies on a related permeability between the magnetizer and the patient.[67] For these thinkers, we are interconnected not only with other people, but also with everything, because as Spinoza's ontology suggests, we are composed of the same raw material. Here, again, is De Mainauduc:

> The only essential difference between the particles which are employed in the formation of bodies, and those which are not, is, that such as are moulded into forms, are altered in their qualities by action, re-action, and heat; whilst the detached particles freely pass in every direction …[68]

While every sense—sight, hearing, touch—can mediate these exchanges, sound has a specific role in magnetic theory. De Mainauduc, for example, describes the process whereby atmospherical nerves (external) and bodily nerves are related directly through the medium of sound:

> Sound is the general term for a percussion of the atmosphere, and the nerves of Sound are a general division of those from every other set of nerves in the universe … Consequently, what affects that part of the nerve which is atmospherical, must also affect that which we are accustomed to consider as the nerves of the body. Thus, the atmospherical nerves of Sound are parts of the auditory nerves, or nerves of hearing, in Man.[69]

De Mainauduc offers us a continuous and musical theory of interconnectedness, referring to nerves as "strings of sensibility."[70] Winter also suggests

that "animate and inanimate beings" are attached via atmospherical conductors or nerves. As with musical instruments, tension, length, and diameter have important consequences:

> [P]lace two musical instruments perfectly in unison, one at each end of the room, and whatever is struck on one will be reported by the other. If the key of A be touched on one instrument, the string of A will vibrate on the other; if B be touched on one instrument, the other instrument will also vibrate B, and other similar notes *only* will be answered.[71]

We might call this theory of interrelatedness imitative or sympathetic. If A is sounded, A answers. If B is sounded, B repeats

Shelley vacillates between this imitative mode of interconnectedness and a more radical, harmonic, and responsive mode. He begins "A Defence" by articulating a sympathetic relation, completely consonant with Coleridge's claims in "Eolian Harp." But as the passage continues Shelley suggests a deeper, more complicated and "harmonic" strain:

> But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them.[72]

Abrams famously explores this metaphor in *The Mirror and the Lamp*. But whereas Abrams exposes the philosophical power of music as a trope for the romantics, I hope to demonstrate more specifically the responsive and cocreative dimension in Shelley's poetics, especially the automatic or "instinctive" character of the poet's responses to external and internal stimuli.

To adjust and harmonize means: to listen (sound) and respond to a certain rhythm (movement); to make oneself vulnerable and responsive; and, finally, to unconsciously establish an interval—a spatiotemporal relation. Aside from the important notion of harmony, Shelley places insistence on inner and outer responsiveness. Shelley holds open the possibility that all sentient beings construct harmonies as well as melodies. This reciprocity would seem to undo the necessity to establish or locate an original sound or motion. Causation is thus undone. It does not matter whether the sound or motion bears the name of "wind," "nature," "spirit," "mother," "lover," or "God." Nor does it necessarily follow that one thing is "prior" to another. In other words, since all sentient beings are interconnected in Shelley's poetics, a tape loop effect occurs in which the concept of an "original" sound or motion becomes as unthinkable as it is undecidable.

In an unpublished section of "A Defence," to which I return at the end of the chapter, Shelley uses the figure of the chain as a way to link, in a spatiotemporal manner, one "sound or motion" to the other. The child/poet acts as

a harmonizing instrument, altering its song in relation to this other presence, which in turn had altered its song, and so on and so on in an endless *mis en abyme*. The draft version of "A Defence" is even more radically democratic in this regard:

> And ~~sing or [speak], or murmur, or? touch? itself~~
> in ~~an exact~~ & determined proportion of sound[73]

Shelley lists the full range of expressive responses—song, speech, nonverbal utterance, touch. Following Laplanche, we might term these communications "messages."[74] Shelley is clear that harmonization (responsiveness) is not a mimetic act—if you play a "D" note, my "internal adjustment" (if we were in a major key of a Western, well-tempered scale) would call for an "A" or an "F#"—not a unison "D." Yet the proportion and mode (song, speech, touch, etc.) of the response are "determined" by an earlier, causal impetus (a "determined proportion of sound"). Therefore, the range of communicative and sensual possibilities (while still maintaining the name of poetry, even if not in the "restrictive sense") would be quite open—touch, song, murmuring, affect, speech.[75] So leaving aside for a moment the problem of Shelley's transferential style, the problem of determining causation then is twofold—not only might we be compelled to respond contrapuntally—that is, to produce a harmony—to the earlier impetus, but we might also be compelled to respond in an entirely different manner or medium. Thus, we get a shifting set of possible responses in Shelley's harmonic theory, a full chromatic spectrum rather than a merely diatonic mode. Here, again, this makes the issue of identifying an origin or "key" that much more difficult, a matter of genre as well as style.

So whereas the Platonic "music of the spheres" is primarily a melodic and mimetic, the music of infancy, of Shelley's dissolve, is relational, harmonic, and reverberative. As such, much of its force lies beyond the reach of linguistic translatability. As Shelley notes in his "Defence," sound and noise do communicate, but they do so more ambiguously and fitfully than so-called prosaic speech. Just as Shelley slid away from his initial impulse to use the child as a figure for the poet ("a poet is as a ~~person child who walks through~~") to the more conventional figure of the nightingale, here too he seems to slide away from claims about the cocreative powers of poetry back toward the imitative or determined. In the original draft manuscript of "A Defence," Shelley writes that

> ~~a refinement & extension of sentiment, must have [sprung f] been propagated from the mind of the auditor as circles from its centre; concentric to its air their~~ that ~~vast circumference,~~ the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined & and enlarged by a sympathy with such great & lovely emotions …[76]

The cancelled lines suggest a direct if displaced connection to the past—he's writing of the effect of Homer on his readers—through a kind of

temporal or historical vibration: "*extension* of sentiment … propagated from the mind of the auditor …" These claims recall both magnetists' claims for a kind of atmospheric connection between patient and magnetizer as well as Coleridge's claim for the musical/auditory (prosodic) power of poetry over its hearers. Following Shelley's revisions, the next line reads in the original manuscript: "refined & and enlarged by a sympathy with such great & lovely *emotions*"; the intermediate fair copy draft replaces "emotions" with "*creations*"; the final draft reads, "great and lovely *impersonations*." On the one hand, we can read this as a slide from affectivity to creativity to mere mimesis. On the other, we can think along with Shelley about what it might mean to "impersonate," that is, to read "impersonate" closer to the Latin, and still available, definition of "incorporate."

To respond from the "principle within us" that "acts otherwise than in the lyre," to act in concert or harmony, might mean then to "emote," to "create," or to "impersonate." If what one is responding to is "the awful shadow of some unseen power," then indeed what may result are radically dissonant and wild (psychic, emotional, and verse) intervals or voicings. Consider, for example, stanza one of "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty":

> The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats though unseen among us; visiting
> This various world with as inconstant wing
> As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;
> Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
> It visits with inconstant glance
> Each human heart and countenance;
> Like hues and harmonies of evening,
> Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
> Like memory of music fled,
> Like aught that for its grace may be
> Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

The poem is organized around a tension between what is seen and what is not. This tension is doubled in the form of the poem, which, although the rhyme scheme stays consistent throughout, sets up metrical expectations that Shelley explodes at strategic places in the verse. The reader is immediately thrust into an alternation between solidity and weightlessness, or, as I suggest in the next section, "suspension." "Unseen" is repeated in the second line in order to reinforce the materiality of the power and its shadow—only something with mass can "float." But the repetition also creates a vertigo in the reader, not merely because of the uncanniness of the echo, but also because the late caesura in line two ("visiting") creates a "floating" feeling, in part because of the interruption of the line and also because the line ends on a double feminine rhyme (visiting = X – –). Deepening the sense

of uncanny is the difficult fact that it is very hard to know how to stress "unseen"—I read it as a spondee, which makes the line hypermetric; yet its second syllable seems to receive a strong stress in line one and a weaker one in line two, suggesting that not all forms of invisibility are the same. Finally, the uncanny feeling of "unseen" in these first two lines is partly a chiasmatic effect. The unseen in the first line refers (obviously) to "power." But the unseen in the second line refers all the way back to "awful shadow." In other words, just when the poem seemed to be floating and ungrounded, the figure of chiasmus (Shadow / unseen—unseen / power) crosses, clasps, connects and stabilizes the lines.

The reader clings to this stability given the fact that Shelley sets up an unstable, "awful" cadence in the first two lines. Line three wavers a bit with a pyrrhic ("with as"). Line four is the first regularly iambic line. The creeping and mechanistic repetition of a power moving from "flower" to "flower" recalls Shelley's fragment "To William," although in that poem it is the spirit of the dead boy (again, a figure that I believe we should read as embodied and corporeal even in death) that moves through the imagined natural scene, mixing death and life. The identical repetition of "flower" reinforces the uncanniness even as the poem's rhythms work to subdue the uncanny aspect, reproducing a steady iambic cadence ("creep from flower to flower"). The repetition of sliding signifiers (failed similes)—like hues / like clouds / like memory / like aught—repeat on the tropological level Shelley's difficulties in naming an origin or source of the power. They would also seem to support something deeply traumatic and extralingual: the "inconstant glance" of power, mirroring but not repeating the "inconstant wing" of earlier in the stanza.

The problem of finding unity in difference informs the form of the final line of the stanza as well: "Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery." This is both a formal recognition of difference and sameness in the figure of polyptoton (different forms of the same word—dear/dearer), as well as an echo of Wordsworth's turn to his sister at the close of "Tintern Abbey" ("More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!"). Tellingly, most of the similes are metrically regular except for "like memory of music fled." The line appears catalectic. The question centers on whether "memory" is stressed X - - or X – X: the music of the line pulls for the latter (which is more regular); the speech situation (and colloquial speech) pulls for the former (which is oddly gapped as Shelley, like Wordsworth before him, experimented with the Pindaric ode form—a trimeter line in the middle of a verse that swings from pentameter to tetrameter). Of course it could also be sounded as a syncope, as "mem-ries." There is a similar uncertainty in "harmonies," which is two lines up and forms an internal rhyme relation with "memory," and is in an ideational rhyme relationship to "music." The point I am trying to stress is that music structures the verse thematically, while it both tempers it (as cadence) and troubles it (as metrical ambiguity).

4.5 Rhythm, Suspension, Dissolve

The question Shelley asks himself and us, over and over, is how to find and maintain harmony—not just how to respond without becoming politically submissive or parroting, but also how to improvise so as to avoid mechanistic repetition and the deadness of conformity and univocality. In "Essay on Love," Shelley's basic need for reciprocity is expressed as the desire that "another's nerves should vibrate to our own."[77] Shelly Trower has pointed out how romantic era poetic discourse appropriated language of vibration and association in order to imagine "a sonorous model for the self."[78] As we have seen, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a language of vibratory responsiveness emerged not only from scientific texts, but also from texts on aesthetics. The interplay between these discourses is evident in a late eighteenth-century text on acoustic theory by Matthew Young. In a section called "sympathetic vibrations" he writes:

> Let … two strings AB, CD be of equal diameter, length, and tension; and let one of them AB be struck, so as to produce a forcible tone; the other CD will be so agitated by the pulses of the air, as to produce a tone; which consequently will be in unison with the former.[79]

The pulses of the air, like the "hues and harmonies" in Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," act as mediating agents. They constitute, as it were, the "unseen power" of sound. Yet notice that the strings need to be identical in order to produce this unison effect, "of equal diameter, length, and tension." Shelley similarly argues in "Essay on Love" that "there is something within us which, from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness."[80] Later in his essay, Young anticipates Shelley's claims in "A Defence," noting that when the strings are of different diameter, length, or tension there is still a responsive tone created on the "quiescent" instrument, but the sound produced is a (dissonant or consonant) harmony.[81]

Although Shelley seems deeply ambivalent about difference, he does provide us with a model of two instruments, rather than, as in Coleridge, only one. In "Essay on Love," alongside his claims that we thirst after our own likeness, Shelley writes that we desire our "anti-type," someone "with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations of our own." This ambivalence—desiring both sameness and difference, comfort and risk, even life and death—is mirrored in the lines from "The Triumph of Life," "as one between desire and shame / suspended …" Suspension, a concept crucial to Paul de Man's reading of Shelley's disfigurement, holds us aloft as if mesmerized. Anne McCarthy, developing Jacques Derrida's concept of suspension, calls it a "practice of awareness."[82] She elsewhere connects suspension to Kantian aesthetics and Coleridge's suspension of

disbelief, finally, in the same essay, connecting it as well to the "charming" suspension of the infant in Coleridge's "Nightingale."[83]

Suspension also suggests musical figuration. A suspended chord is a hybrid, a bridge between two chords, usually meant to resolve to the tonic. To move between the two chords requires the ability to tolerate suspension and dissonance. It requires a kind of rhythm. Rhythm, from the Greek *rhythmos,* to measure but also to flow, is a founding principle of animal magnetism—namely, that the free flow of energy throughout the body simply is health. As de Mainauduc writes, "solidity is action destroyed … solidity prevented is animal life."[84] Similarly, Shelley makes rhythm the basis for a healthy life and society.

Shelley's desire for "difference without discord" (dis-chord) in "Episychidion" revises Coleridge's famous passage in "Eolian Harp" ("But what if all of animated nature be / but organic harps diversely framed") so that the mind of God (the "intellectual breeze") is no longer needed. Or perhaps it is better to say that Shelley makes God synonymous with the "we" that begins my quotation ("We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,"—not a unity as it is in Coleridge, but rather a multiplicity, "spirits" in the plural, connected in "continuous air," not vertical but horizontal. Just as he does at the end of "Mont Blanc," the pluralist in Shelley reappears. And in this sense, despite his ambivalence, homogeny seems at odds with Shelley's musicality. We need each other, are formed for each other, and can only make music in response to another's sound:

> It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre.[85]

The draft from the Bodleian notebook is even more illuminating and strange:

> It is as if the lute was endowed with the ~~at play~~ power of accommodating its chords to the ~~guitar~~ of the musician.[86]
> motions

"At play" of course suggests the ludic aspect, the playfulness of the child. Yet "at play power" suggests an inherent and instinctive power, an instinctually rhythmic tendency in the human.

As Shelley writes in "An Essay on Christianity," this at-play-power is available to us only to the degree that we remain open to our experience and "examine and … estimate every imagination." Then, says Shelley, we will have seen God. It turns out of course that for Shelley God is the power "by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended."[87] This state of suspension, of being held, which children innately experience and poets and philosophers actively seek, is freely given like the atmosphere. Yet we need to orient ourselves toward this

power: "a being of pure and gentle habits will not fail in every thought, in every object of every thought, to be aware of benignant visitings from the invisible energies by which he is surrounded." Through our engagements with and openness to the world, we are instinctually open to and engaged with others. In this way are we able to be "harmonized by [our] own will to so exquisite [a] consentaneity of powers."[88]

Recent conceptualizations of rhythm and suspension in Shelley's verse suggest a connection between philosophical and poetic considerations of rhythm and motion. In an essay on Gilles Deleuze and Shelley, for example, Robert Mitchell stages a Deleuzian reading of "Mont Blanc." Mitchell claims that the narrator assumes a state of openness, a kind of "suspended animation." This openness positions the poem to access, on the level of feeling and form, the nature of power that lies beyond rational cognition.

> It is within this state of suspended animation—that is, a state in which the narrator's faculties of knowing and desiring are placed in abeyance—that the specificity and complexity of the faculty of feeling can be best revealed. More specifically, it is from this perspective of trance that the narrator is able to sense the differentials that connect living beings with an embodied external world.[89]

"Differential" is one of Deleuze's key concepts. As part of his attack on representation (for Deleuze, representation—his word for mechanistic and melancholic repetition—is always the enemy), Deleuze argues that there is a form of sensual connectedness prior to or just below conceptualization.[90] It is on this level that Shelley's narrator experiences the power of Mont Blanc. Not only do Deleuze's ontology and Shelley's aesthetics rely on figurations of human infancy (for Deleuze this involves our "becoming infant"), but they also resonate deeply with many of the permutations of mesmeric discourse I have been discussing in this chapter, once again a bodily and leveling account of experience offsetting the conceptual and psychical account.[91]

Shelley's intuition of interconnectedness cuts across disciplinary and period boundaries, and, through the topos of the responsive infant/poet, anticipates the psychoanalytic concept of transference, whereby earlier conflicts are worked through with the analyst within a precisely calibrated and ritualized setting.[92] The unique time and space of the poetic encounter in Shelley—the breakneck metrics of "Ode to the West Wind" or "To a Sky-Lark" combined with the time it takes for the reader to unpack the images and concepts, to give just one, primarily phenomenological example—produce for the reader a sense of suspension, alienation, and dissociation.[93] How else to describe the extreme flicker between self-abnegation and externalized destruction of lines such as Shelley's hyperbolic and infantile "Be thou me" in the final canto of "Ode to the West Wind"?[94]

4.6 "The Great Secret of Morals Is Love"

So, finally, what is it that connects us and holds us in suspension? Ricardo Lombardi, writing about the musical connection between the analyst and analysand, writes:

> The advantage of music [as a mode of communication between analyst and patient] is that it is equally linked to the world of subjective sensation and to that of external reality, since it is part of complex cultural system: hence it is an important transitional phenomenon (Winnicott 1951) that can keep the internal and external worlds connected.[95]

For Shelley, the link "to the world of subjective sensation and to that of external reality" makes possible not only an "aesthetic, mediated, and vibratory dimension" but also an ethical one:

> The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action or person, not our own.[96]

Our "natural passions," in other words, are shared, communal passions, obtained only through "a going out of our own nature." Shelley goes on to claim:

> A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own.[97]

The definitional torsion of "greatly good" captures the paradoxical opening (in order not to be subjected, one must subject oneself to the "other") that Shelley believes is essential for a healthy polis and poetics. Through tremendous effort, we seek to be connected with the world, suspended in its musical flux, rather than to be merely distinguished; through a "great" effort to harmonize, to go out of our nature, we strive to be good. Again, I argue against a Platonic reading of these lines. Shelley does not say that we should strive greatly to achieve the "good" in some abstract, philosophical sense. It is rather that we strive simply to *be* good, not through contemplation but rather through openness, rhythmicity, and suspension—processes, that is, of attunement and interconnectedness: "the good which exists in the relation subsisting, first between existence and perception and secondly between perception and expression."[98] Shelley imagines the true and beautiful as that which is communed with, communicated by the poet as a "relation borne by perception to existence."[99] Theorists of magnetism used similar rhetoric to describe their work. Edwin Lee, for example, writing in 1866, claims that magnetism creates the possibility for a sympathetic "Community of Sensation."[100]

Shelley left the following prose fragment in the same notebook as "A Defence," inferring a chain of poetic inspiration, a community linked together by an unseen force:

> For a divine power moves you, as that of the magnet; which not only can draw iron rings to itself but can endow them with a similar power of attraction to draw other rings, until a long chain of rings is attached to each other; and all is attached to the stone itself.—Thus a poem, being itself divinely inspired, communicates this inspiration to others, until a long chain is made, every link of which is the human spirit, & the first ~~link~~ of which is attached to that of the poet.[101]

Just as a magnetizer must orient himself or herself toward some higher purpose in order to affect the magnetic cure, so too must the poet surrender to the divine spirits. Thus a certain "thirdness" or overlap between subjects appears.[102] The fragment continues to suggest a kind of rational madness at the heart of this movement—"as the Corybants dance in being mad; so poets being mad make those beautiful poems & possessed with the divinity bacchanalize so soon as the[y] arrive at harmony and rhythm"—poetry as a form of divine, and musical, possession.[103]

To say we are possessed means that to some extent we are dispossessed of the self. Shelley understood this as a necessary "going out of oneself." And while there is an important difference between madness and creative self-negation, perhaps the difference is not as clear-cut as we might wish. In a late essay, Shelley writes that "thoughts, or ideas, or notions, call them what you will, differ from each other, not in kind but in force." He goes on to suggest that so-called "*real or external objects*" (italics in original) are no different "in kind" than "hallucinations, dreams, and the ideas of madness."[104] Shelley argues that we are all caught up in the world, and exist on a spectrum of moral virtue rather than on a ladder.

To consider the musicality of infancy as politics as well as a theory of composition and reception requires that we rethink our romantic relation to authority and authorship, as well as to the origin of the subject. Shelley's father-in-law, William Godwin, argued that as subjects we are in a state of "perpetual flux." As such, each of us becomes a portion of the poem, but also perhaps a portion of the problem. Sometimes we are politically "represented"; at other times, we are present within the polis and the body politic, a harmonic and rhythmic force, or as Shelley would have it, a tempestuous bursting through. We are not one or the other of these options. We are both. On the same notebook page as one draft of the poem addressed to William but turned upside down, Shelley scribbled the following lines.

> Originality does not consist
> ~~In words & names, or stories~~
> or combinations of metre &

language different from those
which have gone before, it
does not consist only in avoid[ing]
a resemblance.[105]

A complicated statement on our relation to the future and the past, this fragment suggests an improvisational poetics, one that does not merely reproduce or shy away from the possibility of contingent, accidental, or strategic resemblance. It imagines us loosely linked together, responding like the infant at the opening of Shelley's "A Defence" for pleasure and in order to retain some "consciousness of the cause" of pleasure. Thus, originality may itself be a kind of suspension. Like the magnetizer and her patient, like the poet and his reader, like little William in the old Protestant graveyard in Rome, perhaps even like Shelley himself, we are caught between our longing for resemblance and our desire to avoid it, destined to become a portion of that on which our spirit feeds.

Notes

1. Winter, George, and Jean Boniot De Mainauduc. *Animal Magnetism: History of, Its Origin …* (Bristol; London: Printed by George Routh. Sold by E. Newberry, 1801), 37.
2. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 135.
3. Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Shelley's Prose; Or, The Trumpet of a Prophecy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 293.
4. Mary Quinn suggests "between spring 1819 and spring 1820," Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Volume IV*. Edited by Mary A. Quinn. Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics (New York: Garland Pub., 1990), xxxii.
5. Ibid., 300–305.
6. Forman intriguingly suggests that the final line might have read something like "a portion of the life that was," Shelley, Percy Bysshe, H. Buxton Forman, and William K Bixby. *Note Books of Percy Bysshe Shelley, from the Originals in the Library of W. K. Bixby, Deciphered, Transcribed, and Ed.* (Boston: Printed for members of the Bibliophile Society, 1911), 154.
7. Shelley, Percy Bysshe, and George Edward Woodberry. *The Shelley Note-Book in the Harvard College Library: Reproduced with Notes and a Postscript* (Cambridge, MA: John Barnard Associates, 1929), 92–93.
8. A letter written shortly after William's death gives us a window into Shelley's conception of death: "By the skill of the physician he was once reanimated after the process of death had actually commenced, and he lived four days after that time. This was, as you may think, a terrible reprieve …" Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Containing Material Never Before Collected* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1912), vol. 2, 701.
9. "Lines Written in Early Spring": "The budding twigs spread out their fan / To catch the breezy air / And I must think, do all I can / That there was pleasure there."

10. Pyle, Forest. *The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 96; see also Paul Hamilton on Shelley's materialism, Hamilton, Paul. "Poetics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* Edited by Michael O'Neill, Tony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 177–192.
11. "[T]hese drawings keep the ink flowing as the poet works out lines in his head. The process of drawing is a kinetic action which parallels the impulses and pulses of the poetry," Goslee, Nancy Moore. "Shelley at Play: A Study of Sketch and Text in His Prometheus Notebooks." *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 48, no. 3 (Summer 1985), 214.
12. Forman suggests that Shelley may have meant to keep "heart": "[I]t is doubtful whether Mary's preference for *grief* is fully justified," *Notebooks of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* 153; recent scholarship on Emily Dickinson is instructive in this regard. Editions of her work have begun to appear in which multiple lexical options are presented. By this I mean that if Dickinson leaves two words in the manuscript side by side (the "right" word presumably to be decided later) editors are leaving both options equally open for readers; Shelley scholars have likewise attempted to address the issue of how to present the "fragment poems" from his notebooks: Bradshaw, Michael. "Reading as Flight: Fragment Poems from Shelley's Notebooks." In *The Unfamiliar Shelley*, edited by Timothy Webb and Alan M. Weinberg, 21–40. (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).
13. Wang, Orrin Nan Chung. *Romantic Sobriety: Sensation, Revolution, Commodification, History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 170; see also Tilottama Rajan on the "autonarration" of "Alastor," *Romantic Narrative: Shelley, Hays, Godwin, Wollstonecraft* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 3–9.
14. Hogle, Jerrold E. *Shelley's Process: Radical Transference and the Development of His Major Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 65–67.
15. Leask, Nigel. "Shelley's 'Magnetic Ladies': Romantic Mesmerism and the Politics of the Body." In *Beyond Romanticism: New Approaches to Texts and Contexts, 1780–1832.* Edited by Stephen Copley and John Whale, 53–78. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991).
16. George Winter, *Animal Magnetism …*; Southey, Robert. *Letters from England: By Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella. Translated from the Spanish. Vol. II.* (London: Longman [u.a.], 1814), 304–330. Although it is superfluous to this chapter, there is a tangled textual issue here—Winter seems to have based his account on De Mainauduc's, and, depending on whom you read, Southey plagiarized either Winter or De Mainauduc—Dawson (1986) claims Winter for Southey's source, Dawson, P. M. S. "'A Sort of Animal Magic': Shelley and Animal Magnetism." *Keats-Shelley Review* 1 (Autumn 1986), 15–34; Leask (1991) claims Mainauduc.
17. Granted, Mainauduc's lectures draw similar parallels between magnetism and Christianity, but the two are not integrated to the extent they are in Winter's text.
18. Winter accredits Mainauduc with laying aside Mesmer's method, and proceeding "further into the science," adding "dignity to the Art," *Animal Magnetism,* 17.
19. Ibid., 24, 25.

20. There is some disagreement between magnetists on the issue of distance: Du Mainauduc: "It is perfectly immaterial what may be the distance between the Examiner and the Examined," de Veaumore, Caullet. *Mesmer's Aphorisms and Instructions* (London, 1784) 4. What matters, he suggests, is the rapport.
21. "The Setting in Psychoanalysis" in Luce Irigaray. *To Speak Is Never Neutral* (New York: Routledge, 2002), and Modell, A. H. "The Psychoanalytic Setting as a Container of Multiple Levels of Reality: A Perspective on the Theory of Psychoanalytic Treatment." *Psychoanal. Inq.* 9 (1989), 67–87.
22. See Chertok, Léon, and Isabelle Stengers. *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisier to Lacan.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Chertok, Léon. *Hypnosis.* (Oxford; New York: Pergamon Press, 1966).
23. See Shelley in "A Defence," where he argues for an associated relation of perception between sounds, mental images, and thoughts, *Shelley's Prose,* 280. In terms of the privileging of aural over visual stimuli in magnetism: again, magnetism assumes a unique form in England (arguably Protestant and more easily assimilated into empiricism and postempiricism); Winter, for example, does not even comment on the Mesmeric gaze.
24. See Jeffrey Robinson's attempt to think a nondialectical romantic aesthetics along the lines of the "fancy" and Kant's theory of "beauty" (over and against the sublime), Robinson, Jeffrey Cane. *Unfettering Poetry: Fancy in British Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); this approach should be distinguished from other work by Paul Hamilton, *Metaromanticism: Aesthetics, Literature, Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) and Marjorie Levinson "Pre- and Post-Dialectical Materialisms: Modeling Praxis without Subjects and Objects." *Cultural Critique* 31, no. 0 (Fall 1995), 111–127.
25. Cf. "the feeling of the sublime is a pleasure that only arises indirectly. … The *sublime* consists merely in the *relation* exhibited by the estimate of the serviceability of the sensible in the representation of nature for a possible supersensible employment," Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 495, 506.
26. See Faflak, Joel. *Romantic Psychoanalysis: The Burden of the Mystery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 7.
27. Colquhoun, J. C. *Isis Revelata: An Inquiry into the Origin, Progress, and Present State of Animal Magnetism.* 2 v. (Edinburgh: Maclachlan & Stewart, 1836), vol. II, 108; see also William Lawrence on "organization," an important keyword in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century physiology and natural science, a term meant to connote a kind of engine that drives "organic" life and development, Lawrence, William, *An Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology; Being the Two Introductory Lectures Delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, on the 21st and 25th of March, 1816* (London: Callow, 1816).
28. Colquhoun also cites Coleridge's tendency to waffle on magnetism as evidence for a kind of tacit support for the discourse, *Isis Revelata*, vol. II, 168, 169.
29. Hazlitt, William. *Selected Essays*. Edited by George Sampson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), 15.
30. "[Poetic recitation is] a species of animal magnetism, in which the enkindling reciter, by perpetual comment of looks and tones, lends his own will and apprehensive faculty to his auditor. They live for a time in the dilated sphere

of his own being," Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Biographia Literaria or My Literary Life and Opinions." In *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*. Edited by H. J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 476, 477; see Eric G. Wilson on this passage: "Matter and Spirit in the Age of Animal Magnetism." *Philosophy and Literature* 30, no. 2 (October 2006), 339.

31. Burwick, Frederick. "Coleridge, Schlegel, and Animal Magnetism." In *English and German Romanticism: Cross-Currents and Controversies* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter University, 1985), 275–300.
32. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works,* 68, 69.
33. DeLong, Anne. *Mesmerism, Medusa, and the Muse: The Romantic Discourse of Spontaneous Creativity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 56; Leask also feminizes Shelley's sensitivity to magnetism.
34. *Animal Magnetism*. Edited by Ch Féré (New York: D. Appleton, 1890), 17.
35. Ettinger, Bracha. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
36. See also Winnicott's concepts of transitional phenomena and space, at least insofar as he claims this imaginary space as the "location of culture," as well as holding environments, "The Location of Cultural Experience." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 48 (1967): 368–372.
37. "The matrixial is modeled on a certain conception of feminine/prebirth psychic sharing, where the womb is conceived of as a shared psychic borderspace in which differentiation-in-co-emergence, separation-in jointness, and distance-in-proximity are continuously reattuned …" *Matrixial Borderspace,* 139, 140. I believe that Ettinger makes explicit a uniquely "romantic" investment in space/topology/rhythm/environment, and thus should be essential for those who are looking for new ways to theorize our relation to our aesthetic and social environments.
38. Winter, *Animal Magnetism,* 33.
39. Ettinger, *Matrixial Borderspace,* 47.
40. See also "A Treatise on Morals: "Let us reflect on our infancy, and give as faithful as possible a relation of the events of sleep," *Shelley's Prose,* 193.
41. "On Life" in *Shelley's Prose*, 174.
42. Hogle comments on how Shelley in the essay "turns a centripetal gathering" of internal forces and figures of power into a text that is able to "transport the ingredients of personal psyches more and more outside personal limits," *Shelley's Process*, 273.
43. See Hamilton, writing about "A Defence": "Child and poet grasp themselves in an imagined antitype which evidences our understanding of ourselves through otherness and of otherness through self," *Poetics,* 190.
44. Wordsworth, William. *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*. Edited by Jered Curtis (Bristol, England: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 61.
45. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Biographia Literaria," 202.
46. Dawson makes the link between the reason/imagination and science/mesmerism oppositions explicit. Shelley understood that one could not build a moral society on only the imagination (similitude)—that reason (difference) is also essential, "'A Sort of Animal Magic': Shelley and Animal Magnetism;" see also "Treatise on Morals" in *Shelley's Prose*, 181.
47. Hamilton, *Poetics,* 180.
48. Clough's great poem, "Amours de Voyage" (1858), argues that the freshness in and of the world is synonymous with childlikeness, whereas childishness

(in a culture, a person, or a society) is equivalent to barbarity. Shelley: "Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave" (preface to "Alastor").

49. *Shelley's Prose*, 189.
50. Gilles Deleuze may prove a useful intertext here. As always in Deleuze, there is deep distrust of narratives of sameness and mimesis. Thus, "the music of the spheres" is rejected in favor of "the molecular domain of transverse becomings. The pulsations that play through music and the world are not measured recurrences of the same but ametrical rhythms of the incommensurable and the unequal," Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 16.
51. *Shelley's Process,* 114.
52. *Shelley's Prose*, 84.
53. Ibid., 83.
54. Cf. "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty": "Thus let thy power, which like the truth / Of nature on my passive youth / Descended, to my onward life supply / Its calm …" (78–81). Here the passivity of the poet corresponds to an openness to experience, which makes possible the epiphany for the speaker that he should "fear himself, and love all human kind" (84).
55. From "Eolian Harp": "And many idle flitting phantasies, / Traverse my indolent and passive brain" (40, 41).
56. *Shelley's Prose*, 277.
57. Ibid., 277.
58. See "A Defence": "the savage is to ages what the child is to years," *Shelley's Prose,* 277, 278, and also "Speculations on Metaphysics and Morals," in which he conflates "an infant, a savage, and a solitary beast," ibid., 64.
59. Shelley, *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts d1-Part II*, 103; "Transcription, f. 84r rev." *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts: A Facsimile Edition, with Full Transcriptions and Scholarly Apparatus.* Edited by Donald H. Reiman and P. M. S. Dawson. Selections. 1986, v. (New York: Garland Pub., 1986).
60. Tim Clark writes about Shelley and the body and also touches specifically on the relation that Shelley establishes between physiology or "care of the self" and morals, *Embodying Revolution: The Figure of the Poet in Shelley.* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1989).
61. *Shelley's Prose,* 296.
62. Ibid., 277; see also "On Love" for the suggestion of a vibrating "antitype," ibid., 170.
63. Consider in the context the famous ending to "Mont Blanc": "And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea, / If to the human mind's imaginings Silence and solitude were vacancy?"
64. *Shelley's Prose,* 282.
65. *The Bodleian Shelly Manuscripts d1-Part II,* 167–169; "Transcription, f. 68r rev."
66. Ibid., 167–169.
67. Two recent and important studies have considered from different perspectives the cultural significances of narratives of intersubjective permeability in discourses of animal magnetism. Adela Pinch asks what it means that people in the nineteenth century believed in the power of thought to traverse space and time and affect other people, *Thinking about Other People in Nineteenth-Century British Writing*; Jill Galvan focuses primarily on the role of women as mediating

presences in the nineteenth century, sense-laden channels for energy and desire; Galvan, Jill Nicole. *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859–1919* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

68. De Mainauduc, John Boniot. *The Lectures of J. B. de Mainauduc, M. D … Part the First* (London: printed for the executrix [by Fry, at the Cicero Press], 1798), 14, 15.
69. Ibid., 51, 52.
70. Ibid., 68.
71. Winter, *Animal Magnetism,* 30.
72. Shelley, *Shelley's Prose,* 277.
73. Shelley, *The Bodleian Shelly Manuscripts d1-Part II*, 103; "Transcription, f. 84r rev."
74. For Laplanche there is always something excessive and inaccessible in a message. Messages are always doubled—the message qua message (a narrativized part) and the enigmatic part, which is split off and enters/forms the unconscious, Laplanche, Jean. *Essays on Otherness*. Translated by John Fletcher (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 74–82.
75. See "A Defence" on the "restricted sense" of poetry, *Shelley's Prose,* 280; following Shelley in manuscript we can determine that, by "restricted," he means as Peacock defines it in his essay.
76. *The Bodleian Shelley manuscripts d1-Part II*, 171; "Transcription, f. 67r rev."
77. "… if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own; that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood. This is Love": *Shelley's Prose,* 170.
78. Trower, Shelley. "Nerves, Vibration and the Aeolian Harp." *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 54 (May 2009); for sonorousness, see Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).
79. Young, Matthew. *An Enquiry into the Principal Phænomena of Sounds and Musical Strings* (London: G. Robinson, 1784), 82.
80. Shelley, *Shelley's Prose,* 170.
81. Young, *An Enquiry into the Principal Phænomena of Sounds,* 88–93.
82. McCarthy, Anne C. "Suspension." In *Jacques Derrida: Key Concepts*. Edited by Claire Colebrook (London: Routledge, 2015) 29.
83. McCarthy, Anne C. "Dumbstruck: Christabel, the Sublime, and the Willing Suspension of Disbelief." In *The Sublime and Education*, Romantic Circles Praxis Series: Aug. College Park: University of Maryland Press, 2010.
84. De Mainauduc, *The Lectures of J. B. de Mainauduc*, 115.
85. "A Defence," in *Shelley's Prose,* 277.
86. *The Bodleian Shelley manuscripts d1-Part II*, 103; "Transcription, f. 84r rev."
87. *Shelley's Prose,* 202.
88. Ibid., 202.
89. Mitchell, Robert. "The Transcendental: Deleuze, P. B. Shelley, and the Freedom of Immobility." In *Romanticism and the New Deleuze*, Romantic Circles Praxis Series (RCPS): Jan. (College Park: University of Maryland Press, 2008).
90. I refer to Deleuze's theory of passive syntheses in Chapter 3 of *Difference and Repetition*: "Not a passive reception of world on soul or an active projection

of soul on world, but rather a "synthesis that binds a living being into the non-organic forces of the cosmos," 74. Deleuze leans here, as elsewhere, on Bergson's metaphysics, especially his theory of "intuition," Deleuze, Gilles. *Bergsonism*. (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

91. For the "becoming-child" in Deleuze and Guattari, see "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible …" and "1837: Of the Refrain" in Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).
92. See, for example, Chertok and Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason*.
93. In terms of speed, the "Ode" uses terza rima and constant enjambment to produce its effects. "To a Sky-Lark," on the other hand, uses an odd five-line stanza with a final couplet comprising one tetrameter line and a final alexandrine. The effect, it seems to me, is to produce a ballad that wobbles unstably at the end, especially in those alexandrines that do not contain caesurae.
94. Orrin Wang comments on speed in Shelley's poetry, arguing that the poems provide us with models with which to rethink the "problem between the diachronic and synchronic," *Romantic Sobriety*, 170.
95. Lombardi, R. "Time, Music, and Reverie." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 56 (2008), 1199; Lombardi, R. "The Body, Feelings, and the Unheard Music of the Senses." *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 47 (2011), 3–24.
96. "A Defence" in *Shelley's Prose,* 282, 283.
97. Ibid., 283.
98. Ibid., 279.
99. Cancelled in manuscript, *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts d1-Part II*, 129; "Transcription, f 77v rev."
100. "It sometimes happens … that if the magentiser suffers from some pain when he is magnetising a healthy, but susceptible person, that the pain is transferred from him to the subject," Lee, Edwin. *Animal Magnetism and Magnetic Lucid Somnambulism. With Observations and Illustrative Instances of Analogous Phenomena Occurring Spontaneously; and an Appendix of Corroborative and Correlative Observations and Facts* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866), 127.
101. Shelley, *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts d1-Part II,* 73; "Transcription, f. 91v rev."
102. In psychoanalytic theory, the appropriate analogue is the "analytic third"—not analyst or analysand, but some hybrid version of both: "the analytic experience occurs at the cusp of the past and the present, and involves a past that is being created anew (for both analyst and analysand) by means of an experience generated between analyst and analysand (i.e., within the analytic third)," Ogden, T. H. "The Analytic Third: Implications for Psychoanalytic Theory and Technique." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 73 (2004), 178.
103. Shelley, *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts d1-Part II,* 75; "Transcription, f. 91r rev."
104. "Treatise on Morals" in *Shelley's Prose*, 183.
105. Shelley, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Volume IV, Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics*: Huntington Shelley Notebook HM 2177, "Transcription, f.46v," 300.

5 Stillborn Poetics and Tennyson's Songs

> For the artistic individual has lived in art-creation instead of actual life, letting his work live or die on its own account, and has never wholly surrendered himself to life. In place of his own self the artist puts his objectified ego into his work, but though he does not save his subjective mortal ego from death, he yet withdraws himself from real life.
>
> —Otto Rank[1]

> I have become a name.[2]
>
> —Tennyson

In Chapter 3 we saw how Sara Coleridge immersed herself in a world of infancy, a holding environment, in order to help her to emerge from a deep depression. This process, which necessitated new modes of observation and thought and thus new genres of writing, allowed her first imaginatively to merge with and then to separate from her children, creating an interval or a caesura within which new forms of relatedness became possible. This chapter, the final full chapter in this book, focuses on Alfred Tennyson's need to establish a kind of distance or detachment from his poems, which, continuing the tradition of the "parturient" or pregnant poet, he conceived of as his children. Like many artists, Tennyson experienced any attack on his art as an attack on the self. Whereas Sara Coleridge needed to establish a gap between a body wracked by a nervous disorder and her intellectual and creative capacities, Tennyson needs to establish a gap between the representations of his ego and the productions of the unconscious.

Tennyson's well-established melancholy, a sensitivity that drove him to long more and more for inwardness and safety, complicates the issue of aesthetic and psychic gestation. In any dialectic of inwardness and social being, sooner or later one must move back out into the world. For Tennyson, this means publishing his poetry and subjecting his work, and by extension himself, to criticism or praise. Not to do so, to hold on to the object, would be, as he himself writes, to do "violence to [his] modest worth."[3]

In what follows, I address two related types of caesurae or disruption in Tennyson's poetry: psychological and formal, or, conceived of differently,

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subjective and objective. Each seems motivated by a sense of loss. These syncopations govern the shape of my chapter, in that my first section, after situating Tennyson's ambivalence toward the public realm in relation to Wordsworth's, is devoted to psychological distancing, what I term Tennyson's stillborn poetics. Following a middle section in which I consider Arthur Hallam's continued intellectual and emotional influence on Tennyson, the final section develops a formal reading of ballad or song in Tennyson's poetry—specifically, *The Princess*—song's iterability as well as its connection to infancy, infancy imagined again as a space of poetic origination, anamnesis, and perpetual beginning.[4]

5.1 Tennyson and Wordsworth: Ambivalent Poet Laureates

In April of 1850, William Wordsworth, the Poet Laureate of Britain, died. In November of that year, Tennyson, then forty-one years old, was invested with the title. Each man, for somewhat different reasons, had been reluctant to accept the honor. Although Arthur Hallam famously considers them as antithetical types of poets—Wordsworth, a poet of reflection, and Tennyson, like Keats and Shelley, a poet of sensation—each regarded the public with considerable distrust and placed tremendous value on family and friendship. Both Wordsworth and Tennyson, to differing degrees and under different circumstances, had come from difficult family backgrounds and had started their own families relatively late. Yet each developed a poetics and identity deeply and intricately involved with the image of the infant and the child.

As I recount in Chapter 1, Wordsworth presents "intimation" and "immortality" as two related but incommensurable aspects of our experience. Through a theorization of infancy ("Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting") Wordsworth is able to bring intimation and immortality (the finite and the infinite) together in a way that allows for a spatial/embodied rather than a merely temporal/developmental relation of the subject to her or his individual and collective experience. This relation, derived from phenomenological imaginings of infancy and structured along the horizontal rather than vertical axis, allows for processes of recommencement for the individual subject at the same time as it authorizes a connection to an ongoing poetic tradition for the poet. Yet we have also seen how imaginings of infancy in nineteenth-century poetry were and are still often read as sealed off and inaccessible to the adult poet or reader, either nostalgically yearned for or relinquished/renounced for the subtler pleasures of the "philosophic mind"—processes that correspond respectively, if perhaps a bit too schematically, to Freud's conceptual pairing of melancholia and mourning.

Consider the following two well-known passages, one by Wordsworth and the other by Tennyson, separated by twenty-five years. For all their thematic similarity, they pointedly and precisely reflect these dissimilar

processes and beliefs. They also reproduce in miniature many of my larger concerns in this chapter.

> —Blessed the infant babe—
> For with my best conjectures I would trace
> The progress of our being—blest the babe
> Nursed in his mother's arms, the babe who sleeps
> Upon his mother's breast, who when his soul
> Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
> Doth gather passion from his mother's eye.
> Such feelings pass into his torpid life
> Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind,
> Even in the first trial of its powers,
> Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
> In one appearance all the elements
> And parts of the same object, else detached
> And loth to coalesce.
>
> (Wordsworth's 1805 *Prelude*, Book II, 233–245)

> Thrice happy state again to be
> The trustful infant on the knee!
> Who lets his rosy fingers play
> About his mother's neck, and knows
> Nothing beyond his mother's eye.
> They comfort him by night and day;
> They light his little life alway;
> He hath no thought of coming woes;
> He hath no care of life or death;
> Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
> Because the Spirit of happiness
> And perfect rest so inward is.
>
> (Tennyson's "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind" 40–52)

The infant–mother pairing is paradigmatic in each of these passages. Note not only the verbatim allusion ("his mother's eye") but also its identical placement in the verse.[5] This repetition is all the more astonishing given that Tennyson could not have read Wordsworth's lines since *The Prelude* would not be published until twenty years later. Whereas, for Wordsworth, the love of the mother makes possible a movement from human connectedness to the nurturance of nature, for Tennyson, absent the active feeling or evident agency of God ("Why pray / To one who heeds not, who can save / But will not?" [88–90]), separation from the mother results simply in alienation and dejection.[6] Again, at the risk of schematism, Tennyson's position is clearly the more melancholic. Perhaps Wordsworth's immortality had become for Tennyson's generation

(I read this dramatic monologue as expressing an aspect of Tennyson's fear at the same time as it ventriloquizes the anxieties of the age) synonymous with mere posterity.[7] In the perceived aftermath of the failed idealism of the first generation of the romantics, in other words, the English imagination of the 1830s registers the "inwardness" of perfect rest as, at best, a irretrievable interval, at worst, nothing more than stasis, solipsism, and impotence.

There seems to be little faith in social or even subjective coherence in Tennyson's early poetry. In fact, the original title for Tennyson's poem as published in 1830 was "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind *Not in Unity with Itself*," the last five words dropped by Tennyson when he allowed the poem to be reprinted in the 1880s.[8] Whereas Wordsworth, our starting point in this study, can express faith in the combinatory power of poetic feeling in the mind, which "combine / In one appearance all the elements / And parts of the same object," Tennyson's poems deal primarily with dispersion.[9] More often than not, parts do not cohere.

This chapter traces the trajectory of Tennyson's skeptical and disjointed poetics and suggests that part of his melancholic and well-documented attachment to Hallam (over-determined, I will argue, from the start) gets partially rewritten or displaced over the decades. We see it, for example, transmuted into an anxiety over the "loss of the child" in *The Princess,* Tennyson's first long poem. I also argue in what follows that it affixes itself to the image of his stillborn son. All of these losses, arguably experienced as one continual loss, can productively be read as arising from a complex of literary-historical, psychic, personal, and professional determinations.[10] In fact, Tennyson's desire for coherence—professional, aesthetic, and psychological—might help to explain his production in the 1840s and 1850s of a series of longer and strangely hybrid forms, from the pseudo- or psychological "medley" (*The Princess*) to the elegiac poem of eternal return (*In Memoriam*). Contained within these longer poems are shorter, "received" forms—like memories or fragments of experience. Tennyson himself claimed that the key to understanding the longer *The Princess* was to focus on the child as presented in the interpolated songs.[11] The relation of "parts to the whole" in Tennyson, their desire as well as their ultimate failure to cohere, is largely what this chapter is about.

Whereas in Chapter 1 I suggest that Wordsworth's dilemma concerning the loss of experience ("there's a tree, of many, one") necessitated a renovation of the ode form, this chapter argues that Tennyson's apprehension and voicing of various social and cultural anxieties concerning the "loss of the child" and all that it signifies—innocence, belief, poetic originality—is similarly continuous with his search for a more flexible poetic form. Consider, for example, that many of the songs that were added to *The Princess* in the second edition of the poem are primarily balladic. This matters because, as I will argue, ballad measure and the child were thought to be (arguably may still be thought to be) determinately and reciprocally linked.[12] As I argue in the Introduction to this book, the linkage between ballad and the child forms part of a larger discourse on the pastoral.

Wordsworth figures importantly here as well, first, as one of the authors of *Lyrical Ballads*, a work that puts childhood and ballad front and center, and, second, as the outgoing Poet Laureate, out of whose shadow Tennyson, the incoming Poet Laureate, struggled to step. Consider, for example, the anecdote of Tennyson writing "Tears, Idle Tears," the most well known of the songs from *The Princess,* at Tintern Abbey, which was only a short distance from Hallam's grave.[13] Thus Tennyson writes one of the poems that would help to establish his legacy at a spot equidistant between two monuments of his greatest influence: the site of Wordsworth's great poem and the resting place of Arthur Hallam. Furthermore, Wordsworth's own death, not to mention the posthumous publication of *The Prelude*—perhaps the most sustained paean ever written to the poetic powers of the child—was more or less contemporaneous with the publication and revision of *The Princess*.[14] My argument here is not about the anxiety of influence; rather, I am interested in tracking the historical refiguration of a specific trope—namely, that of the parturient or pregnant poet—while also marking the related reception, use, and revision of ballad measure.[15] In teasing out this connection, I will argue that Tennyson uses ballad measure or song to intercut and organize the longer structures in the poem, incorporating and revising the poetic materials of the past, all of which allows him to manage the psychological and poetic pressures of personal and professional loss.[16]

Rather than influence, then, we are dealing with anxiety regarding circulation and creation. As Freud tells us, anxiety is primarily defensive and retrospective.[17] The parturient or pregnant poet comes to play an important part in Tennyson's working through of this anxiety. The parturient poet has served as a metaphor for the solitary, self-authorizing creator at least since Diotima's colloquy on love in Plato's *Symposium*.[18] More particularly, as Tennyson deploys it, the pregnant poet serves to mediate between the realms of the personal and the poetic as well as the professional and the domestic. Tennyson recognizes that, "giving birth in beauty" (which for Diotima is far greater than giving birth in flesh insofar as it guarantee's one's immortality) is a more complicated matter than Diotima suggests, at least in the age of the mass production and circulation of poetry.[19] On one level, he regards his poems as children. The question then becomes whether to subject them to the whims (and, in the nineteenth century, the anonymity) of constantly changing literary opinion, thereby subjecting a part of himself to critique, or whether to wall himself off from his critics, and, by extension, his readership. Yet to steel himself would be to repress his sensitivity, the very quality (Tennyson calls it being "half-woman natured") that makes him a "true-cast" poet in the first place. Drawing on passages from poems and letters addressing the stillbirth of his first son, I argue that a process of aesthetic and psychic distancing or detachment, that is, a reorientation that allows for the recognition that his poems are separate from his self, allows Tennyson to gradually—although never absolutely—let go of his poems and his need to control their reception. This distancing amounts to the insertion of a spatial

and temporal caesura or interval.[20] In Tennyson's own terms, it involves an ongoing process of being "round[ed] … to a separate mind."[21] I call this a stillborn poetics.

I also comment later in the chapter on some of the effects of Tennyson's adaptation of a feminine posture of receptivity and protectiveness in response to the pressures of a masculine market of poetic reception and production. These related phenomena (economies of psychology and form, theories of unpleasure and pleasure, the role of gender norms in nineteenth-century cultural production) anticipate certain psychoanalytic terms and concepts, inchoate in the period, but yet to be developed. Birth trauma, a theory that recurs in different forms throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, helps to shed new light on the oft-cited problem of Tennyson's reticence, which in the material covered here, refers to his personal struggles as well as his anxiety about producing and reproducing his poetry.

More specifically still, and in keeping with the critical commitments of this book, I am interested in talking about Tennyson's anxiety without resorting to psychobiography. Any reader of Tennyson knows that instances of birth and infant death provide him not only with feeling, but also with fertile poetic ground. Yet where most accounts of Tennyson read anxiety as corresponding to some previous loss or losses, Otto Rank's theory of birth trauma (essential to Freud's theory of the death drive) sees anxiety as part of what constitutes us as human animals, and thus is not necessarily repressive, that is, is not caught up in a constant cycle of sublimation, "not a matter of mere phenomenon of regression."[22] In part, I use a scaffolding of arguments made by Stephan Gill, David Riede, and others about Tennyson's skepticism or melancholy versus Wordsworth's faith or normative mourning in order to construct an argument that is not so much about what kinds of losses might be gathered up in Tennyson's anxiety over the "loss of the child," but rather puts loss itself—as a material fact of our existence—at the center of Tennyson's poetics.[23]

Following an interlude in which I discuss Arthur Hallam's essay, "On Sympathy," and its relation to Tennyson's poetics, in the final section of the chapter I focus on Tennyson's use of song, specifically ballad or English measure. My starting point for this reading is Herbert Tucker's powerful argument about the repetition of song in Tennyson's work:

> [O]ne way of seeing Tennyson's whole is to grasp these repetitive devices as modes of approach to, or recession from, musical intuitions of an inevitable *burden*—something he felt as a pressure and expressed in the half-mimetic, half-protective mediations of song.[24]

I read Tucker's use of the word "intuition" in a Kantian sense, meaning to touch, to perceive. Tennyson then perceives these losses, feels them, touches them, musically. If we take Tennyson's reluctance to circulate his poems as a

reaction to an unnameable and overdetermined loss, for which I offer birth trauma as a nonrepressive figure, then ballad, measure, or song in some ways represents the formal working through of that resistance, providing us with a revised picture of the "economic" relation between received poetic forms and psychological and cultural pressures. I strive to show how we might read Tennyson's desire to "find the child" as a concomitant desire to return to the infancy of English poetry (which ballad represented) as well as to the anamnestic space of infancy's perpetual beginnings.

Tennyson's simultaneous desire for and mistrust of formal and psychological unity, when understood as part of a larger concern over the loss of the child, suggests that a wish to return to infantile states of interconnectedness need not be only a melancholic desire for solipsism and safety. That is, it may point us toward a deeper understanding of the relation between the drives, their reciprocity in the psyche. Andre Green suggests that the death drive and the life or love drive are an "indissociable conceptual pair."[25] Whereas the life or love drive binds us to the world, the "purpose of the death drive is to fulfill as far as is possible a *disobjectalising function* by means of unbinding."[26] On this reading, the death drive responds to an enigmatic and structural lack rather than a particular loss.[27] To recognize the rhythms of repetitive binding and unbinding (formal and thematic) in Tennyson's work is to call into question readings of Tennyson's work as a fusion of inconsistencies and incongruities. Instead, these incompletions form an incomplete relation. In a similar sense, Tennyson's poetry suggests, through its use of received forms such as ballad, a critique of idealizing theories of organic form or compositional unity. To use Tennyson's own language, there is no poem or a mind in absolute "unity with itself."[28] Furthermore, infancy shows us that we include parts or aspects of other minds, bodies, and poems within our incompletion.

5.2 "Children of My Silence"

In April of 1851, on Easter Sunday, Alfred Tennyson's first child was stillborn. The child, a boy, was apparently strangled by the umbilical cord. Christopher Ricks reports that the poet never forgot this "great grief."[29] Rather than send a death notice to the newspaper, Tennyson took it upon himself to "write some 60 letters" to inform friends and family of the news. What follows is representative:

> My dear Robert,
> I am quite sure you will feel with me. My poor little boy got strangled in being born … I have suffered more than ever I thought I could have done for a child still born … he was the grandest-looking child I have ever seen. Pardon my saying this. I do not speak only as a father but as an Artist … he looked … majestic in his mysterious silence …[30]

Given the poet's usually guarded epistolary style, it is surprising to read such a direct and open expression of grief: "I have suffered more that ever I thought I could have done …" Tennyson speaks as an artist and a father perhaps in order to justify the intensity of his attachment to the child, but his claim also suggests an inchoate aesthetic judgment, itself still in the process of gestation. According to this aesthetic, what determines the beauty of the stillborn child is his mysterious silence. Since he will never perform acts of grandeur, his greatness is determined paradoxically by his unrealizable or arrested potential.

The force of Tennyson's grief surprises him. Yet he not only expresses it, but also quickly sublimates and transposes it. That is, he writes in such a way as to fill up the mysterious silence in spite of his reluctance to do so. ("Pardon my saying this.") The silence attributable to the child redoubles the silence we ordinarily grant to infancy; the stillborn child is not only incapable of speech, but also incapable of sound. Two years later, after the birth of his son, Hallam, in 1852, Tennyson continues in his letters to refer to the stillborn child as the "poor little silent elder brother."[31] It is this incapacity, the beauty of the silence, which compels the poet to speak.

This feeling of compulsion at once results from and precipitates an intense identification. I say this in order to foreground the ways in which the poetic description of a stillborn infant tends necessarily toward prosopopoeia. Any attempt to grant potential or futurity to the stillborn child breaks down the binaries of living–dead, speaking–silent, and subject–object. For example, the two participles initially describing the child and the father—"strangled" and "suffered"—are almost interchangeable and occupy more or less identical places in their respective sentences. Additional mirrorings and reversals, implicit and explicit, occur throughout the passage. The roles of the father (pater, creator, "majestic" sovereign) are hived off and given to the son, whereas the conventional positions of the son (admiration, identification, supplication) are assumed instead by the father. This may take on significant biographical resonance when we reflect on Tennyson's troubled relationship to his alcoholic father. Even the fixed roles of the percipient–perceived dyad are tenuous, liable to subtle shifts. Thus, the "grandest-looking child" seems capable of looking back at his father—he "looked …"

This confusion of roles and states has significance beyond the context of Tennyson the father; it may also be understood in relation to a certain period of Tennyson's poetic career: roughly, the nearly ten years separating the publication of *Poems* (1842) and the stillbirth of his son. By all accounts, these were turbulent years for Tennyson, shot through with anxieties about his abilities as a poet and his ambivalent relationship to his own reading audience.[32] I want to suggest that the stillbirth of his son marked a turning point not only in his private life but also in relation to his poetry and poetic practice. Since the publication of his earliest work, Tennyson had anguished over which poems to keep back from publication and those that he should release.[33] I suggest that we read this anxiety as part of an ongoing rhythm

of binding and unbinding, holding onto and releasing poems, people, memories, and personal and professional identifications. What I term Tennyson's stillborn poetics is not a transcendent aesthetic and does not necessarily auger a clean break from the past. In some ways it precedes the actual stillbirth and continues to inform Tennyson's poetic practice throughout his long career. As I have already stated, Tennyson's rhetoric of poetic parturience (that is, his tendency to think of and refer to his poems as children) is neither entirely unique to him nor entirely all encompassing. Stillbirth—as a trope, a thematic, an emblem, and, yes, a traumatic historical event—allows Tennyson to begin to shift personal and professional anxiety away from concerns about origins/originality, authenticity, and authorship to the more manageable concerns of circulation and desire. After a period of meditation, Tennyson is able to see his stillborn son as his own creative offspring. In other words, and this is essential, he also see himself as author—a "separate self" from the child: "I do not speak only as a father but as an Artist."

Tennyson's response to the stillbirth suggests not only a powerful identification with the infant, but also an intensely felt and openly expressed sorrow. As the letter indicates, Tennyson's grief collapses the distance between himself and the stillborn child. He maintains these slippages and reversals as well as this emotional pitch (a strained and strangely distanced voice [why do open expressions of grief always seem to contain this distance?]) in nearly all the extant letters, repeating several times how beautiful the child was, how he kissed his "poor, pale hands," expressing his open embarrassment at being so moved: "I am foolish [i.e., childish] enough to be affected with all this."[34] An unfinished fragment of poetry survives:

> Little bosom not yet cold,
> Noble forehead made for thought,
> Little hands of mighty mould
> Clenched as in the fight which they had fought.
> He had done battle to be born,
> But some brute force of Nature had prevailed
> And the little warrior failed.
> Whate'er thou wert, whate'er thou art,
> Whose life was ended ere thy breath begun,
> Thou nine-months neighbor of my dear one's heart,
> And howsoe'er thou liest blind and mute
> Thou lookest bold and resolute,
> God bless thee dearest son.

Here, again, expression and observation are mixed; a strange amalgam of candor and passion imbues the lyric, pushing it toward heraldry. The poem, unlike any of the letters, employs a masculine rhetoric of war.[35] Perhaps we can understand this tonal difference as both a defense against a public expression of grief and an example of the historical segregation of genres

by gender—the openness of the (feminine) epistolary form versus the steely defensiveness of (masculine) lyric.[36] Surprisingly, despite the rhetoric, there is little violence or anger in the descriptions and tone. Rather, there is acceptance and a desire to sing the praises of the stillborn child's ineffable beauty. It is significant for Tennyson, as he reports in one letter, that the child never took a breath ("not born—I cannot call it born for he never breathed").[37]

The apostrophe that signals the turn in the lyric ("Whate'er thou wert …") is more than a mere turn or a swerve; it also seems to mark a desperate attempt at animation. The force of the apostrophe seems triggered by a "fail[ure]" in the preceding line, a failure that seems at once the stillborn child's, the poet's, and, in an overarching sense, humankind's. In other words, the signature emotions of the poem—tenderness and intimacy—are only possible if the possibility of animating breath is denied.[38] He may speak as a father about a living child in other words, but were he to speak as a father and an artist about his living infant (think of S. T. Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," for example), there is always the problem of projective identification; the prophetic claims of the poem and the real life of the child can diverge at any point and it becomes clear that the apostrophe had always been at least partly an address to the self. But with a stillborn child, some quality or qualities (you could almost say life itself) remain preserved in the *form* of the infant, locked up forever within, protected. The myth of objectivity, Keats's dream of "unheard melodies," seems easier to maintain when one's object remains unchanging.[39]

Of course it is common in the criticism to recognize within Tennyson's thought and poetics a quality that identifies with and longs for the stillness and fixity of death. Yet whereas other critics have been quick to seize on Tennyson's "fixations" (Rowlinson) or his ambivalent submission to doom (Tucker), I am interested in connecting those drives or tendencies to his deeply ambivalent feelings about having his poems (and thus his *feelings*) in circulation—having them, that is, subject to constant scrutiny and critique. As we will see, stillbirth emerges as a figure for Tennyson's poetics precisely at the nexus of public and private realms, roles, and spaces. Writing, in other words, necessitates crossing a space between the domestic and public spheres. To stay alive, to attain immortality in Wordsworth's many senses of the word—authorial, spiritual, social—one must produce, one must give birth. One's writing, originating in personal experience, thought, and feeling, enters the realm of the public; poetry becomes that which transverses both realms and, in this example, infancy provides the metaphorical structure. Thus, Tennyson can claim to speak as a father *and* an artist. Similarly, in 1833, Tennyson can write in a letter to James Spedding, "… I was delivered of them [letters] so long after conception—my confinement was very painful—the nurses said it was like to have proved a still birth."[40]

A stillborn poetics grants Tennyson new possibilities for creating a space of aesthetic and personal autonomy. Recognizing this as readers allows us to rethink aesthetic production and reproduction in terms that are not

necessarily about influence. Conventionally, theories of poetic origination have been thought of in Oedipal or anti-Oedipal terms. By extending the series "anxiety of influence" (Bloom) to "anxiety of authorship" (Gilbert and Gubar), we arrive finally at what Andre Green terms an "anxiety of intrusion."[41] To understand the full scope of this anxiety one should recognize the extent to which Tennyson had already "become a name" in his poetry. Taking the name of a poet or assuming the poet laureateship, as Tennyson does in 1850, puts one in the difficult position of having what one does seem identical with what one is—that is, moving from having a name to becoming one. W. M. Rossetti recounts (secondhand) that Tennyson had been in a "state of disgust at the idea of being presented at court on his appointment to the Laureateship."[42] And while it is a commonplace to speak of Tennyson's nervousness or anxiety, issues of circulation and desire take on added meaning when the developing discourses of family, infancy, privacy, and the child are seen as inseparable from the more public worlds of print circulation, poetic production, and reproduction. My point is not that Tennyson aestheticizes stillbirth, although undoubtedly he does (along with friendship, melancholy, citizenship, etc.). My point is that he is able to articulate a supplemental drive for poetry, one that does *and* does not circulate, one that allows for binding and unbinding—a drive, in other words, toward a stillborn poetics.

5.3 The Trauma of Birth and Circulations of Desire

Tennyson wrote the following fragment in 1839, a full twelve years before the letter quoted previously. It was published in *The London Times* thirty years after its composition, and I quote only the first several lines. The poem attests to the potency of Tennyson's self-image as a solitary creator, his anxiety concerning the social realm more generally, and the affective force with which he felt the threat of usurpation or intrusion from voices and valuations sounded from within and without.

> Wherefore, in these dark ages of the Press
> (As that old Teuton christened them) should I,
> Sane mind and body, wish to print my rhyme,
> Fame's millionth heir-apparent? why desire
> (If like a man that hath his sense compact
> I write a clean fair hand) the public thumb
> Of our good pamphlet-pampered age to fret
> And sweat upon mine honest thoughts in type,
> The children of my silence? I today
> Lord of myself and of my ways, the next
> A popular property, nauseate, when my name
> Shot like a racketball from mouth to mouth
> And bandies in the barren lips of fools

> May yield my feeling organism pain
> Thrice keener than delight from duest praise?
> And if I be, as truecast Poets are,
> Half woman-natured, typing all mankind;
> So must I triple-man myself and case
> My humours as the caddisworm in stone,
> Or doing violence to my modest worth
> With one long-lasting hope chain-cable-strong
> Self-fixt, immoor in patience, till I die …[43]

Several dangers appear in the poem, to the poet as well as to his poems. First, there is the threatening technology of print itself, as though in the dark ages of the press, "type" yields more easily to fretting judgment, to the meanness of the "public thumb," than does, say, ink and pen on paper. The poet's "clean fair hand" is at once the product and evidence of his "sane mind and body." Typing and typology blend in homonymic repetition; to print is to represent is to reproduce, to reduce "honest thoughts" to mere mimetic manufacture.[44]

The psychic territory of "Wherefore in these dark ages …" is the blurred boundary between inside and outside, public and private. Thus, sensitivity to having one's "self"—name = poem = thought—swallowed results in images of nausea and being vomited, "shot … from mouth to mouth."[45] These images of orality and depth loom large as though to swallow the poem, so large in fact that we are surprised to find, after the sinews of the syntax have been untangled, that it is only the poet's name that is bandied about.[46] The sensitive skin of the poet ("thrice as keen to insult as to praise") is akin to the porosity and thinness of paper. Importantly, there seems little difference between the poet and his productions at all. Tennyson projects onto his readership signs of authorial labor that suggest yet another permeable boundary, this time between poet and audience; the public "frets" and "sweats" over the poet's thoughts, his children. Sweating and fretting (the rhyme reinforces their relatedness) should be the actions of the poet-parent. It is almost as if the bearing forth, the sweating and fretting—the labor necessary to bring forth a child or a poem—is itself the problem, at least insofar as these bodily processes are cast as dangerous and then projected onto readers. In the midst of this collaborative labor, we might recognize Hallam's injunction to readers of Tennyson's verse that they provide the "requisite exertion," to begin from the "same point" as the author, that is, to collaborate in the co-composition, one might even say co-birthing, of the poem.[47] The etymology of "fret," from the Old English/German "to consume," further reinforces the sense of danger to the organism. Any transmission of the poem (spoken or pamphleted), as the etymology of "transmission" suggests, results in the crossing of a bodily or psychic threshold or border.

In the need to seal himself off from the barren fools (the critics), Tennyson potentially seals himself off from—and, at the same time, identifies himself

with—the opposite sex; true-cast poets are half-woman natured.[48] His immediate defense against this admission of feminization is telling. If he, as a poet, is half-woman, he will "triple-man" himself in response. Tennyson originally adopted a more distanced position vis-à-vis his half-woman nature: an earlier manuscript version (MS A as compared to the Trinity Notebook) is written from a third-person perspective: "… should any man desire to print his rhyme" rather than "should I … wish to print my rhyme." Why Tennyson chose to collapse the distance—from "he" to "me"—is unclear. The effect though is of a heightened, more immediate danger and response.

In the face of these dangers, there is still a desire to write, to be seen, to be witnessed—granted, this is weakly couched within the interrogative: "why desire." Yet because it comes after a terminal caesura and is then enjambed into the next line, "desire" resonates through the poem; the "why" rhyme that immediately precedes fulfills the unconscious expectation set up by the "I" rhyme that comes in the terminal foot two lines prior. It also reproduces the question from "Supposed Confessions": "why pray?" They each occupy the same position in their respective lines (the terminal foot). "Why desire," while it carries a tone of self-frustration, in part because of the enjambment and the parenthetical that follows, also has a secondary connotation. When read in concert with the earlier question ("why pray / To one who heeds not?"), it sounds a tone of moral psychical exhaustion in which "why desire?" takes on an absurdly literal sense, as in "why breathe?" or "why blink your eyes?" Why is desire—for acceptance, for circulation, for transmission—so essential to the poet? Trapped in a narcissistic identification—by which I mean simply that the children of the poet's thoughts are his thoughts—the product becomes the producer. Therefore, any attack on the poem is an attack on the thought, which, in turn, is an attack on the self (now made coequal with the poet's name). The speaker is unable to conceive of the poem as difference, as having autonomous life outside the self, all of which begins to take on the character of a stunted or ambivalent birth. It is against this background of harsh internal chatter that desire itself is called into question.

Tennyson's intense identification of poem and name as well as the identification of publication and death—"immoor in patience, till I die"—suggests that to enter into public life, into circulation, constitutes not only a private death, but also the death of the private realm altogether, where the private realm is conceived of, as it consistently is in Tennyson's poems, as the safety and unified bond of the speaker and the beloved, a figure for the nearly undifferentiated mother and child.[49] In fact, the twelve years or so that separate "Wherefore" and his son's stillbirth find Tennyson employing several different strategies for coping with the anxiety of circulation—intense revision of *The Princess* after publication (including, as we will see, the interpolation of several songs that were primarily about the "loss of the child"), corresponding directly with critics about their reviews of his work, and the delayed and (initially) anxiety of circulation—intense revision of

In Memoriam. In other words, what I have termed a stillborn poetics should be read as part of a dynamic ongoing process of connection/disconnection with his poetry and readership.

What is more, given his tendency to figure children as particularly vulnerable to the excesses or deficits in society and culture, Tennyson's identification of children with his poems takes on added significance. In many of the poems (*The Princess, Maud,* "Demeter and Persephone"), children—symbolic of that which needs protection, aesthetically, it seems, as well as socially—are presumed to be in danger. "Wherefore in these Dark Ages," by locating poems as being half in and half out of the poet, revises the dilemma from one of exterior forces that exercise their wills on ideas (i.e., through ideology) to an anxiety about intrusion at the level of the body, which therefore rephrases the problem as one that is formal (that is, pre- or extralingual) as well as strictly linguistic. As we have seen, the poem itself is fraught with posterior caesuras and multiple enjambments, especially in those sections in which Tennyson considers the impact or impingement of a public readership on his creative output: "why desire … I today … the next … till I die …" These fragmentary lines reproduce the brokenness and conflicted quality of thought, the fragility and vulnerability of a poet working very hard to be understood, when the message of the poem is that such understanding is probably not going to occur.

Tennyson sees the need to protect a name, like the need to protect a child, as instinctual. Here, of course, he anticipates Freud; from a psychoanalytic point of view, *trieb* (drive) needs to be distinguished from *instinkt* (instinct). For the purposes of understanding Tennyson's poetics, critics tend to be interested in the drive.[50] But in terms of certain defenses (for example, self-protection), instinct needs to be addressed as well. The instincts, says Freud, are conservative insofar as they allow us to "preserve life itself for a comparatively long period."[51] In this way, he sees the sexual instincts as equivalent to the "Eros of the poets and philosophers which binds all living things together,"[52] which in turn help develop the drive for reproduction (of poems and children, insofar as each reproduces a lineage). This process of binding and unbinding—a feature of address in poetry (apostrophe, prosopopoeia) as well a feature of psychic functioning in psychoanalytic discourse (identification, projection, introjection, or transference)—requires risk, movement, a moving out from one's center, and thus a willingness to be hurt or rejected. Tennyson understands this; yet he also knows that to withhold his poems from the public, to fail to reproduce his name, would be akin to an act of "violence."

If, in Tennyson's work, we link publication to instinct (each serves a conserving function), drive sets an internal limit or boundary in opposition to pleasure or even self-preservation. What makes the death drive so counterintuitive is that it does not operate according to typical models of repression. It is strictly formal and does not respond to or result in latent content. As Freud conceives it in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* the death

drive responds to a universal material fact. The very fact of being born sets up a separation for us, which reverberates in every consequent anxiety:

> Anxiety is not newly created in repression; it is reproduced as an affective state in accordance with an already existing mnemic image … In man and the higher animals it would seem that *the act of birth, as the individual's first experience of anxiety,* has given the affect of anxiety certain characteristic forms of expression.[53] (my emphasis)

The genius of this formulation is that anxiety stems from a material and literal separation, one that is both pre-Oedipal and precedes Lacan's entrance into the symbolic order.[54] Once the concept of birth trauma, developed most fully by Freud's pupil Otto Rank, is reinserted into the critical oppositions of Eros/Thanatos, then it becomes clearer how stillbirth and poetic parturience function in these texts. If, as Freud argues, birth trauma partially motivates the death drive (that is, the move toward stasis and noncirculation), then it may well serve as a *nonrepressive* figure for Tennyson's "nervousness." The emblem of his stillborn son responds directly to the particular symptom (fear of circulation) of a universal trauma (the double desire to be separate and in relation to another or, seen in another way, to publish or to withhold one's poetry). It does not remove fear and danger so much as sublimate and displace them. It does so by providing an alternate image (neither Hallam nor the cannibalistic press), by introducing something outside the self (but experienced as part of the self), which might act as buffer between the poet and his critics—an unfeeling organism.

In "Wherefore, in these dark ages …," the poet figure receives criticism, feels it at the level of the body—hands, humours, mouth, and nauseous gut. By recognizing and responding to the figure of the stillborn child, Tennyson slows or quiets the endless feedback loop of internal and external critical voices. Acting as an interval or caesura, it operates according to the logic of what Lyotard calls the figural, an aspect of our infancy that transcends language and yet can only be spoken through language.[55] This is what Tennyson yearns for and finds in the image of his stillborn child. He finds a workable relation to his own poems—an orientation toward his loss, poetic and personal, a way to speak as father and artist.

5.4 Interlude: Hallam's Midwifery

It is part of our received literary history as well as the history of the modern elegiac lyric that Hallam, Tennyson's closest friend, who died when both men were in their early twenties, became for Tennyson in the 1830s and 1840s the name for nearly every individual and collective loss. To this seemingly unimpeachable truth, I want to simply add a few adumbrating lines. What if marriage and fatherhood, circa 1850, incorporate that loss and possibility, shift it slightly, giving it a more domestic and less fraught form? And

what if one aspect of that form is the figure of the stillborn child? Tennyson and his wife had planned to name the stillborn child Hallam. "Hallam," of course, is more than a name for Tennyson—more, that is, than the name of a loss. Hallam's own writing might also be said to have prepared the ground for his surviving friend's investments, without which they might not have been able to form a viable aesthetics.

In an essay called "On Sympathy" delivered to the Apostles at Cambridge in 1830, Hallam recapitulates certain associationist and empiricist motifs—most significantly, the focus on the infant as a test case for one's ethical subjectivity.[56] The essay details the "successive" states of awareness of a soul—specifically, of an infant—of other objects, people, moods, and expressions. Sympathy becomes the conduit by which we come to know the world and by which we differentiate ourselves as separate beings in it. Hallam suggests that these are processes of subtle differentiation. At first, the "infant cannot separate the sensations of nourishment from the form of his nurse or mother."[57] Over time, however, the infant passes through several cognitive states. The first recognition for the infant is that the mother or nurse exists outside the self. Hallam does not, as theorists since Freud have done, interpose an "objective" state in which the infant regards the breast or the mother's body as merely an instrument or object. Instead, he focuses strictly on the sensations that the infant feels and the rational processes by which she understands (Hallam says "infers") the import of those feelings. The second "assumption" the infant makes is that the "looks and tones in the other being" (i.e., the cooing, "responsive" gestures of the mother/nurse) are associated with the pleasure she is experiencing. The infant thus assumes that the other is interlinked through an economy of pleasure. Furthermore, the infant believes she is the *cause* of the other's happiness, just as the other, through her care and feeding, is the cause of the infant's pleasure. We can sense in Hallam's descriptions the structure of Blake's "Infant Joy," the delineations of a chiasmatic connection.

In his important review of Tennyson's poetry, "On some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry," Hallam reframes "On Sympathy's" theory of psychological development into a theory of poetics. In place of the infant, it is the poet (i.e., Tennyson) who lives a "life of immediate sympathy with the external universe."[58] In this transposition, the capacity of the infant to feel in reciprocal relation to the mother or nurse becomes, for the poet, the "power of embodying himself in ideal characters, or rather moods of character"; the poet "evolves" the character by the use of "assimilative force" drawn directly from feeling. The rhythms of infancy, the repetitions that Hallam claims as the basis for pleasure and the interruptions of which provide us with "pleasurable" pain, are there at the disposal of the poet of sensation: "the variety of his lyrical measures, and exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed."[59] Meter, in other words, becomes a regulating factor for the feeling of pleasure and pain.[60] Sympathy is not merely the corresponding

psychological state, an a priori receptivity, but also a physiological register, the name for a reciprocal exchange between reader and poet, poet and world—both relations mirroring the dyad of mother/nurse and child. Thus, echoing P. B. Shelley in "A Defence of Poetry," Hallam links poetry to the infant's acts of reality testing, of projection and introjection, thus grounding poetics in an innate ability to produce "corresponding antitypes" to every "pleasurable impression." This relation of resonance suggests the possibility of returning monadic representations—poetic, lyric, isolated—to the dyadic or multiple presence of the *objectal* world—other people, nature, etc.

At the level of prosody, what Hallam terms the "marks of suffering" registered as pleasure "mingled" with pain by the exemplary infant in "On Sympathy" can be read as literal marks of emphasis or stress. Furthermore, the double flow of influence between Hallam and Tennyson, as well as the tendency for the men to refer to each other as infants, is itself a mark, an index of their shared and tenacious adherence to a gestational/maternal model of poetic inspiration, care, and collaboration: like Tennyson's infant, each knows "nothing beyond [the other's] eye."[61]

In Memoriam, Tennyson's serially composed elegy to Hallam, offers a clear example of this ethics of maternal care. Consider poem XLV, believed to have been influenced by "On Sympathy":

> The baby new to earth and sky,
> What time his tender palm is prest
> Against the circle of the breast,
> Has never thought that 'this is I:'
>
> But as he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of 'I', and 'me,'
> And finds 'I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch.'
>
> So rounds he to a separate mind
> From whence clear memory may begin,
> As thro' the frame that binds him in
> His isolation grows defined.
>
> This use may lie in blood and breath,
> Which else were fruitless of their due,
> Had man to learn himself anew
> Beyond the second birth of Death.[62]

Tennyson, like Hallam, describes the state before separation of subject and object, infant and mother begins. Echoing Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," he tracks the infant's entrance into the symbolic order. He infers a similar emergence of the awareness of temporality, not in earthly forgetting,

but rather in awareness of difference. The baby's "clear memory," in other words, requires a split not just between experiencing and reporting subject (I remember me), but also between two temporalities, the "then" and the "now." Tennyson carefully works out the logic of this becoming. The argument of the preceding poem (XLIV) follows even more closely the argument of Wordsworth's Ode: "… here [on earth] the man is more and more; / But he forgets the days before / God shut the doorways of his head" (2–4). Hallam's defense of the infant as sympathetically connected to rhythms of pleasure and pain muddies the water of Tennyson's "clear memory" by suggesting that memory is also always somehow somatic, inseparable from forgetting. The uncanny implication of Tennyson's formulation (separation = memory = isolation = pain) is that enmeshment with the mother = forgetting = connection = pleasure. In this way, the infant's connection with the mother compulsively repeats Tennyson's depiction of Hallam after death: "… he forgets the days before." Thus the pleasure of the mother's body, as well as its painful absence, constitutes the spatiotemporal conditions of our experience. For Hallam, this love of another is inseparable from a kind of self-love: "a conscious agent can only be imagined as a separate and co-existent part of self."[63]

Extending this logic, in "On Some Characteristics …," Hallam argues that "rational" aesthetic judgment should also be subordinate to the body. The poet of sensation (intuition) surpasses the poet of reflection (conceptualization)—in other words, Tennyson over Wordsworth. For example, after criticizing Tennyson's "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," for its misuse of the word "redolent," Hallam doubles back: "At the same time our feelings in this instance rebel strongly in behalf of 'redolent'; for the melody of the passage, as it stands, is beyond the possibility of improvement."[64] Hallam's critical approach here is performative. A poetry of sensation requires a criticism of sensation, one that operates according to several different logics, affective as well as cognitive, and that, like the mother–baby dyad itself, is able to permit two points of view to coexist, even at the risk of tension, contradiction, and "misuse." Importantly, it creates the conditions for Tennyson's ensuing poetic production.

Hallam suggests a "felt" poetic "melody" in Tennyson's use of the word "redolent." Pleasure/melody/enmeshment on this reading are inseparable from the metrical field; measure may be the ultimate pleasure for the poet of sensation in that it invites forgetting, enmeshment with the mother and, ultimately, with the dead. Substitution, the term that poets use for a break or caesura in the metrical pattern (RED-o-lent), is itself a form of splitting, the irruption of separateness, "me-ness" and will into the poem, itself a kind of rounding to a separate rhythm.[65]

Hallam's approval of Tennyson's heterogeneity of forms and tropes becomes then a kind of ethical as well as metrical and prosodic map. It fosters a poetics that critics recognized as subtle, variable, yet ultimately suited (like the songs in *The Princess*) for elegy. George Saintsbury, for example, in

volume III of *A History of English Prosody* … comments that the *In Memoriam* quatrain (*abba*) naturally lends itself to "pensive meditation":

> I defy any one to use the *In Memoriam* stanza without dropping into such a vein, unless he is contented with simple burlesque, or likes to have his metre perpetually jostling his thought, like two ill-matched walkers arm-in-arm.[66]

Saintsbury points to the meditative marriage in the poem of content and form, a union he claims, somewhat embarrassedly, cannot be accounted for in terms other than psychology.[67] In terms of the quatrain structure (*abba*), we might refer to it as a "holding" environment—the inner rhymes "enveloped" by the outer (it is in fact often referred to as the envelope stanza).[68]

The form of the *In Memoriam* stanza mirrors Tennyson's stillborn aesthetics insofar as it allows at once a letting-go of as well as a holding-on to objects (*abba*). Just as I will argue that *The Princess*'s interpolated songs can be read as symptomatic of an overdetermined loss, so too *In Memoriam* reinforces a sense of stuttering loss, verse that seeks to redress and reorder trauma retroactively, which it does largely through repetition and metrical substitution. Stanza two of poem XLV formally arrests the imagined child at the point of otherness. The even iambic patterns shift toward the end of the poem:

> And finds 'I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch.'

"And finds 'I am'" can be scanned as either

x / x /		x / \ /
And finds I am	or as	And finds I am,

the "I" receiving a secondary stress.

This scansion is reinforced by the speech situation, the entrance into the poem of an internal speaker, a newly and loosely formed ego, constituted by its own utterance. The second scansion is also supported by the fact that the beat falls on "I" in the previous line ("And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'"). The effect of this ambiguity, I argue, is that a slight caesura opens up before "I," creating an added emphasis on "finding," as in a lost object that must be recuperated, but it also suggests a scientific "finding" or discovery:

> x / x / x / x /
> But as he grows he gathers much,
> x / x / x / x /
> And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'
> x / \ (or x) / x / x /
> And finds I am not what I see,

Tennyson brilliantly inserts a similar weak stress in the identical position (first position, second foot) in the next and final line of the quatrain:

> x / x \ (or x) x / x /
> And other than the things I touch.'

The effect here is even more dramatic; either "than" receives a weak stress or none at all (my vote). Regardless, the line hovers on "otherness" before galloping forward (I scan "than the ***things***" as an anapest) to the "things I touch." Formally, then, the stanza carries a secondary, "sympathetic" message: "I am other." This statement lingers, not at the level of reason, but rather as the felt effect of the affective structure, the form of the poem; it further functions as a poetic reformulation of Hallam's theory:

> The soul, we have seen, contemplates a separate being as a separate state of itself, the only being it can conceive. But the two exist simultaneously. Therefore that impetuous desire arises. Therefore, in her [the soul's] anxiety to break down all obstacles, and to amalgamate two portions of her divided substance, she will hasten to blend emotions and desires with those apparent in the kindred spirit.[69]

The process of being "rounded to a separate mind" leaves a trace in the form of (impossible) desire to "amalgamate" with the other. The infant/poet/soul passes on to separate states of separateness, but always bearing with her desire born of division—this desire, remember, introduces itself in the place of primary instinct.

And while Tennyson's poem bears several traces of this desire, it reveals this desire and loss acutely at the level of form. Hallam's exemplary poet of sensation (Tennyson) attempts to hold the separate parts and delineated objects in formal relation: "he holds all of them *fused* … in a medium of strong emotion."[70] Yet as we have seen, even the tetrameter line and metrics of the *In Memoriam* stanza cannot contain the affective fusion of separation and desire without bursting the parameters of the line and meter.[71] There seems at least as much diffusion as fusion, as much unbinding as binding in the poem.

5.5 "Out of Darkness Came the Hands"

In her translation of "Mourning and Melancholia" Joan Riviere notes that the word Freud chooses to describe the pain produced by the loss of a loved one is *Schmertz* (pain, ache, grief, sorrow) as opposed to *Unlust* (pain, but also reluctance), a term Riviere suggests is favored by Freud as "the mental antithesis of pleasure" (154). The conventional reading, not one that I wish to contest necessarily, is that on the level of narrative *In Memoriam* resolves the grief (Schmertz) through the temporal repetitions of Christmases and the

arrival/resurrection of Easter. Tennyson's sister Emily's marriage (she had been, at the time of his death, engaged to Hallam) also provides a sense of closure to the poem; we might even read it as representing an easing or displacement of the homoerotic/homosocial feelings of Tennyson and Hallam (i.e., the potential "exchange" of Emily [as theorized through Gayle Rubin's famous "Traffic in Women" argument[72]], thwarted by Hallam's death). Yet I have been arguing for another level of grief at work in the poem (Unlust) and that that grief exists at the level of form, at the level of a painful (reluctant) break or a series of compulsive repetitions—metrical, thematic, lexical. *In Memoriam's* Unlust, as I read it, is registered in the body, through partial and recurrent displacements and shocks, and represents the perpetual letting go and finding of its object.

Even at the end of the poem, when Tennyson relinquishes (mostly) his unbelief in God and makes himself rather than Hallam into an infant, to whom God the father's hands reach out, he is reluctant to let go of the object of disbelief, synonymous with the object of loss, that is, Hallam:

> No, like a child in doubt and fear:
> But that blind clamour made me wise;
> Then was I as a child that cries,
> But, crying, knows his father near;
>
> And what I am beheld again
> What is, and no man understands;
> And out of darkness came the hands
> That reach thro' nature, moulding men.[73]

Tennyson manages brilliantly—and perhaps this is what Eliot admired in him—to wedge faith and doubt into the same psychic and poetic space. Echoing 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13 ("When I was a child, I spake like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways."), Tennyson suggests that to lose the child now means something like maturity.[74] In other words, there is an ethics of accepting the separation, the gap, the space, the distance. It is an ethics of a *radical* acceptance. At the same time, of course, the poem displays its disunity in the Unlust or reluctance, a melancholic indigestible core (the mental antithesis of pleasure) that is taken into the subject (the "what I am" [Tennyson's subjectivity] is altered due to the loss of Hallam ["what is"]); Freud defines this change in ego representation, rather than world representation, as one defining feature of melancholia.[75] Once again, we can say that the symptomatic eruption of energy irrupts formally in the sequence: "What **is**, and **no man** under**stands**." Tennyson's Unlust, his reluctance to release Hallam (or any of the other important personal or collective lost objects touched on in this chapter), is echoed in the substitution of "no man" in the middle of the line, an inversion made more powerful by the internal rhyme of "man" and "stands."

As we have seen, the mnemic quality of the death drive suggests that we are physically and psychically altered by traumatic memory, a change that is also materially registered in formal qualities of Tennyson's verse. In other words, at the level of form—disruptive, painful, irregular—the two men are still not separated; they "understand" (underwrite) each other as "no [other] man" can. They are, as Tennyson suggests at the end of the poem proper, "soul in soul." I believe we should interrogate our desire to read "soul in soul" as a comforting, normative working through. Of course I understand (and share) the desire for a happy ending. Yet it seems more in keeping with the spirit of the poem to read "soul in soul" as a superposition—Hallam over/on/in Tennyson. Perhaps we might also read "soul in soul" in tandem with Saintsbury's image of walkers jostling each other "arm in arm" (slightly out of sync, wounded)—which is to say that every time we read *In Memoriam* (i.e., follow the cadence—*cadere*: to fall), we are, as readers, compelled to repeat, comforted and discomfited in some sort of equal measure. Like the child of "As through the land at eve we went," a song from *The Princess* that informs the argument of my penultimate section, we are lost one moment and found the next.

5.6 *The Princess*: Song as Stillborn Form

There is ample evidence that Tennyson first conceived the idea for *The Princess* in the same year that "Wherefore in These Dark Ages" was written.[76] And while *The Princess* evolved significantly over time, clearly the impetus to conceive of a longer, multivocal poem arose, at least in part, in response to the pressures articulated in "Wherefore …," that is, criticisms that his poetry was "too removed from 'familiar matters of today'" (Garden), that many of his poems were "altogether without meaning" (Mill), and so on.[77] In any case, the composition of *The Princess* was certainly not one of immediate inspiration. In fact, it is part of the lore of Tennyson's *The Princess* that it underwent significant revisions in the course of its first three publications.[78] In fact, the early publication history and reception seem as interesting to critics as the text(s) of the poem itself. Several songs (centering primarily on the figure of the child) were included in the third addition, inserted between the seven narrative sections of the larger mock-heroic poem. As Tennyson recounts, "The child is the link through the parts, as shown in the Songs, which are the best interpreters of the poem."[79] The collegiate narrator of the poem announces in the prologue that, unlike the heroic narrative (told in seven parts by the seven college friends), "the ladies [will] sing … some ballad or a song / To give us breathing-space" (233–235). Commentators have, from the earliest reviews to the present, almost universally preferred the "breathing space" of the lyric sections or songs to the narrative "rougher"[80] body of the poem. Song then becomes not only the sole province of the feminine, but also the poem's most universally satisfying aesthetic element.

In all of its versions, *The Princess* has been read as an attempt to educate, improve the conditions of, chasten, and/or subdue women. So perhaps it is not surprising to find that song, the realm that Tennyson ascribes to women, also was historically privileged in the nineteenth century as the mode best suited to communicate *affective* (i.e., sentimental or domestic) truths.[81] As I argued earlier, the gendering of poetic form takes on unique significance for Tennyson, especially given his assertion that all true-cast poets are "half woman-natured." According to Saintsbury, song accomplishes these ends not merely by means of its content, but also by its more malleable, fluid, and dexterous form. While Saintsbury expresses admiration for Tennyson's plurality of styles, he notes specifically the taste for shorter pieces, claiming that it was the "bent of the century." Shorter pieces gave themselves to "more opportunities for varying prosodic success than the long," and, as a consequence, the "addition of [Tennyson's] songs … was a rich prosodic as well as poetic *bonus*."[82]

It is not simply that the songs compensate for an aesthetic gap in the blank verse (Tennyson is generally acknowledged to be a masterful practitioner of blank verse),[83] nor that they merely communicate corrective meanings; rather, the "bonus" (the "good") provided by the songs is woven into the texture of the poem, serving now pedagogic, now disciplinary, and now aesthetic ends: "The songs themselves … stand there, not merely for the sake of their intrinsic beauty, but serve to call back the reader's mind, at every pause in the tale of the Princess's folly, to that very healthy ideal of womanhood which she has spurned."[84] Yet it is not at all clear—from Tennyson's own comments, that is—precisely what was to be called to the reader's mind by the songs. With a characteristic mix of scrupulousness and opacity, Tennyson writes to S. E. Dawson, corroborating that the child was indeed the "heroine of the piece" and that the songs were intended to clarify what "the public did not see."[85] Twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics have generally agreed that the songs manage to muddy the message of the poem at least as much as they clarify it. Even Jerome Buckley, one of Tennyson's most perceptive and eminent twentieth-century critics, sees no direct correlation between the songs and the larger theme of the poem: "If they do indeed interpret the action, they must indicate a real theme beyond the apparent occasion of the poem, a meaning apart from all contemporary sympathies."[86] Recently, responding largely to the most influential late twentieth-century readings of the poem by Eve Sedgewick and Terry Eagleton, critics have interpreted the songs as operating at odds with the mock-heroic elements: pointing to "the extent of Tennyson's feminist sympathies,"[87] or working in tandem with the framing narratives to repress "any advance toward polyphony."[88]

If the child is the link through the parts and the songs are the key to the poem, then perhaps the songs, like the figure of the child more generally, operate as interruptions. The generic space carved out by the songs allows them to enter into subtle contestation with the narrative or blank verse elements in the poem. As Ewan Jones has recently written, "the

superimposition of the songs exposes those internal contradictions (formal, generic and historical) that were already present, but which lay concealed within the blank verse." According to Jones, "the poem itself struggles against [its own] knowledge."[89] On this reading, the songs' resistance to being integrated into the narrative disrupts rather than aids the narrative drive of the poem. Ballad measure uniquely underscores this interruption, especially insofar as ballad might be thought of as an archaic point of contact with an earlier poetics, thus helping to explain not only the predominance of ballad within the songs, but also the relation between a specific received form (with all of its ideological connotations) and a stillborn poetics. Tennyson's ongoing engagement with the genre of ballad thus takes on additional meaning. In fact, the earliest interpolated songs in *The Princess* are ballads; then, as the story progresses, the songs shift gradually from a tetrameter to a pentameter line.

As I have noted, song/ballad as a genre carries its own internal relation to the child, its own connotative and connective resonances, of which the child is only one. Ballad is also associated with the "masses," a feminine readership, and an earlier, less fragmented sense of national identity, primarily identified—positively—with Wordsworth, and—radically or prophetically—with Blake.[90] These connections were so ingrained in nineteenth-century culture that to include, as Tennyson proposed to do in *The Princess,* a ballad entitled "The Losing of the Child" is tantamount to worrying the loss of an object in a form whose very articulation constitutes its resuscitation. What emerges from this understanding of song is a form that is simultaneously disruptive *and* elegiac, conservative *and* subversive.

Within the narrative arc of the poem, the Prince's "weird seizures" are also relevant insofar as they point to the femininity and even maternal nature of the Prince/narrator. The seizures give way (birth) to the interpolated ballad sections of the poem, suggesting that sensitivity and sensibility are still poetic prerequisites in Tennyson's schema. The figure of the parturient poet therefore can be situated within in a literary-historical genealogy of lyric's engagement with the figure of child and ballad form. What I have previously termed poetic parturition comes to figure here in a formal way. In other words, Tennyson's anxiety about poetic reproduction and reception, an anxiety doubled symptomatically as the Prince's "weird seizures," necessitates a formal gesture—namely, the inclusion of the songs.

Tennyson added the seizures after he added the songs. Thus they constitute his final revisions to the poem. In some measure, they act as an index of the Prince's anxiety, an anxiety that paradoxically gets worked out through incorporation of the songs. Celeste Langan and Andrew Elfenbein have written about the relation between a kind of "nerve-language" and the production of poetic verse.[91] A kind of corollary or vestige of the space and temporality of the infant, the boundary between sleep and consciousness gets conceived by nineteenth-century critics as a site of lyric generation and effect: song "awakes all the fountains of bitter-sweet memory, sets us

dreaming like a half audible strain of music in the distance, without fixing the mind to definite objects, suspends reflection and will. …"[92] These dream states, like metaphysical experience more generally, are part and parcel of the self-conception of many nineteenth-century poets. Keats, of course, is the paradigmatic example. For Tennyson, the danger occurs when the poet's dream language, the children of his silence, comes in contact with systems of exchange, publication, circulation, etc. Likewise for the Prince in the poem, liminal spaces are locations of potentially dangerous confrontations:

> And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
> To float about a glimmering night, and watch
> A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
> On some dark shore just seen that it was rich. (I: 242–245)

It is in this state of in between that song first breaks into the poem. As I have suggested, the Prince's seizures uniformly anticipate most of the interpolated songs. Yet the connection between song and seizure is not explicit in the text. In fact, a number of nineteenth-century critics wondered at the reason for adding the seizures. Dawson, writing in 1859, claims that they weaken the poem and asks whether "they are to indicate the weakness and incompleteness of the poet side of the Prince's character. …"[93] Dawson's reading of the poem traces an internal movement in the poem whereby the poet-prince character (Dawson himself conflates them, and Tennyson, in his letter to Dawson, does not disagree) moves from doubt to certainty, from weakness to strength. On this reading, anxiety is symptomatic of a poetic weakness that is finally excised from his character as he finds his "rest in his ideal." This reading of the Prince's anxiety—that is, of his "weakness," which more properly belongs to the province of women—underwrites more normative readings of the poem. These types of readings, emphasizing the need for Aristotelian narrative normalization, push logically to transcend song, the "feminine" element, either to incorporate it, as the Princess does as she becomes the maternal-healing figure for the Prince once he is injured, or appropriate it, but to push beyond it nonetheless.

In fact, several nineteenth-century critics of *The Princess* worried over the effeminacy of its language, warning of a "dressy literature, an exaggerated literature,'" a softness and effeminacy that is an "evil incident to democracy."[94] Implicit in many of the critiques is a class bias; only uneducated (i.e., soft, feminine) readers would "go in" for *The Princess*. A more educated readership would reject its generically multiple poetry:

> To high thinking and noble living the pure style is natural. But these things are severe, require moral bracing, minds which are not luxurious, and can endure hardness. Softness, luxuriousness, and moral limpness find their congenial element in excess of highly colored ornamentation.[95]

Even Tennyson's friends complained about his sensitivity, his morbidity, his "Germanized, and smoke-sodden temperament." Why won't he, Aubrey de Vere wondered, "set about writing like a man?"[96] Clearly, these terms resonate with Victorian critiques of Romantic era poetry and childishness—of Shelley in particular.[97] These complaints about Tennyson, in other words, work from both sides; they suggest an untoward and romantic influence from without as well as a moral weakness from within. Even Lady Tennyson remarked in a letter about her husband's "tenderness of nerve," which she hoped would not "descend" to her children."[98]

Rather than read Tennyson's particular brand of sensitivity as stemming from internalized-historical (his depression in relation to his alcoholic father) as well as its external-historical (the pressures of producing a poetry that would serve the needs of the age) determinations, I have suggested there are models of anxiety (birth trauma, for example) that make anxiety (nervous language) primary, rather than a symptom. What matters is not the etiology of Tennyson's anxieties so much as their dual points of articulation, which the poet *feels* as internal (personal/lyric) and external (social/longer forms). Coyle and Cronin suggest that the false choice between so-called lyric and longer forms was a "problem to be confronted by all Victorian poets who accepted that a poem was authentic only in so far as it maintained a lyric voice, and yet aspired to write a poetry that addressed the circumstances of their times."[99]

Tennyson's solution in *The Princess*—to move in a "strange diagonal" (conclusion), to steer a path between lyric and epic—seems to have satisfied almost no one:

> And, towards [the poem's] conclusion, issues in a *cambe recota* of all heterogeneous elements—for which it would be difficult to discover a palpable simile, except we find it in a Centaur, "half man and half horse"—or in a mermaid, "a lovely lady with a fish's tail"—or in a Caliban, or in a "Bottom the weaver," with his innocent ass's mouth "watering for thistles" … The general impression left on the mind by 'The Princess' is therefore, as might have been expected, simply the grotesque.[100]

The term "grotesque" (originally the final word in J. M. Marston's unsigned review of *The Princess*[101]) had a certain valence in nineteenth-century poetry criticism, and it comes close to describing what may be the core distaste for the poem: its gender-bending, not to mention its genre-blending, are entirely too close to the surface for comfort.[102] The fact that Dawson needed both the similes of the centaur and the mermaid suggests that the hybridity in the poem is sexual as well as formal. Yet it is not enough to claim that the Prince's unmanliness and/or the Princess's surplus of masculine attributes are strictly the issue either. Rather, the hybridity of the poetic genres and the hybridity of the represented gender roles are finally and inextricably linked. So when the poem announces finally that women are, or should be,

"diverse" from men, we cannot help but hear both "different" and "varied," as well as "double versed."

The narrator acknowledges that it was in fact the power of the women and the ballads that forced this grotesque diagonal:

> The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
> For something in the ballads which they sang,
> Or in their silent influence as they sat,
> Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
> And drove us, last to quite a solemn close—(Conclusion 13–17)

The solemnity of the close can be understood as the effect of a process of distancing. Through the interpolation of the songs, that is, through the insertion of spatial and temporal intervals or interruptions, the poem can finally be "driven" into the world—in other words, put into circulation. As I argued before, Tennyson's anxiety about releasing poems into the world, the fear that he, or perhaps *we,* will "lose the child," results in a poem shot through with gaps and fissures, hesitancy and doubt, which critics have read as a sign of effeminacy. In the narrative logic of *The Princess* the Prince transcends his own effeminacy (his epileptic fits) even as it is instantiated inside him through his internal and external linkage with the now reformed Princess: they are two halves of a "two-celled heart."

Yet each character (Prince and Princess) is also two celled, or perhaps put more accurately, two selved. For example, when the Princess reads, "Now sleeps the crimson petal" and "Come down, O maid" to the wounded Prince, she is, on one level, fulfilling the woman's role. She who had previously refused song and the child now takes the place propitious to the feminine. She reads the words aloud, yet the words and rhythms are perhaps less a consolation to the injured Prince than a form of meditation for her. Strangely, then, the songs come through her and to her and she is, in that moment, both male and female, teacher and taught, mother and infant: "So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales / Await thee. …" Granted, Ida is being subjected in this section to a kind of disciplining or normalizing. But it is equally interesting to consider the degree to which the Prince, although no longer stricken with seizures, still retains the lyrical "half-feminine" character of the true-cast poet. He received his poetic half-feminine nature through his mother: "Happy he / With such a mother! faith in womankind / Beats with his blood … and though he trip and fall / He shall not blind his soul with clay" (VII; 308–312). Terms associated with verse (beating, tripping, falling) recur within the passage to associate him forever with a form of poetic sensibility that seems to have passed into him in utero.

Of course the contest between song and mock-heroic need not only be read as allegorical, that is, as a struggle between embodied and intersected gender traits, but can also be read as a formal intermixing, interfusing, and combining—as Tennyson suggests, a medley. That the forms might mix and

still refuse synthesis or unification points again to the paradox of a stillborn poetics. The songs force an internal break or interruption in the generic poetic boundaries, much as historical and ideological forces operate to force a movement in the lived (gendered, familial, sexual, educational, literary) relations that get represented and recast within the poem. The break or interval the songs are proposed to provide—the "breathing space"—as readers can attest, more often than not results in a perplexing but not unpleasurable dissonance. The songs, in other words, are integrated at the same time as they resist integration into the larger poem, resulting in a breathless, internal, and unbreachable distance.

5.7 Child as Ballad, Ballad as Child

Coventry Patmore referred to ballad as an "ancient narrative meter, which, though almost excluded from the 'polite literature' of the eighteenth century, never lost its charm for the people."[103] It is possible (following Matthew Arnold's condescension toward the ballad and its practitioners) to interpret "the people" as bordering on an epithet.[104] There were and are multiple connotations to the ballad, of course. As Jason Rudy claims, for example, "the comfortingly predictable Victorian ballad offers … an impossibly idealized vision of the British nation."[105] Regardless of the ideology that ballad reflects at any given historical moment, it is clear that despite the ballad "revival" started by Isaac Watts and James Macpherson and continued by William Wordsworth and Felicia Hemans, ballad was never far out of fashion. Furthermore, D. M. Moir, writing in 1856, claims that ballad has a specific *affective* universality:

> Common to every human heart there is a certain class of emotions, the expressons of which "turn as they leave the lips to song;" and hence the primitive form of poetry in the ballad.[106]

Moir's universal claim points to the stakes involved in this argument—both for this chapter as well as for formalist and historicist criticism of nineteenth-century poetry more generally. I am suggesting that ballad measure or hymn measure recurs throughout the nineteenth century as indexical of a loss (nature, national and personal innocence or youth, poetic vision, etc.). This poetry of eternal return is often articulated in proximity to infants, domesticity, pastoral scenes, or memories of childhood—so much so that the signification functions either way—ballad to child or child to ballad. The songs in *The Princess* are one obvious example; Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes* and "Childe Harold's Good Night" from Canto One of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are others.[107]

Although Tennyson later claimed that ballad or song was not extrinsic to *The Princess*, the fact is that his first emendations/additions to the published version of *The Princess* were minor and contained within the blank

verse. Next Tennyson added the songs and expanded the conclusion. Finally, he wrote in the Prince's weird seizures. "The songs were never an afterthought," he explained. "You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine [of the poem] if, instead of the first song as it now stands 'As thro' the land at eve we went,' I had printed the first song which I wrote, 'The Losing of the Child.'"[108]

The child was sitting on the bank
    Upon a stormy day.
He loved the river's roaring sound;
The river rose and burst his bound,
Flooded fifty leagues around,
Took the child from off the ground,
    And bore the child away.

O the child so meek and wise,
    Who made us wise and mild!
All was strife at home about him,
Nothing could be done without him;
Father, mother, sister, brother,
All accusing one another;
    O to lose the child!

The river left the child unhurt,
    But far within the wild.
Then we led him home again,
Peace and order come again,
The river sought his bound again,
The child was lost and found again,
    And we will keep the child.

Clearly, Tennyson was right. This song would have made more explicable the now-conventional reading of *The Princess* insofar as it recapitulates the redemptive narrative of the larger mock-heroic. So why does Tennyson not include it? On the one hand, of course, It would mean, of course, cutting "As Through the Land at Eve We Went," arguably the better poem.

Beginning with the title, Tennyson seeks to frame the poem within a mythical Blakean structure. Rather than "Losing the Child"—a potential process—we get narrative definitiveness, determination, and anteriority: "*The* Losing of the Child." The poem itself proceeds in a pattern of shorter lines. Thus, from a strictly formal point of view—and by point of view, I also mean the literal way the poem *looks* on the page—the songs introduce three- and four-beat lines (i.e., shorter), where previously (I am reading the poem *as if* it had occupied the place of pride [as the first song of *The Princess*] that Tennyson claims to have intended it to occupy), there had been only been uniform five-beat lines.

Not only do the songs make a medley of the poem, but they also set up intertextual and transhistorical resonances. For example, the first and last couplets in each stanza paragraph of "The Losing of the Child" replicate exactly the measure of Blake's "Little Boy Lost," and "Little Boy Found" from *Songs of Innocence*. In Blake's companion poems, written in hymn measure (a four-beat line followed by a three-beat line), God appears in the place of the father and leads the boy home to his mother. In Tennyson's poem, no such deity is at work. The social and familial structures likewise seem to have failed. Instead, Tennyson uses three tetrameter lines with more or less unchanging rhyme sounds—dedifferentiating the internal couplets—in between the hymn measure couplets. The effect is to formally inscribe something like homogeneity and order. The only real difference appears in the middle stanza, when chiasmus (meek and wise … wise and mild) and internal (aural and ideational) rhyme (father, mother, sister, brother) do the work instead, this time working rather to equalize blame for the loss and resulting disorder, or such disorder as there is in this very tidy poem. The identical rhymes that break out in the final stanza (again, again, again, again) drive home the point of the child's importance as a symbol, an arbitrary and appositive sign that stands in for something, reproduces it in contradistinction to any actual children, whose historical and personal specificity might make identical rhyme tantamount to a form a reification.[109] For what human subject—even, or perhaps especially, a child—is ever identical with itself, much less with any other?

Tennyson himself, though, does *not* drive home these points. In fact, the poem remained unpublished in his lifetime. Instead, as we have noted, he interpolates the song "As through the land at eve we went," which tells the Wordsworthian tale of a husband and wife who have a falling out while journeying to the grave of a child "lost in other years."

> As thro' the land at eve we went,
> And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
> We fell out, my wife and I,
> O we fell out I know not why,
> And kiss'd again with tears.
> And blessings on the falling out
> That all the more endears,
> When we fall out with those we love
> And kiss again with tears!
> For when we came where lies the child
> We lost in other years,
> There above the little grave,
> O there above the little grave,
> We kiss'd again with tears.

Immediately we can see that the loss Tennyson imagines as social and communal in "The Losing of the Child" is experienced at a much more isolated,

familial, and individual level. The object moral lesson itself is nothing new—Wordsworth's "Two April Mornings" contains an even more challenging version of "endearing" (can we also hear the less idealistic "all the more en**dures**"?) in Matthew's "I did not wish her mine," that is, the capitulation to God's will even on the level of thought or desire. Although the couple is reconciled in grief (they "kissed again with tears") at the end of the poem, the child, as a living being, is still lost. As a point of origin for the couple's loss (perhaps even for the strength of their love), the child is located again, named. It is, in other words, found and lost simultaneously. The form, though hybrid in terms of its lineation, is unfalteringly balladic.

The comforting repetition of the refrain (kiss again with tears) links the form of ballad with a form of mourning, a structure (the primitive form) *and* a drive toward the past (the other years) and the future (blessings whose reverberations move "through the land," i.e., through the spatial and temporal field of the poem). This is yet another sense in which the poem conserves even, or especially, that which it overtakes. Besides pulling the blank verse of *The Princess* toward loss and recuperation, the song compulsively repeats its four-three beat linear structure, and its repeated end-rhymes (note the identical repetition of the penultimate line—is this melancholic 'supplement' an anticipatory echo of the *In Memoriam* stanza?).[110]

The poem is built on the dramatic irony of the narrator's repressed understanding of his and his wife's condition. We know why the couple falls out, even as he claims not to know. Presumably, it is easier to fall out than to feel the full brunt of loss of their child. One gets the sense that this couple peripatetically wanders the countryside, endlessly fighting and kissing. The poem presages the (more self-aware)[111] reconciliation of the Prince and the Princess. The mock-heroic sections of *The Princess*, the blank verse narrative, does not melancholically incorporate into its narrative structure—at least not as explicitly—the repetitions of falling and rising, losing and finding. This more cyclical *weltanschauung* is the unique project of the songs.

The border-state that precedes the song seems close in its affective and psychic disorientation to the Prince's strange Keatsian seizures ("I seemed to move among a world of ghosts, / And feel myself the shadow of a dream" [I: 17, 18]).[112] Keats is an important figure in this regard, not just because one of his most famous ballads—"La Belle Dame sans Merci"—anticipates Tennyson completely, but also because Keats's reception throughout the nineteenth century was that of a "child" (Arnold), whose verse was too "feminine" (Patmore).[113] The song's relation to Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* (specifically, "The Thorn," "Song" ["She dwelt among the untrodden ways"], and "Two April Mornings") points again to the return of ballad measure as a late eighteenth-, early nineteenth-century mode that recurs and generally haunts poetry written later in the century, Tennyson's in particular. Like Wordsworth's ballads, the themes of Tennyson's songs tend toward children and childhood.[114] Whereas Dawson in the nineteenth century conflates the Prince with Tennyson, it is also possible to read the Prince as

the figure for the "poet" in the poem. His effeminate fainting spells precipitate nearly all of the interpolated ballads. As his seizures give way to taking assertive action and ultimately to being wounded, the ballad sections of the poem give way to pentameter or five-beat lines. In this regard the Prince gives birth to a nostalgic form (ballad, says Moir, is the "primitive form of poetry"), a conservative gesture that, like naming a child for a beloved, deceased person, pulls in both directions, future and past, at once.

By referring to ballad as a "conserving" form or genre, I mean not only that it carries the weight of poetic tradition, but also that it can contain within its generic structure a "certain class of emotions, the expressions of which 'turn as they leave the lips to song.'" It is, in other words, melancholic. The same might be true of blank verse, of course, or iambic pentameter in general. But as Paul Fry suggests in his important book on the English ode, whereas other lyric forms seek to make voice or consciousness present, hymn or ballad seeks to sacralize or praise (i.e., to speak to the gods or the dead).[115] Elegiac in form and content, Tennyson's songs remove the object of the song (principally the child) from the contingencies of the world, the narrative of the idyll, and seal it up within a song of praise.[116] With "As through the Land at Eve We Went" as the first song, loss is sealed up within the verse form (not enjambed and broken with caesuras as is the blank verse) at the same time as it conserves within the "form" (one might even say that it buries it) its affective or emotional content. To "kiss again with tears" is the perfect emblem for a poetry that is always being born again, but always haunted by a primal and unnameable loss.

5.8 And We Shall Keep the Child

The repetition of poetic form (by Tennyson) and ritualistic mourning (by the characters of the song) reproduces Freud's argument about the compulsion to repeat in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Setting aside the biologism of Freud's scandalous postulation of a death drive (Green reminds us that we must think of it rather as a theoretical structure), whereby living matter strives continually toward its earlier nonliving state, we have a picture in that essay of anxiety as a conservative force.[117] According to Freud's logic, trauma can sometimes break into the psyche, usually on account of an "absence of preparation for anxiety."[118] Unpleasurable and unconscious repetitions—compulsions to repeat—occur in order to "master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis."[119] Freud's premise, articulated more forcefully by Melanie Klein, is that anxiety is productive … of more anxiety. Much like the formal elements of a poem, anxiety's *function is to bind energy*.[120] Tennyson's anxious revision of *The Princess* may itself have been an attempt at retrospective mastery, merely one mode of distancing, of establishing a stillborn relation to the poem. As we have seen, the poem initially received unfavorable and/or lukewarm reviews, which no doubt prompted the

successive revisions.[121] The thematic revisions move away from gender and toward the maternal; Tennyson's use of song as an interpolated interruption returns us in form and content to the thematic and the topos of the stillborn, or *lost,* child. Furthermore, ballad as a historical form may be said to interrupt Tennyson's "innovative" blank verse epic—giving it and us, as the narrator says of the songs in the Prologue, "breathing space." Finally, the vulnerability of the child, and, indexically, the culture, is the primary "message" of most of the songs.

More generally, we can see that ballad (archaic forms in general, but especially ballad) is a primitive and iterative form and that it might be productively theorized as consonant with the death drive, whereas the blank verse of the narrative drives forward toward unity and creation. Not in any essential way, but as the result of a living literary-historical process, ballad pulls then toward the archaic historicity of poetic forms (i.e., toward death, disintegration, stasis), even as it is in the process of being born. Ballad is, on this reading, always stillborn. The normative blank verse, in contrast, pulls toward narrative. Ballad—elegiac, nostalgic, and rooted in English meter—might be said to regress toward a (theoretical) place before the trauma of birth. As we have seen, Freud's and Rank's romantic formulation of anxiety, like Tennyson's recursion to ballad and the Prince's strange seizures, describes a formal breaking through of the present ("reproduced as an affective state" it gives "certain characteristic forms of expression"). It corresponds to something elsewhere but, in so doing, it brings that elsewhere affectively present, coloring the present with the opaque content of the past.

One more moment from *The Princess*: after the Prince is injured, a song ("Home They Brought the Warrior Dead") is sung whose argument is that a failure to respond to grief results in an entombment of that very grief (not repression, says Freud, but rather a wholesale incorporation). Typical of all the songs in the poem, it does not correspond directly to the action of epic section of the poem, in which the Prince has just been wounded. The ballad instead describes a more generic scene and places an orphaned infant where none exists in the longer text. The Princess, cold and imperious, must grieve, say her handmaids, or else she will die. The refusal to respond to the dead hero or the child—neither the literal child that Ida claims as her own, nor the analogized lover-child of the Prince—results in a breach between her and her people, a political ramification that is inferred in other sections of the longer poem and seems directly determined if not signified by her inability to mourn. The failure to relate to her people has potential gender implications of course. Presumably, the court would not be as scandalized had a *king* or *prince* refused to publicly mourn. The Princess's refusal of the ballad and the child, not of its sentiment per se but rather of its "already existing image," illustrates the political as well as cultural and social power of its (ballad's and the child's) characteristic and embedded form.

In the final strophe, an older nurse named Rose ("Rose" here recalls Tennyson's lost love Rosa Baring) acts responsibly (i.e., she responds to the other):

> Rose a nurse of ninety years,
> Set his child upon her knee—
> Like summer tempest came her tears—
> 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

The wintery Rose is restored to summer, and that restoration reverberates outward toward the community. As I have shown, Tennyson's contemporaries were cognizant of how the child is used in the poem as a spur to domesticity and nationhood. Throughout *The Princess,* the repetition of scenarios in which a child is worried over, or in which the Prince is reduced to a state of dependence resembling that of a child, works to "develop" the anxiety (in Freud's sense) and to disperse it over the wide political, cultural, and ideological field that the poem represents, and to which it is addressed. The form of the appeal is ballad measure or song.

In a fragment from the *Memoir,* written at roughly the same time as the letter quoted before, Tennyson muses over the infant:

> Dead as he was I felt proud of him. To-day when I write this down, the remembrance of it rather overcomes me; but I am glad that I have seen him, dear little nameless one that hast lived though thou has never breathed, I, thy father, love thee and weep over thee, though thou has no place in the Universe. Who knows? It may be that thou hast. … God's Will be done.[122]

I do not mean in any way to schematize or reduce Tennyson's emotions at the loss of his actual child. But to read child-as-poem in this passage is to witness a transformation made possible by the image of a stillborn child. Exactly two years before the stillbirth in April, Tennyson wrote "The Losing of the Child": "The child was lost and found again, / And we will keep the child." The "dear little nameless one" who lived yet did not breathe is finally outside the poet, lost *and* found, and functions like a poem that circulates between readers.

The distance created by Tennyson's surrender ("God's will be done"—an echo, as we have seen, of S. T. and Sara Coleridge's responses to their respective losses) and made possible by the displacing doubleness (lost and found) of the figure of the stillborn child allows the poet once again to speak as father *and* poet, that is, to express a judgment even about that which is nearest to him because it is no longer an undifferentiated object; it has an exterior existence, a place in the universe. A stillborn poetry and poetics mediate between the dictates of the drive toward publication, recognition, preservation and the drive to be enmeshed, "immoored," inanimate. The

poem, like the "nameless" child, may have a place outside the poet yet, not only in the "pamphlet pampered age," but also within a larger genealogy, one that traces the uses and the afterlife of a stillborn poetics and poetry that moves not only from mouth to mouth, but also from hand to hand.

Notes

A condensed version of this chapter appears as "The Breathing Space of Ballad: Tennyson's Stillborn Poetics." *Victorian Poetry*. 47; 1 (2009).

1. Rank, Otto. *Art and Artist: Creative Urge and Personality Development* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1932) 430.
2. "Ulysses."
3. Ricks, Christopher. *Tennyson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 48, 49.
4. For the purposes of this chapter, I am going to treat ballad and song more or less interchangeably, as Tennyson does in *The Princess*. Unlike Tennyson, in those cases where a poem is in ballad measure, I will make a distinction between them, purely for reasons of keeping clear the separate strands of my reading.
5. It is striking that, just as Wordsworth suppressed the passage concerning the infant's grave in the "Immortality Ode," Tennyson cuts a passage from "Supposed Confessions" (the only substantial cut not counting the change in the title mentioned in the next paragraph) in which the poem pauses over a grave and muses: "These little moles and graves shall be / Clothed on with immortality …" It is as though Tennyson conjures the gothic spirit of Wordsworth's darker version of immortality, only to cast it away, as Wordsworth did, perhaps for touching too close to home.
6. Compare the closed circuit of human need in Tennyson ("Her subtil, warm, and golden breath, / Which mixing with the infant's blood, / Fulfils him with beatitude" [60–63]) to the universal blessing Wordsworth bestows upon the child ("No outcast he, bewildered and depressed; / Along his infant veins are interfused / The gravitation and the filial bond / Of Nature that connect him with the world" [241–244]).
7. See Copjec for a reading of two competing notions of "modern" immortality, one of which opposes and the other that is supplanted by the ideal of personal posterity, *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation,* viii, 261 pp. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002., 239–244).
8. Ricks, *Tennyson,* 37.
9. Francis Ferguson comments on these lines, cut from the 1850 *Prelude*: the cycle of projection and introjection between mother and infant "operates by imagining an expansion and consolidation of an internal unity rather than as a relationship between separate entities," Ferguson, Frances. *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit,* xvii, 263 pp. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 136.
10. Although, as we will see, Tennyson did "lose a child," I argue that the loss that he writes about *(the* loss of the child) should be differentiated, although it is clearly not an entirely separable phenomenon, from the discourses of early childhood mortality and infanticide, for which, see Kipp, Julie. *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Schor, Esther H. *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of*

Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria. Literature in History (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

11. Ricks, *Tennyson*, 2:186.
12. See Robson, Catherine. "Standing on the Burning Deck: Poetry, Performance, History." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 120, no. 1 (January 2005), 148–162.
13. Tennyson: "'[Tintern Abbey is] full for me of its bygone memories,' and expresses 'the sense of the abiding in the transient,' as well as his habitual 'passion of the past,'" Turner, Paul. *Tennyson* (London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 110; see also Gill, Stephen Charles. *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1998), 195.
14. Wordsworth's death: 1850; *The Princess* published (and revised): 1947, 1948, 1950; *In Memoriam* published 1850.
15. For non-Bloomian theories of poetic allusion and influence, see Elfenbein, Andrew. "Paranoid Poetics: Byron, Schreber, Freud." *Romanticism on the Net: An Electronic Journal Devoted to Romantic Studies* 23 (August 2001), and Bennett, Andrew. *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
16. Ricks argues similarly: Tennyson "sought to relieve" "personal anxieties" in the poem, *Tennyson,* 174.
17. A compulsion to repeat unpleasurable and dangerous scenarios is a way for the ego "to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis," Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XVIII (1920–1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works,* 1920, 32.
18. Plato. *The Dialogues of Plato*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 166.
19. Anna Barton makes a related argument about *Maud,* suggesting a reading of the poem in "the context of Tennyson's anxious relationship" with anonymous critics, Barton, Anna. "Lyrical and Responsible Names in Tennyson's *Maud*." *Tennyson Research Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (November 2007), 43.
20. For the concept of the interval, see Dorothea Olkowski. Olkowski, Dorothea E. "The End of Phenomenology: Bergson's Interval in Irigaray." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2000), and Irigaray, Luce. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (London: Continuum, 2004), 31–48.
21. *In Memoriam*—XLV (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1982).
22. Rank, Otto. *The Trauma of Birth* (New York: Dover, 1993; 1929), 5.
23. For Tennyson's skepticism, see Gill, Stephen Charles. *Wordsworth and the Victorians,* 203.
24. Tucker, Herbert F. *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 22.
25. Green, André. *The Work of the Negative* (London; New York: Free Association Books, 1999), 84.
26. Ibid., 85.
27. See also Žižek, Slavoj. "Melancholy and the Act." *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (Summer 2000), 659–663.
28. Faced with disunity, critics have generally read Tennyson's poetry in terms of drives toward progression, closure, and coherence. David Riede, for example,

attempts to connect the "two Tennysons" (the public/discursive man and the intensely private poet of sensation) through the figure of allegory, *Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 41–62. Herbert Tucker, to my mind (along with Ricks) the most rigorous reader of Tennyson, for example, reads these poems (*In Memoriam, Maud,* and *The Princess*) as verse narratives "of a central figure's progress from self-division and cultural alienation, through stages of therapeutic encounter, to a hard-won goal of inner and outer reconciliation," *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism*, 349.

29. Ricks, Christopher. *Tennyson,* 221.
30. Tennyson, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), vol. II, 15.
31. Lang, Cecil Y., and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr. *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1851–1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987) 40—to Aubrey De Vere; Emily Lady Tennyson writes of the stillbirth in her journal for April 20: '[Our] first child born," Tennyson, Emily Sellwood, and James O. Hoge. *Lady Tennyson's Journal* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 26.
32. Ricks, *Tennyson*, 161–171; Tate, Gregory. "'A Fit Person to Be Poet Laureate': Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, and the Laureateship." *Tennyson Research Bulletin* 9, no. 3 (November 2009), 233–247.
33. According to friends, Tennyson disliked and was angered nearly as much by favorable reviews as by negative ones—Aubrey de Vere's diary (1845), reprinted in *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson,* vol. I, 239.
34. Tennyson, *Letters,* vol. II, 14.
35. That the stillbirth happened on Easter is deeply significant to Tennyson, suggesting an association between Christ the sufferer and the little warrior figure.
36. See, in this regard, Tennyson's own gendered theory of epistolary exchange: "A brief and terse style suits the man, but the woman is well when she deals in words," *Letters,* vol. I, 176.
37. *Letters,* vol. II, 15. It is interesting to compare "Little Bosom" to the description of King Arthur in "Morte D'Arthur (204–220). I thank Marjorie Levinson for pointing out this connection.
38. Barbara Johnson suggests that the "lost child" hovers beneath the figure of apostrophe and that there may be a "deeper link between motherhood and apostrophe," Johnson, Barbara. "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion." In *A World of Difference* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 198.
39. Tennyson does write a poem to his surviving son, born in August of the following year—"De Profundis"—but it remained unpublished for 28 years. Emily Tennyson writes that Tennyson, "watched him [the infant Hallam] with profound interest" before composing the poem, there, in front of the child, *Lady Tennyson's Journal,* 28.
40. Tennyson (1981) vol. I, 86.
41. "Intrusion anxiety" is the anxiety of penetration, an attack on the "frontiers of the ego," Green, André. *Key Ideas for a Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Misrecognition and Recognition of the Unconscious* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 152.
42. Page, Norman. *Tennyson, Interviews and Recollections* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 20.
43. Ricks, *Tennyson,* 48, 49.

44. "Typing," as can be seen by looking at Tennyson's late ballad "On One Who Affected an Effeminate Manner," has a dangerous edge: "While man and woman still are incomplete, / I prize that soul where man and woman meet, / Which types all Nature's male and female plan, / But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man." Ricks points also to *The Princess* vii: 281–282, and vii: 268 in the 1847–1848 text. "Typing" is an especially important term given its common usage in philology as well as science and moral philosophy: to "type" an attribute is to typify or exemplify it. In fact, typology as a stable category, as way of knowing the world in an absolute sense, was being reconceived at precisely this moment. See Isobel Armstrong's important chapter on Tennyson and the Type, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 252–283; see also her rephrasing of Carlyle's "moveable type": "Moveable type, where technology mobilizes the logos, makes the process of signification a political matter as it opens up a struggle for the meaning of words which is part of the relations of power explored through the structures of the poem," ibid., 16.
45. For the implications of the commodification of the poet's name, see Barton, Anna Jane. "'What Profits Me My Name?' The Aesthetic Potential of the Commodified Name in Lancelot and Elaine." *Victorian Poetry* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 136; consider also that Tennyson published the first version of *In Memoriam* anonymously. The oral fixation of "from mouth to mouth" is also an anticipatory echo of the narrator's intention to share the story of *The Princess* with his classmates: they will pass the story "from mouth to mouth" (prologue line 189).
46. The differentiations between depth and surface are, for philosophy, "primary in relation to the distinctions nature-convention, nature-custom, or nature-artifice," Deleuze, Gilles. *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 186, 87; David Riede demonstrates how T. S. Eliot returns to this distinction in his critique of Tennyson, *Allegories,* 41, 42; see also Griffiths, Eric. *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1989), 108.
47. From Hallam's review of Tennyson: Hallam, Arthur Henry. *Remains in Verse and Prose of Arthur Henry Hallam: With a Preface and Memoir …* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), 299, 300.
48. Christ is Tennyson's exemplar in this sense, as can be gleaned from the manuscript version of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After": "our greatest [Christ] is man-woman," Tennyson, Alfred. *The Poems of Tennyson.* Edited by Christopher B. Ricks (Harlow: Longmans, 1969), 1424.
49. "As a poet Tennyson prefers to take his stand neither in an enclosed and private world nor in a public arena, but rather in the shadowy borderland between them," Coyle, John, and Richard Cronin. "Tennyson and the Apostles." In *Rethinking Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke, England; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's, 2000), 114.
50. See Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), for the importance of this distinction, 8–15; Rowlinson, especially in his conclusion, signals the importance of drive to his reading of Tennyson. Rowlinson, Matthew Charles. *Tennyson's Fixations: Psychoanalysis and the Topics of the Early Poetry* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 144–167.

51. Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 40.
52. Ibid., 50.
53. Freud eventually, in 1926, revises this view, in a clear and unambiguous break with Otto Rank; see Obaid, F. P. "Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank: Debates and Confrontations about Anxiety and Birth." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 93 (2012), 693–715. Mneme, an early twentieth-century concept put forward by Richard Sémon, is the "effect of stimulation on the irritable substance." It leaves an afterimage, and "engram," in (on?) the memory, which can be activated at a future point. Semon, Richard. *The Mneme* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1921), 11, 12. (Freud had at least two books by Sémon in his library.) Of course, the concept had been available, under different names, for at least half a century prior to the time of Tennyson's career of which I write. Charles Bonnet, who was translated into English early in the nineteenth century and was read by Samuel Butler among others, writes that memories are connected to and modify the body, resulting in a physics of memory and recollection; see Anderson, L. *Charles Bonnet and the Order of the Known* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2012).
54. Lacan, in an essay entitled "Alienation," theorizes a moment of splitting for the subject *before* the entrance of language. Complicating his own linguistic theory of the subject, he pushes back the moment of I/thou separation to the moment of sexual differentiation in the womb: "Sexuality is established in the field of the subject by a way that is that of lack," *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 204.
55. Lyotard, Jean-François. *Discourse, Figure* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 129–132.
56. See my Introduction for more on the relation between infancy and empiricism.
57. Hallam, Arthur Henry, *Remains in Verse and Prose,* 98, 99.
58. Hallam, Arthur Henry. "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry: And on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson." In *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory* (Peterborough, Ontario; Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1999), 1192.
59. Ibid., 1196.
60. See Wordsworth's 1802 preface to *The Lyrical Ballads*: "The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure," 171. Here, again, we can see the blurred lines of demarcation between nineteen-century prosody, moral psychology, and psychoanalytic theory. Eric Griffiths, for example, comments on the "intertexture of feeling" in Wordsworth's poetic theory, a "metrical record of composition," which creates the possibility for a "*double consciousness* within the poem … that … may respond to divisions in the poet himself or to divisions between the poet and the imagined subject of his poem, or both," *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry,* 73.
61. See Margaret Reynolds for a reading that orients Tennyson and Hallam in relation to Sappho, arguing that in one sense Hallam helped "bring Tennyson into existence as a poet. His coming to power is a coming to poetry, and Hallam is his handmaiden," *Fragments of an Elegy: Tennyson Reading Sappho* (Lincoln, England: Tennyson Society, 2001) 20.
62. Canto 45.
63. Hallam, A. H. *The Remains in Verse and Prose,* 107–108.
64. Hallam, A. H. "On Some Characteristics," 1199.

65. Eric Griffiths points to canto forty-seven in order to argue that Tennyson desired an afterlife that did not entail endless progressive growth (as it does in Goethe's theory) because the progressive version of immortality would end in ultimate loneliness, "be a process of separation; finite people infinitely developed would eventually become incapable of recognizing each other," *The Printed Voice,* 112.
66. Saintsbury, George. *A History of English Prosody. Vol. III* (London; New York: Macmillan and Co., limited, 1910), 205.
67. Ibid., 204.
68. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (3rd ed.) remarks that Tennyson "utilized its suitability for successive, mutually independent philosophical observations, each enclosed within its stanzaic "envelope," (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 581; see also Ostriker, Alicia. "The Three Modes in Tennyson's Prosody." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 82, no. 2 (May 1967): 273–284.
69. Hallam, *Remains in Verse and Prose,* 105, 106.
70. Hallam, "Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry," 1196.
71. Irene Hsiao claims that the verse form "persists melancholically," Hsiao, Irene. "Calculating Loss in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*." *Victorian Poetry* 47, no. 1 (2009), 194. Isobel Armstrong writes of the form's iterability, claiming, "Each isolated lyric is a precarious stepping stone which might not lead to another when language breaks down," "The Collapse of Object and Subject: *In Memoriam*." In *Critical Essays on Alfred Lord Tennyson.* Edited by Herbert F. Tucker (New York; Toronto: G. K. Hall; Maxwell Macmillan, 1993), 139.
72. Rubin, Gayle. "Traffic in Women." In *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
73. Canto 124.
74. Campbell comments on a different canto's allusion to 1 Corinthians 13. Campbell's discussion of "rhythm and will" is useful in that it argues for marriage of form and psychology in which "lyric or dramatic consciousness [is drawn] within the line of poetry, working one with or against the other, within or outside metrical norms or inventions," Campbell, Matthew. *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry*. (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5, 185–186.
75. Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia." In *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953), 155.
76. See Killham, John. *Tennyson and* The Princess; *Reflections of an Age* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1958), 6–8.
77. Tate suggests that by 1842 the tide had turned, and critics began to warm to Tennyson. It does not at all follow, however, that Tennyson *ever* warmed to them, Tate, Gregory. "A Fit Person," 235–236; Garden, F. "On Poems (1842)." In *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Barnes & Noble, 1967), 98; Mill, John Stuart. "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical [1830] and Poems [1833]." In *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Barnes & Noble, 1967), 94.
78. Killham, *Tennyson and* The Princess*,* 1–19.
79. Ricks, *Tennyson*, 741; most commentators assume that Tennyson means us to focus primarily on Psyche's child, appropriated for a time by Ida, as "the" child in the songs.

80. "… and the women sang / Between the rougher voices of the men" (Prologue 236, 7).
81. See George Brimley's treatment of *The Princess*; he reads the interaction of the mock-heroic and songs as an incongruity that somehow typifies "the union of man and woman, in one full, rich stream of poetry," *Essays*. Edited by William George Clark (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), 92.
82. Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody, Vol. III*, 202, 203.
83. See, for example, Wallace's comments on Tennyson's blank verse: Tennyson, Alfred. *The Princess, a Medley.* Edited by Percy Maxwell Wallace (London; New York: Macmillan and Co., 1892), xx–xxiii.
84. Tennyson, Alfred. *Tennyson's* The Princess. *Edited with Introduction and Notes*. Edited by Albert S. Cook (Boston; London: Ginn & Company, 1897), xxvi.
85. Ibid., xxvii.
86. Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. *Tennyson; the Growth of a Poet* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 100.
87. Clapp-Itnyre, Alisa. "Marginalized Musical Interludes: Tennyson's Critique of Conventionality in *The Princess*. *Victorian Poetry*, no. 2 (2000), 229.
88. Herbert, Isolde Karen. "'A Strange Diagonal': Ideology and Enclosure in the Framing Sections of *The Princess* and 'The Earthly Paradise.'" *Victorian Poetry* 29, no. 2 (1991), 149.
89. Jones, Ewan. "Lyric Explanation." Edited by Jonathan D. Culler and Ryan Dobran. *Thinking Verse* 4, no. 1 (2014), 53.
90. Consider Chapter III of *Jane Eyre*. Jane, still shaken after being locked up in the "red-room" (significantly, the room in which Mr. Reed had died—death is song's perennial subject), is comforted by hearing Bessie, the maid and closest thing to a maternal, loving presence for Jane, singing a ballad.
91. Langan, Celeste. "Pathologies of Communication from Coleridge to Schreber." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 147. The term "nerve language" comes from Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Mental Illness,* which details his psychic breakdown in the 1880s and 1890s (his second/last hospitalization would have been roughly contemporaneous with Tennyson's death). Schreber, who was textually analyzed by Freud, has become an important figure for "postmodernism" (Gilles Deleuze, Donna Haraway, etc.).
92. Brimley, *Essays,* 273.
93. Dawson, Samuel Edward. *A Study; with Critical and Explanatory Notes, of Alfred Tennyson's Poem* The Princess (Montreal: Dawson Bros., 1882), 49.
94. Hutton, Richard Holt, and Walter Bagehot. *The National Review*. (Robert Theobald, 1864), 66–67; Shairp, J. C. *Aspects of Poetry: Being Lectures Delivered at Oxford* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882), 134.
95. Comments by Cook in Tennyson, Alfred. *Tennyson's* The Princess: *A Medley, Edited with Introduction and Notes*. Edited by James Chalmers (New York, Boston [etc.]: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1897), xii–xiii.
96. Coyle and Cronin, "Tennyson and the Apostles," 118.
97. See especially Coventry Patmore's "What Shelley Was," Patmore, Coventry. *Principle in Art, Religio Poetæ and Other Essays* (London: Duckworth, 1913), 66–73.
98. Ricks, *Tennyson,* 222, 223.
99. Coyle and Cronin, "Tennyson and the Apostles," 122.
100. Moir, David Macbeth. *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1856), 318–319.

101. Marston, J. W. "J. W. Marston on *The Princess*." In *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Barnes & Noble, 1967), 171.
102. Isobel Armstrong comments on Walter Bagehot's description of Robert Browning's poetry as grotesque, a term also applied to *The Princess* (Croker and Moir): "The wrenching of metrical pasterns, the heterogeneous vocabulary compounded of aggressive colloquialisms and highly literary fragments of poetic diction, these together have an eccentricity which is appropriate to call grotesque," Armstrong, Isobel. *The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 93.
103. Patmore, Coventry. *Essay on English Metrical Law. A Critical Edition with a Commentary by Mary Augustine Roth* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1961), 45.
104. Arnold, Matthew. *On Translating Homer: Three Lectures Given at Oxford* (Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), 46–47.
105. Rudy, Jason R. "On Cultural Neoformalism, Spasmodic Poetry, and the Victorian Ballad." *Victorian Poetry* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2003), 591.
106. Moir, *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century*, 117.
107. See, for example, Yopie Prins on the "interruption" of song in Browning into the iambic pentameter of the "speaking voices" in "Pippa Passes," "Robert Browning, Transported by Meter." In *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 212.
108. Tennyson (Cook), *Tennyson's* The Princess, *Edited with Introduction and Notes*, xxxvi, xxxvii.
109. There is a further analogy to be made between "The Losing of the Child" and Blake's "Little Girl Lost" and "Little Girl Found" in *Songs of Experience*. Lyca becomes one with nature in such a way as to renaturalize her civilized surroundings. In a similar way, the "river find[ing] its way again" in Tennyson's poem suggests a reciprocity with the natural world. Again, the difference is that Tennyson encloses nature within a mythological or classical narrative.
110. Tennyson had written many, many of the cantos for *In Memoriam* over the years preceding publication; one assumes that he was intensely comfortable in this stanza form. Furthermore, Alicia Ostriker argues that a metrical examination of the first two editions of Tennyson's poems (1830 and 1832) finds the poet attempting to develop a "flexible" stanza form, which could be used to produce "serious and substantial work," Ostriker, "The Three Modes in Tennyson's Prosody," 280. What she describes is roughly a ballad structure—mostly isometric, tetrameter lines, more than half of which "build on that strong rock of English stanzas, the simple quatrain," ibid., 279.
111. Although I cannot comment on them here, there are significant class and cultural implications implied by the rural couple's melancholic inability to become self-conscious about their losses versus the Prince and Princess's self-consciousness, revelation, and redemption, especially insofar as ballad is traditionally associated with less educated and sophisticated elements of culture (cf. Arnold, Patmore, and More).
112. Keats usually gets mentioned in relation to *In Memoriam*; see, for example, Najarian, James. *Victorian Keats: Manliness, Sexuality, and Desire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

113. Monographs on Keats have focused on his arrested youth and his ambivalent sexuality: for example, Turley, Richard Marggraf. *Keats's Boyish Imagination* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004). My argument about song in *The Princess* (always pulling back toward a moment before sexual differentiation) and its ubiquitous and lasting association with the child occupies some common ground with these readings. Elegy has also been associated with the feminine. Schor's analysis of Joseph Trapp's critiques of elegy is helpful in that it identifies the feminine not so much with the unmanliness of feeling as with the specific formal (unruly) elements of the verse, *Bearing the Dead,* 22–23.
114. The conscious framing of the balled sections (sung by the women, brought on by the Prince's seizures, etc.) recalls Wordsworth's early use of frame narratives in "Michael," "Two April Mornings," and "The Ruined Cottage."
115. Fry, Paul H. *The Poet's Calling in the English Ode* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 4–10.
116. The unavoidable referent here is, of course, Wordsworth's ballad "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal."
117. Green, *The Work of the Negative,* 84.
118. Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 33.
119. Ibid., 32.
120. Ibid., 62.
121. Killham, *Tennyson and* The Princess, 11–16.
122. Tennyson (1981) II: 14.

Afterword

"An Echo to the Self": Augusta Webster's Psychoanalytic Thought

> In poetry the form of the thought is part of the thought, not merely its containing body.
> —A. Webster[1]

> We call it "regression" when in a dream an idea is turned back into the sensory image from which it was originally derived.
> —S. Freud[2]

If Lyotard, Coleridge, Shelley, and Arendt are all correct that we are never completely done with infancy and childhood, then what forms does it take now? In what ways does infancy—as a poetics and structure of feeling—still function in our current psychosocial and aesthetic situations? Given the historical conflation of romanticism with infancy, we might also ask whether we can see, hear, and feel in our continued involvement with infancy the aftereffects, echoes, and lingering traces of the romantic.

In the introduction of this volume, I refer to Friedrich Schiller's "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man" and suggest that the dialectic of childhood that he proposes (sensation/form/play), when read against moments of infancy in the poetry of the English nineteenth century, turns out to be a messier and more contingent process than the narrative of his text suggests. Indeed, we have seen that engagements with infancy are as likely to be interruptive as smooth, as open to moments of confused sublimity and trauma (the trauma of our own ongoing and only partially synthesized beginnings) as to beauty. In this final coda, I want to invoke another text by Schiller, "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry," in which he distinguishes between the simple/naive and the complex/sentimental in modern poetry, modern for Schiller meaning roughly post-1750. This opposition reproduces theoretically the pairing of immediate (purely sensual) and mediated (remembered, represented, repeated) experience so essential to our accounts of romanticism. As I suggest in my introduction, the idea of infancy, rushing in to fill the void left by religion and enlightenment reason, becomes a sort of bridge between these two ideas.[3] In his third critique, for example, Kant makes the aesthetic itself the theoretically mediating link, that is, the faculty that unites pure (sensual) and practical (moral) reason. Given Kant's optimism—that is,

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given the possibility of unifying experience through recourse to the aesthetic dimensions of art and infancy—the dilemmas of (subjective) alienation and (objective) suffering, which seem to be endemic to the movement of modernity should be able to be overcome, at least theoretically.

Yet, when one reads Schiller, who claimed to have built his entire system from Kant,[4] it seems nearly impossible not to pick up a sense of permanent, irrecuperable loss in his description of our modern fall from nature:

> In the child, all is *disposition* and *destination;* in us, all is in the state of a *completed, finished* thing, and the completion always remains infinitely below the destination. It follows that the child is to us like the representation of the ideal; not, indeed, of the ideal as we have realized it, but such as our destination admitted; and, consequently, it is not at all the idea of its indigence, of its hinderances, that makes us experience emotion in the child's presence; it is, on the contrary, the idea of its pure and free force, of the integrity, the infinity of its being.[5]

According to Schiller, the very idea of our childhood mocks us. He tells us that this is because, unlike the Greeks, we have grown in opposition to nature and thus are no longer able to see the simple and truthful in the human realm. There may be for us moments and spaces of unification, but they are, like moments in poems or moments in an unfolding narrative of becoming, merely temporary openings or repositions in a field that is constantly in flux—spaces, Schiller tells us, of emotional response. Yet the nature/culture divide so important to Schiller's explanation seems impossible to hold onto in modernity, or if you prefer, postmodernity. Indeed, the poetics of infancy we have traced in this volume disallows at the same time as it invites these oppositions—innocence/experience, nature/culture, etc. Thus, it would be a mistake to read the poetry of infancy as either naïve or sentimental, but rather as an image of the intervolution and struggle of each of these elements. Indeed, Schiller recognizes their necessary and intricate interrelatedness and bemoans merely that the class of man capable of incorporating their union has not yet been born.

While he refuses to soften the blow, Geoffrey Hartman reminds us in his important essay, "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness," that not only is it impossible to permanently overcome "self-consciousness" (the sentimental or reflective in Schiller's sense), but also that the "very desire to overcome it, which poetry and imagination encourage, is part of a vital, dialectical movement of soul-making."[6] In a sense, then, Hartman reads Schiller against himself, recognizing that "disposition" and "destination" are processes rather than finished forms.

We have seen in poems such as "Frost at Midnight" or "To a Little Invisible Being …" something akin to the processual movement Hartman articulates. It often takes the form of a pause or a moment of suspension within the dialectical movement of lyric. There is, for example, that uncanny moment when "self" addresses "not-quite self" ("Dear Babe that sleepest cradled by my side") in which self-consciousness is not so much overcome

as short-circuited. Another way of framing this is to allow that these strange apostrophic moments (moments of Hartman's "anti-self-consciousness") are moments of deep aesthetic experience, which nonetheless stubbornly refuse the very "soul-making" they portend and propose. Indeed, nearly all the poems that we have looked at in this volume suggest that these moments of opposition and deferral are consistent with and anticipate a new aesthetics of infancy, and that this new aesthetics is rather dispositional and mobile than fixed and formal.

In Lyotard's reading of Kant, for example, the aesthetic experience is not "felt" by a subject—rather, the subject is "promised" in the aesthetic union of knowledge and morality that *is* the experience of beauty in Kant's critique of judgment.[7] This is why infancy remains such a vital concept for Lyotard—infancy and subjectivity are inextricably linked at the moment of aesthetic pleasure: "In the aesthetic of the beautiful the subject is in a state of infancy." Therefore, what is revealed, in some sense activated, in the lyric encounter with infancy is not the "real" (i.e., the simple or naïve) as opposed to the imaginary (i.e., the sentimental in Schiller's sense), but rather the promise of simplicity or naiveté as such, the idea of beginning again. Finally, Lyotard leans heavily on Kant's critique in order to suggest that it is not the beautiful per se that authorizes these new, more subtle forms of subjectivity, but rather the traumatic temporality of the sublime.[8] Lyotard thus grounds infancy and the aesthetic in a structure of elegiac loss—an inability to synthesize the givens of our experience (an aspect of the sublime)—that nonetheless continues to drive us.

In lieu of closing (for "completion always remains infinitely below the destination") and in hopes of elaborating this new "interminable" temporality as well as its structure of contingency and hope, I propose to read two *Mother and Daughter* sonnets by Augusta Webster and briefly comment on a contemporaneous text of Freud's. To do so is to bring us from the 1790s in Chapter 1 of this volume to the 1890s, when Webster's sonnets were published, or, put differently, from the era of Erasmus Darwin's zoological aesthetics to that of Freud's theorizing of the unconscious. Yet it is also to bring us back full circle. In each decade, poetry attempts to bridge the gap between "I" and "you" (subject/object, etc.) through the mediation of the idea of infancy. Webster's unfinished sonnet sequence, to my mind, demonstrates as vividly as any text I can think of the desire to overcome the distance between self and other (i.e., self-consciousness) while at the same time refusing to violate the boundary of the other. The poems maintain—in their form and argument—the tension between a wish to be enmeshed with the child and an ethical honoring of the child's irreducible otherness.

A.1 'Tis Simple Tears She Weeps …

Augusta Webster, a poet known primarily for her dramatic monologues, began the *Mother and Daughter* sonnet sequence in 1881, when her daughter would have been around seventeen. Yet she writes the sequence as though

it traces the early infancy of her daughter right up until her teenage years. In other words, she writes retrospectively, from the position of reflection or self-consciousness. Worked on and written right up until her death and unpublished in her lifetime (she died in 1894), the poems are intensely personal and place her in the elite company of fellow excellent sonneteers Elizabeth Barrett-Browning and Christina Rossetti. The poems, as their title suggests, record the inner thoughts and addresses of a mother contemplating her only daughter. They are exceptionally and equally alive to the slightest movement or change within the child's affect or countenance and to the mother's patterns of thought and feeling. "Sonnet III," for example, captures lovingly the enigma of infancy, as well as the desire of the mother to solve the puzzle, to scan and "read" the landscape or text of her daughter's face.

> I watch the sweet grave face in timorous thought
> Lest I should see it dawn to some unrest
> And read that in her heart is youth's ill guest,
> The querulous young sadness, born of nought,
> That wearies of the strife it has not fought,
> And finds the life it has not had unblest,
> And asks it knows not what that should be best,
> And till Love come has never what it sought.
>
> But she is still. A full and crystal lake
> So gives it skies their passage to its peeps
> In an unruffled morn where no winds wake,
> And, strong and fretless, stirs not, nor yet sleeps.
> My darling smiles and 'tis for gladness' sake;
> She hears a woe, 'tis simple tears she weeps.

Harmonically vibrant (moving from speedy sibilance to lulling "L" sounds and plosives and finally to the stop and start alternation of long vowel and clipped 'T' sounds in the final lines) the sonnet, like all of the poems in the sequence, is "split" into separate stanzas. The first stanza comprises the sonnet's octave and the second corresponds to its sestet. This asymmetry (built into the sonnet form) mirrors the imbalance and reciprocity of the parent–child dyad. It also echoes the asymmetry of the poet/reader relation.[9] Without this asymmetry, as Paul Fussell suggested long ago, sonnets would be unable to capture and hold these dynamic tensions.[10] Webster's sequence not only captures but also brilliantly exploits this dynamism.

It is as though the octave, in the position of the mother, leans over the sestet, in the position of the infant. In "Sonnet III" the "I" dominates the octave; the "she" occupies the sestet. Infancy appears here as a timeless ideal, a "full and crystal lake." Emily Harrington suggests that the sonnet cycle introduces the motif of maternal love as the force that can, as it were, activate that ideal, and thus suspend time, distance, and outside influence. While it is an ideal (or idealizing) love, it is, Webster takes pains to remind

us (and herself), nonetheless destined to succumb to change over time. Harrington equates this awareness of temporal dispersal and distance with the temporalizing effect of meter in the verse. I would add that the growing distance is not merely between mother and child, but also between aspects of the self, the reflective self and the experiencing self, the former sentimental in Schiller's sense, and the latter a figure of simple or sensuous aesthetic pleasure.[11] Thus, the entire cycle seems elegiac of an over-determined loss even at the start.

Perhaps Webster is able to capture the vanishing possibilities and the movements of parental projection and regression because she writes the poems after her child is grown. Yet the distance established by these poems has little to do with wisdom that is accumulated over time. If anything, the distance teaches that we cannot know another person, no matter how near or dear, in any absolute sense. It looks clearly and soberly, in other words, at the inherent limitations of love. This retrospective temporality is later taken up as one of the cornerstones of psychoanalysis. According to Freud's theory of melancholy, for example, time itself appears to stop in situations when we experience a loss, but cannot determine precisely who or what it is (within or attached to the lost object—e.g., innocence, hope, requited passion, etc.) that we have lost. While I will comment on the personal and political possibilities of this lyric temporality at the end of this short chapter, post-structural thinkers from Lyotard and Nancy to Agamben link this theory of time directly to the idea of infancy.

Harrington and others have argued that maternal love is the driving or authorizing force of the sequence, a conclusion with which I can easily agree. Indeed a strong and intimate voice sounds from these sonnets. Yet the problem is also a formal one. In contrast to many of the poems we've read in this book, infancy is neither apostrophized in the second person nor addressed directly, but is rather thought or spoken of in the third person. Adela Pinch complicates the distinction between apostrophe as speech (I think of you) and address as thought (I think of her), suggesting that in many nineteenth-century poems speaking and thinking (second and third person addresses respectively) become indistinguishable, mere "ghosts of each other."[12] I suggest that this pronominal ambiguity is not only active in the *Mother and Daughter* poems, but that the relation between the stanzas plays with and intensifies these ambiguities—not only for the poet but also for the reader. As a result, the reader occupies a strange position in the poem, identifying fully with neither mother nor child. Rather, we identify with the scene itself, watching and listening as if behind a screen as mother and child observe, project upon, and reflect one another.

The poem positions us in time and space, in what must now seem to us a familiar scene of empirical observation of the infant: "I watch the sweet grave face in timorous thought." There is a sense of detached attachment in many of these poems, a sense, that is, of taking the watching self as a secondary object. Thus, the line might be easily rewritten as "I watch myself

watching the sweet grave face …" or "look how we look at ourselves looking." This is not to say that Webster's poem is narcissistic, at least not problematically so.[13] Rather, she stages looking in such way as to allow the entire process of self- and other-reflection itself to be reflected, that is, for the reader to think and feel the strange circuitous flows of observation and love, and to recognize these flows as part and parcel not only of our intimate relationships as parents, children, friends, and lovers, but also of our intimate relationships with texts.

Notice, for example, the reversibility of meaning in the first line; everything hinges on whether we read "grave" as a noun or an adjective and "face" as a verb or a noun. Clearly, the intended meaning is "I watch [my daughter's] sweet grave [i.e., serious] face as she sleeps." But death (presumably the death of the mother) also looms in the ambiguity of the line. Before we read beyond the line break it is possible to read the line as "I watch the sweet 'grave' [as in a burial plot] 'face' [the mourners in the churchyard]." Harrington comments on Webster's concern about her own aging and the very real possibility that her death would take her away from her daughter.[14] Thus, as we saw in Sara Coleridge's poems, identification results in a reversal of subject positions, and a kind of doubled address occurs. This double-ness is marked in the repeated stress patterning between octave (mother) and sestet (child): the rhythm of "sweet grave face" (XXX) in line one, a triple beat, shows up in "no winds wake" (XXX) in line eleven.[15]

If we read the octave as governed by the "I" of the mother, we notice nonetheless that it overflows with worried projections onto the child. Yet between the octave and sestet there is a moment of clarity: "But she is still. A full and crystal lake / So gives it skies their passage." The caesura and ensuing enjambment suggest an interruption of the rhythm of worry and projection. The word "still" (so reminiscent of Wordsworth, not merely in his usage but also in his tendency to use the word at the end of a line or break) contains all of its meanings here: temporal, spatial, and kinesthetic. The child is the clear "still" lake that images the cloudy mother.[16] I am suggesting we can read a vertiginous alternation in these poems, formal and ideational, between child and mother, back and forth, speaker and addressee, back and forth. The two positions (stanzas) are separated by a space, within which the other is imaged and echoed.

"So much then depends … upon distance."[17] In this case so much depends upon the formal distance, the break between the octave and the sestet. How do we read that white space? Is it the required distance to see in an ethical way?[18] At the center of each of these poems is a moment/space of openness. Entering into this bare perceptual space—being aware, being present—is essential for the reading of these poems. For me, this is the ethical meaning of the white space. It allows the mother to see the daughter, if only fleetingly, as separate from herself—not to "know" her in the way that we know what a lake or clouds are, but rather to be "affected" by her.[19] The many negated negatives of the octave (the child is neither unrested nor unblest, neither sad

for no reason nor weary because of battles she did not fight) give way in the sestet to a positivity that can sustain itself for only two lines before reasserting its doubtful and doubled logic in "an unruffled morn where no winds wake, / And, strong and fretless, stirs not, nor yet sleeps." The child's face is a familiar and unruffled surface, a tabula rasa that seems almost uncanny in its absence if not refusal of signification. The relentlessly anxious thought renews and manifests itself in the stops and starts of the sudden caesurae ("And—strong and fretless—stirs not—nor yet sleeps").

There is an echo of Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" ("and no bird sings") in "no winds wake." Each, I think, can be taken as evidence for Keats's claim (most clearly articulated in "Ode on a Grecian Urn") that absence is often much louder than presence. Harrington suggests that the rhythmic anomalies in Webster's verse mirror the temporal stops and starts (illness, death, aging, distance) that are an essential aspect of, rather than a suspension of, maternal love. I would merely add that the poem seems incredulous at the absence of any sign of these temporal interruptions and markers in the infant. It is almost as though the poem is unable to believe it own eyes. Is it possible that infancy exists? Is the gift of pure reflection (lake to clouds and clouds to lake, mother to daughter and back again) really possible? And is it a gift if ultimately it will not last? Webster captures the ambivalence of such questions in her final couplet. Since the poem is in Petrarchan form, the final couplet does not rhyme, yet Webster nonetheless sets up a parallelism: "My darling smiles and 'tis for gladness' sake; / She hears a woe, 'tis simple tears she weeps." The slight dissonance in the absence of end rhyme lingers despite the otherwise symmetrical form and near chiasmus of the couplet.

To read this poem as a poem about reading, that is, as an aesthetic encounter, suggests that Webster imagines (in her daughter) the possibility of complete, if fleeting, responsiveness and receptivity. Compare these lines to Blake's "She doth smile / I sing the while" in "Infant Joy" and I think you get the full force of the dream of infancy's reciprocity, at least as it is presents itself from the perspective of innocence as opposed to experience. Unlike the octave where projections and displacements seem to crowd and clutter thinking and reflection, here, in the final couplet, there is only gladness or woe, smiles or tears. Laura Linker reads these poems through Schiller's previously mentioned distinction between naïve and sentimental poetry. The naïve of pure reflection cannot be recaptured; thus poetic anxiety ensues.[20] Following this reading, one gets the sense that the "woe" heard by the child belongs to the mother, that is, to the realm of poetic anxiety. Yet perhaps it also belongs to all of us: those who cannot respond simply and strongly to happiness or woe, those of us who watch ourselves watching the infant, banished forever from the simple, from Schiller's "unmutilated nature," except perhaps in glimpses and afterimages, wayward moments in which we "stir not, nor yet sleep."

The concentrated awareness exhibited in Webster's sonnets reveals an intense desire to know the other, to see her clearly for what and who she is.

Harrington rightly argues for a hedge in Webster's thought, a sense of honesty about the limits of love, an ethical hesitancy that she places within the realm of temporality and loss ("I am with you now, but soon one of us will be gone"). Yet there is another hedge in these poems, another dimension to Webster's honesty. I would categorize this as an honesty concerning the limits of knowledge and representation ("I am with you now, and will be partially with you in the future through the function of anamnesis and memory [not to mention writing], yet although our love is genuine and real, neither of us can know the other absolutely"). We saw in Chapter 2 that infancy presented a similar problem for Coleridge. How was he to love his infant son without the introjection of a prescribed image of fatherhood. I suggested that there was an ethical opening, an interval or gap in thought and feeling that Coleridge felt when contemplating the dilemma of infancy. Webster's sonnets seek to hold open indefinitely that gap or interval, to imagine love as ethical distantiation, love as awareness, as stillness and a white space that literally splits the poem in two.

A.2 Echolalia

> The repetition compulsion is in fact the murder of time …
> —A. Green[21]

Webster's "Sonnet XIII" speaks to a later time in the child's development than "Sonnet III." Here, the emphasis is not so much on vision as on sound and not upon the mother's sensual responsiveness but rather upon the daughter's.

> My darling scarce thinks music sweet save mine:
> 'Tis that she does but love me more than hear.
> She'll not believe my voice to stranger ear
> Is merely measure to the note and line:
> "Not so," she says: "Thou hast a secret thine:
> The others' singing's only rich, or clear,
> But something in thy tones brings music near:
> As though thy song could search me and divine."
>
> Oh voice of mine that in some day not far
> Time, the strong creditor, will call his debt,
> Will dull—and even to her—will rasp and mar,
> Sing Time asleep because of her regret,
> Be twice thy life the thing her fancies are,
> Thou echo to the self she knows not yet.

The poem reverses the movement of "Sonnet III." Whereas that poem moves from the mother's projections and observations to the stillness of the placid child in the second stanza, here the child's love fills out the octave with its

"thought," "belief," and direct quotation. The sestet is an apostrophe (half imperative, half Miltonic invocation), in this case addressed neither to a divinity nor a muse, but rather to the human faculty of voice. To invoke the voice, especially one's own voice (like facing a face), amounts to a kind of poetic tautology, an apostrophic structure familiar to readers of romanticism. For example, when Coleridge writes in "The Lime-Tree Bower, My Prison," "Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!" he attempts to call into being that which already is. Pinch calls this moment in Coleridge "a sublimely bossy sovereignty," a formulation that captures wonderfully the fantasy of omnipotence that obtains in such romantic tropes.[22] Yet we might also see it (in Webster as in Coleridge) as thinking attempting to come home to itself—to domicile, to accept, and to be reconciled with what is. Yet this attempt at reconciliation is perverse, at least insofar as strangely, what she is asking (praying?) for is, at least on one reading, the continuation of a fiction.

There is tremendous tenderness in the willfulness of the sestet, that is, the degree to which the mother desires to slow time ("Sing Time asleep") rather than to conquer it. Harrington comments on the intimacy in the poem, evinced in the intergenerational repetitions (echoes to the self "she knows not yet"), which suggest a rhythmic and circular temporality. There are two readings (attitudes toward that circularity) that I think are equally possible here and they are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, there is a sense in which the poem attempts to manage the disillusionment of the child. In other words, the poem wishes that the child not be rushed into disillusionment, but rather gently and quietly disappointed. This suggests that there may be a new temporality associated with this type of feeling, a parental cadence (think of Winnicott's "good-enough mother") that mirrors the rhythmicity required in writing. The writer creates patterns, that is, of revealing and withholding, leaving spaces for the reader to fill in details and descriptions. This rhythmicity may obtain especially to verse. On the other hand, there is a second possible reading in which the parental voice is itself uncertain and attached to the notion of a "searching" and "divine" voice, not only because it benefits the child but also because it gives pleasure to the parent.

Importantly, unlike the child in "Sonnet III," the child in "Sonnet XIII" has entered into language. From this position, she is able to utter the all-important negation: "'Not so,' she says." Her speech occupies an entire quatrain. She argues against the hollowness of mere facility. It is not merely that the child wishes to maintain the status quo. She reveals something difficult and essential about the aesthetic, a quality that transcends our attempts at analysis, something that the speaking voice of the poem, the mother, seems unable to accept. Instead, the mother turns to apostrophizing voice—she turns, that is, to figuration itself. Once again, the whitespace of the stanza break allows us to linger over the child's defense of timbre and touch over "note and line"—the grain, as it were, in the voice. The mother's invocation, her apostrophic call to slow down time, although touching, seems so formal as to nearly be cliché.

In fact, Sonnet "XIII" appears deeply ambivalent about the possibilities of poetry, that is, of voice to overcome mere mechanical temporality, "mere measure to the note and line." Responding to this ambivalence, the speaker takes on the attributes of the infant, replete with omnipotent fantasies and wishes. Whereas Schiller claims that, in our modern era, pure simplicity is no longer possible, "Sonnet XIII" shuts its ears and pushes back against this notion. The poem presents us with a moment when, out of love, poetry itself (articulated as voice) is promised in a naïve rather than sentimental fashion. Yet, here, ambivalence (not disinterestedness, but rather loving and hating the object equally) helps to maintain a dialectical balance. The force of wanting/not wanting to hear the "real" qualities of the voice produces what Schiller terms the ideal. This ideal voice (not belonging entirely to the mother or the infant) is the loving and necessary fiction that holds the poem (and the relational situation) together.[23] Again the break between the octave and the sestet provides the needed moment/space of dwelling and rest. Suddenly, there is a "third" presence in the poem—the voice. To read the voice/poem as that which mediates sonorously between "now" and "then" as well as "here" and "there" saves us from more psychologized readings. I for one want to resist, for example, the "rhetorical" reading that claims that the sentimental can be inferred through the ironic distance of the reader from the situation—so-called "dramatic irony." After all, it is not that the child is "wrong" when she says that something in the mother's "tones brings music near." Despite the mother's judgment of her voice, love adds something ineffable to the "real" voice, some quality (again) of domiciling, of homing in on an object. In this way, then, the poem, articulated as mother's voice, is used by the child as an object in the psychoanalytic sense.[24]

What I want to insist upon here is that the so-called content of the song the mother sings is irrelevant. Voice is the instrument that brings together sestet and octave, self and other, and so on. To read otherwise is to mythologize either the mother or the infant—again, the ideal (in Schiller's sense) is the echoic relation between the two, figured, in this poem at least, as the voice.

A.3 Singing Time (and Space) Asleep

> The function of art and politics is to make people dream.
> —Lyotard[25]

In the same year that *Mother and Daughter* was published, Freud had the famous dream of Irma's injection. The dream, which opens *The Interpretation of Dreams,* is a multilayered tapestry of guilt, desire, and displacement that centers on a young woman, Irma, whom Freud had previously treated. In recounting the dream, Freud comments on its increasing obscurity and compression. It is as though the closer we get to some sort of truthfulness, the harder it becomes to see and comprehend. We have seen throughout

this book the myriad ways in which conceptualizations of infancy in the poetry of the period anticipate and even complicate psychoanalytic theory. Because so much of Freud's theoretical framework can be traced back to the interpretation of this dream, in the few remaining pages of this afterword, I want to explore two points of connection between Webster's sonnets and Freud's initiatory dream. I do so in hopes of linking a late romantic moment (the birth of psychoanalysis) with an earlier one (the romantic tradition of the sleeping child poem).

Late in his interpretation of the dream Freud writes of "the replacement of one person by another." His concern that he might have erred in his treatment of an earlier patient (not Irma) causes him to conflate, by virtue of a shared name, his eldest daughter with this patient; both of these women, by virtue of a general concern about unsuccessful treatments, are then conflated with Irma in the dream. This defensive formula, which will come to be termed "displacement," is, as we know, a fundamental aspect of psychoanalytic theory. The second point of connection between Webster's sonnets and Irma's dream is the conflating (in dream-work as well as in poetry) of multiple time frames.[26] Freud's dream brings together bits of data from different moments of his memory, all of which the unconscious treats as though they happened (or *are* happening) simultaneously. This is because, as he explains later in *Interpretation,* dreams function via "regression," when "an idea is turned back into the sensory image from which it was originally derived."[27] Later, when Freud comes to more systematically theorize the unconscious, "timelessness" becomes one of its primary characteristics.[28] We can think of this pairing (displacement/timelessness) in a Kantian way, that is, of standing for a priori forms of experience: space and time.[29] But we might also note that time and space are overarching concerns of Webster's sonnets as well.

Returning then to Freud's text, he analyzes the section of the dream in which he chastises Irma for not "accepting [his] solution." If she was still in pain he tells her (he did so in real life as well) it was entirely her own fault. Freud breaks away from the narrative to explain:

> It was my view at that time (though I have since recognized it as a wrong one) that my task was fulfilled when I had informed a patient of the hidden meaning of his symptoms; I considered that I was not responsible for whether he accepted the solution or not—though this [the acceptance] was what success depended on.[30]

Two opposing modes of responsibility are visible in this short section of text: the abstract responsibility that Freud proposes to Irma ("here is the hidden meaning of your symptoms—accept it and you will be cured") and a processual mode of responsiveness and attentiveness to the other, hinted at but not fully articulated in his retrospective comment ("I have since recognized that it [my mode of responsibility] as the wrong one"). In the narrative, although he acknowledges his sense of guilt, Freud stays, rhetorically at least, firmly

on the side of reason, insisting (in the dream and in life) that Irma is solely responsible for her suffering, which could be ameliorated if only she would accept his solution. As a result, unlike the mother in "Sonnet XIII," who did not force her reality on her daughter but rather allowed her to be slowly disillusioned over time, the analyst here runs roughshod over his former patient. My point here is not to disparage Freud (he admits, after all, that he was wrong); rather, I wish to gesture, as Freud does, toward the future, toward a new conception (and ethics) of psychoanalytic working through. The work of the analyst, Freud will soon discover, is, like the mother in the sonnets, to sing time and space to sleep, to create the optimum conditions for something new to happen, and to scan the face of an otherness lost "in timorous thought," waiting patiently for what will happen next. Perhaps this is also the work of critics and readers. If so, it seems to me that infancy creates the gestational space that makes this newness visible, reveals it and then suspends time for a moment, and models for us a way of being with the text (the other), of being slower and more attentive in our interpretations.[31]

This slow consideration, as Lyotard reminds us (he relates it to patience and anamnesis), is hard work.[32] Infancy and childhood, he writes elsewhere, is a debt to life itself.[33] Perhaps this is what Freud also realizes when he comes to understand that knowing the "hidden meaning of symptoms" in itself is meaningless—only by working through (*durcharbeitung*) can the debt to infancy begin to be paid. Putting infancy in these economic terms reminds us, on the one hand, that what infancy asks of us is not always pleasant and sweet (in fact it can be monstrous), and at times requires diligence, forbearance, and labor. On the other hand, it reminds us that although in 1915 Freud elaborated an economic view of the unconscious, it is difficult if not impossible to know to whom the debt is owed and at which point, if ever, it will be paid in full. We merely know the currency, libido, a circuitous flow of excitation within the psyche that Freud will later make synonymous with love.[34]

Webster also has much to say about the relation between work and love in her essay collection *A Housewife's Opinions*. Although one could argue her interest in the work habits of domestic servants and housewives amounts to no more than an intensification of Victorian values, when she speaks of the work of the poet and the child, she seems to be standing on different ground:

> Let him [the child] learn rather to know, not play, but the pleasure of another kind of work. Let him learn the joy of endeavour, the triumph of difficulty overcome. You cannot teach him to do difficult things easily, for that is not to do them. But teach him to like to do difficult things. Make ruggedness a pleasure, and the pleasure is keener and truer than all sweetness and smooth things.[35]

What is this other kind of work? It seems to be something in between, alongside, or beneath our usual conceptualizations of work and play. The

libidinal economy she models in her sonnets, while it touches on ephemeral feelings and thoughts, works intensely with the raw materials of love, with voices and touch and death and even pedagogy. It calls for and models a rugged and patient persistence, and perhaps points to a viable poetics of working through.

Notes

1. Webster, Augusta. *A Housewife's Opinions* (London: Macmillan, 1879), 61–62.
2. Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Avon, 1965), 582.
3. Angamben, Giorgio. *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience* (London; New York: Verso, 1993), 50, 51; as I write in my introduction, Lyotard, unlike Agamben, insists via his concept of the "differend," on the "monstrosity" of infancy, that is, its resistance to knowledge and conceptuality, Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 100. Andrew Slade suggests that this insistence refers back to Lyotard's commitment to Kantian rather than Hegelian aesthetics, *Lyotard, Beckett, Duras, and the Postmodern Sublime* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 30.
4. Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Edited by Reginald Snell (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004), 32.
5. Schiller, Friedrich, and Percy Pinkerton. *Schiller's Works: Aesthetical Letters and Essays. Aesthetical Letters and Essays. The Ghost-Seer. The Sport of Destiny* (Boston: D. Estes, 1902), 282.
6. Hartman, Geoffrey H., and Daniel T. O'Hara. *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 181; for reflection in the sentimental mode, see Schiller, *Schiller's Works,* 309–310.
7. Lyotard, Jean-François. *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment* [sections] 23–29 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 20.
8. Ibid., 22. Particularly, see Lyotard's claim that the analysis of the sublime in Kant's third critique, although it "is conducted from the perspective of space" can be easily and usefully carried "over to the form of time … Transposed into time, this aporia [the painful and excessive aspect of the sublime] signifies an inability to synthesize the givens [in perception] by containing them within *a single moment*."
9. It is also, not inconsequentially, similar to the asymmetry of the analytic situation; see Ogden, T. H. "The Analytic Third: Implications for Psychoanalytic Theory and Technique." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 73 (2004), 167–195, and Irigaray, Luce. *To Speak Is Never Neutral* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 193–204.
10. "The poet who understands the sonnet form is the one who has developed an instinct for exploiting the principle of imbalance," Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York: Random House, 1979); See also Emily Harrington: "To illuminate the bittersweet relationship between mother and child, Webster must turn to the inherent conditions and contradictions of the sonnet form," *Second Person Singular: Late Victorian Women Poets and the Bonds of Verse* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 48.

11. Laura Linker picks up on this reflexive movement: "Childhood becomes not only a lost perceptual mode of experiencing nature but also a longed-for and lost time in the speaker's life," "*Mother and Daughter*: Augusta Webster and the Maternal Production of Art." *Papers on Language & Literature* 44, no. 1 (2008), 55.
12. Pinch, Adela. *Thinking about Other People in Nineteenth-Century British Writing* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 93.
13. Thus, from a psychoanalytic perspective, narcissism is structural, and need not be a pejorative term; see Green, André. *Life Narcissism, Death Narcissism* (London; New York: Free Association Books, 2001).
14. Harrington, *Second Person Singular,* 48.
15. In classical prosody, the term for a foot of three successive stresses is "mollossus," Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form,* 22.
16. Hartman comments on this imaged lake/cloud motif in a reading of Wordsworth's "Composed by the Side of Grasmere Lake," Hartman, Geoffrey. *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 185.
17. The line is spoke by Lily in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, a character in the midst of attempting to capture the swirl of parent/child subject positions, to find the proper aesthetic as well as intersubjective relation.
18. To grant separateness and uniqueness to objects, according to Kant's first critique, they must have a location "not only in the understanding (under concepts) but in sensible outer intuition (in space)."Lyotard, *Lessons,* 29.
19. Ibid., 11; see also section 23 of Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* for the importance of affect to thought.
20. Linker, "*Mother and Daughter*," 61.
21. Green, A. "Freud's Concept of Temporality: Differences with Current Ideas." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 89 (2008), 1037.
22. Pinch, *Thinking about Other People,* 91.
23. Nature reconciles man with himself; art divides and disunites him; the ideal brings him back to unity. Schiller, *Schiller's Works,* 334.
24. "The object is the thing in respect of which and through which the instinct seeks to attain its aim (i.e. a certain type of satisfaction). It may be a person or a part-object, a real object or a phantasied one," Laplanche, Jean, and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 273; "The object is, therefore, both there and not there at the same time," Green, *Life Narcissism, Death Narcissism,* 18.
25. Lyotard, *Toward the Postmodern*. Edited by Robert Harvey and Mark S. Roberts (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 41.
26. Lacan, speaking of dreams in general and Irma's injection specifically: "the dream is not in time," Lacan, Jacques, Jacques-Alain Miller, and John Forrester. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book I, Book I* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 152.
27. Freud and Stachey, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* 582; the work of interpretation, as Lacan reminds us, is to symbolize the image, *Seminar I,* 152.
28. Freud, S. "The Unconscious." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XIV (1914–1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works,* 1915.

29. In his preliminary remarks on dreaming, Freud cites Haffner in a footnote: "the first mark of a dream is its independence of space and time," Freud and Strachey, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* 84.
30. Ibid., 141.
31. Braccha Ettinger, echoing Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt, refers to "wit(h)nessing," *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 123–155.
32. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained,* 105.
33. Lyotard, *Toward the Postmodern,* 149.
34. Freud, *The Unconscious,* 181; Freud, Sigmund. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York, Boni and Liveright, 1922) 38; in this same text he mobilizes libido to help explain group psychology, his own theorization of a collective libidinal economy, 37.
35. Webster, *A Housewife's Opinions,* 123.

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