LYRIC MINDEDNESS:
SCIENCE AND GENRE IN ROMANTIC BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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"Lyric Mindedness" recovers conversations between Romantic-era poetics and the science of the embodied mind. While recent scientific approaches have tended to reinforce the idea of "the lyric" in its most familiar Romantic formulation—where it voices a solitary or idealized consciousness—"Lyric Mindedness" shows that Romantic-era lyric theory served as the occasion for a livelier debate between diverse, competing models of mindedness. Romantic theories of the lyric flirt with materialism, entertain the notion that the mind spreads over bodies and linguistic technologies, and explore the individual mind's entanglements with a social environment made up of *other* minds. I begin by examining James Macpherson's "Ossian" poems, in which he takes up the Scottish Enlightenment's understanding of the lyric as a vestige of human cognition in its earliest and most pristine stages. Because his poems were largely forgeries, however, Macpherson imports eighteenth-century physiology into his Ossianic recreations, and experiments with the relation between poetic form and popular knowledge. The second chapter pursues the reception of that same theory—that poetry expressed the foundations of human cognition—into Romantic texts that align lyrical practice with cognitive

disability. I trace the argument from William Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy" through Walter Scott's *Waverley*, to show how the lyric, like disability, came to be understood as revealing the quasi-mechanical operations to be found at the core of cognition. Chapter three, on the collaborative writing and thinking of William Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, examines how technologies of writing and, more specifically, the lyric as a generic medium, bring mental activity out of the individual head and into social circulation. The final chapter turns to William Hazlitt's counterintuitive philosophy of action, which holds that even the simplest self-directed activities, like pulling away from a hot stove, require the same outward-directed faculties as sympathy for another person. This strange conclusion casts new light on Hazlitt's later literary criticism, often read as installing a notion of private lyric that we have come to regard as traditionally "Romantic." His early philosophy, by contrast, gives a glimpse of what a more capacious approach to "lyric mindedness" might look like.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Introduction

The Lyric Mind from Romanticism to the Cognitive Revolution

One of the most canonical moments in English poetry turns on the act of attributing mindedness to a lifeless thing. Indeed, much of Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" derives from a false attribution of mindedness to an inanimate form, an ashen film that "fluttered at the grate" of the fireplace. The film offers a strange kind of solace. Coleridge writes:

> Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
>
> Gives it dim sympathies with me, who live,
>
> Making it a companionable form,
>
> With which I can hold commune.[1]

The poet, seated by his fireside in winter, is contemplating the eerily silent "hush of nature" that he elsewhere calls its "dead calm," and in which criticism of the poem has recognized the specter of "human mental vacancy and nature's consequent lifelessness."[2] Beginning from that austere premise, "Frost at Midnight" becomes a seeking-out of what the speaker calls "companionable form": a shape or an object that might seem a kindred spirit.

The speaker immediately recoils from that idea, however, calling it an "[i]dle thought," and waxing philosophical on the human tendency to project mental activity onto the world:

> still the living spirit in our frame,
>
> That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,

Transfuses into all its own delights

Its own volition, sometimes with deep faith,

And sometimes with fantastic playfulness. (21-5)

This tendency is as troubling as it is comforting. "Frost at Midnight" confronts the most pressing version of David Hume's philosophical challenges: the challenge of skepticism, and the firm limits Humean epistemology set on knowledge of the world in general, and other minds in particular. In Hume's famous anecdote of the Indian prince, frost presented one of the most enduring symbols of a naturalistic universe. "The Indian prince who refused to believe the first relations concerning the effects of frost reasoned justly," Hume argues, since "the operations of cold upon water are not gradual," but sudden and dramatic.[3] Frost thus provided a model for how any apparently miraculous occurrence ought simply to enlarge and nuance our understanding of the laws of nature. Indeed, Hume looms large over "Frost at Midnight," and Coleridge's attentions to his own habits of projection are largely due to an anxiety that *all* mental contact might be no better than the film's paltry approximation of "companionable form." Hume insisted that we do not know the world, but only qualities we project onto it. From the skeptical point of view, describing sensation in terms of an external world, or social interactions in terms of other minds, did not refer to durable properties of the world, but merely reflected habits of the individual mind. "Frost at Midnight" begins with that habitual projection of mindedness onto the ashen film. While the poem ultimately arrives at a wish for a future generation to have a different experience of the vitality of nature, rooted in "far other lore," the poem itself is an engagement with that habit of projection, which comes to seem a basic human tendency: the hungering after other minds that drives both questions of "deep faith" (or

that faith that would become aligned with the "common sense" of Thomas Reid, a faith that we do not simply project ourselves onto others, but reliably *recognize* the other minds around us) and the "fantastic playfulness" of literary or other forms of imaginative play.[4]

This is a tendency in which poetry itself was implicated, especially to the extent that it was defined as a precisely this kind of anthropomorphizing movement of thought, or as human awareness reaching out in search of a nature like itself. The eighteenth-century rhetorician Robert Lowth, for instance, accounted for the apparently animistic nature of ancient Hebrew poetry by calling it just such impassioned thought, and explaining that "to those who are violently agitated themselves, the universal nature of things seems under a necessity of being affected with similar emotions."[5] The first poetry was on this account a spontaneous outpouring of the solitary subject, to an environment that could not hear; it had its roots in the early mind's supposed tendency to view the natural world in terms of other minds. For an influential critical tradition, articulated most famously in the nineteenth century by John Ruskin, this "pathetic fallacy" is a danger poetic expression always risks.[6] At stake in "Frost at Midnight"—and in the Romantic era's broader identification of the lyric as a mode of particular cognitive value—is whether thinking is a solitary act, or one that reaches out into the social world; and, accordingly, whether that turn outward achieves reliable knowledge, or is simply a "superstitious wish" tied to an outmoded or primitive variety of "poetic" thinking. Accounting for "companionable form," in other words, also meant accounting for poetry.

This dissertation argues that the problem of other minds is central to the ways Romantic writers define the lyric. The rise of the lyric in its current, Romantic-era

formulation is often attributed to the special relationship that the period established between the lyrical mode and the innermost workings of the human mind. In contrast, by recovering alternative, outwardly-turned models of lyrical cognition that circulated alongside the narrower and more familiar one, "Lyric Mindedness" expands the story of the lyric and demonstrates the close connection between Romantic lyric theory and the sciences. In recent years, a number of literary critics have sought to explain literary experience by turning to the sciences, and in particular the science of other minds. In its most polemical form, this has resulted in the argument that "literature" is synonymous with the activity known as "mindreading." For cognitive psychologists, mindreading, also referred to as "theory of mind," is the ability to attribute mental states to other people. Theory of mind allows us to recognize that there are other minds in the world, and to predict other people's behavior and manipulate their expectations. On most accounts, mindreading works the same way whether one is having lunch with a friend, watching two strangers have lunch together, or pretending to have lunch at a doll's tea party. The latter, perhaps, is closest to what Coleridge means when he calls such fancies "toys / of the self-watching subtilizing mind," habits of thought that speak both to serious philosophical questions and to child's play (26-7). For literary scholars who draw on the cognitive sciences, literature is one such form of play, and the science of mindreading can explain why people engage in the sustained acts of pretense that is reading, conceived as a series of encounters with fictional minds.

While the past decade has seen a modest rise in such "cognitive approaches" to literature, those projects have a longer, unexamined history in literary studies. From the concept of the primitive mind that drove the eighteenth century's ballad revival, to the

avowedly interdisciplinary aims of canonical Romantic critics like Coleridge and Hazlitt, a wide range of eighteenth-century and Romantic writers made cognitive claims for the poetic artifacts they studied. Moreover, the emergence of the lyric in its Romantic-era formulation relied on assertions that literature in general, and the lyric in particular, should be understood in terms of the underlying science of the mind. While more recent scientific approaches have tended to reinforce the idea of "the lyric" in its most familiar Romantic formulation—where it voices a solitary or idealized consciousness—this dissertation show that Romantic-era lyric theory served as the occasion for a livelier debate between diverse, competing models of mindedness. Those very methods— especially the focus on theory of mind or "mindreading"—suggest that the traditional model of the lyrical mind requires substantial revision, and moreover helps illuminate that it was certainly not the only one in circulation during the Romantic era. Romantic theories of the lyric flirt with materialism, entertain the notion that the mind spreads over bodies and linguistic technologies, and explore the individual mind's entanglements with a social environment made up of *other* minds. This introduction begins by offering an overview of cognitive approaches to literature, which I read in terms of two largely antithetical impulses: to define literary experience in terms of the private mind, and to define it as a function of social cognition. I then turn to those impulses' Romantic-era origins, in some of the earliest attempts to formulate a science of literature. Recovering that longer history offers to critique some of the assumptions of more recent cognitive approaches to literature, not least their sequestering of lyric and narrative. I conclude by suggesting how a focus on the lyric can help illuminate the various, experimental models of mindedness literature offered during the Romantic era.

The Cognitive Turn

Today there are a number of ways of characterizing literature in terms of other minds. Recent studies have echoed Coleridge's equivocation between "faith" and "play"—between a reliable engagement with a real world and the imaginative positing of a fictive one—based on a conviction that the structures of literature are also the structures of the mind. What has been called the "cognitive turn" in literary studies corresponds to a broader cognitive turn marked by the "second cognitive revolution." The first cognitive revolution was a reaction against behaviorism and tended to picture the mind as software running on the hardware of the brain. The second cognitive revolution, by contrast, turned from this type of symbolic processing or "language of thought" toward the unconscious, embodied processes that underlie cognition. Literature departments took up cognitive science as early as the 1980s, but saw a major growth spurt in the early 90s. The first years of that decade saw Ellen Spolsky's foundational *Gaps in Nature* (1993), which argued that the cognitive sciences' approach toward nature were fundamentally compatible with that of humanists.[7] They also saw two influential books by Mark Turner, *Reading Minds* (1991) and *The Literary Mind* (1996).[8] Both of those books pursued the homology between the mind conceived as a function of human bodies, and the mind conceived as a pattern of semiological or tropological structures. On Turner's model, cognitive theory can help us understand what goes on in literature, because the strategies demanded by literature are the same strategies we deploy in everyday life. As a result, concepts like metaphor or narrative offered to reach across the divide between literary theory and cognitive linguistics.

Meanwhile, scholars who shared Turner's focus on cognitive linguistics sought to explain those experiences that were specifically or uniquely literary: the experience of poetic meter, or the processing of the various effects of poetic imagery. Rueven Tsur, an early proponent of this "cognitive poetics," describes that endeavor as a way to create a less "impressionistic" way to talk about particular linguistic effects, grounded in an understanding of the human mind's particular endowments.[9] In a 1997 essay Patrick Colm Hogan named such cognitively-grounded features of the mind "literary universals," and suggested that many features of texts are both cognitively instantiated and cross-culturally universal.[10] Hogan enumerates many such universals: for example, throughout world poetry, poetic lines tend with surprising consistency to contain between five and nine words. Likewise, assonance is a verbal pattern to be found in all major literary traditions, as is "verbal parallelism"–the repetition of the same content in a different verbal structure– which Hogan locates in a host of ancient poetries including Chinese, Babylonian, and Hebrew. Like Tsur's cognitive poetics, Hogan's enumeration of universals verges on a scientifically-inflected formalism, one that has become increasingly diverse in studies of the physiology of readerly response, like those by Elaine Scarry, Ellen Esrock, and Nicholas Dames, to name a few.[11] Some, like Maryann Wolf, have even engaged in this work from the experimental laboratory, by seeking to correlate literary effects to particular brain regions.[12]

A decade of continued growth widened the already diverse array of methods. By 2004, Alan Richardson and Ellen Spolsky's *The Work of Fiction: Cognition, Culture, Complexity* (2004) could offer a "field map" of this varied terrain, and a sense that some of its roads were better traveled than others.[13] More recently, Lisa Zunshine's

Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies (2010) has brought a number of those approaches under one heading, and has sought to identify a coherent field with a sense of shared purpose.[14] Zunshine's anthology in some ways marks the "arrival" of cognitive theory, both with respect to its increased attention in the academic and popular press and the emergence of a set of shared aims. Zunshine is explicit about the role she wants her anthology to play, announcing her intention to "shape the field for the coming decade" (1). As her title indicates, that shared purpose is to balance the pursuit of cognitive universals with the local and historical claims of culture. Rather than seeking to demonstrate biological determinism, Zunshine notes in her introduction, today's cognitive theorists attend to "the role of universally shared features of human cognition in historically specific forms of cultural production" (2). The volume thus brings a cluster of different methodologies together under one name based on their desire for a more "robust interdisciplinarity": that is, one that allows discussion of "embodied universals" without losing focus on the predominantly historical and culturalist premises of humanistic inquiry.[15]

While Zunshine frames her anthology as a plea for humanists to meet scientists halfway—to admit, as we already tacitly acknowledge, that not *everything* in human life and experience is culturally relative—the collection is also an intervention in cultural studies itself. For while versions of cultural constructivism have defined the academic Left for several decades now, Zunshine and at least some of her contributors propose that this tendency has largely obscured the true radicalism of cognitive approaches. Seeking common ground, Zunshine anchors her *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* in the work of Raymond Williams, one of the founders of cultural studies and, on her account,

an underappreciated cognitivist. She quotes a passage from the beginning of *The Long Revolution*, where Williams writes that the reality humans experience in day-to-day life has two main sources: "the human brain as it has evolved, and the interpretations carried by our cultures" (6). Williams' recognition of the interplay between brain and culture has been "ignored," Zunshine writes, by cultural studies ever since (7). In the volume's essay devoted to Williams, Bruce McConachie implies that Williams simply lacked the resources to give more than a loose, "impressionistic" account of cultural hegemony.[16] On McConachie's account, Williams's repeated attempts to define and specify "structures of feeling" signals that early cultural studies was grasping for the kind of explanatory framework the cognitive disciplines now make available. The claim, then, is that cognitive theory can actually help cultural studies do what it was always designed to do.

In its early years, the scandal of cultural studies was its refusal to give imaginative art special treatment.   The creative imagination is for Williams simply "the capacity to find and organize new descriptions of experience," a capacity shared by all human beings but communicated in the varied ways that together make up "culture."[17] In consequence, "we cannot continue to see art as qualitatively special and thus discontinuous with everyday practices" (10). Claiming this lineage is somewhat different from the simple "meet me halfway" strategy Zunshine employs elsewhere. For if her volume administers a rebuke to cultural studies for its reflexive constructivism, it also joins cultural studies in its resolute demotion of the "literary" and its determined folding of literature into the wider domain of writing, communication, and culture. Of course, the impulse to fold aesthetic activity into a larger organizational matrix has become common currency for

many of us. In *The Work of Writing* (1998), for example, Clifford Siskin distinguishes between the more general activity of "writing" and the professionalized thing that came to be known as "Literature," a narrowed cultural activity made safe for study within the rapidly modernizing university. There is no reference to cognitive material in Siskin's account, but it is congruent with the cognitive cultural studies that Zunshine finds in Williams. For his part, Siskin is clear that demystifying "Literature" will reduce the influence of Romanticism: "The reason," he writes, "that Romantic discourse so thoroughly penetrates the study of Literature is that Literature emerged in its presently narrowed—but thus deep and disciplinary—form during that period and thus *in* that discourse" (14).

The alternative to this sociological impulse has long been to insist that *poesis* is indeed qualitatively unique, or performs a philosophical work that cannot be done in other domains. Such a claim has a robust Romantic pedigree, springing especially from the group gathered around the Schlegel brothers in Jena at the turn of the nineteenth century, and threading its way through 20th-century phenomenology (Bergson, Sartre, Heidegger) and deconstruction.[18] Thus construed, Romanticism would be a particularly hostile ground on which to cultivate a cognitive cultural studies. Yet Romanticism has been an important site for that project, due largely to the work of Alan Richardson. His *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001) reframed the Romantic era as an important moment in the history of the cognitive sciences, even if Richardson's brand of "cognitive historicism" is aimed largely against the Romanticism of high theory.[19] That aim is explicit in Richardson's *The Neural Sublime* (2010), the announced purpose of which is to replace Kant with Burke. Burke's "physiological sublime," which "remains

tethered to the body and its limitations," offers a salutary alternative to Kant's transcendental sublime (which "leaves the body and brain behind") and, by implication, with a Romantic tendency to render aesthetic experience a privileged domain.[20]

Occasionally, however, a different possibility peeks through: the characteristically Romantic ambition to uncover the "extraordinary character of ordinary perception" (47). And as Zunshine has suggested, that Romantic lineage is embedded in the foundations of cultural studies itself. Raymond Williams's argument in *The Long Revolution*, after all, hinges on the idea that all perception, not just literary "genius," is creative. In fact, his decisive text is chapter 13 of *Biographia Literaria*, where Coleridge, defining the primary imagination, "extended the idea of creation to all perception."[21] While neither Zunshine nor Richardson allude to that Romantic-era link, Richardson indirectly echoes Williams when in a discussion of Donald Hoffman's 2003 *Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See*, he glosses that same, hyper-canonical moment in Romantic theory as "mystical to some" but "neuroscientific to others."[22] Among proponents of cognitive cultural studies, then, Richardson perhaps comes closest to demonstrating the Romantic-era lineage of the project itself.

Today's cognitive criticism retains that Romantic impulse to explain literature by turning to the underlying structures of the ordinary mind. This is especially clear for those working in the fields of "cognitive poetics" or "cognitive aesthetics," who tend to focus on the single mind, and on the complex sonic and linguistic effects that make poetry a particularly rich cognitive phenomenon.[23] But it is also true of a different set of approaches—aligned most influentially with Zunshine's own work in her book *Why We Read Fiction*—that grounds literature in the faculties that structure our experience of

other minds.[24] As Zunshine's title indicates, the question she sets out to pursue is why mundane, plot-driven literature interests people in the first place. Her answer, as she succinctly puts it, is that "theory of mind"—the ability to identify and navigate information about other minds—"makes literature as we know it possible" (198). To be sure, a great deal of our experience of literary worlds and characters involves complex attributions of mindedness. We routinely, automatically attribute mental states to characters—Clarissa Dalloway, Emma Woodhouse—who don't actually exist. And literary texts routinely embed those mental states like matryoshka dolls: Frank Churchill *knows* that Knightley *believes* that Emma *thinks* she is love with him. Certain kinds of literature, moreover, ratchet up the cognitive load dramatically. Studies suggest that our brains can handle four levels of intentional recursion with relative ease, but five levels is extremely difficult. Virginia Woolf routinely pushes her readers into the terrain of five, six, or even seven levels. Similarly, Blakey Vermeule proposes that "moments we consider especially literary" engage our capacity for thinking about other minds.[25] She highlights moments when "a flat or minor character provokes a fit of reflection in a round or major character." Such moments lead to "elaborate rituals of shared attention and eye contact," so that "[t]he scene itself becomes soaked in mindfulness" (219). Theory of mind provides the operative terms here: the characters that interest readers are those best at mindreading—those who can predict what other characters will believe or experience in given situations, and who use that ability to manage social situations to their advantage.

These approaches to "theory of mind" or "mindreading" depend on a specific set of conversations about what philosophers of science refer to as "folk psychology," the

quite ordinary way in which people come to attribute mental state concepts, like beliefs and desires, to others.[26] Like the cognitive sciences more broadly, studies of mindreading are thoroughly interdisciplinary, drawing on the philosophy of science, clinical psychology, and neuroimaging. Accordingly, it is a field with many live debates and a variety of competing positions about how we read minds. The most important three are the "theory" theory (which holds that we make theoretical inferences about other people's mental states); the modularity theory (which looks to the mind as a set of innate, modular mechanisms, and which I will discuss in chapter two); and the simulation theory (which holds that we pretend or imagine what it is like to be another person, and which I will discuss in chapter four). The cognitive science of mindreading hinges on the now-classic experiment known as the "false belief task, also known as the "Sally-Anne test."" In this experiment, the participant (generally a child) sees the character Sally put a marble in a basket, and leave the room. While Sally is gone, the character Anne moves the marble into a box. The test comes when Sally returns to the room: where will she look for the marble? Most children 4 and up say that Sally will look in the basket. They are thus able to attribute a "false belief" to Sally, suggesting that they can differentiate between what they know and what others know. The false-belief task thus tests for the presence of a developed theory of mind. By contrast, very young children and individuals with autism consistently declare that Sally will look in the box, where they know the marble actually is. For Alison Gopnik, an influential proponent of "rationality theory," that indicated that such individuals lacked the ability to attribute discrepant mental states to others, and thus defaulted to their own beliefs.[27]

Indeed, severely autistic children *routinely* fail the false belief task, and predict Sally's behavior based on their own true beliefs that the marble was in the box. This is where the second position, modularity theory, comes in. The close correlation between Autism Spectrum Disorders and the failure of the belief task led another group of researchers to propose that such disorders represented a physical impairment of theory of mind, via damage to or underdevelopment of a particular part of the brain. Thus Alan Leslie, Simon Baron-Cohen and others have argued for the existence of an innate, modular "theory of mind mechanism."[28] Curiously, it is this latter, modular account of mindreading that has found a home in literary studies. Zunshine in particular closely follows these cognitive scientists' research on Autism Spectrum Disorders and their relation to the mindreading tasks required in the social world, extending their claims to the fictional minds we encounter in literature.

Such work has some inherent liabilities. The claim that "theory of mind makes literature as we know it possible" means little, since it would be equally true to say that theory of mind makes baseball (or driving, or shopping) possible. "Theory of mind" theory is a hypothesis about social life in general, and has little to say that pertains specifically to literature. Moreover, the idea of a mindreading mechanism is one position out of many, in a scientific field fraught with its own internal debates and competing hypotheses. The choice of the modular nativist position, in particular, raises some problems for literary scholars, especially given that field's relationship to studies of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Defining "literature" as the success of one, specific cognitive ability commits literary scholars to a particular understanding of how "normal functioning" relates to disability. Thus for Zunshine, "mindblindness" serves primarily as

a point of contrast, one that illuminates the kind of ordinary mindreading tasks which, on her account, drive literary practice and readerly engagement. Normally-developing readers can appreciate the complex embedding of mental states in, say, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, or, in the Romantic era, at certain moments in Jane Austen's novels.[29] Such studies are thus methodologically committed to the idea that mindblindness—if that is what we want to call it—equates to literary impoverishment. In fact, on this account "literature as we know it" begins to look roughly like realist narrative. This flattening-out of "literature" is at stake in Zunshine's work, and it is even more at issue in the vast number of evolutionary literary studies less nuanced than hers, many of which argue that literature itself is an evolutionary adaptation.[30] So, too, many of the broadest searches for "literary universals" typically describe literature as something like "story," whether conceived explicitly as an engagement with other minds or as people's everyday "use of the elements of speech to evoke action in a temporal sequence."[31] On this point Mark Turner does not mince words: "narrative imagining—story—is the fundamental instrument of thought […] It is a literary capacity indispensable to human cognition generally."[32]

As such, these methodologies make it difficult to make claims about anything but the broadest and fuzziest definitions of literature. Even David Herman, himself an influential figure in cognitive narratology, has noted this tendency toward vagueness, arguing that many working in the field use "story" only as a "primitive, undefined term." In his subsequent work, Herman has helped clarify the terms by which "narrative" can serve more fruitfully.[33] Yet he cautions, in a review of Turner's *The Literary Mind,* "Narrative is wider in scope than literature, and literary narratives are only one kind of

story among many other possible kinds" (25).[34] Narrative, on this account, is the ether in which literary and nonliterary discourse moves, whether in "song lyrics, grant applications," or everyday speech.

How did we arrive at this point—that is, at a moment when literature offers to illuminate something foundational about the human mind; but *what* it shows can be articulated in two largely antithetical ways: as a theory of private sensuous experience, or as a theory of socially-embedded narrative?

Literature, the Disciplines, and Cognitive Origins

The question should be particularly intriguing to Romanticists, who are immersed in the rhetoric that gave the lyric its cultural ascendency by naming it an alternative to narrative as well as science. As Douglas Patey and Virginia Jackson have argued, the modern idea of lyric took shape during the long Romantic era, in response to the emergence of professionalized disciplines of knowledge and the concomitant professionalization of literary study. Indeed, the Romantic era saw the rise of "literature" as the particular kind of writing that came to be an object of study in its own right within the modernizing university. The lyric became a metonymy for "literature" in this new sense due to a common argument that it pertained to subjective human experience, rather than the accumulation of facts about the world. On this account, the "rise of lyric" (and by extension the process Virginia Jackson has called the "lyricization" of poetry) occurred by virtue of poetry's claims to be a stronghold against or refuge from the sciences.[35] Thus, Patey argues, the rise of literature's own disciplinary methods gradually "forces an identification of 'true' poetry with lyric," at the same time that it sequesters

poetry both from the "actions and events" of plots and from the increasingly disciplined or specialized world of positive knowledge.[36]

More recently, Robin Valenza has complicated that argument by suggesting that the lyric—even when it was held up as a refuge from the increasingly compartmentalized disciplines—began to mimic the language of disciplinary specialization. On her argument, poetry sought to navigate the widening sea of intellectual disciplines by becoming, paradoxically, "a practice whose specialized role was the creation of common language and universal experience."[37] In Romantic studies, much effort has been spent in recent years to show that this newly disciplined literature continued to draw upon and influence the sciences.[38] What is implicitly at stake in such studies, then, is an argument about how disciplines take shape historically. The reciprocal pressures exerted between nascent disciplines are as likely to appear as skirmishes on disputed territory as transactions on common ground.[39] Accordingly, the ways literary studies became formalized as a discipline of its own were always already in dialogue with the other disciplines alongside which it emerged.[40]

The earliest systematic attempts to perform what we would now call literary criticism took place somewhere between belletrism and empirical psychology, in the attempts to formalize an account of taste. The usual touchstone here is A.G. Baumgarten's repurposing of the Latin term *aesthetica*, in 1750, to designate a program of systematic and rationally-deduced rules of distinction. Baumgarten's impetus was as much a sense that *belles lettres* needed a sturdier intellectual foundation as the sense that empirical psychology had gaps it needed to fill, and those gaps were literary. That latter version of the claim—that literature is something that a mature science must be able to

explain—characterizes the ways that literature cropped up in explicitly philosophical works, like Etienne Bonnot de Condillac's *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1756), subtitled a "supplement to Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding." Condillac concludes his discussion by casting literature as the problem he aspires to solve. He proposes a challenge:

> An author's work being given, to determine the character and extent of his understanding, and in consequence thereof to tell not only the talents of which he gives proofs, but likewise those which he is capable of acquiring: to take, for instance, Corneille's earliest performance, and to demonstrate that, when this poet wrote it, he was already possessed of, or at least would soon acquire those bright parts by which he merited such high applause […] I question whether there are many problems more difficult than this.[41]

For Condillac, the sign that empirical psychology had become a mature science would be its ability to have explanatory power in a field as murky as literature. In fact, since "[n]othing but an analysis of the work is capable of shewing us the operations that produced it, and how far they were exerted," arriving at that point would require wedding the scientific knowledge of the mind's operations to what we would now call "close reading" (339). Condillac's challenge articulates the emerging sense at mid-century that a thorough science of the mind would need to be capable of accounting for literature. Philosophy would ultimately have to rise to the level of literary criticism.

The alternative, for those writing from within the tradition of *belles lettres*, was to seek a firmer foundation for the previously loose, impressionistic features of artistic

response by referring them to the contours of human psychology and physiology. This physiological turn is most enduringly associated with Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), which Vanessa Ryan has called a theory of the "physiological sublime."[42] More recently, Alan Richardson has taken Burke as the starting point for what he calls a "neural sublime," an embodied, brain-based aesthetics he finds in Burke, in Keats and Shelley, and in contemporary neuroscience.[43] Burke takes into account the physiology of the nerves as well as the biological differences between human and non-human reproductive drives. He even occasionally sounds proto-evolutionary, as when he maps the sublime and beautiful onto two biological drives, to survive and to procreate. The sublime, for Burke, is a function of the emotions relating to self-preservation. The beautiful is what attracts people into groups or couples, and it turns on the emotions relating to the "society of the sexes," namely to sexual attraction and love.[44] For Condillac, literature was the most complex of human activities, and so it stood as a challenge that would motivate empiricists to improve the science. Burke's *Enquiry* marks the beginning of a different science of literature, for which particular attributes of aesthetic objects might yield insights into the mind's makeup, its basic faculties and drives. So, on the one hand, the rise of "literature" saw the rise of a *science* of literature. On the other, it saw the claim that literature was an alternative or complementary source of knowledge about the mind.

Lyric theory as it consolidated in the Romantic era was the place where those earlier strands of empirical literary studies came together, for the very effort to separate poetry from science—an effort forged in the debate between the ancients and moderns—wound up redefining the lyric in terms amenable to the sciences. As William Hazlitt

wrote in his late entry into the debate, "Why the Arts Are Not Progressive," the arts do not improve over time, while the sciences do. He distinguishes the progressive sciences, which are "mechanical, reducible to rule, or capable of demonstration," from art, which is "not mechanical or definite, but depends on genius, taste, and feeling."[45] Because feeling has not changed, Hazlitt argues, the best poetry—unlike the best science—is that which we find in the earliest ages. The senses and the passions (the domain of lyric) are clearest in the earliest ages, before they are overwritten by custom and poetic convention. Instead of actually divorcing the lyric from the sciences, though, that rhetorical move wound up articulating a different science of the lyric, one that aligned lyrical modes of expression with the earliest stages of cognitive life—with the pristine moment represented by Homeric Greek, or Biblical Hebrew, or Ossianic Scotland. Noel Jackson has recently shown how aligning poetry with sensation and feeling was not a retreat from scientific knowledge, but a return to sensation (which Erasmus Darwin and other "placed […] at the fount of the human sciences"). But another, related Romantic argument made a still bolder, more contentious claim: that the lyric was not just a mode that explored sensation, but the very form cognition historically takes.[46]

That approach is clear in Johann Gottfried Herder's "Treatise on the Ode" (1764), which suggests that poetry captures the mind's true language, as it emerges from a submerged realm of affect. This is particularly true of the original (ostensibly lyrical) forms of poetry, principally the ode, which Herder calls "[t]he firstborn child of sensibility, the fountainhead of poetic art, and the germ cell of its life"[47] In its original form, Herder writes, the Greek dithyramb was not like its modern counterpart—"a vehement German celebration of indifferent subject matter"—but "a lost heirloom of

Greek sensibility" (38). Poetry originates not as a discursive structure, but as the foundational activity that gives rise to discourse in the first place. Herder's "Explication of the Ode on the Basis of Sensibility" makes this equation eloquently: "Affect, which at the outset silently, encapsulated within, benumbed the entire body and surged as a dark feeling, gradually pervades all slight stirrings, until it finds expression in recognizable signs" (43). Poetry—or at least poetry deserving of the name—*was* the faculty of sensibility.

Later in the period, Coleridge would extend this argument in his frequent attacks on the materialist claim that if the mind was identical with its physical substrate (the pineal gland, the vital spirits, the nerves, or the brain), then it could be divided into, or reduced to, its component parts. In an echo of contemporaneous arguments against disciplinary specialization, Coleridge sought to make poetry an act of the whole mind, rather than its parts. Poetry, he writes, "brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity."[48] Poetry modeled cognition as an embodied process that could not be divided into its component parts. In its engagement with the science of the mind, the *Biographia*'s most sustained objection to association theory is that it denies people this kind of centralized processing. Because in Hartley's system impressions were tied to particular physical locations, Coleridge argues, they could only influence one another by "proximity in place," and the whole of mental life would reduce to a set of determined interactions between them. "[I]nstead of being the determining causes of association," then, "the will, the reason, the judgement, and the understanding [...] must needs be represented as its *creatures*, and among its mechanical effects" (I:110). Setting aside the

question of whether Coleridge was taking aim at a straw man here, the result was an insistence that mental functioning hinged on central processing.[49] Mindedness may involve many different abilities, but its core is one centralized power that can take hold of the "immense" and "unwieldy spectacle" presented by sensation. Coleridge thought that poetry offered a model of such central processing. Increasingly aligned with "feeling" (at once a term for embodied response and inward, subjective experience), poetry offered to demonstrate most robustly that the mind was one single, indivisible entity, which had access to the full storehouse of signifiers to use according to its will or whim.

Lyrical Minds

That is not, however, the only model of what the lyric does, or how it was made to model the mind. To be sure, Romantic texts habitually position the lyric as an expressive utterance, one that resembles the domain-general faculty of consciousness or "sensibility." Yet the same texts often engage quite different models, models that take advantage of the lyric's distinctive formal characteristics. As a case in point both of the lyric's versatility, and the extent to which it might illuminate the literature of inter-mental relationships, I want to turn briefly to the case of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa,* the novel that has perhaps garnered the most attention in recent years by scholars interested in literary minds.

For a number of cognitive literary critics, *Clarissa* is a benchmark of sorts due to its nuanced deployment of the strategies of mindreading. On most of these accounts, the novel's strength lies in its deft handling of characters' mental states, as exemplified not only by its eponymous heroine's deep interiority, but by the demanding task it sets readers, who must keep track of a host of other characters, their often dubious self-

presentations, and their relationships to other characters in the novel's social world. *Clarissa* thus serves as Lisa Zunshine's major example of a novel that "exercises" its readers' mindreading skills. Lovelace makes us work particularly hard: his machinations are the occasion for Samuel Richardson to make novelistic mindreading into a form of "deep play."[50] For Blakey Vermeule, too, *Clarissa*'s achievement is in its play with the protocols by which people come to engage with a cluster of words on paper as a mind in the first place. In particular, it dramatizes the means by which Clarissa (or anyone) can come to appear less an agent than an instrumental object (230). On accounts like these, then, the rise of the novel simply institutes literary protocols that mirror the mind's natural abilities and proclivities for processing social information.

For a different group of critics, *Clarissa* is a historically important experiment in thinking about minds, but for precisely the opposite reason. In spite of its epistolary structure, which offers to present a mind like Clarissa's as a set of consciously held desires and intentions, the novel's achievement might actually be to push away that intuitive privileging of expressible inner states, and to experiment with different ways of thinking about minds. Both Jonathan Kramnick and Sandra Macpherson, for instance, have recently offered readings of *Clarissa* that bracket questions of interiority and intention, and seek the salient features of social agents elsewhere. For Kramnick, the concept of consent makes important features of Clarissa's mind—namely, whether or not she has consented to Lovelace's advances—alternately a feature of her inner life and of her external, social environment.[51] For Macpherson, the question of individual desire or intention is still less interesting: instead, *Clarissa* explores how Lovelace's *intention* might be less salient than his *liability*, in the legal sense that obligates agents to one

another as a result of their actions' unintended consequences.[52] In both cases, *Clarissa* shows that (as Kramnick puts it) "conscious experience matters not at all," and demands different, less intuitive models of one mind's life among others (229).

On all these accounts, of course, *Clarissa*'s nuanced treatment of interpersonal relationships is a testament to its virtuosity *as a novel*—of its doing all those things novelistic narratives do particularly well. Yet one of the most bizarre representations of mindedness in the novel is lyrical. In the poetic fragments of Clarissa's "mad papers"— especially Paper X with its eccentric typesetting—the lyric marks a departure from the straightforward reportage or reading of intentions, desires, and beliefs the novel offers elsewhere.[53] Clarissa ceases telling us (or her epistolary interlocutor Anna Howe) what she thinks, and delves into fragment, figure, and allegory. In these papers, Clarissa is distanced or alienated from her own inner life—as when she invokes "my divided soul, / That wars within me, / And raises every sense to my confusion."[54] Read against the novel's fluent, narrative depiction of minds and mindreading, Clarissa's "mad papers" make a case for the lyric's affiliation with pathological, partial or impaired states, as well as those features of private mental life that one finds outside of oneself, in (social or poetic) form, convention, and quotation. In his own definition of poetry, William Wordsworth would later concede *Clarissa*'s effectiveness only to divorce it from his own lyrical project. Arguing that poetry sustains rereading more effectively than the novel, he "appeal[s] to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe."[55] And yet, when one turns to the most "distressful" moment in the novel, one finds lyrics.

me fly to the fuccour of fuch a poor diftreffed—With what pleafure would I have raifed the dejected head, and comforted the defponding heart!—But who now fhall pity the poor wretch, who has encreafed, inftead of diminifhed, the number of the miferable!

PAPER X.

LEAD me, where my own thoughts themfelves may lofe me;
Where I may doze out what I've left of Life,
Forget myfelf, and that day's guilt!——
Cruel Rémembrance!——how fhall I appeafe thee?

——Oh! you have done an act
That blots the face and blufh of modefty;
Takes off the rofe
From the fair forehead of an innocent Love,
And makes a blifter there !——

Then down I laid my head,
Down on cold earth, and for a while was dead;
And my freed Soul to a ftrange Somewhere fled !
Ah! fottifh Soul! faid I,
When back to its cage again I faw it fly,
Fool! to refume her broken chain,
And row the galley here again !'
Fool! to that Body to return,
Where it condemn'd and deftin'd is to *mourn.*

O my Mifs Howe! if thou haft friendfhip, help me,
And fpeak the words of peace to my divided Soul,
That wars within me,
And raifes ev'ry fenfe to my confufion.
I'm tott'ring on the brink
Of peace; and thou art all the hold I've left!
Affift me——in the pangs of my affliction!

When Honour's loft, 'tis a relief to die:
Death's but a fure retreat from infamy.

Then farewel, Youth,
And all the joys that dwell
With Youth and Life!
And Life itfelf, farewel!

For Life can never be fincerely bleft.
Heav'n punifhes the *Bad,* and proves the *Beft.*

Death only can be dreadful to the Bad;
To Innocence 'tis like a bugbear dreß'd
To frighten children. Pull but off the maß,
And he'll appear a friend.

I could a Tale unfold
Would harrow up thy Soul!

By fwift misfortunes
How am I purfu'd!
Which on each other
Are, like waves, renew'd!

AFTER all, Belford, I have juft fkimmed over thefe tranfcriptions of Dorcas; and I fee there are method and

good

Fig. 1: Samuel Richardson, "Paper X" from *Clarissa*

Among other things, what Wordsworth's forgetfulness here signals is that the lyric came to Romantic writers in many guises. Like Clarissa's "mad papers," the Romantic-era lyric was often made to represent minds that were not expressive, but clunky and mechanical, bespeaking a mediation at the core of private mental life. Additionally, they experiment with materialist conceptions of the mind; with portrayals of partial, fragmentary, or impaired minds; or with theories that offload the labor of cognition onto bodily or technological supplements. The chapters that follow expand the story of how the lyric obtained its present, narrowed definition by recovering alternative models of lyrical cognition that circulated alongside the most familiar one. I begin with the work of ballad scholars and antiquarians who claimed, for better or worse, that poetry tells us something about the essence of the mind in its most primitive state. The first chapter, "Ossian's Folk Psychology," takes James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) as a point of entry into the "other minds" question in its broadest form: how are minds situated in bodies, and how do they become known to others? Like Macpherson, most Scottish Enlightenment antiquarians associated poetry with the basic faculties of the primitive, solitary mind. They thus run up against a conceptual roadblock: ancient poetry was supposed to show what the mind really was. However, since that poetry often appeared as a kind of animistic projection of the speaker's thoughts onto the landscape, it said little about other minds, proffering instead an image of the mistakes the early mind was liable to make. Macpherson's poems, in contrast, establish mental states as real, observable entities in the world. By recuperating pagan materialism, and incorporating more recent speculations on the mind's materiality, the Ossian forgeries ask not what poetic language tells us about the earliest forms of cognition, but rather how

ancient, popular poetry might contribute to ongoing debates about the mind's physical makeup.

The second chapter, "Lyrical Impairment," follows those two alternative models of poetry—as an echo of primitive cognition, or as a more ambitious engagement with the mind's physical makeup—as they become more starkly opposed in Romantic-era discussions of poetic "idiocy." Just as empirical philosophy celebrated primitive, poetic language as closer to the origins of thought, so it defined "idiocy" as a state closer to the original blank slate of the mind and therefore a privileged window into the mental life of "original man." By aligning idiocy with poetry, Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy" revalues both by making them expressive of the pristine, figurative origins of language and thought. By contrast, in *Waverley* Scott uses the cognitively impaired minstrel Davie Gellatley to reduce lyric expressivity to the brute elements of memorization and counting. Through readings of nineteenth-century tracts on the poetic mind, from phrenology to evolutionary theory, I show that Scott's discussion of impairment looks forward to the quest by modern cognitive researchers to isolate the specific mechanisms or brain regions responsible for particular activities. That project is not without its problems, especially when it defines "normal" mental functioning in narrow terms. Scott, in contrast, remains sensitive to a range of mental dispositions and literary modes, as *Waverley* correlates the triumph of one genre—the realist novel—with a decreasing tolerance for individuals like Davie in Britain's rapidly modernizing society.

In its focus on Davie's rote memorization, *Waverley* reframes the philosophical problem of how minds inhere in matter in more accessible terms. Chapter three, "Distributed Thinking in the Wordsworth Circle," brings Scott's focus on linguistic

technologies to bear on Romantic poetics more broadly. I examine the collaborative practices that structure and generate the *Lyrical Ballads* themselves alongside the science of what is variously referred to as "distributed cognition," "group thought," or simply "the extended mind": the proposition that the mind is not encapsulated within the individual head, but distributed across body, technology and environment. Through readings of "Lines Written in Early Spring" and "The Old Cumberland Beggar," as well as Dorothy Wordsworth's nuanced use of poetic quotation in her *Grasmere Journal* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's appropriately scattered thoughts on the technologies of composition, I argue that the Wordsworth circle's compositional practices offer a consummately ordinary way of extending the mind beyond the body, and of conceiving the poem as a vehicle of interpersonal thinking.

The final chapter, "Hazlitt and the Science of Reading One's Own Mind," takes William Hazlitt's philosophy as a bridge between eighteenth-century theories of sympathy and social feeling and more recent discussions of mindreading: the basic strategies by which one mind recognizes and keeps track of another. Hazlitt's early *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* counterintuitively argues that outward-directed protocols like sympathy and altruistic motivation are central even to ordinary, self-directed activities, from planning one's own future to recoiling from pain. He thus breaks down the division between inwardness and outward-directed thinking that structures much of the received tradition of the lyric. Lyrics supposedly put the private mind on display, whereas narrative mobilizes readers' strategies for encountering and coordinating third-person information about various networks of characters. Although Hazlitt's later writings on the lyric reinforce that division between first-person and third-person

literatures, his early theory insists that first-person and third-person faculties of mind depended on each other. The result is a different Romantic account of the literary mind: one that anticipates not the cognitive study of poetic language and effects, but rather the turn toward the central role of social feeling, even for fictional characters, in everyday mental life.

The period this dissertation studies thus sees a range of interdisciplinary strategies brought to bear on questions of literary form. At the same time, it sees the entrenchment of a particular understanding of literature's cognitive stakes. In the 1760s, James Macpherson could identify the "lyrical" with a wide range of poetic forms—solitary laments, martial ballads, and fragments of epic narrative—all of which he presented as products of early or primitive cognition. By the late Romantic period, those forms had been parceled out into the lyric (conceived in terms of private sensuous experience) and narrative (the domain of "other minds"), faculties and genres that John Stuart Mill called "mutually exclusive." Despite the tendency by writers like Wordsworth and Mill to identify the lyric with private sensation—and to leave the social operations of the mind for the novel—numerous Romantic texts suggest that private sensation and social thinking cannot be so neatly separated. Each of the following chapters focuses on a conceptual issue that troubled Romantic writers, and that continues to drive speculation and debate in philosophy and the cognitive sciences: the validity of our ordinary "folk psychological" assumptions; the biology underlying those assumptions and the role such theories see for impaired minds; the spaces shared among minds and the technologies they jointly use; and the sympathetic or simulation-based relationships between minds. Treating poetry, lyric theory, cultures of sentiment, and proto-cognitive theories of mind

recognition, "Lyric Mindedness" argues that the lyric served Romantic writers' attempts to go beyond available models of interpersonal relations. From theories of altruism to proposals for social reorganization, lyric modes of mindedness offered the Romantics ways to think through the problem of philosophical skepticism—how one mind can reliably encounter another—and to model an ethical relationship between minds. While Romanticism ultimately bequeaths to us this compartmentalizing of different faculties, its texts themselves offer a wider range of possibilities for the lyric and a more varied picture of how scientific paradigms brush up against those in the humanities.

Notes

[1] "Frost at Midnight," *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose,* eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York: Norton, 2004) 120-3, lines 17-20.

[2] Stillinger, Jack. *Coleridge and Textual Instability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 57. Coleridge subsequently revised the "dead calm" to the less troubling "deep calm" (50).

[3] Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1955) 122n, 121.

[4] "Frost at Midnight" 55. See also Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense,* ed. Derek R. Brookes (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). On Reid's response to Hume, see chapter 1 below.

[5] Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,* Trans. G. Gregory (London: Joseph Johnson, 1787) 38-9.

[6] See *The Works of John Ruskin,* eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 5:201-220.

[7] Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modular Mind* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

[8] Turner, Reading Minds: The Study of Literature in the Age of Cognitive Science (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[9] Tsur, *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (New York: North-Holland, 1992).

[10] Hogan, "Literary Universals," *Poetics Today* 18.2 (1997): 223-49.

[11] See Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming By the Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Ellen Esrock, *The Reader's Eye: Visual Imaging as Reader Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); and Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[12] See Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).

[13] See especially "Cognition: A Field Map (Introduction)," in *The Work of Fiction: Cognition, Culture, and Complexity,* ed. Richardson and Spolsky (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) 1–29.

[14] Zunshine, ed., *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[15] "Robust interdisciplinarity" is Richardson's term for this shared aspiration. See *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) x.

[16] McConachie, "Toward a Cognitive Cultural Hegemony," *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* 134-50, 138.

[17] Zunshine, *Introduction* 10.

[18] See, for example, Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature, e*d. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004), and Philippe Lacou-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

[19] Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). On "cognitive historicism," Richardson writes, "recruits and selectively adapts theories, methods, and findings from the sciences of mind and brain, partly in the hope that these will provide suggestive (though, it is understood, necessarily imperfect) analogies with past models and partly in the hope that cultural and historical differences will emerge *more* clearly and cleanly when set against what appear to be stable and invariant aspects of human cognition and behavior" ("Facial Expression Theory from Romanticism to the Present," in Zunshine, *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* 65-83, 67-8).

[20] See Richardson, *The Neural Sublime* 24.

[21] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) 11.

[22] Richardson, *The Neural Sublime* 47.

[23] For a recent application of cognitive aesthetics to the lyric, see Gabrielle G. Starr, "Poetic Subjects and Grecian Urns," *Modern Philology* 105:1 (August 2007): 48-61.

[24] See Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

[25] Vermeule, "Machiavellian Narratives," in Zunshine, *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* 214-30, 214.

[26] The discussion of folk psychology is usually sourced to Wilfred Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of the Mind," *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis*, Eds. Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (University of Minnesota Press, 1956) 253-329.

[27] See especially Alison Gopnik and Henry M. Wellman, "Why the Child's Theory of Mind Really Is a Theory," *Mind and Language* 7 (1992): 145-171.

[28] See especially Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). Baron-Cohen's work has been influential for theories of *normal* mental functioning, but he has also been quite influential in the study of autism-spectrum disorder itself.

[29] Alan Richardson takes this logic a step further in his discussion of Jane Austen, in which he identifies "Austen herself as an early theorist of what is now called Theory of Mind." See *Neural Sublime* 81.

[30] Two well-known articulations of this claim are Joseph Carroll *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004) and Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). For a critique, see Jonathan Kramnick, "Against Literary Darwinism," *Critical Inquiry* 37.2 (Winter 2011) 315-47.

[31] John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans*: *The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 1-2.

[32] Turner, *The Literary Mind* 4-5.

[33] See for example Herman, "Scripts Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology," *PMLA* 112.5 (1997) 1046-59 and "Narrative Theory after the Second Cognitive Revolution," in Zunshine, *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* 155-75.

[34] Major examples of cognitive narratology include Marie-Laure Ryan's *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991) and Monica Fludernik's *Toward a 'Natural' Narratology* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[35] Douglas Lane Patey, "Aesthetics and the Rise of the Lyric in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 33.3 (Summer 1993): 587-608; Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[36] Patey 604, 600.

[37] Robin Valenza, Literature, Language, and the Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines in Britain, 1680-1820 (New York: Cambridge UP, 2009) 142.

[38] Noteworthy studies include, among others, Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*; Noel Jackson, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Denise Gigante, *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[39] As Michael McKeon has demonstrated, formative moments of disciplinary division, in which scholars stake out their own disciplinary territory, frequently "appear intertwined with a synthesizing counter-movement." See McKeon, "The Origins of Interdisciplinary Studies," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28.1 (1994): 17–28, 18.

[40] For a discussion of this formation, specifically in light of "the advent of science as a category of restricted knowledge," see Jonathan Kramnick, "Literary Criticism Among the Disciplines," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35 (2002): 343-60, 343.

[41] Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge. Being a Supplement to Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. Translated from the French of the Abbe de Condillac, Member of the Royal Academy of Berlin. By Mr. Nugent* (London: J Nourse, 1751) 338-9.

[42] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (New York: Oxford, 1998). On Burke's physiological argument, see Vanessa L. Ryan, "The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason" and, more recently, Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*.

[43] See Richardson, *Neural Sublime* 17ff.

[44] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry* 38. On the difference between sexual attraction in man and animals, see 39.

[45] *Selected Writings of William Hazlitt,* ed. Duncan Wu, 9 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) 2:158.

[46] Noel Jackson, *Science and Sensation* 4.

[47] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Selected Early Works, 1764-1767: Addresses, Essays, and Drafts; Fragments on Recent German Literature*, eds Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992) 36.

[48] *Biographia Literaria,* eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983) 2:15-16.

[49] For the argument that Coleridge chose Hartley as an easy, "dated" target by comparison with more contemporaneous biologies of mind, see Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* 9ff.

[50] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction* 97.

[51] For Kramnick, the psychology at issue in Clarissa is one in which "conscious experience matters not at all" (*Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009]) 213. Lovelace and Clarissa have different understandings of whether consent in this case is internal or external. On Kramnick's reading the language that exculpates Clarissa from the charge of suicide at the novel's conclusion concedes the grounds of debate to the externalist position, finally "present[ing] something like a world with events yet no actions" (229).

[52] For Macpherson, it bears noting, the liability-based worldview she terms "tragic" is precisely the worldview cultivated by the novel as a form. See *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[53] For a thorough discussion of "Clarissa and the Lyric," including Clarissa's "mad papers," see the first chapter of Gabrielle G. Starr, *Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

[54] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa. Or, the history of a young lady.* 4th ed. 5 vols. (London, 1751). Eighteenth Century Collections Online <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>). 5:59.

[55] *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, Eds. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 755.

Chapter One

Ossian's Folk Psychology

James Macpherson's "Ossian" poems are steeped in the language of memory, of history, and of ghosts. From its first publication in the controversial volume *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), the reconstructed Ossianic corpus fostered a critical vocabulary of apparition and spectrality, not least with regard to the spectral nature of the poems themselves. Macpherson offered these poems as fragmentary glimpses of ancient Scotland, and of the hazy domain of oral tradition. Heated debates regarding the poems' authenticity subsequently cast Ossian himself in ghostly shades. Hazlitt, alluding to the forgery debates, writes, "If it were indeed possible to shew that this writer was nothing, it would only be another instance of mutability, another blank made, another void left in the heart."[1] As an author function, and as the poetic voice that offers itself in the printed fragments, "Ossian" communicated to his audience a ghostliness still more thorough than that of ancient Britain.[2]

Criticism of Macpherson has likewise subscribed rather quickly to a decorporealizing poetics. For Katie Trumpener and Murray Pittock, the Ossianic poetry offers shades of a Gaelic past in the face of Scotland's increasingly circumscribed political future within the British Empire.[3] For scholars of orality, Ossian stands in for the lure of a past conceived nostalgically as an oral culture, which was thereby removed from the gritty materiality of the eighteenth-century's rapidly expanding print market. Maureen McLane, for instance, describes how a Romantic writer like Wordsworth could idealize the "spirit of Ossian," while still reviling that spirit's dubious modern history in print. Macpherson's reputation as forger, but also the status of print itself, helps explain why

Wordsworth is happy to reclaim the ancient bard "in soul […] but not in textual body."[4] Extending this argument, James Mulholland finds in Macpherson's Ossian a poetics of voice, one that deftly negotiates the trappings of print even as it becomes "unmoored from the constraints of human corporeality."[5] Both figuratively and literally, then, the poems become artifacts of a particular kind of "spirit."

It is hardly surprising to see Ossian marked as intangible and spectral. When McLane refers to Ossian's "textual body," she implicitly invokes the Biblical language of "letter" and "spirit" which for Johann Gottfried Herder offered an insight into the nature of poetry in general. In his *Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples* (1773)*,* Herder writes, "The more remote a people is from an artificial, scientific manner of thinking, speaking, and writing, the less its songs are made for paper and print, the less its verses are written for the dead letter."[6] Ancient poetry (as Herder would more famously write of Hebrew Biblical poetry) was a poetry of the spirit. This poetic theory was intimately connected to his theory of *national* spirit, and to a practice of reading the "spirit" of a text. Within the Romantic period, of course, that model of poetry became a common way of defining poesis as a special kind of activity, rooted in the intuition of a certain kind of feeling but frequently raised to the level of rarified or transcendent faculties of mind.

Scholarly approaches to Macpherson, even those resolutely opposed to Herderian poetics, have nevertheless typically emphasized the immaterial and disembodied. As a result, they have neglected Macpherson's engagement with a broader range of approaches to the mind's embodiment. Indeed, Macpherson's project was conditioned by an emphasis on corporeality. Of course, one need look no further than the corpses strewn

about Ossian's Highland settings to see that these are poems about *particular* bodies. My argument is that Macpherson also offers a general theory of embodiment. His poetry may encourage a language that sets poetic "spirit" against its textual and bodily medium; but it consistently pushes toward new models of an embodied mind.[7]

The theory of embodiment to which I refer is a folk psychology. In its contemporary philosophical usage, "folk psychology" refers to people's everyday understanding of how other minds work. Ordinary non-philosophers generally think that other people's behavior is best explained by referring to mental states, which can be described using terms like "beliefs," "desires," and "intentions": he raises the glass because he *wants* to take a sip; Elizabeth refuses Mr. Darcy's proposal because she *believes* he is an unjust and ungenerous man, and *wants* nothing to do with him.[8] Most philosophers who identify a pre-reflective folk psychology of this kind grant that it is a dependable strategy for explaining human behavior—even if they think that the language of mental states is a vulgar illusion, which will ultimately evaporate into the more nuanced language of a mature science.

This chapter argues that when Macpherson turns to popular literature, he finds in it something like a folk psychology. The first section frames the Ossianic project as an intervention in then-current theories of ancient poetry, which made the ancient text the site of information about the primitive mind. These poems offered a repository of "philosophically impoverished" models of mental life; yet they also became a source of information about even contemporary people's most basic mental architecture. Macpherson's ostensibly ancient poems, that is, offer a pre-philosophical or naïve theory about mental states and their relationship to the body. For a cognate project, I turn to the

philosophy of Thomas Reid, who was the towering figure in Aberdeen's university system in the 1750s, when Macpherson was matriculated there. While it struck some as baroque, Reid presented his philosophy as a vindication of "common sense," of what the common folk have always, in all ages, believed. Macpherson, too, turns to the ideas of the common people and their commonsense notions of other people's minds. Yet that vernacular packaging ultimately delivers a philosophy closer to the more radically counterintuitive models of mindedness then in circulation: primitive animism, radical materialism, and innate faculties of mind-recognition. I turn finally to one of the stranger moments in the 1760 *Fragments*—the death of Morna in fragment fifteen—as Macpherson's attempt to make "common sense" answer to these more experimental models of embodied mentality. Macpherson not only asserts ancient literature's usefulness for ongoing debates about materialism; more broadly, he seeks a materialism that might inform literary methodology, and that (in ways that remain relevant today) could situate the literary artifact within a broader, interdisciplinary terrain.

I. Aberdeen, Mental Investigations, and Empirical Poetics

In 1759, Macpherson met the poet and dramatist John Home. Home was acutely interested in Scottish tradition, and had already instigated William Collins's *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*. When Macpherson claimed to have collected a body of traditional literature in the original Gaelic, Home asked to see a sample. Macpherson reluctantly produced an English "translation" of one of these poems, which Home immediately brought to the attention of Hugh Blair. With Blair's encouragement, Macpherson published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the GALIC or ERSE Language* in June

1760.[9] The volume offers brief glimpses of life in the militarized Scottish Highlands during and after the wars of Fingal (the traditional figure Fionn mac Cumhaill, who appears here as a Scottish king). Its final three fragments offer glimpses of a larger epic on these wars, which Blair hints might yet be found and reconstructed. That poem, *Fingal*, appeared in December 1761, and was followed by another, *Temora*, in March 1763. These latter, epic productions made Ossian world-famous, and obtained the admiration of a public that included Goethe and Napoleon. *Fingal* recounts Danish aggression against the Irish tribes led by Cuchullin, and the defeat of those invading forces with Fingal's help. The earlier *Fragments*, by contrast, had explored the public and private damage that resulted from those wars. Ossian, the son of Fingal, survives his contemporaries and his own son to become a melancholy and nostalgic bard, whose poetry alternates between descriptions of military exploits and private affective exchange. Everything about the *Fragments* culminates in trauma and loss, and voices a third-century Highland society already lamenting its own demise.

Despite their broad success, and the emphatic support of Scots like Blair and David Hume, doubts about the authenticity of the poems arose from their first publication. Macpherson was reluctant to produce his translations, and he repeatedly refused to show his Gaelic originals. Thomas Gray was one of the first to voice his suspicions, and scholars of Welsh and Irish literature soon became skeptical about Macpherson's scholarly and editorial methods. While these doubts were briefly put to rest by Blair's *Critical Dissertation* and the appendix to the 1765 *Poems of Ossian,* the next decade renewed the controversy. In 1775, Hume reluctantly confessed his doubt at the poems' authenticity. In the same year, Samuel Johnson published his *Journey to the*

Western Isles, which boasted first-hand investigations that proved the Ossian poems to be total fabrications. After Macpherson's death, *The Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland* officially concluded that he had not in fact translated particular poems, but had creatively reimagined a body of traditional motifs and characters.[10] Like the *Report,* the poems' reception down to the present day has remained curiously divided between aesthetic appreciation of the poems—which remain crucially important to the development of British nationalism and what used to be called the transition "from Sensibility to Romanticism"—and an ambivalent stance toward Macpherson himself, as a literary opportunist riding the coattails of his country's famed philosophers. The poems' *philosophical* impact has thus been seen as largely indirect, mediated by figures like Blair in Britain and Herder in Germany.[11]

It is not usually emphasized, however, that Macpherson's poetry was actively engaged with the ideas of that broader philosophical environment. This environment consisted of the network of Scottish learning centered in the major university towns, especially the "ancient universities" at St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Macpherson spent time at the latter two of those universities. He began his studies at King's College, Aberdeen in 1752, when the university was freshly reformed on Enlightenment principles and invigorated by a philosophical society that included curriculum reformer Alexander Gerard, land reformer William Ogilvie, and philosopher Thomas Reid.[12] Macpherson matriculated at King's in the first year of the new curriculum: students now began with concrete, empirical subjects like history and geography, then worked their way up to the more abstract sciences. The next year—when Macpherson began the second-year course in philosophy—Thomas Reid became

Regent.[13] There Reid conceived, presented, and worked out with students what became his *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense.*

On the received account, Macpherson was a disaffected student: little-inclined to strict study, he preferred the pleasures of imaginative poetry. Thus Thomas Bailey Saunders, writing in 1895 and evincing his own nostalgia for the age of Reid, suggests that while at King's Macpherson "showed no inclination to philosophy," and so "neglected the special opportunities of the place."[14] Fiona Stafford concurs: Reid's philosophical scrupulousness would have repelled Macpherson, and so his "creative talents" received "no formal encouragement" (27). Nevertheless, as nearly all his critics have acknowledged, Macpherson's writing bears strong marks of the Scottish Enlightenment's empirical poetics: the preference for a simple, concrete language; a turn to sentiment; and an interest in the earliest ages of humanity. On most accounts Macpherson carved out a special, sequestered niche for himself within this intellectual culture: one which, while it was shaped by Thomas Blackwell's poetic theories, and publicly defended by Hugh Blair's critical writings, remained primarily a space of aesthetic enjoyment, sublime experience, and cultural nostalgia. On my argument, however, the Ossian poems—*especially* to the extent that they are acts of forgery— explore and test the limits of the Scottish Enlightenment. Specifically, they engage the philosophy of mind that framed theories of ancient poetry, and cast it as a laboratory in which to observe the mind in its early, pristine stages.

Inquiries into brains, nerves, and vital spirits were in full force at this time, and the mind's operations formed the basis of study across the Aberdeen curriculum. For Reid and his colleagues, empirical investigations of the mind were more difficult than

those of the body. Alexander Gerard, for instance, notes the comparative ease of

anatomy:

> We can put *bodies* in any situation that we please, and observe at leisure
>
> their effects on one another; but the phoenomena of the *mind* are of a less
>
> constant nature; we must catch them in an instant, and be content to glean
>
> them up by observing their effects, as they accidentally discover
>
> themselves in the several circumstances of life.[15]

Though Gerard was at least nominally a dualist, the salient aspect of the mind for him is

its fleeting nature, its tendency to elude observation. The mind is "less constant," and

harder to pin down. He describes the mind's obliqueness in a language of "accidental

discovery"—of reasoning backward from effects to causes—that would have been second

nature to him. A professor of Natural Philosophy and then Divinity, Gerard outlined

Aberdeen's new curriculum as a progression from sensory concreteness toward the

abstract principles of logic and "natural theology" (33). From its humble beginning in

"pneumatics" (which Gerard defines interchangeably as the study of "spirits" and "the

phoenomena of the *mind*"), the curriculum reflected the Enlightenment project of

deriving all knowledge from sensation. In Gerard's words, a course of knowledge must

begin with "the constitution of man, and his several active powers" (25, 23). Yet

knowledge about the mind, the foundation of the empirical sciences, remains dependent

upon indirect strategies, secondary circumstances and the instantaneous "gleanings" of

the observer.

 Gerard was almost certainly in the audience when Reid first lectured on the

principles of common sense. "All that we know of the body," Reid explains, "is owing to

anatomical dissection and observation, and it must be by an anatomy of the mind that we can discover its powers and principles."[16] Reid is writing figuratively here. An "anatomy of the mind" would not explain the mind by turning to physiology, but would seek the mind's own constitutive principles. This is possible, Reid thinks, only through introspection. He notes that while an anatomist can study a wide variety of cadavers, the anatomist of the mind has only himself: "It is his own mind only that he can examine […] He may, from outward signs, collect the operations of other minds; but these signs are for the most part ambiguous, and must be interpreted by what he perceives within himself" (13). However intimate the connection might be between mind and body, mental investigations do not happen in the laboratory. They are restricted to the kind of "armchair philosophy" practiced by John Locke, that mental anatomist who was his own best subject, and who turned to introspection to "catch" or "glean" the mind's inner workings.

But introspection is impressionistic. The mind is unwieldy; it often appears as one big, slippery entity, and resists being parceled out into analyzable units. This is what Descartes called "unity of mind": the mind appears to be one thing, with no physical extension. It cannot be divided into parts. The body, on the other hand, has a physical extension, and consequently it can be divided into many parts. Furthermore, introspective studies of the mind do not permit the scientific method. Good science would entail the comparison of "bodies of all different ages," as Reid notes, as well as those in variously "defective," "obscure," or "perfect" states (13). Such standards of comparison elude the "anatomist of the mind."

Students of poetry, however, *do* have more than simply introspection into their own minds. Belletristic writers on ancient poetry frequently cast it as evidence from the past ripe for comparison with the present. For many of the period's leading lights, poems were textual artifacts by which voices reach out into futurity, and through which future readers encounter, in spectral form, the expressive content of the past. In fact, poetry from earlier ages offers a particularly helpful kind of reportage, since the primitive mind was taken to be free of those cultural accretions with which centuries of development had covered over our "original constitution." In the Enlightenment's early version of the debate between "nature" and "nurture," primitive society offered subjects closer to the mind's natural condition.

Thus, for a host of writers—Robert Lowth and J.G. Herder on Hebrew poetry, Paul Henri Mallet on Scandinavian poetry, and Herder and Hugh Blair on Ossian— ancient poetry offered a special kind of language.[17] This is the sensuous language of thought that Herder praised as not yet doomed to the "dead letter" of abstraction. Primitive poets had only concrete language derived from the senses. Mallet thus resembles Herder in his discussion of ancient Icelandic poets. Mallet points to "[t]he paucity of their ideas and the barrenness of their language," which "oblige them to borrow from all nature, images fit to cloath their conceptions in" (393). Antiquarians like Mallet took the texts they studied to be remnants of a primitive, philosophically impoverished era. That explained both the simplicity and concreteness of the poets' diction, and their penchant for analogies and metaphors in lieu of complex concepts. For Mallet, as later for Herder, the benefits of philosophical impoverishment were primarily aesthetic: "How should abstract terms and reflex ideas, which so enervate our poetry, be

found in theirs?" (393). Primitive poetry—and, by extension, the best modern poetry— was thus far better at expressing sensuous particularity and emotional excess than philosophical nuance. At Aberdeen, the major proponent of this poetic school was Thomas Blackwell, who tutored Gerard and perhaps Macpherson himself.[18] Certainly Macpherson retained Aberdeen's focus on what he termed a "sentimental" aesthetics, one focused on the language of primitive sensation and feeling.

Macpherson would later retail much of this theory as his own, including the assertion that primal, sensory language told readers about the basis of their own, modern minds. As he writes in his *History of Great Britain and Ireland,* "The sentimental is peculiar to no age; it suits the inherent feelings of the human mind."[19] Because it spoke from what Blair called humanity's "most artless ages," primitive poetry revealed the mind at its barest: stripped of the accretions of culture, and closer to its natural state.[20] In his *Critical Dissertation* on Ossian, Blair writes that "mankind will never bear such resembling features, as they do in the beginnings of society," though what we would now call cultural difference "divert[s] into channels widely separated, that current of human genius and manners, which descends originally from one spring" (347). This theory, known as the "stadial" model of sociocultural development, came to prominence at the hands of Scottish Enlightenment writers like Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith. Since all minds begin identically, the story goes, each society looks the same at its beginnings. Societies then progress from primitive hunting groups—the earliest stage, in which Blair sets Ossian's highlanders—through pastoral life, agriculture, and ultimately commercial society. Since each individual is born with a Lockean blank slate, culture drives or constrains development. Moreover, since societies modernize at different rates, vast

populations can either mature quickly, entering by adulthood into the highest forms of commercial modernity; or whole societies could languish in the earliest, primitive ways of living and thinking.

Stadial theory became most closely associated with a particular genre, the narrative mode Dugald Stewart called "conjectural history."[21] Historians of the distant past, including Rousseau, wrote speculative, imagined explorations of what life might have been in the earliest ages. Even as they explored cultural difference, such histories also claimed to discover humanity's common, underlying mental architecture as it becomes fitted to different cultural settings. Conjectural histories ultimately tell us about the "inherent" properties of our own minds. I want to suggest that we read Macpherson's forgery as conjectural history of this sort. By offering "evidence" of what life was actually like in foreign settings, Macpherson reframed the primitive poem as a venue for experimental engagement with the primitive mind. As such, the Ossian poems pave the way for what Noel Jackson has called "the experimental lyric of early Romanticism."[22] On my argument, this model of poetry has its origins in an antiquarian turn to the poetic mind, and concerned not just the primitive mind's empirical makeup but its habitual, even superstitious modes of thought. William Collins had already, in 1748, turned to Highland superstitions for their aesthetic value. In the *Fragments*, popular superstitions offer more than aesthetic gains. They embed within the poems a primitive philosophy of mind.

II. Macpherson's Phantom Lyricism

Macpherson models his first two fragments after the *Song of Songs*, but moves the lovers' dialogue to a new historical setting, one on the point of being torn apart by the

"the wars of Fingal."[23] In the volume's recurrent pattern, the poems move between private affective exchange and public catastrophe. The plot is simple: Shilric must go off to war, and knows he will likely die. Vinvela speaks as if Shilric's death is inevitable, and promises that he will live on in her memory:

> Yes!—I will remember thee—indeed my Shilric will fall. What shall I do, my love! when thou art gone for ever? Through these hills I will go at noon; I will go through the silent heath. There I will see the place of thy rest, returning from the chace. Indeed, my Shilric will fall; but I will remember him. (8)

Vinvela's preemptive lamentation—and later the posthumous regret she expresses from beyond the grave—gain their cultural efficacy from their claim to be records of sentiment that speak to modern readers. Fragment two dramatizes this by beginning with a nameless speaker, who seems to be Vinvela mourning for Shilric ("I sit by the mossy fountain; on the top of the hill of winds.") Part of the real confusion produced by this poem is whether we are supposed to read it as a continuation of the first fragment at all. We only find out for sure when Shilric is named. A great deal goes into the production of this initial perplexity. For instance, when the second fragment's nameless speaker says, "no hunter at a distance is seen," he echoes Vinvela's description of his absence in the first fragment: "The hunter is far removed" (8, 7). The reasonable inference is that Shilric has not returned from the wars. In fact, though, it is Shilric who is speaking, and who is about to see a ghost. The fragment's framing makes the reader's encounter with him similarly phantasmal, as if he is a voice from beyond the grave.

Macpherson occasionally sought to explain his supernatural content by turning to the poetic theory in which he had been educated. In his *Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* he claims:

> In the infancy of philosophy it is difficult for the human mind to form any distinct idea of the existence of an immaterial Being. We are not, therefore, to wonder that the northern nations carried the business and pastimes, though not the miseries, of life into their future state. Without being acquainted with the PALINGENESIA of Pythagoras and his followers, they clothed departed spirits with bodies not subject to decay.[24]

Primitive subjects lack the more advanced philosophy of Greece, or, more to Macpherson's point, Hellenic Christianity.[25] Ideas about the immaterial soul, he argues, arrive comparably late in the history of philosophy, and require a level of abstraction that primitive societies lack. As a result, they approximate the idea of the soul by telling tales of ghosts and immaterial spirits.

For poetic empiricists, this philosophical impoverishment was a good thing, since it led to more gripping and moving language. For Macpherson, though, such impoverishment is desirable, paradoxically, for *philosophical* reasons. The primitive mind's dependence on the concrete and the sensory does not just conduce to appealing literary subject matter, but performs a philosophical work of its own by reopening the discussion of materialism. Macpherson's language, of course, concedes that a mature philosophy will ultimately possess a theory of the immaterial spirit. The poems themselves, however, open up the possibility that mind might be more intimately connected to body. If the mind outlasts death, it does so in bodily form.

This location of mind in matter has long been seen as a desideratum for later eighteenth-century literature. Studies by Jerome J. McGann and Adela Pinch have portrayed Sensibility as a literary movement crucially interested in the continuities between mental states and the social environment in which they subsist.[26] McGann, for instance, finds in Macpherson a nostalgia for an earlier age of pagan materialism, and a poetic practice that "erodes the sharp divisions of matter and spirit, body and soul, at every textual level" (37). The possibility of situating the spirit firmly in the body, and of correlating mind and matter, proved both dangerous and fascinating. The most ambitious way to bring mind and body together was to make a claim about the mind's underlying ontology. In order to explain how mental states inhere in the body, we need first to explain how they can be a property of matter at all. Spinoza had made a particularly influential version of this claim with his monistic account of the universe, in which the one existing substance ("God, or nature") possesses the radically different attributes of thought and extension, of mind and matter. Spinoza's influence was on the rise by mid-century. Within a few decades monist-inflected controversies would erupt between Thomas Reid and Joseph Priestley—occasioned by the latter's scandalous 1777 *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*—and soon thereafter in the German *Pantheismusstreit*.

This set of debates—about how matter can think, or be understood as vital—would seem to be what McGann has in mind, since he claims that "the world of Ossian appears to subsist," at base, "as a complex affective system" (38). Yet there is a substantial difference between this position—which typically goes by the name *panpsychism*—and the more modest, descriptive approach known as *animism*.[27] Animism

names a human psychology: the primitive speaker loses track of his own mental states, and projects them onto the landscape. Panpsychism, on the other hand, alleges that the mental is at least potentially a characteristic of all matter. When Wordsworth declares his "faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes," he gestures toward a variety of panpsychism with particular revolutionary associations in the 1790s.[28] A few years later, he turned to a reactionary animism in an equally well-known exclamation:

> Great God! I'd rather be
>
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
>
> That I might, standing on this pleasant lea,
>
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.[29]

That later sonnet conveys nostalgia for a world *perceived as* vital and living, rather than as the inert object of scientific rationality. Animism, on this familiar model, is a mode of enchantment, one which ultimately tells us less about the world than about the psychology of the perceiving subject. Stanley Cavell suggests why this is disappointing when he speaks of Romantic thought as risking a kind of animism, one "already implicit" in philosophical skepticism.[30] Like the Ancient Mariner's "ghastly crew," animism offers only the artificial animation of something always already lifeless. Against this specter of animistic encounter—and the disappointing Kantian "settlement" with it—Cavell sets Romanticism's project of "bringing the world back, as it were, to life."*[31]*

This is a disappointment that Macpherson shares. For poetic theorists from Blair to Wordsworth, animism offered primarily aesthetic benefits. Animism supposedly captures something genuine about cognition in general, something that endures in the most basic functions of expressive language. Thus Robert Lowth explains that "to those

who are violently agitated themselves, the universal nature of things seems under a necessity of being affected with similar emotions" (38-9). For an influential critical tradition, primitive projection continues to explain our own mental functioning, at least for a special category of impassioned thought. It endures into the nineteenth century, where it becomes the habit John Ruskin terms the "pathetic fallacy." And it inflects Paul de Man's brand of deconstruction, where anthropomorphic projection speaks to the most basic of language's figural dependencies.[32]

Macpherson, though, was uncomfortable with animistic projection. In fact, after publishing the *Fragments* he quickly revised the "Shilric, Vinvela" sequence in ways that make it *less* animistic. The second edition of September 1760 advertises that some changes have been made to conform to the more accurate manuscripts Macpherson claimed to have located.[33] In fragment two, Shilric had originally painted a dreary scene: "One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath." The "troubled" lake and strange midday silence anticipate (unremarkably) Shilric's turn inward: "Sad are my thoughts as I sit alone." In September's revised edition, however, that line is simplified to "Sad are my thoughts alone."[34] Originally, there had been some slippage between Shilric's feelings and the natural scene. The new language, in contrast, makes the lone melancholy element either Shilric ("sad are *my* thoughts alone"), or mind itself ("sad are my *thoughts* alone"). Either way, the revision strips away the pathetic fallacy that had suffused the natural scene with mental presences. Macpherson's poetry consistently seeks to identify such mental presences, and remains rife with ghosts. But he recoils from a moment where those presences threaten to dissipate into a psychology of the primitive mind. If Macpherson is interested in pursuing how thoughts exist in nature—not just as

projections, but part of the natural surround—animism will not do. What the poem gains by this revision, then, is a new purchase on the "vital and articulate human presences" that McGann identifies "throughout Macpherson's otherwise inanimate, desolate, and purely geophysical places."[35] Animism would tell us primarily about the psychology of the primitive mind, which supposedly projects itself onto inanimate nature. A literal reading of these poems, by contrast, entails a claim about the mind's underlying ontology: mental states are continuous with that which is outside the head. This opens up a philosophical framework in which spirits—that is, minds—are integrated into the world of natural objects; and where there is a homology between seeing a rock and perceiving or encountering another mind. The implication is that primitives are actually more philosophically sophisticated than modern, "philosophical" readers.

By 1760, the lyric was taking on its soon-habitual association with the solitary expressive speaker, based on the mode's close association with the sensory and linguistic forms that condition individual thought. For Blair, Ossian was one such relic of concrete language and strong feeling, a poet of solitude and the sublime.[36] Blair goes on to align higher philosophical abstraction, which these poems lack, with the realm of social life. Ossian's ideas, he writes, "extended little farther than to the objects he saw around him. A public, a community, the universe, were conceptions beyond his sphere" (354). This assessment of Ossian should sound strange to anyone who has read the poems, and tried to keep straight the sometimes labyrinthine networks of interpersonal relationships they entail. Even the first, simpler fragments turn on Shilric's relationship to Vinvela, the call of societal duties, and the conflict between those intimate and public modes of sociality. But Blair's insistence on Ossian's sublimity makes sense within the familiar empiricist

story, which reads primitive poetry as the origin of human thought, and so as a pristine faculty of sensation that preexists social engagement with other minds.[37] In the Romantic era, such arguments sequester lyric subjectivity from the messy business of plots, characters, and events that drives popular literary forms—what has recently been described as literature's obsession with "social intelligence."[38] For Blair, by contrast, the broader horizons of sociality were too much for Ossian to conceive in his world of bare, lifeless objects. Blair is wrong about this. To understand why that mistake matters for Macpherson's literary project, I turn to one of the Scottish Enlightenment's predominant ways of talking about other minds.

III. From Common Sense to Folk Psychology

The scholarly discourse that framed Macpherson's project offered a solipsistic model of mental life, one with little purchase on other minds as actual, vital presences in the world. The best-known articulation of this "projectivist" stance is David Hume's. Hume was adamant that we do not know the world, but only certain qualities that we project onto the world. Thus, in his account of causation, Hume declines to discuss actual causal relations between objects (say, that a bat strikes and propels a baseball), and remains restricted to ideas (I find the bat's striking of the ball "constantly conjoined" to the ball's subsequent movement).[39] A version of this projectivism also governs sympathetic relationships with other minds. I know only my own sensations, my own feelings—but I can, through a projective act of sympathy, approximate the experience of others.[40]

For Reid, Hume's projectivist account of the mind proved unsatisfying. Kant, more famously, would go to great lengths to show that human knowledge refers to an

actual world (even if, as Cavell suggests, Kant disappointingly forswears the possibility of knowing that world in itself). Reid's "common sense" response to Hume, by contrast, took the form of a methodological shift. Projectivism, Reid argued, presumed that our commonsense way of thinking about the world was wrong. We take ourselves to perceive actual objects, Hume said, though a close attention to our own minds showed that we speak merely of ideas and impressions. Against this Humean "way of ideas," Reid asserted that commonsense intuitions about external objects were reliable. "We know," he argues, "that when certain impressions are made upon our organs, nerves, and brain, certain corresponding sensations are felt, and certain objects are both conceived and believed to exist."[41] For Reid, that conception and that belief indicate basic elements of the human constitution, which imply a reliable connection between the world, bodily organs, and sensation. Thus, when I perceive an object, I obtain actual, positive knowledge about something in the world. Although philosophers "find inexplicable mysteries, and even contradictions" in these "acts of mind," Reid emphasizes that they "are perfectly understood by every man of common understanding."[42]

Such acts of mind grant knowledge of the world, and—as Reid discusses in his *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*—knowledge of other minds. Acts like willing, judging, and reasoning, Reid concedes, would be possible in a solipsistic universe. But other, social actions—promising, receiving testimony—presuppose "society with other intelligent beings," and presuming this is part of our basic constitution (68). Reid's main evidence for the naturalness of this presumption is its emergence in early childhood. He writes:

> Our social intellectual operations, as well as our social affections, appear very early in life, before we are capable of reasoning; yet both suppose a conviction of the existence of other intelligent beings. When a child asks a question of his nurse, this act of his mind supposes not only a desire to know what he asks; it supposes likewise a conviction that the nurse is an intelligent being, to whom he can communicate his thoughts, and who can communicate her thoughts to him. (69)

This is Reid's argument against other-minds skepticism, one that follows the same logic he had used to counter skepticism generally. Reid goes on to emphasize that the child's "early conviction" is quite striking, and demands more attention than it has frequently merited: "[h]ow he came by this conviction so early, is a question of some importance in the knowledge of the human mind, and therefore worthy of the consideration of Philosophers" (69). This natural belief is a phenomenon which must be accounted for in its own right, not explained away as an illusion. The premise of common sense is that ordinary people possess an intuitive, largely reliable folk theory. As such, Reid's philosophy represents a third option that avoids both Humean skepticism and a Kantian faculty psychology with its animistic supplement. In recent years, cognitive science has given Reid's theory a new lease on life; his account of the mind's innate social mechanisms bears a striking resemblance to what now goes by the name of "folk psychology," "theory of mind," or simply "mindreading."[43]

The current, philosophical usage of "folk psychology" is usually dated to Wilfred Sellars's 1956 essay "Empiricism and the Philosophy of the Mind."[44] Sellars's argument, in brief, is that people hold the tacit theory that other people's behavior is directed by

mental states. If asked why someone picks up an apple and takes a bite, most people would answer that this person *wanted* to, or that she *felt* hungry and therefore *desired* to alleviate that hunger. If this seems intuitive—as Reid would say, what no one ever doubted—that is just the point. Sellars, like Reid, sought to explain the mind by vindicating the most usual, commonsense theories about it. For Sellars, this "folk" account gives a good description of mental life. What makes his argument provocative is the assertion that people apply such theories to themselves, too. We talk about our own beliefs and desires not because we can "see" them through introspection, but because we can infer their presence using a theory we developed by observing others.

Reid would not run the causal history this way, if only because of the privileged role of introspection in his philosophy.[45] Yet especially in his theory of natural signs, he suggests that reading others' minds is an independent, originary faculty. In fact, many recent approaches to theory of mind place special importance on something that Reid noted: this particular set of cognitive abilities develops quite early in childhood, long before an empiricist would predict. Today's nativists have a name for this early emergence. They refer to it as the "poverty of the stimulus."[46] By the age of four, "normally-developing" children can successfully complete complex behaviors, like attributing a false belief (because she didn't see me move it, Sally thinks the marble is still in the blue box), predicting an action (Sally will look in the blue box), or interpreting facial cues (Sally now looks confused).[47] For some, these aptitudes are evidence for an innate, evolved mechanism that performs mindreading behaviors. While Reid did not speak of such mechanisms, he frequently emphasizes the innateness of the same abilities.[48]

In the remainder of this chapter I explore the common ground between Reid's and Macpherson's turns to folk psychology. To be sure, "folk psychology" is a term invented for specific, philosophical usage. It resembles the "ordinary" in ordinary language philosophy, whose major proponents were directly influenced by Reid's claim that philosophical concepts inhere in everyday speech. Macpherson, meanwhile, is associated with the other, literary-cultural sense of the "folk," and indeed, via his influence on Herder, contributed to the theories of folk literature that would arise in the nineteenth century. One kind of "folk" yields a theory of culture, the other a theory of cognition. Their divergent intellectual careers notwithstanding, however, they come from the same Aberdeen lecture halls and try to answer the same questions. In response to what Stanley Cavell has called the "crisis of skepticism," both Reid and Macpherson turn to the common in order to reinvest inter-mental relations with an ontological ground. In Macpherson's hands, ancient poetry carries with it primitive models of relationships between minds. For Macpherson, as for Reid, those notions tell us something about minds that exist out in the world. Further, the Ossianic project strives to countenance the common, shared foundations of the human mind: both as a distant origin visible in the records of ancient civilizations, and as an entirely *modern* practice which characterizes popular or "low" literature. The antiquarian poetics of Mallet, Lowth, and Blair asked how primitive man thought—and, as a result, how we continue to think in the "infancy" of our thought. Macpherson, on my argument, goes further, and asks *what* we think, and whether the common sense picture of the mind is right or wrong. This makes him a theorist of cognition as well as culture.

In English belletrism, the move from populism to "nature" extends back at least to Joseph Addison's 1711 *Spectator* papers on "Chevy Chase," which were one early signal of what would be termed the "ballad revival."[49] Alluding to that song's perennial popularity, Addison writes, "It is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by the multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to gratify the mind of man."[50] He often phrases this turn to simplicity as a turn to "nature," as in his assertion that highly-wrought verse "would never have become the delight of the common people [...] it is only nature that can have that effect."[51] Addison finds the mind's underlying nature not in exemplars of literary refinement, but in the simplest productions that have always shown a "peculiar aptness" to please the vulgar. While these essays are crucial for the discourse of taste, then, they are also foundational for the academic study of "common" or "low" literature. Addison lays the groundwork for the union of the ancient and the popular that drives Macpherson's pseudo-antiquarian practice. Blair, for instance, suggests that in its supernatural portrayal of "departed spirits," Ossian's mythology "is not local and temporary, like that of most other ancient poets," but "the mythology of human nature; for it is founded on what has been the popular belief, in all ages and countries, and under all forms of religion."[52] In turning to the literature of the "common folk," ballad collectors, antiquarians, and, in Macpherson's case, forgers, understood themselves to be turning from the realm of learned dispute to something like common sense.

Unlike Reid's common sense, though, Macpherson's "popular belief" turns up something quite philosophically counterintuitive. He treats the poems not only as sources of information about the simplest, most ordinary ways of thinking, useful for historical

comparison, but as ways to explore the strangeness and the paradox that inhere *within* older ideas (for instance, the Celt's simultaneous belief in materialism and a ghostly afterlife).[53] In his turn to popular representations of the mind, Macpherson interrogates divisions between mind and body, and between mind and environment, that Reid never touched. I turn now to one striking example, from the end of the 1760 volume, that seeks to unite bodily experiments—what Alexander Gerard calls our ability to "put bodies in any situation that we please"—with that wished-for ability to extract mentalistic information from the accidents of the body.

IV. Morna's "Genuine Remains"

Fragment fifteen is one of the poems Macpherson specifies as the "detached pieces" of the "greater work" he will soon reconstruct as *Fingal*, and of which he offers three quick samples at the end of the volume.[54] The plot is a love triangle. Its occurrences are few: Duchommar approaches Morna, and reveals that he has killed a rival suitor, Cadmor. Morna tricks him into giving up his sword, and stabs him; he does the same to her. The whole scene unfolds in a few short verse paragraphs, formatted as a dramatic dialogue.

<div align="center">

MORNA.

</div>

And is the son of Tarman fallen; the youth with the breast of snow! the first in the chace of the hill; the foe of the sons of the ocean!— Duchommar, thou art gloomy indeed; cruel is thy arm to me.——But give me that sword, son of Mugruch; I love the blood of Cadmor!

[He gives her the sword, with which she instantly stabs him.]

DUCHOMMAR.

Daughter of Cormac-Carbre, thou hast pierced Duchommar! The sword is cold in my breast; thou hast killed the son of Mugruch. Give me to Moinie the maid; for much she loved Duchommar. My tomb she will raise on the hill; the hunter shall see it, and praise me.——But draw that sword from my side, Morna; I feel it cold.———

[Upon her coming near him, he stabs her. As she fell, she plucked a stone from the side of the cave, and placed it betwixt them, that his blood might not be mingled with hers.]

The poem hinges on bracketed moments of third-person description that most closely resemble stage directions. These descriptions would be familiar enough for readers of dramatic poetry, but they are out of place to say the least in poetry that stakes its cultural significance on its supposed origins in oral tradition.

First, Morna asks for the sword, pretending to desire Cadmor's blood, after which (in what I am calling a stage direction) she "instantly" turns the weapon on Duchommar. When Duchommar repeats this pattern of deception, and Morna is stabbed in return, we read a still more substantial description. The former stage direction described only Morna's actions. But the one that concludes this fragment delves deeper into her character. It even includes a statement of intention, in what is a rather more complex action than the impassioned murders the volume has heretofore displayed. This would, of course, be quite unremarkable in a novel, but it stands out jarringly in the context of this oral poetry of voice, which on empiricist accounts focused exclusively on a primitive, first-person engagement with the external world. The stage direction pertains not to the

bardic voice, nor to the performance of quoted speech. Rather, it splits the work of novelistic narration and editorial gloss. This is also the moment at which voice (lyric or dramatic) stops – is stifled, and attempts in the process to mark its *own* body, to delimit its own borders and prevent the commingling of blood. Why does such a mark of translatedness and reconstructedness appears at this particular moment? Clearly this is an important passage for those interested in orality and print, as it dramatizes voice giving way to the "dead letter" of the stage direction.

The first phrase of Hugh Blair's anonymous preface to the 1760 *Fragments* emphasizes their authenticity: "The public may depend on the following fragments as genuine remains of ancient Scottish poetry" (5). "Genuine," of course, speaks to the text's historical legitimacy. Yet in the context of Morna's deception of Duchommar, where the text hinges on a question of concealed intentions, or *dis*ingenuousness, it is the bodily remains (of Morna and of the printed text) that ultimately claim to be "genuine." The textual body of the written tradition here becomes the site of the least corporeal, most mentalistic description available. It might appear that Morna attempts to manipulate the body from beyond the grave, or at least from a place no longer reliably embodied. And yet this remains one of the most bodily moments to be found in the *Fragments*: a moment of identification with the body, from Morna's request for the blood of her slain lover to her last measures to keep her own blood free from mixture with that of her aggressor. Macpherson brings into play a materialism both "primitive" and modern, and countenances their shared investment in prolonging the reach of the mentalistic beyond the bodily. Morna's death scene manages to retain the sense that the mind is an easily extinguished modality of the body, one that exists within it and yet still outlasts it, if only

[65]

fon of Mugruch ; his arm is ftrong as a ftorm.

MORNA.

AND is the fon of Tarman fallen ; the youth with the breaft of fnow ! the firft in the chace of the hill ; the foe of the fons of the ocean ! — Duchommar, thou art gloomy indeed ; cruel is thy arm to me. —— But give me that fword, fon of Mugruch ; I love the blood of Cadmor.

[HE gives her the fword, with which fhe inftantly ftabs him.]

DUCHOMMAR.

DAUGHTER of Cormac-Carbre, thou haft pierced Duchommar ! the fword is cold in my breaft ; thou haft killed the fon of Mugruch. Give me to Moinie

I   the

[66]

the maid ; for much fhe loved Duchommar. My tomb fhe will raife on the hill ; the hunter fhall fee it, and praife me. —— But draw the fword from my fide, Morna ; I feel it cold. ————

[UPON her coming near him, he ftabs her. As fhe fell, fhe plucked a ftone from the fide of the cave, and placed it betwixt them, that his blood might not be mingled with hers.]

James Macpherson, conclusion of "Duchommar, Morna,"
Fragments of Ancient Poetry **(1760)**

"gleaned in an instant"—to revisit Alexander Gerard's language—when made available to literary representation.

For a material account of the vital spirits that might still outlast the body, we might consider eighteenth-century discussions of the soul's posthumous endurance. James Chandler has pursued one such theory—the "vehicular hypothesis," which invests the soul more intimately in the body—from Henry More's poetry, through Abraham Tucker's philosophy, and ultimately to Laurence Sterne's sentimental narratives.[55] The "vehicular hypothesis," in Tucker's words, entailed that the spirit "does not go out naked, nor entirely disengaged from matter, but carries away with her an integument from among those wherewith she was before invested" (33). With its language of departed spirits taking with them a piece of their bodily "integument," the vehicular hypothesis calls to mind Macpherson's discussion of pagan materialists, who "clothed departed spirits" with just such integuments (which etymologically means "covering").

That is not, however, what happens in the poem. A more likely candidate, I suggest, is the philosophy of Robert Whytt, whom Neil Vickers has called "the most influential British physician of the eighteenth century."[56] Both Whytt and his rival Albrecht von Haller studied under the renowned Dutch physician Herman Boerhaave, and were influenced by his theory of fibers. Under a kind of pantheistic sway, though, Whytt desired to show that matter could perform acts usually reserved for mind.[57] Many physicians, including Haller, divided human action into two kinds of motions. The first, "irritability," included automatic bodily motions, from the beating of the heart down to involuntary twitches. These mere mechanical movements were distinguishable from conscious, volitional actions. For Haller, this latter type of privileged activity required a

higher faculty, a faculty of perception, feeling, or consciousness, which he thought to be localized to the brain. Whytt, on the other hand, contended that although the brain is the privileged location of thought, the entire body is endowed with a power *like* thinking or feeling, a faculty he referred to as "sensibility."

To this end, Whytt kept a running list of anecdotal evidence, a list of strange or prodigious cases, in which animals, upon decapitation, not only remained living, but even continued to pursue certain habitual, apparently intentional actions for some period of time after being detached from their brains. His *Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals* (1751) lists these prodigies, some of which he had observed himself, and many of which he had culled from other writers.[58] Whytt's phrasing sometimes suggests that these incidents are universally observed facts about a species. For instance, he writes, "A frog lives, and moves its members, for half an hour after its head is cut off; nay, when the body of a frog is divided in two, both the anterior and posterior extremities preserve life and a power of motion for a considerable time" (384). Others are single occurrences, such as a tortoise which, after having its brain "extracted by a hole made in its scull, in the beginning of *November*," survived until the following May. Another tortoise, decapitated and bled, lived the better part of a month (386). Most important to Whytt were the cases that showed signs of habitual, but on most accounts volitional action by animals. "A viper," for instance, "after being deprived of its head and intrails, moved towards a heap of stones in a garden where it used to hide itself" (385). Whytt also recounts Boyle's experiments with vipers that, days after being decapitated and disemboweled, responded to experimental pricking, like the sparks Galvani would administer to a detached frog's leg in his 1771 experiments.

Perhaps the most striking example is something Whytt offers as a little-known fact about silk-moths. He cites a phenomenon described by Boyle, who claimed that "[t]he female butterflies into which silk worms have been metamorphosed, not only admit the male, after losing their heads, but also lay eggs" (385-6). Here, the overarching project of Whytt's catalogue—to demonstrate the continuity between the brain and the body, between sentient action and mechanical irritability—intersects with a focus on the sexualized body. The spectacle of posthumous penetration and reproduction, which is jarring even in a description of animal life, serves as a disturbing if clinical gloss on the sexual aggression Morna dies trying to fend off. So, too, the catalogue as a whole offers an interesting analogue to Macpherson's survey of traumatized bodies, which are torn between the domain of political violence, social and sexual confrontation, and the ostensibly private realm of affect. For Whytt, these not-quite-dead creatures demonstrate that there is really just one kind of spirit, which is fully embodied during life, communicates motion throughout the body during its lifetime, and leaves a temporary, posthumous push—a kind of after-charge—upon being extinguished. Whytt's creatures perform an exaggerated version of Morna's posthumous action.

Read alongside Whytt, and the antiquarian poetics on which Macpherson was intellectually raised, the fragments begin to look like a kind of science fiction. They slow down quick and unusual natural occurrences to imagine what they tell us about the mind, which, as Gerard and Reid both suggest, still proves elusive to even the closest observation. Remarkably, Morna's death rewrites, at the starkest physiological level, the strangely material phantoms present earlier in the volume, and subsequently in

Macpherson's Ossianic epics. Unlike the ghosts that haunt the earlier fragments, Morna's spirit sticks closer to her body.

This entails, moreover, the turn from dialogue to stage direction. The poem ends with a narratorial gloss, which conveys the sense that the motions of the body go on after the voice is extinguished. The whole act, it seems, is something Morna accomplishes—to quote the stage directions—"as she fell." As a result, what we read is a kind of externalized introspection, the equivalent of free indirect discourse for this ostensibly oral poetry. Morna's statement of intention migrates from the first person of the lyrical dialogue to the editorial third person, at the very moment when the text confesses its reconstructedness. We could call this a kind of "giving up the ghost," a fall into print conventions. How does one depict mental states in the absence of a lyric voice? Just as free indirect discourse creates an externalized, depersonalized account of thoughts ostensibly going through someone's head, it is unclear whether this stage direction reflects explicit thoughts.

Morna might have simply announced her intentions: "Our blood shall not be mingled," "I shall place this rock,' and so on. In fact, such auto-narration would not be much more strained than the descriptions of landscape that begin the second fragment in the volume: "One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath" (9). That type of soliloquy would fit well with Blackwell's or Lowth's claims about the rhetorical forms conducive to oral transmission, as well as with theories of primitive thought as a language that figures itself as address. Equally fitting, for that matter, would be Duchommar's metaphorical manner: he tells Morna he has killed a deer for her, when in fact he has killed her lover. On a first reading, this figurative meaning is hardly clear. In

the absence of additional context, Morna assumes that Duchommar speaks literally. There is no indication that he is speaking of a murder until he spells it out in explicit terms. The shock this entails serves to defamiliarize the poem's figurative language, and renders it jarring. It hardly seems to embody a theory of primitive language as essentially figural.

In the same way, we might read Morna's final, posthumous action figuratively, as a representation of her disdain for the possibility of union, even in death, with her aggressor. But it seems more promising to read this scene literally, as simply enacting Morna's desire to prevent her blood from mixing with Duchommar's. At this literal level, the poem does not channel voices and feelings from the past. Indeed, the turn to the stage direction dramatizes the collapse of that folk model of poetry, which by this point Macpherson seems to have taken as far as it will carry him.[59] The fragmentary form here suggests an experimental breakage of the lyric voice—as when Whytt describes surgically removing a tortoise's brain—to see how intimately the mind is entangled with the body. The poem locates mental states, to be sure—but it locates them in bodily practices, in Morna's one final continuous movement, remarkably sustained even once the mind's guiding force has dropped away.

V. Materialism and Literary Method

Like Whytt's catalogue of experiments, fragment fifteen shifts mentality's location beyond the head, beyond the seat of consciousness. Here the poem takes on the aspirations of panpsychism, which extends mindedness from the conscious agent to matter itself. In doing so, the poem allegorizes a persistent desire to establish mental

states as real, observable entities. The fragment thus arrives at a different, materialist answer to the question that Reid too pursued: how to put the empiricist sensorium back in contact with a real world, populated by real minds. In particular, the turn from lyrical dialogue to editorial gloss seeks to affirm that Morna's intentions are legible, that they can be read or recognized as such without the intervention of the expressive poetic voice. They can, in other words, be "gleaned in an instant": not through introspection, but by bodily observation. The fragment, in other words, frames the attribution of mental states not as an act of primitive, animistic projection, but as an act of reading. That scene of reading, I want to suggest, registers Macpherson's resistance to Hugh Blair's model of the lyric mind. Blair, remember, described Ossian as a primitive poet, whose thoughts "extended little farther than to the objects he saw around him."[60] By contrast, fragment fifteen depicts a lyric mind that exceeds sensory absorption and animistic projection. Instead, it extends everywhere, hungering after a kind of mentalistic access that can only be granted by other means.

Macpherson "found" in his ancient sources documents of the early mind. But the poems tell us of more than primitive, sensuous experience: they proceed to the complex business of plotting and posturing in the social world. As subsequent theorists developed Macpherson's line of thought, they tended to push that latter, socially-entangled mindedness onto a different, more emphatically narrative model of literature. That emphasis is clear, for instance, in Wordsworth's polemic against "frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse."[61] To be sure, Macpherson sometimes hews close to this anti-narrative tradition. He disparages "dull narrative[s] of facts in verse," which cannot "take hold of the human mind"

sufficiently to endure in an oral culture. He contrasts such dull narratives with the rich

formal and linguistic properties of "the rhimes of the bards," those primal, sensory

properties of mind that form poetry's proper object.[62] The thinkers Macpherson is

echoing here typically had a hard time addressing the question of *other* minds. Attending

to the formal properties of language was the period's most tried and true method for

explaining what textual artifacts reveal about the literary mind.[63]

That eighteenth-century interest in the literary mind is all the more intriguing in

light of the recent "empirical turn" in literary studies. In the wake of the cognitive

revolution, scholars have begun to ask what literature's ordinary practices tell us about

the mind's foundations. The past decades have seen the formation of an array of such

critical methods, under the general rubric of "cognitive approaches" to literature and

culture.[64] Such studies seek to ground our understanding of these literary experiences in a

scientific understanding of the mind's abilities and constraints. In his essay "Literary

Universals," Patrick Colm Hogan argues broadly for such a critical method, one that

would situate diverse literary cultures against a broader "background of commonality,"

commonalities that are cognitively grounded and cross-culturally universal.[65] Hogan

enumerates many such universals: for example, throughout world poetry, poetic lines

tend with surprising consistency to contain between five and nine words. Likewise,

assonance is a verbal pattern to be found in all major literary traditions, as is "verbal

parallelism"–the repetition of the same content in a different verbal structure– which

Hogan locates in a host of ancient poetries including Chinese, Babylonian, and Hebrew.

The pursuit of such literary universals was already a feature of eighteenth-century

antiquarian poetics. Robert Lowth's major achievement was the discovery of the "verbal

parallelism." Lowth identified the parallelism as the defining feature of Hebrew poetry, and one that distinguished it from the form known to students of Homer and Virgil. Hebrew poetry, he explained, typically structures itself on a repetition between lines. One line will state a description or proposition, and the next will repeat it with a difference. Sometimes this entails what Lowth calls "synonymous" parallelism, which repeats the same or similar content in different verbal garb. Other times, it entails a "synthetic" parallelism, which takes the original content in a new direction. Although the parallelism initially marked Hebrew poetry's difference from classical poetic forms, it soon became a hallmark of a generic, cross-cultural, and pre-classical poetics, founded on the principle that the primitive mind tends to be alike in all its geographical iterations. Lowth writes, "a poem translated literally from the Hebrew into the prose of any other language, while the same forms of the sentences remain, will still retain, even as far as relates to versification, much of its native dignity, and a faint appearance of versification" (35-6). While this was received as an iconoclastic move, one result was the casting of Hebrew verse into a prose that was less characteristic of *any* particular culture. Throwing off the classical paradigm means, in large part, throwing off the features of versification, leaving a generic prose in which verse is only a "faint appearance."

Drawing on the cultural background he shared with Lowth, Macpherson crafted his traditional Ossianic poems to *sound* like Biblical literature, and to *look*, on the page, like prose. The result was something of an anomaly in Gaelic translation. Previously, for instance in the *Scots Magazine*, Gaelic poems were by and large fitted to "English" criteria, rendered in balanced, rhymed Augustan couplets.[66] Macpherson, on the other hand, often characterizes what he does as "prose" translation, despite the fact that he

usually keeps quite regularly to a hexameter line. Vinvela, for example, opens the 1760 volume by saying, "My love is a son of the hill. He pursues the flying deer. His gray dogs are panting around him; his bow-strings sound in the wind." As the poem continues, a Hebraic parallelism gradually emerges. Here is Vinvela, a few lines later, shown as her lines sound, and not as they were originally printed:

> Then thou art gone, O Shilric!   and I am alone on the hill.
>
> The deer are seen on the brow;   void of fear they graze along.
>
> No more they dread the wind;   no more the rustling tree. (7)

The punctuation and cadence create palpable pauses, which separate the line into three-stress sections. The second half alternates between the "synonymous" and "synthetic" parallelisms Lowth identified. By making his ancient Scottish poems sound like ancient Biblical poetry, Macpherson gestures toward the uniform basis of cognitive architecture, which was required of the empiricist mind and those primitive artistic productions that spoke—as Blair understood them to—from the origins of stadial history.

In this sense, Macpherson's Ossianic project draws on some of the same assumptions that drive more recent work on literary universals. Hogan's project, for one, owes a clear debt to Lowth, as well as to Macpherson, in whose hands the Hebrew parallelism began to look less like a mark of cultural difference than a cross-cultural feature of the literary mind. If the pursuit of such universals was already a feature of eighteenth-century belletrism, then it is necessary to think about how that history continues to condition more recent critical endeavors. Like the Scottish Enlightenment's conjectural histories, philologists' exploration of cultural differences in poetry served a broader project, which sought to uncover the mind's basic, cross-cultural foundations.

Rather than paving the way for cultural relativism, then, Macpherson's poems (and theories of the "folk" more broadly) are part and parcel of that universalist project.

That project began—like Hogan's "literary universals" or Rueven Tsur's "cognitive poetics"—in the study of the single mind, and its experience of poetic language.[67] What makes poetry distinctive —and this remains common sense for many of those who teach poetry to undergraduates—is its complex and self-aware treatment of language, its drawing on sensory experience, and its manipulation of sonic and conceptual linguistic effects. Sometime in the nineteenth century, though, storytelling becomes a cognitive attribute in its own right. Famously, John Stuart Mill identified poetic "feeling" and narrative "incident" as "two mutually exclusive characters of mind." While "all minds are capable of being affected" by both, only advanced societies cultivate true poetry. The earliest stages of life are marked, meanwhile, by the "passion for a story."[68] Like Wordsworth, Mill reviles popular narrative as a vulgar, rudimentary activity. Yet where Wordsworth aligned only poetry with a mental faculty, Mill grants that narrative, too, is a cognitive ability. The result is a compartmentalized picture of two different faculties: one aligned with sensation and passion, and the domain of a singular voice; and the other marked as the domain of narrative, folk psychology, and the doings of other minds.

That compartmentalization remains clear in more recent approaches to the literary mind, a sub-set of which focus on the concerns of folk psychology, specifically readers' engagement with fictional minds. Such studies—as indicated by titles like Lisa Zunshine's *Why We Read Fiction* and Blakey Vermeule's *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?*—ask what makes mundane, plot-driven literature possible. In order

to provide the explanations their titles promise, both of these studies attempt to link how we read with how we countenance other minds in everyday life.[69] As a groundwork for literary studies, the scientific debates around folk psychology tend to position the literary artifact as a vehicle of social information. For Zunshine and Vermeule, novels portray complex networks of social information, which ultimately provoke and "exercise" our mindreading abilities. This includes both our common or "folk" theories about what the mind is like, and, more to the point, our ordinary (and on many versions of this argument, evolutionarily hard-wired) methods for recognizing and navigating the social world. These studies typically describe literature in terms of realist narrative, or more generally in terms of plot or story. And that equation is particularly stark in work that, seeking a broad, cross-cultural and transhistorical scope, cuts across myth, national epic, folktale, metrical romance, and the realist novel, seeking a more basic and all-encompassing definition of the literary artifact. The result is a model of literature as something like "storytelling," a designation that has particular affinities with theories of narrative and oral culture. Thus John D. Niles defines "oral narrative" as "people's use of the elements of speech to evoke action in a temporal sequence."[70] The openness of that definition intends to make narrative include both cultural institutions (e.g. ritual performance) and the basic tools of everyday social life (e.g. the conversational anecdote). Indeed, such theories can say little about questions of literary genre; the cognitive architecture to which these theories refer has not changed since the Pleistocene era.[71]

This gives the lyric an anomalous place within cognitive literary studies. The origins of the current cognitive revival can be found in the eighteenth century's historicizing theories of poetry, yet the present obsession with narrative reduces poetry to

a solitary lyric voice. Macpherson participated in this trend, too, of course. While they are not precisely ballads, the *Fragments* share many of the characteristics that have made ballads hard for literary critics to categorize. Largely narrative, populated by stock figures, generic settings, and brief actions, they support the reduction of literature in general to "narrative" or "storytelling." But Macpherson often discussed his poems using anti-narrative rhetoric, highlighting primitive linguistic effects and the "rhimes of the bards." In short, Macpherson worked at a moment when two conceptions of literature were diverging, both of which saw the poem as the source of real knowledge about the mind. On the one hand was the empiricist poetics of sensation, which culminated in an introspective poetics, and a theory of lyric solitude stretching from Mill to the twenty-first century classroom.[72] On the other was a more positivistic turn to cognitive "universals," which countenances the social mind, but only by theorizing the literary as something like an "instinct" to tell stories. Macpherson begins to register that divergence as a contradiction within his own poetic practice.

The best emblem for that theoretical knot is Morna's death itself. Fragment fifteen takes the poetics of sensuous expressivity to its point of rupture. It leaves us with the "dead letter" of the stage direction, and its descriptive language of mental states, instantiated in behavior and expressed as a function of the body. In that moment of textual and bodily disruption, Macpherson's poetry probes the intersection of two competing paradigms: poetry as a key to the embodied mind, and literature as a reflex of the mind's social operations. The result is a peculiarly ambivalent engagement with the era's scientifically-inflected theories of literature, one that sought both to explain

literature's minds, and to ground humanistic inquiry in the material world. Ultimately,

this is a materialism for which literary studies is still looking.

Notes:

[1] *The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt,* ed. Duncan Wu (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) 2:180.

[2] The controversy regarding Macpherson's status as forger endures, most recently in Thomas M. Curley's *Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). As Curley acknowledges, though, the past decades have seen a resurgence of interest in Macpherson's original achievement, notably Fiona J. Stafford's *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988).

[3] Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a different take on the theoretical and political stakes of the phantasmal, see Orrin N.C. Wang, "Ghost Theory," *Studies in Romanticism* 46:2 (Summer/Fall 2007) 203-25.

[4] McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 239.

[5] Mulholland, "James Macpherson's Ossian Poems, Oral Traditions, and the Invention of Voice," *Oral Tradition* 24.2 (2009): 393-414. 402. On the Ossianic voice in relation to empire, see Mulholland, *Sounding Imperial: Poetic Voice and the Politics of Empire, 1720-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming).

[6] Herder, "Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples," *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel,* ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 71.

[7] Bogel, *Literature and Insubstantiality in Later Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[8] For a detailed account of Restoration and eighteenth-century debates around mental state terms, see Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[9] *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996) 5-31.

[10] Curley, *Samuel Johnson* 8.

[11] On Ossian's mediation, see Howard Gaskill, ed, *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (New York: Continuum, 2004).

[12] Macpherson transferred to Aberdeen's Marischal College in 1755. That same year he likely also studied in Edinburgh, without matriculating, before returning home to rural Ruthven. See Stafford, *Sublime Savage* 24ff.

[13] On Aberdeen's curricular reform, see Paul B. Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment: The Arts Curriculum in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1993), and Stafford, *Sublime Savage* 26-8.

[14] Saunders, *The Life and Letters of James Macpherson* (New York: Macmillan, 1894) 40.

[15] Gerard, *Plan of Education in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, with the Reasons of It. Drawn up by Order of the Faculty* (Aberdeen: James Chalmers, 1755), Eighteenth Century Collections Online <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> 25.

[16] Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense,* ed. Derek R. Brookes (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) 12.

[17] Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,* trans. G. Gregory (London: Joseph Johnson, 1787); Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, trans. James Marsh (Burlington: Smith, 1833); Mallet, *Northern Antiquities: or, a description of the manners, customs, religion and laws of the ancient Danes, and other northern nations*, trans. Thomas Percy (London: T. Carnon, 1770); Herder, "Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian;" Blair, "A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," *The Poems of Ossian* 343-99.

[18] On Blackwell's relation to Macpherson, see Stafford, *Sublime Savage* 28-33 and Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* 78.

[19] Macpherson, *Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Becket and de Hondt, 1771), Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, <http://galegroup.com/ecco> 214.

[20] Blair, *Critical Dissertation* 345.

[21] See Dugald Stewart, "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL.D.," *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, ed. William Hamilton, 10 vol. (Edinburgh: Constable, 1858), 10:1–98

[22] Jackson, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 105. Jackson reads Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," for instance, as a sustained engagement with Reidian self-observation.

[23] *Poems of Ossian* 7. On Fragments I-II as a "grimly ironic" reworking of the *Song of Songs*, see Stafford 102-3.

[24] Macpherson, *Introduction* 177-8.

[25] In the preface to the 1760 *Fragments*, Ossian's resistance to Christian evangelism is taken as evidence of his antiquity (*Poems of Ossian* 5). For the much-remarked Christian use of the Greek term *palingenesia*, see Matthew 18:29.

[26] See Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion from Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) and McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). For a recent exploration of the vitality of objects, see Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[27] On panpsychism's history see David Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West* (Cambridge, MA: Massachussets Institute of Technology Press, 2005).

[28] *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, Eds. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 76.

[29] *Poems in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807,* ed. Jared R. Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) 150.

[30] Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 55. Cavell remains agnostic whether "the world that poetry (or what is to become poetry) seeks" will ultimately entail "a new animism, a truer one, or whether the concept of animism will fall away, as if outgrown" (65).

[31] Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary* 31; 52-3.

[32] See de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). De Man's turn to the structures of language was one signal of literary criticism's broader turn away from discussions of consciousness—on which see Colin Jager, "Can We Talk about Consciousness Again?" *Romantic Frictions*, ed. Theresa Kelley (*Romantic Circles Praxis Series, <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/frictions>,* September 2011).

[33] *Poems of Ossian* 3.

[34] *Poems of Ossian* 9 and 9n.

[35] McGann, *Poetics of Sensibility* 35. For an extension of McGann's argument to the poetics of orality, see Mulholland, "James Macpherson's Ossian Poems" 400-1.

[36] See Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime: The Romantic Aesthetics of Individuation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[37] For a discussion of Enlightenment developmental theory's effacing of sociality, see Nancy Yousef, *Isolated Cases: The Anxieties of Autonomy in Enlightenment Philosophy and Romantic Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[38] See, for instance, Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[39] For this account of how an experience of such "constant conjunctions" produces the idea of a "necessary connection" between causes and effects, see especially Book I, Part III, section XIV of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Ph.H. Nidditch, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 155-72.

[40] See especially Hume's description of the social passions in Book II of the *Treatise.* Compare, though, Adela Pinch's alternative account of Humean sympathy, where feeling originates outside the self and is never quite one's own in the first place (*Strange Fits of Passion* 17ff).

[41] Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man,* Eds. Derek R. Brookes and Knud Haakonssen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 27.

[42] Reid, *Inquiry* 68.

[43] While "folk psychology" is a coinage of the twenty-first century, it draws on an older concept of "folk belief" or "folk faith," as opposed to more developed philosophy or science. Reid uses this verbal formula in his attack on Hume, who, Reid notes, occasionally confesses to having "relapsed into the faith of the vulgar" (Reid, *Inquiry* 21). On Hume's relationship to folk psychology, see Kramnick, *Actions and Objects* 48ff.

[44] Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of the Mind," *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis*, Eds. Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 253-329.

[45] Hume, on the other hand, would. See Kramnick, *Actions and Objects* 56.

[46] The "poverty of the stimulus" argument is usually dated to Noam Chomsky's review of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* (*Language* 35:1 [1959] 26-58). Linguists in Chomsky's tradition argue that language acquisition—as opposed to knowledge of particular languages—must be innate, since children become fluent so early in the rules of language use.

[47] The best-known articulation of this position is probably Simon Baron-Cohen's *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Massachussets Institute of Technology Press, 1995).

[48] Alan Richardson points to this "inborn ability to read the 'natural' language of facial expressions and gestures" as something that "Herder, Reid, and Darwin all theorized" (Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* [New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001] 161). On Reid and mindreading in early childhood, see Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[49] See Albert B. Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) and more recently Steve Newman, *Ballad Collecting, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[50] *Selections from Addison's Papers,* ed. Thomas Arnold (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907) 378.

[51] Addison, *Selections* 383.

[52] Blair, *Critical Dissertation* 368.

[53] In this sense, Macpherson's Ossianic project is already an attempt at what Alan Richardson has termed "cognitive historicism." For Richardson's methodological overview, see his introduction to *The Neural Sublime.*

[54] This fragment, originally number fourteen, was renumbered in the September 1760 second edition, and in all subsequent editions of the text.

[55] Chandler, "The Languages of Sentiment," *Textual Practice* 22:1 (2008): 21-39) 31.

[56] See Vickers's review of "Alan Richardson. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind," Studies in Romanticism* 43:1 (Spring 2004): 146-50. 148. For Vickers's full discussion of Whytt, see *Coleridge and the Doctors, 1795-1806* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[57] On Whytt's inheritance from pantheism, see Vickers, *Studies in Romanticism* 148.

[58] *An Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals* (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill, 1751. 1 December 2003. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. <http://galegroup.com/ecco>).

[59] Ian Haywood reads the poem as a failed literary experiment, since its main claim to authenticity—its fragmentary status—comes into conflict with Macpherson's claim to editorial authority. (*The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Ideas of History and Fiction* [Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986] 85).

[60] Blair, *Critical Dissertation* 354.

[61] *Lyrical Ballads* 747. On the influence of Lowth on Wordsworth, see Stephen Prickett, *Words and the Word: Language, Poetics, and Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 43.

[62] Macpherson, *Introduction* 77.

[63] For this term and the method it implies, see Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language* (New York: Oxford University. Press, 1996).

[64] For an overview of some of these approaches, see Lisa Zunshine, ed., *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[65] Hogan, "Literary Universals," *Poetics Today* 18.2 (1997): 223-49.

[66] See John J. Dunn, "Coleridge's Debt to Macpherson's Ossian," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 7.1-2 (July-October 1969): 76–89.

[67] Rueven Tsur, *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (New York: North-Holland, 1992). For a recent application of cognitive aesthetics to the lyric, see Gabrielle G. Starr, "Poetic Subjects and Grecian Urns," *Modern Philology* 105.1 (August 2007): 48-61.

[68] *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963) 1:345.

[69] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006). Vermeule, *Why Do We Care.*

[70] John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans*: *The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 1-2.

[71] Jonathan Kramnick makes this point in "Against Literary Darwinism," *Critical Inquiry* 37.2 (Winter 2011): 315-47. "Literary Darwinists" attempt to explain literary behavior more directly through an account of selection and adaptation. See Joseph Carroll, *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004) and Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

[72] On the Anglo-American tradition's blunting of Mill's initially more nuanced account of lyric solitude, see Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) 130ff.

Chapter Two

Lyrical Impairment

> It's the *worst sort* of classroom activity, the rote memorization, that
> supplies the best model for cognitive science, because it has the nice
> feature of decoupling memory from understanding. Memory of this sort is
> just brute storage (like a singer memorizing the lyrics of a Russian song
> without having the faintest idea what they mean).
>
> Daniel Dennett, *The Intentional Stance (1987)*[1]

Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) is often read as announcing once and for all
Scotland's assimilation into the British empire, even as the novel's representational force
comes from its depiction of Scotland's distinctive or eccentric nature, situated on the
margins of Britain. This chapter seeks to recover *Waverley*'s engagement with a different
kind of marginal figure. In the character of Davie Gellatley, the Baron's cognitively
impaired attendant with a penchant for memorizing scraps of poetry, Scott brings the
discourse of *cognitive* marginality to bear directly on questions of Scottish cultural
transmission. Davie is the first character Edward Waverley meets, and the first local
Scottish character who is given dialogue. He is really Waverley's first encounter with
"Scotland," aside from the unkempt village of Tully-Veolan and the Scottish girls he eyes
appreciatively while they are washing clothes. Davie enters the novel's pages singing
"with great earnestness, and not without some taste, a fragment of an old Scotch ditty." [2]
Early on, the narrator establishes that Davie is a "half-crazed simpleton," possessing "so
much wild wit as saved him from the imputation of idiocy," and defined above all by

"warm affections, a prodigious memory, and an ear for music" (58). From the start, Davie is marked by "the oddity of [his] appearance and gestures," both in his clothing and in his possession of a "wild, unsettled, irregular expression," an expression that the novel tells us results from "neither idiocy nor insanity […] but something resembling a compound of both, where the simplicity of the fool was mixed with the extravagance of a crazed imagination" (40-1). That description, as it happens, offers a concise summary of Locke's distinction between "idiocy" and "madness": the former is a general slowness or "stagnation" of the faculties, whereas the latter refers to faulty or extravagant processes of thought, based on inappropriate connections of ideas.[3]

Waverley overtly thematizes ballad collection, transmission, and preservation within a popular culture that is cast as quickly evanescing. But why do its chief examples of traditional literature come at the hands of a character who also appears to be socially and affectively disabled? To answer this question, this chapter considers how *Waverley* responds to and revises earlier examples of what we would now call a "cognitive poetics."

From its first Scottish scene, in fact, *Waverley* engages directly with the previous century's arguments about popular poetry and the architecture of the mind. Specifically, this chapter revisits a longstanding association of the discourse of Romantic "idiocy" with that poetic theory's arguments about the primitive mind. By most accounts, Scott was the most prolific and popular successor to James Macpherson's vision of Ossianic Scotland. In the previous chapter I showed that poetic antiquarianism, under the aegis of the Scottish Enlightenment, located in folk literatures both those forms of traditional culture particular to Scotland, and a source of information about the primitive mind in

general, one that could speak to the broadest, cross-cultural ambitions of Enlightenment science. The earliest versions of cognitive poetics thus emerged from these historically-minded turns to ancient or primitive modes of expression, and to the glimpses such poetry offered of earlier, traditional, or "folk" models of mindedness.

But the ancient and primitive were not the only categories that served the rise of that cognitive poetics. As scholars like Alan Bewell and Nancy Yousef have shown, the Enlightenment witnessed an equally important turn to impaired minds: to the people its practitioners termed "idiots," "deafmutes," and other "marginal" figures.[4] Despite his resistance to the Enlightenment's treatment of marginal peoples, William Wordsworth dramatizes that use of "idiocy" to stand in for a primitive, solipsistic model of humanity's cognitive origins when he famously weds impairment to Romantic poetics in his lyrical ballad "The Idiot Boy." By contrast, Scott's 1814 deployment of a similar figure, Davie Gellatley, sets the discussion firmly in the realm of the social, and, I shall argue, the sub-rational and mechanical features of mental functioning. *Waverley*'s argument about the poetic mind is located between the enlightenment's histories of natural man and the pathologizing rhetoric of the prodigy.

As Daniel Dennett suggests in the epigraph to this chapter, the cognitive paradigm has a surprising affinity with popular song. Dennett suggests that such song offers a "model for cognitive science" because it highlights the "brute" or "rote" aspects of the mind. To follow up on that surprising affinity, then, this chapter considers how popular song offers an alternative to the rational, imaginative, or "organic" models of the mind that appear as recognizable commonplaces in Romantic discourse. Scholars working on the ballad, the "lesser lyric," and forms of popular narrative and communal song are

discovering much the same thing.[5] Specifically, I argue that an attention to this wider

conception of the lyric substantially revises our understanding of the typical cognitive

claims made on behalf of poetry. The lyric did not just capture primitive, pristine modes

of thinking and feeling, but also registered its "brute" or "rote" features—features that fit

less neatly within Romantic sentimentality.

Scott is, of course, typically aligned with sentimentality, at least in terms of

literary form. In fact, his major literary contribution has often been viewed as a turn away

from poetry, as in the received wisdom that *Waverley* marked Scott's "farewell to poetry"

and his turn to the historical novel.[6] More pointedly, Ian Duncan has influentially argued

that Scott's turn to the novel offers an alternative to the "Kantian-Coleridgean" lyric,

which "casts the imagination as a trace of an alienated transcendental cognition."[7] The

alternative to this overdetermined model of the lyric, on Duncan's account, is sentimental

fiction, which provided the fictional counterpart of Hume's skeptical philosophy. As

Hume "traces a skeptical dismantling of the metaphysical foundations of reality and their

replacement with a sentimental investment in 'common life,'" so too do "Scott's novels

activate skepticism rather than faith as the subjective cast of their reader's relation to

history" (29). In fact, Duncan argues, Scott's rise to prominence coincides with a revival

of Humean skepticism over Thomas Reid's nativist "faith." As Scott's novelistic career

took off, Reid's philosophy had come to appear both more narrowly orthodox and

historically sterile than it in fact was. In historical representation and in studies of social

cognition, turning from Reidian nativism to Humean skepticism reduces the encounter

(with history, or with another person) to a fictional or quasi-literary strategy.[8]

Yet, this chapter argues, even as he made his supposed farewell to poetry, Scott identified the lyrical as a stronghold against the skepticism that sentimental fiction entailed. For Scott, the answer to that skepticism comes from the lesser lyric, which *Waverley* figures as obsolescent even as Scott is deploying for the first time the techniques of "historical romance." Davie Gellatley is a vestige of Scottish popular culture, like the Reidian philosophy that was by 1814 increasingly a matter of the past. Yet *Waverley* also looks forward to the materialist recuperations of Reid that would arise during Scott's most productive years. This chapter first contextualizes *Waverley* within discussions of Enlightenment idiocy. I then turn to the reception and extension of Thomas Reid's philosophy in the Edinburgh phrenological circles, to demonstrate a physiological argument about the mind with which *Waverley* has strong affinities. I then offer a reading of Davie's lyrical practice in light of this alternate tradition, and of more recent accounts of the modular mind, before turning to the broader influence of Scott and his critics in the nineteenth-century scientific community.

"Wild Boys" and Poets

Waverley's treatment of Davie is only implicitly allusive to Wordsworth until late in the novel, in the chapter titled "Desolation." In the aftermath of the failed Jacobite uprising, stretches of formerly inhabited land are deserted or demolished, and many of the families that supported the Jacobite cause have gone into hiding. At this point, Waverley revisits the ruins of Tully-Veolan and is met by Davie, who initially regards him with suspicion. Eventually, Waverley prompts recognition: tellingly, by whistling a tune he had taught Davie, and which had become one of his favorites. His fears assuaged,

Davie takes Waverley to the Baron's hiding place, where Davie's doting mother praises him for his ability to tend barehanded to the eggs roasting on a fire. This prompts Waverley, and the narrator, to turn to Davie

> with his nose almost in the fire, nuzzling among the ashes, kicking his heels, mumbling to himself , turning the eggs as they lay in the hot embers, as if to confute the proverb, that 'there goes reason to roasting of eggs,' and justify the eulogium which poor Janet poured out upon
>
> "Him whom she loved, her idiot boy."[9]

Scott's allusion here serves as much as a commentary upon Janet Gellatley's maternal style as upon Davie himself. From Coleridge to John Wilson, Wordsworth's readers complained of their difficulty in sympathizing with Betty Foy's maternal affections.[10] Most importantly, though, the allusion to Wordsworth serves as a late confirmation that Scott is joining a conversation about poetry and the impaired mind. "The Idiot Boy" was Wordsworth's most explicit engagement with the discourse of Enlightenment idiocy, and it makes a polemical claim for the importance of the lyric as a mode of mindedness. In *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment*, Alan Bewell identifies Johnny as an example of idiocy in particular and, more generally, of the enlightenment category of "marginal people," the "'idiots,' 'wild children, blind, deaf, and mute people'" that offered a particular kind of evidence about the early mind.[11] Writers like Locke, Monboddo, and Condillac understood "idiocy," in particular, as the condition of being stuck with one's original blank slate. Those who were deaf and mute, or the so-called "wild children" who were raised away from human society, were seen as offering valuable evidence of human mental life in its earliest, pre-societal stages, and concomitantly of what all our minds

were like before our educations at the hands of an advanced culture.[12] Wordsworth's

achievement, on Bewell's argument, is to identify with marginal figures rather than

instrumentalizing them. In "The Idiot Boy," Wordsworth celebrates the marginal by

aligning idiocy with a lyrical mode, a mode that the poem asserts over and against its

own narrative frame.

"The Idiot Boy," which appeared in *Lyrical Ballads* from the 1798 first edition,

tells the tale of Betty Foy, who sets her son Johnny ("her idiot boy") off on horseback to

bring home a doctor for their neighbor Susan Gale. When Johnny fails to return, Betty

grows worried, and after much searching discovers the horse standing idly, feeding by a

waterfall, as Johnny sits calmly: or, as Wordsworth suggestively puts it, "as careless as if

nothing were" (360). It is the poem's conclusion—in Johnny's answer to his mother's

entreaty to tell the tale of "where all this long night you have been, / What you have

heard, what you have seen"—that the poem resists narrative in favor of the lyrical:

> And thus to Betty's question, he
>
> Made answer, like a traveller bold,
>
> (His very words I give to you,)
>
> "The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
>
> "And the sun did shine so cold."
>
> —Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
>
> And that was all his travel's story. (457-63)

After Betty's tense, counterfactual conjectures as to Johnny's fate, the poem comes to a

carefully prepared anticlimax that amounts to a refusal of plot or story. This is to the

narrator's own ostensible regret, since reporting Johnny's adventures would have made

"a most delightful tale" (326). In short, Betty has a narrative, the tale of "maternal passion" that Wordsworth emphasized in the 1800 preface.[13] Johnny, by contrast, has only an elliptical attempt to report certain enigmatic sensations. "The Idiot Boy" makes the lyric a primal and first-person category, against the third-person accumulation of narrative "incident."

This non-narrative emphasis makes sense, of course, on most accounts of enlightenment idiocy. Since idiocy was understood as a slowness of faculties, and as an impairment of memory, it implied a continual flow of sensations the memory could not catch, and which for that reason could not take a narrative structure. On Bewell's argument, the very fact of Johnny's reporting *anything* offers a retort to Enlightenment constructions of idiocy. His ability to articulate his experience retrospectively would have been remarkable to a "philosophical reader," Bewell argues, since "[t]o an age that saw idiocy as a state excluded from language and memory, its very existence would have seemed to offer rare empirical support for an investigation of the origin of language and memory."[14] Idiots, like the ancient poets discussed in the last chapter, were taken as relics of primitive cognition. Ultimately, though, Bewell thinks that Wordsworth intentionally frustrates that enlightenment impulse, since the evidentiary narrative Johnny would provide is something that the poem flatly refuses. Instead of delivering that impossible narrative of origins, Bewell continues, Johnny's reply "suggests that the world that first appears to human perception is fundamentally metaphoric. Only later, as language (and with it knowledge) develops, do 'moons' and 'owls' displace the cold suns and hooting cocks of primitive perception" (69).

Poetic language, however, cannot be made a separate matter, and cannot be so neatly bracketed from the broader Enlightenment stance toward cognitive origins. While Bewell argues that Wordsworth defies his philosophical reader's expectations, it is important to recognize that the poem's alternative—its privileging of primitive, figural cognition—keeps it entangled with the same quest for origins Bewell seeks to resist.[15] Wordsworth's identification with marginal figures may be preferable to their instrumental treatment at the hands of earlier practitioners; but "The Idiot Boy" remains bound up with the Romantic construction of the lyric as a return to the early mind. In writings on ancient and popular poetry, as well as in Biblical criticism, the question of a specifically *poetic* language was crucial to eighteenth-century theories about the nature of primitive thought. This continuity should come as no surprise to those familiar with Robert Lowth, Hugh Blair, Paul Henri Mallet, Johann Gottfried Herder, or James Macpherson, writers aligned to various degrees with the Enlightenment project or with the emergence of a counter-Enlightenment tradition that eschewed narratives of historical progress, and turned instead to humanity's origins.[16] Through theories that correlated cognitive function with the development of language in the individual mind, many of these accounts celebrated the lower ranges of cognitive functioning by associating them with poetic language. Herder depicts this kind of primal scene eloquently in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, as he imagines the naming of an animal. The individual encounters a sheep and observes its sensory properties ("white, soft, woolly") until "the sheep bleats, and the soul recognizes it. And it feels inside, 'Yes, you are that which bleats.'"[17] By making the bleat the "distinguishing mark" of the sheep, Herder's imagined subject takes one of the animal's characteristics (the one which is most strongly felt, and "makes upon

man's soul the strongest impression") to stand for the whole. In other words, figural language *is* the origin of language. If Wordsworth's Johnny Foy strains to describe his experience, then at some level this is simply a recapitulation of that same early phase of cognition.

At stake here is the principle of empirical philosophy that Bewell finds "ironic"—namely, "that empirical philosophy," which aimed for a description of "normal" functioning, became "preeminently a discourse about marginal people" (25). The alternative to the implied developmental schema would position the impaired mind at strict *variance* with normal functioning; impairment would thus illuminate that normal functioning by contrast. This, it is worth noting, is the methodology of the cognitive sciences. The underlying principle is simple: if it is a *mechanism* that enables a particular ability, then studying cases where that ability is impaired will show us where the mechanism is. This is particularly important in today's conversations about other minds, namely in the debates around "theory of mind" or "mindreading," one influential way of describing how one mind recognizes and identifies the mental states of another. I want to pay some attention to that conversation, both because it exemplifies the cognitive sciences' orientation toward impairment, and because it speaks to the "other minds" problem on which Romantic responses to skepticism hinged. Like Thomas Reid, the later Edinburgh phrenologists, and, I argue, Walter Scott, these cognitive-scientific conversations turn from the challenge of skepticism to the strategies of positive knowledge that make sociality possible.

The previous chapter introduced those strategies in terms of "folk psychology," the quite ordinary way that people come to attribute mental state concepts (like beliefs

and desires) to others, and to understand actions in terms of intentional systems. I also noted a few of the competing hypotheses about what happens when one person reads another's mind.[18] Here, I will focus on the "modular nativist" position, which understands the mind as a set of innate, modular mechanisms, one of which drives mindreading tasks. I do so not to claim that modular nativism offers the most accurate theory of social cognition, but because it has a close affinity (and on some accounts a genealogical link) to the material theories of the mind emerging as Scott wrote the *Waverley* novels. The fact that we can recognize other minds—and, in fact, that we do so from a remarkably early age—establishes for today's modular nativists, as it did for Thomas Reid, that mindreading is a basic, innate fact about our cognitive architecture. Like Reid, modular nativists posit innate, effortless faculties that drive a variety of mental functions, though with their emphasis on biological mechanisms subserving those abilities, today's nativists depart decisively from Reid's philosophical terrain. Nevertheless, the resulting differentiated and embodied account of cognition offers a challenge to the enlightenment's conjectural histories of human origins. Locke, Condillac, and Hume implied that the social functions of the mind grew out of the original, first-person language of sensation and passion.[19] Herder and Reid, by contrast, thought that sociality was fundamental, and that our ability to read "natural signs" like facial expressions shows that we could not develop those abilities strictly from the raw stuff of sensation. From Thomas Reid's faculty psychology to the emerging accounts of a material mind, writers between 1750 and 1850 tended to reduce the number of cognitive abilities assigned to explicit, rational thought, and to multiply the mind's basic, sub-rational attributes, casting them variously as simple acts, independent faculties, or even

physiological mechanisms. However inadvertently, Reid's faculty psychology and its nativist commitments laid the groundwork for the subsequent turn to biology that is still with us.

In a more recent nativist argument, Simon Baron-Cohen has influentially proposed that a specific kind of impairment may be the key to locating the innate mechanism that drives mindreading tasks.[20] He hypothesized that autism is an impairment of a "theory of mind mechanism" in a particular region of the brain. While normally-developing children begin to show evidence of theory of mind by their fourth year, those with Autism Spectrum Disorder struggle to perform ordinary mind-reading tasks. That capacity typically correlates with the ability to attribute false beliefs to other agents: because she didn't see me move it, Sally thinks that the marble is still in the red box even though I know that it is actually in the blue box.[21] The close correlation between Autism Spectrum Disorders and the failure of such "false belief" tasks led Baron-Cohen and others to propose that such disorders represented a physical impairment of theory of mind, via damage to or underdevelopment of a particular part of the brain. By comparing the brain-function of those who "pass" and "fail" tests like this one, modular nativists argue, we can locate the region that houses the theory of mind mechanism.

If Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" frames poetic disability as a return to human origins, Scott's treatment of Davie more closely resembles the cognitive-scientific model of impairment. While Scott repeatedly invokes the discourse of idiocy, he also puts in question whether it is the best description for Davie. The narrator introduces Davie as possessing "neither idiocy nor insanity […] but something resembling a compound of

both," and as marked equally by "simplicity" and "extravagance" (40-1). This unaccountable nature seems to have entered the realm of folk wisdom, too, as evidenced by the "hypothesis" of the "common people [...] that David Gellatley was no farther fool than was necessary to avoid hard labour" (58). Alan Richardson has helpfully suggested that these uncertain or equivocal stances toward Davie register a growing suspicion that idiocy was not the general slowness of faculties that Enlightenment thinkers had postulated. Instead, he argues, Romantic writers became increasingly sensitive to a model of an embodied and functionally differentiated mind, one with discrete and separable faculties that can be selectively impaired or overdeveloped. One of the breakthroughs of the time was to recognize a range of disabilities as resulting not from a lack of development, but from the *overdevelopment* of one particular faculty. Richardson links selective overdevelopment to the nascent "biological psychology" that would culminate in phrenology, and which generates a small repertoire of "'partial' idiots" in Romantic literature.[22] Phrenology, Richardson alleges, with its focus on discrete, functionally differentiated "organs" within the brain, anticipated the accounts of functionally-localized (or on some accounts "modular") brain function that continue to drive research on the brain in the cognitive sciences.

Richardson's reframing of Davie is attractive for the alternative it opens to enlightenment idiocy. If Davie is actually not simply a "wild boy" or "idiot," but a selectively-overdeveloped prodigy, then he is not simply a gloss on Wordsworth's lyrical idiocy. Richardson has little to say about why Davie's particular strength should be *lyrical*. He speculates that, since Davie's brother was reportedly a great songwriter, "Davie's powers as well as his deficits may be congenital, a matter of familial

inheritance" (167). But he (and his brother) could just as easily have been prodigious painters, or prodigious sportsmen, and still indicate the dawning awareness of a functionally differentiated, "selectively overdeveloped" mind. Glossing over the poetic— or uncritically privileging the "figural"—thus risks making the figurative in "The Idiot Boy" one more enlightenment quest for origins. It also risks missing the fact that *Waverley* launches a particular argument about poetry, one that significantly revises poetry's place in the enlightenment schema of "The Idiot Boy."

Davie's role as songster is a testament to poetry's overdetermined status in theories of ancient literature and culture, and in studies of the mind. When, in *Biographia Literaria,* Coleridge wants to accuse Hartley's association theory of determinism, he accuses him of insulting the dignity of poetic activity. On such arguments, Coleridge explains:

> The inventor of the watch did not in reality invent it; he only looked on, while the blind causes, the only true artists, were unfolding themselves. […] So must it have been with Mr. SOUTHEY and LORD BYRON, when the one *fancied* himself composing "RODERICK," and the other his "CHILDE HAROLD."[23]

Coleridge's choice of poets is unsurprising: Southey was his friend, and he was currently soliciting favors from Byron.[24] But their writing processes are sacred enough to be juxtaposed with the watch and the watchmaker, that analogy of mechanical operation with strong ties to natural theology. The so-called "blind causes" would assail divine activity as well as human activity, for which poetry is the metonym of choice.

Coleridge's aim here is to defend the unity of the mind against those who, like David Hartley, would reduce it to its component parts. In particular, he rejected associationism's "mapping" of ideas and impressions onto particular nerves and fibers. Hazlitt would second Coleridge's arguments, and would later critique Gall and Spurzheim's phrenology the same way, arguing that the mind could not possibly be made up of *local,* functionally specific organs. Instead, Hazlitt asserted the unity of consciousness, arguing for a single sentient principle that could, at any time, have access to all of the mind's contents. At times he confessed that this approach was impressionistic, calling it his "dull, cloudy, English mysticism."[25] Like Coleridge, Hazlitt would in his literary criticism make poetry answerable to that single, undifferentiated faculty of mind he referred to simply as "consciousness."

Locke had been largely of Coleridge's opinion. In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Locke grants that "[s]ound may mechanically cause a certain motion of the animal Spirits, in the Brains of those Birds, whilst the Tune is actually playing; and that motion may be continued on to the Muscles of the Wings," since such reflexes would enable immediate flight from danger and thus "tend to the Birds Preservation." But Locke can find no such explanatory basis for automation in singing, "which imitation can be of no use to the Bird's Preservation."[26] Not even poetry, but the birdsong to which it is compared in caricatures of Romantic poetics, was for Locke too willful an activity to be considered automatic. Thus even for Locke, non-purposive song breaks free from the explanatory power of material psychology.

For Coleridge, this independence from mechanical causes is particularly important when the poetry in question is Biblical poetry. He was strongly invested in the

biblical writers' status as full human agents, as opposed to mere vessels for the inspired word. In his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* he specifically rejects such theories as detrimental to the character of the Biblical poet, King David: they imply that "this *sweet Psalmist of Israel* was himself a mere instrument as his harp, an *automaton* poet, mourner, and supplicant."[27] Coleridge—or his persona—will submit himself to the poet, a mere "instrument" to be played, such that "every several nerve of emotion, passion, thought, that thrids the *flesh-and-blood* of our common Humanity responds to the Touch" (1136). But the poet himself must be no such passive thing. Importantly, Coleridge pursues this argument about the integrity of human action not by appealing to scriptural authority, but instead to a more self-evident fact about reading: that readers have bodies, and those bodies feel. Poetry is an example—in fact, *the* example—of free human action, and that freedom is crucial both for the historical efficacy of writing and the experience of reading. The issue at stake is not the authority of scripture, but the value of poetry. Historical actors cannot be made into automata, especially if they are poets.

Davie Gellatley is not an "automaton poet." But his poetic practice seems associative or automatically prompted, and runs afoul of Coleridge's association of poetry with rationality and freedom. In fact, if Davie is less like a wild boy than, as Alan Richardson suggests, an "idiot savant," or a selectively-overdeveloped prodigy, then his rote poetics would have invoked a long history of identifying the prodigious with the mechanical. It was Descartes' description of selective overdevelopments, after all, that underwrote the eighteenth-century discourse of automation. For Descartes, highly selective abilities were symptoms of mindlessness. If an animal outperforms a human at a specific task, Descartes argues, it is always to be observed that they will underperform

humans in just about everything else. Since animals were essentially machines on Descartes' argument, they can dramatically outperform humans at particular, highly selective tasks, but cannot display the general "dexterity" that characterizes the human:

> Hence, the fact that they do better than we do, does not prove that they are endowed with mind, for in this case they would have more reason than any of us, and would surpass us in all other things. It rather shows that they have no reason at all, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, just as a clock, which is only composed of wheels and weights is able to tell the hours and measure the time more correctly than we can do with all our wisdom."[28]

In this view he differs sharply from Locke, who even when discussing animals frequently argued against mere automation. Unlike La Mettrie in the eighteenth century, the Romantic era's paradigm shift in the science of the mind did not produce a simple account of a clock-like "machine-man," whose bodily motions simply resulted from the "disposition" and reflexes of particular organs.

Yet Romantic science frequently took interest in the elements of embodied mental life that *did* seem to point to the organs that subserved the mind. Those who like Davie raised the specter of the Cartesian prodigy or mechanical animal gave clues as to the ways that the mind could be understood not just as an undifferentiated faculty of thought, but as a set of coordinated bodily organs. This change is at heart a difference in philosophical method, a difference in the way philosophers dealt with the evidence impairment provided, as a Cartesian model of the prodigy came back to the forefront of

the conversation. And that difference of method is what I take to be the distinctive development between "The Idiot Boy" and *Waverley*.

This is why Scott's treatment of Davie is all the more provoking to the line of thinking with which Wordsworth plays in "The Idiot Boy." That poem makes the lyric a primal and first-person category, against the third-person accumulation of narrative "incident." This return to cognitive and linguistic origins frequently effaced the social component of human mental development, and resulted in the philosophical impasse that marked both Enlightenment anthropology's "isolated cases" and Hume's skepticism.[29] The emerging model of an embodied, functionally-differentiated mind countervailed that early model of primitive cognition, and looks instead to a functionally differentiated mind in which sociality is also a basic faculty. I locate this emerging model in Scott, and specifically in *Waverley*'s argument about genre, to which I now turn.

Skeptical, Sentimental, and Modular Literatures

Discussions of Scott and genre are inevitably routed through discussions of the historical novel. When it comes to the cognitive claims entailed by particular genres, the historical novel points in the overdetermined direction of sentimental history and Humean skepticism, a context which Ian Duncan has usefully unpacked. Duncan argues that Scott offers the fictional counterpart of Hume's skepticism, by writing novels that trace "a Humean dialectical progression from metaphysical illusion through melancholy disenchantment to a sentimental and ironical reattachment to common life." Sentimental history—the very genre in which Hume excelled—makes readerly sentiment the vehicle of historical engagement, just as Hume's philosophy made the imagination the source of

all knowledge, and thus saw sentiment and custom take the place of hard metaphysical truths. In Scott's hands, sentimental history gives way to the overtly fictional novel, which Duncan argues "activate[s] skepticism rather than faith as the subjective cast of their reader's relation to history" (29). Paul Hamilton reads *Waverley* along similar lines. He identifies its arc as a "relinquishing of Kant's supposed advance on Humean philosophy," since "it reverts from the logical necessity of believing in valid representation to Hume's strictly psychological explanation of why we do so."[30]

Duncan, in particular, makes a forceful correlation between Scott's rise to prominence and the revival of Hume's philosophy in the 1810s, which ended a decades-long reign by Thomas Reid and his students. In his explanation of Reid's sudden decline, Duncan attributes much to the work of Thomas Brown, who, by providing a Humean rereading of Reid (a creative misreading, really), weakened Reid's claims and paved the way for Hume's return. Many, Duncan included, take Brown at his word when he equates Reid's faculties with Hume's feelings, and suggests that the difference is merely one of emphasis. While the skeptic says that belief is *only* a feeling, Brown argues, the common sense philosopher simply says that the force of that feeling is irresistible. To Duncan, this means that Brown "revives Hume's more subtle, dialectical stance" against Reid's stubborn insistence on directly apprehended realities (135). The problem with Brown's redaction, though, is that it completely effaces the terms of Reid's quarrel with Hume. Reid's objection had been that the faculties by which we know the world are not determined by the imagination—the representational philosophy he termed the "way of ideas"—but by separate faculties, notably "conception."

Reid was for decades the most important name for that resistance to Humean skepticism. In the years following Reid's supposed decline, "Common Sense" resistance to skepticism took a surprising materialist turn. Scottish converts to phrenology— notably the members of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society—recast Reid as an underappreciated materialist. Where Thomas Brown took great pains to bend Reid back toward the Humean system from which he had departed, the Edinburgh phrenologists made Reid the progenitor of a biologically-minded, anti-skeptical philosophy of mind. In many respects phrenology earned its reputation as a pseudoscience. Yet in the hands of its Scottish redactors, in the influential Edinburgh circles that included George and Andrew Combe, William A.F. Browne, Robert Edmund Grant, and Charles Darwin, phrenology mobilized a powerful argument about the relationship between mind and brain.[31] These circles, which had a massive influence on materialist philosophy of mind, and on Darwin's meditations on the human mind's development, produced a flawed but historically significant redaction of Thomas Reid's faculty psychology.[32] So, while Duncan concedes that "[a]t its most sophisticated, Reid's argument anticipates neo-Darwinian or sociobiological explanations" of credulity, there is a more detailed story to tell about the line that runs from Reid to the material mind (132).

In his "Preliminary Dissertation" to the *Transactions of the Phrenological Society*, George Combe is explicit about this intellectual debt, which he casts in conspicuously nationalist terms. He cites a review of Reid's *Inquiry* from the *Quarterly Review*, which had objected to Reid's claims for "common sense." In fact, the reviewer had pointed out, the existence of "simple and uncompounded faculties" was hardly "a point which no person had dared dispute" as Reid had proposed, but was actually quite

controversial.[33] This "English" objection to Reid's premise was, Combe asserts, a matter of national difference. The *Quarterly* reviewer participates, he writes, in a long tradition of English essayistic prose, one that descends from Addison to Johnson, and which retained a native prejudice toward the Lockean "way of ideas." Locke admits that the mind is made up of component parts, the ideas received from sensation and reflection. Yet the empirical analysis of the mind that followed Locke tended to treat the mind as one thinking thing, as a single faculty of sensation that linked together the successive moments of experience. Combe's materialist rejoinder is that the mind is, in fact, made up of many faculties, which run independently of one another. This alternative is, for Combe, peculiarly Scottish, since "the Scotch metaphysicians in general, adopt the opinion, from whatever source derived, that the mind manifests a plurality of faculties."[34] Combe thus repositions Reid as the proponent of a characteristically Scottish "faith" in independent faculties of mind, against a looser, English assertion of the mind's unity. This is a dubious characterization of Reid, to be sure, since he was often an outspoken defender of the unity of the mind. Yet Combe's reconstruction of Reid offered an important alternative to the version presented by Thomas Brown—this one aligned not with a return to Hume, but with the new Scottish materialism.[35] For those materialists, Reid and his common sense successors "present an *analysis* of the human faculties" for which phrenology can identify "a corporeal organ, by means of which a particular faculty manifests itself."[36] Reid provided the theory—the list of mental capabilities—and it remained for the phrenologists to map those faculties onto the brain.

I propose that Scott develops an analogous, Reidian form of resistance to skepticism. In the novel that Duncan calls "an internal allegory of the emergence of the

novel as the genre of modern life from premodern traditions of ballad, epic, allegory, and romance," those very premodern forms remain the locus of resistance to the sentimental, novelistic mode Duncan aligns with modernity.[37] Of course, these traditions, and "tradition" in general, emerge at the other end of Scott's process as a manufactured nostalgia. There, they can signal only dissatisfaction with skeptical, sentimental modernity, rather than offering a solution to its problems. Scott's real innovation is to make "impairment" serve as more than an object of nostalgia. For if idiocy is typically associated with slowness of the Humean sensorium, Scott looks instead to the brute, subrational, even mechanical processes that, like Reid's innate faculties, work independently of the sentimental imagination.

In the early chapter titled "Castle Building," Scott makes sentimental narrative itself subject to this kind of reduction. In that chapter the young Edward Waverley is listening to a stultifying rehearsal of his family history. To explain how this dry detail occasionally gives way to interesting narratives—which to Waverley resemble sentimental histories—the narrator launches a conceit:

> Family tradition and genealogical history […] is the very reverse of amber, which, itself a valuable substance, usually includes flies, straws, and other trifles, whereas these studies, being themselves very insignificant and trifling, do nevertheless serve to perpetuate a great deal of what is rare and valuable in ancient manners, and to record many curious and minute facts which could have been preserved and conveyed through no other medium. (17)

On this analogy, sentimental narrative is a precious rarity, embedded in uninteresting dross the novel calls the "the oft-repeated tale of narrative old age." "Narrative" here serves in the older sense of the word, indicating Sir Everard's loquaciousness, as he moves with "remorseless and protracted accuracy" through a "dry deduction of his line of ancestors" or "the remorseless and protracted accuracy" of his detailed antiquarianism.[38] It is this kind of sentimental narrative, when it erupts from the dross of detail, that defines history as practiced by David Hume, and which Duncan aligns with Scott's novelistic practice.[39] But the "reverse of amber" passage suggests that such narratives depend on a prior, tedious mode, and indicates Scott's interest in the relationship between sentimental narrative and more rote, automatic modes of cultural transmission.

At least at the outset of Waverley's disenchanting education, sentimentality still rules. Yet, as the novel demonstrates, and this passage makes explicit, rote forms of transmission are a necessary supplement to those sentimental moments of greater interest. In other words, it is Hume's own sentimental mode that *Waverley* is de-romanticizing. Moreover, the novel's disenchanting trajectory ultimately looks *toward* the ballad as a modernizing form, rather than as the premodern vestige the sentimental novel leaves in its wake. In *Waverley*, traditional modes of transmission are most thoroughly associated not with family history and genealogy, but with the ballad. In the narrator's gloss we can hear an echo of Robert Lowth's comments on ancient verse, which Lowth emphasized as serving a technological role. Lowth casts sentiment as simply the most interesting of poetry's features, and one that is present mainly to help sustain all of its *less* interesting functions. Sentiment "direct[s] the perception to the minutest circumstances, and of assisting the memory in the retention of them."[40] In short, there is an analogy here

between family history—as a rote process of recitation, immersed in details—and Davie's immersion in the rote practices of traditional balladic literature.

Davie's unsentimental lyricism frequently manifests itself as a failure of a communication, or as an inattention to the social protocols expected of him. Scott repeatedly depicts Davie as engrossed in song, to the exclusion of all else. When Davie first approaches Waverley, for instance, he is totally engrossed in his minstrelsy, and fails to notice Waverley until he is almost upon him. When Waverley asks if Bradwardine is home, Davie "replied, - and, like the witch of Thalaba, 'still his speech was song,'—

> The Knight's to the mountain
>
> His bugle to wind;
>
> The Lady's to greenwood.
>
> Her garland to bind.
>
> The bower of Burd Ellen
>
> Has moss on the floor,
>
> That the step of Lord William
>
> Be silent and sure.

"This," the narrator archly suggests, "conveyed no information" (41). Presumably sticking close to Waverley's point of view, the narrator here suggests that Davie's recitation is an automatically-prompted tune. The comedy of the scene derives from Davie's response to a serious question with an apparently whimsical, associative response. Though Scott's footnote tells us that the song is original, it seems that Davie draws on two existing ballads, drawing proper names and a few keywords from "Burd

Ellen and the Young Tamlane (Child 28) and "Lord William, or Lord Lundy" (Child 254), which he "remixes" into the word-game or children's rhyme we read in the text.[41]

It may well be fruitful to speculate on the hidden meanings created by this juxtaposition of balladic sources. The reference to Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*, of course, suggests that Davie is speaking cryptically, like Southey's sinister if ultimately impotent witch. Her "unintelligible song" has ample meaning, after all—just not to Thalaba.[42] Indeed, some readers identified Davie as speaking more than nonsense. Robert Chambers, for instance, wrote in 1825 that Davie only *seemed* dim-witted to the dim-witted folk annoyed by him: that is, to "Waverley, and such as, like him, did not comprehend the strange metaphorical meanings of [Davie's] replies and allusions."[43] Early on, an unsigned review of *Waverley* in the *British Critic* (August 1814) had built on Scott's own Shakespearean allusions, which align Davie with the figure of the "wise fool." After noting that "the similarity between himself and the fool in King Lear is peculiarly striking," the critic alerts the review's readers "to a circumstance in which they have doubtless anticipated us, the strong similarity between some turns in the character of Davy and those of Blanche of Devon: Particularly the warning given by both in wild and incoherent song."[44] This double-comparison to *Lear* and Scott's own *Lady of the Lake* wrenches Davie into a fairly traditional understanding of Romantic poetics as naïve yet prophetic utterance, what Coleridge, speaking of the fool in *Lear*, termed "inspired idiocy."[45]

Such equations are common in the most traditionally "Romantic" statements about poetry and idiocy. But those "strange metaphorical meanings" can also refer to the practices of Jacobite code, in which memorized song played a large part.[46] More

generally, Celeste Langan reminds us, pure or decontextualized poetics "would approximate the 'gibberish' that Gaelic has become to those now under the sway of England and English," for which reason those readers who take Waverley's incomprehension at face value "do so at their peril."[47] Yet it is crucial in *Waverley*, both for its treatment of Scottish tradition and for the case it makes about the human mind, that Davie's own unintelligible song *may not* be an elliptical code, or contain a deeper meaning. Intimations of Jacobitism aside, Waverley's encounters with Davie do not yield a specific *eclaircissement*, but only continued frustration with Davie's unintelligibility, and with the apparent free association engaged in by this unlikely messenger. Davie's singing seems prompted only by chance associations of ideas, and frequently conveys no information. It demands close engagement, but it cannot be "read" (in the sense of close reading), and does not seem to enclose a metaphorical or figural meaning.

While such a possibility sits uncomfortably within Wordsworthian theories of primitive sensuous utterance, it is hardly foreign to a ballad matrix that runs from wordplay and nonsense-choruses to the engagement of specific historical content.[48] In recombining or remixing traditional source materials, a potentially meaningless set of signifiers could structure social environments around collective song, or instigate more dramatic possibilities for social reconfiguration. Scott was deeply invested in the ballad's culture-building work: the way that communal, social song could build itself into a patrimony worth collecting in the massive *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.* Yet in *Waverley* he caricatures such production, emphasizing its difference from the communicative or expressive functions that characterized the Romantic lyric's speakers.

Davie's trade is in a sort of brute, mechanical genre that nevertheless opens onto sociality. An emblem for this mechanical yet sociable strategy would be the tune that Waverley whistles in the chapter "Desolation." When Waverley sees Davie, after all, the latter is entirely absorbed in his task. Then, on noticing Waverley, he fails to recognize him as anything but a foreign agent, and becomes skittish. The tune—which lacks linguistic content, and thus remains unrepresented in the novel—nevertheless acts as the occasion for recognition and the meeting of minds. A Humean might say that Davie associates the tune with Waverley, and thus connects it to the idea he has of Waverley as a known, non-threatening person. But much of the scene's affect comes from the way that recognizing Waverley pulls Davie out of his caricatured self-immersion, and establishes what even the novel's sentimentality seems invested in as real contact between minds. Of course, Davie's subverting of communication presents an interesting parallel to "mind*blindness*," the coinage of Simon Baron-Cohen that describes the impairment of an innate, mindreading module. Blakey Vermeule suggests as much when she retroactively applies the term "mindblindness" to the "wild children" that stand as Davie's progenitors.[49] Specifically, Vermeule interprets Peter of Hanover, the paradigmatic eighteenth-century "wild boy," in the cognitive sciences' new language of neurological impairments. Her attempt to diagnose Peter of Hanover with Autism Spectrum Disorder is dubious at best.[50] But the stakes of her project are enticing: Vermeule proposes to describe the wild child, the prototype of Romanticism's lyric "idiots," in terms of the functionally differentiated mind. Such an individual might experience difficulty integrating into developed society not because he lacks language (the reason usually given in the literature on the subject), but because of the impairment of an innate ability.

He might experience certain social and affective disabilities, while still functioning highly in a number of other domains.

Indeed, at times Davie appears mindblind. When Waverley has just entered Scotland, and encounters Davie for the first time, Davie is so engrossed in song that he does not notice Waverley until he is almost upon him. "Here lifting up his eyes," the narrator reports, "which had hitherto been fixed in observing how his feet kept time to the tune, he beheld Waverley, and instantly doffed his cap, with many grotesque signals of surprise, respect, and salutation" (41). Davie's self-immersion here, when read in light of the novel's insistence on his actual, physiological impairment, resonates with Vermeule's interest in reduced empathy and hindered understanding of the norms of social interaction. In fact, Davie engages in a kind of self-immersed performance for which we now have the fortuitous term "shoegazing."[51] Coined at the turn of the 1990s—the OED's first recorded use is in 1991—the term draws on a longstanding tradition of associating introversion or antisociality with looking down at one's shoes. The term came into this recent usage to refer to a style of British rock music known for "a deliberately reticent or introverted style of performance." In addition to the perennial critique of musicians perceived as "self-indulgent"—that is, of neglecting the formal expectations of their listeners—the term also alludes to a more specific breach of decorum. The performers involved were caricatured as keeping their eyes trained on the floor, by all accounts (including the OED) "in order to operate guitar effects pedals" and thus neglecting eye contact with the audience. Eye contact is important, and stands as a metonym for sociality in general. Considering Davie's breaches of decorum, and his role as a popular songster, it hardly seems a stretch to refer to him as a shoegazer.

The minute attention to technical details—indeed of *technique*—is an occupational hazard of the poet, or the minstrel, in any century. In the first decades of the nineteenth, the most well-known was to be found in critiques of Wordsworth, especially Hazlitt's description of Wordsworth's poetry as egoistic, an accusation that Keats influentially condensed in his description of "the [W]ordsworthian or egotistical sublime."[52] Besides alluding to the sublime's longstanding association with solitude (in Burke's psychological aesthetics, the solitude of primitive man), the egotistical sublime draws on a critique of egoism that comes out of the sentimental tradition. Most influentially, Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, described egoism or antisociality as a failure of proper social decorum. Just as we sympathize with others by projecting our own mental states onto them, Smith thought, we also imagine our way into the mind of a fictional, impartial observer, from which standpoint we can judge our own actions. Egoism, in Smith's sense, is a failure of this self-regulation by sympathy: a failure to gain a reflexive awareness of oneself by taking the perspective of another.[53] Framed this way—the way Romantic criticism has typically framed the matter—the egotistical poet is stuck in a kind of Humean skepticism, a primitive, sublime solitude. Davie's shoegazing (or perhaps, following Vermeule, his mindblindness) suggests an alternative: instead of a solipsism premised on the empiricist mind, Davie aligns poetic self-absorption with a nascent physiology that differentiated task-oriented abilities like musicality from other activities like sociability. On this latter model, poetic involution speaks not of an originally solitary state, but to the mind's division of labor.

The result is rather a different form of "cognitive poetics" than the one entailed by Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy." It is possible, of course, to put lyrical impairment, as

Wordsworth did, onto the track of stadial history. In the guise of Johnny Foy, the impaired poet marks the origin of a developmental narrative of consciousness, and offers to bring his readers closer to that sensuous and figural mode of thought. On the other hand, it is possible to invoke lyrical impairment—and even theories of sociocultural development—without implying that cognition follows that same developmental narrative. Instead, as in *Waverley*, a selective ability for poetry might illuminate the fact that the mind is made of many parts.

Conclusion: Davie's "Originals"

If Wordsworthian idiocy is a reaction to Enlightenment anthropology and its focus on primitive cognition, then the movement from "The Idiot Boy" to *Waverley* marks a shift in the way that poetry and impairment were brought together. I want to conclude by suggesting some ways that, despite Scott's distaste for the sciences of the mind, Davie spoke quite suggestively to later literary criticism, as well as to the phrenological circles that formed in Edinburgh in the 1820s.

Scott himself offers a precedent for the diagnosis of literary characters, both in his own novels and in his writings on Shakespeare. In Scott's anonymous review of his own *Tales of My Landlord,* he looks back to his early treatment of Davie as the occasion for an ambitious literary-historical claim. He explains the role of literary characters like Davie—markedly impaired, and kept in the houses of the nobility—by gesturing toward a still active, yet threatened tradition of keeping household "fools." The review assures its readers that "there is ample testimony that a custom, referred to Shakespeare's time in England, had, and in remote provinces of Scotland, has still its counterpart, to this day"

(437). Later, he speaks of the "wild wit" which these servants "often flung about them

with the freedom of Shakespeare's licensed clowns" (438). On this reading, the

Shakespearean fool was not just a court jester, licensed to speak freely, but was at least in

many cases an outgrowth of a tradition for supporting the disabled. Strikingly, then,

Scott's comments on Shakespeare medicalize the literary by "diagnosing" the

Shakespearean fool.

On a number of occasions, Scott attempts to situate the fool in socioeconomic

reality by looking to evidence of specific disabilities, and the traditional Scottish customs

that supported to the care of those who could not care for themselves. Such informal

customs, Scott goes on to explain, offer a substitute for official state support:

> There are (comparatively speaking) no poor's rates in the country parishes
>
> of Scotland, and of course no work-houses to immure either their worn out
>
> poor or the 'moping idiot and the madman gay,' whom Crabbe
>
> characterizes as the happiest inhabitants of these mansions, because
>
> insensible of their misfortunes.[54]

Scott locates Davie here as a member of a class of household "fools," kept out of

benevolence, and who "usually displayed toward their benefactors a sort of instinctive

attachment" (438). Such a concern with traditional institutions of care has a precedent in

Wordsworth's "The Old Cumberland Beggar," a poem in which he similarly opposed the

more recent, systemized "HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY," in favor of an earlier,

practice, one embedded in a society based on reflexive sympathy.[55] We must take care to

understand the Shakespearean fool, Scott argues, in light of material contexts: the

physiological conditions underlying impairment, and the social institutions that might

provide for such individuals—especially when, as Scott alleged, those institutions of care were quickly disappearing.

By making Davie a gloss on Shakespeare's fool, Scott reframes literary history as an endeavor that might be continuous with the deep history of empirical realities, whether social, economic, or physiological. Moreover, Scott's *oeuvre* prompted many to engage in the same type of criticism. In the popular genre of "Scott originals" or "Waverley anecdotes," critics implicitly framed Scott's novels as documents of particular Scottish "types." The accounts of Davie Gellatley seem paradigmatic for this brand of criticism, since his poetic activities were those already being documented by early anthropologists of popular literature and music, and because discussions of his impairment picked up on cognate discourses in similar field-work in the study of the mind.[56]

The most notable was Robert Chambers, who in his 1825 *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley* collects information on the supposed "originals" of a host of Scott's characters. Chambers had previously found success in detailing the lives of particular, ordinary individuals, of whom some had acquired a reputation, but few were famous. His multi-volume *Traditions of Edinburgh* was local history in the strictest sense, and the fourth volume advertised "sketches of the most remarkable public and eccentric characters who flourished in Edinburgh during the last century." The "Illustrations" delved into popular, local knowledge about Scott's heroes—Robert Macgregor (the "original" of Rob Roy) and Lucy Ashton (the bride of Lammermoor)—but also into anecdotal and often conjectural details about the locals on whom Scott might have based his minor characters. After an overview of "the rustic idiots of Scotland"—who, he notes, are often known for a "cunning" and "sly humour" that often "baffle[s] sounder

judgments"—Chambers turns to the purported original of Davie Gellatley as particularly notable (9).

Chambers identifies Davie with the man known as "Daft Jock Gray of Gilmanscleugh," an individual who was then still living, and whose identity with Davie Chambers asserts to be "past the possibility of doubt" (16). The identification soon became widespread, as Chambers's work became the source texts for many of the cognate texts produced throughout the nineteenth century, and which like his *Illustrations* served the double-task of historical anecdote and literary criticism. In the twentieth century, that project was taken up by W.S. Crockett, in a synthesis of information and anecdote titled *The Scott Originals* (1912). Of the various sources that had by then been suggested, Crockett prefers Chambers's case for Jock Gray, and claims this identification to have been generally held "[t]hroughout the Border country" during Scott's lifetime.[57] Jock Gray of Gilmanscleugh—so named for the farm on which he was raised, in the border village of Ettrick—bore striking similarities to Davie Gellatley, at least as Chambers tells the tale. "The face, mien, and gestures," he writes, "are exactly the same. Jock walks with all that swing of the body and arms, that abstracted air and sauntering pace" (14). Chambers recounts instances of Jock's prodigious memory, his ability to sing nearly any "national" song requested, and above all the disparity between his abilities as a minstrel and his lack of basic social decorum. Echoing Descartes' argument about selective dexterity, Chambers argues that "all Jock's qualifications," especially his "talents of music and mimicry […] ingenous as they be, are nothing but indications of a weak mind" (15).

Yet the way Chambers discusses Jock's social aptitude suggests that, like Scott, he locates a particular value in non-normative modes of social interaction. Chambers gives a lengthy description of Jock's other "remarkable gift" (which, he notes, "the author of Waverley has entirely rejected"), a gift for mimicry, imitation, or mirroring which straddles the line between innocent play and pointed satire. It is hard not to hear an echo of Robert Burns when Chambers notes that, "[l]ike almost all rustic Scottish humorists," Jock "makes ministers and sacred things his chief and favourite objects" of satire (18). Jock's prodigious memory comes into play here, since his mimicry turns on his ability to memorize large portions of sermons on first hearing, and to humourously imitate them later in a way that "never fails to convulse his audience with laughter" (18). But it is also of a piece with his general tendency to violate the norms of social decorum, as when he wanders about the church "up stairs and down stairs," rather than sitting attentively, or hits with a stick those who nod off during the service (20). The behaviors Chambers describes are ludic above all. Yet, especially when they verge on kirk satire, they also suggest a more pointed form of critique. Chambers even depicts Jock as a kind of nonpartisan critic, since "[B]eing himself of no particular sect, he feels not the least delicacy or compunction for any single class of divines—all are indiscriminately familiar to the powers of the universal Jock!" (18). In this respect Chambers's anecdotal supplement to Davie Gellatley's character is actually quite consonant with the novel, especially when we recall Scott's comparison of Davie to the free-talking "licensed fools" of Shakespeare. Like that moment in the *Tales of My Landlord* review, Chambers does not simply equate physiology with a literary mode, but identifies non-normative modes of mindedness with the literary values of irony and satire.

Most interesting for my purposes is the connection Chambers notes between Jock Gray and James Hogg.[58] Chambers alleges that "Jock, by means of his singing powers, was one of the first who circulated the rising fame of his countryman, the Ettrick Shepherd, many of whose early songs he committed to memory, and sung publicly over all the country round." He was particularly fond, according to Chambers, of Hogg's "Oh Shepherd, the weather is misty and changing," and "the well-known lyric of 'Love is like a dizziness,'" both of which performances seem to have become popular, and to have become "the chief means of setting [Jock] up in the trade of a wandering minstrel" (17). Though both Hogg and Jock Gray were natives of Ettrick, the importance of the connection is not simply a matter of geography. It speaks of a broader connection between rural poetry and disability, especially for those poets whose reputations placed them midway between naïve pastoral production and reflexive, anthropological projects of collection. In light of Scottish Enlightenment theories of "barbarism" and stadial development, rural poet-collectors, from Burns to Hogg, came to occupy alternately the personae of "heaven-taught ploughman" or single-minded prodigy. As Chambers puts it, "Where, for instance, was the perfection of musical genius ever found accompanied with a good understanding?" (15).

This *diagnosis* of poetry occasionally emerges from a more traditional, nostalgic pastoralism's alignment of a laboring-class poetics with natural and untutored genius. It can occasionally be detected in accounts of the type of the rural poet by (and about) Burns, Hogg, or Clare. I am thinking, for instance, of Burns's description of his childhood, when the personal traits he highlights are his "retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety."[59] In Burn's case, this

image of the poet is not so much the "heaven-taught plowman," as the dissolute and degraded figure Nigel Leask has linked to the period's interest in "diseases of the will." Working through James Currie's *Life of Burns*, Leask suggests that the common sense philosopher's account of the poet constitutes a "psychopathology of genius."[60] Leask argues that Currie "sought to exorcise a particularly Scottish pathology of mind that he associated with the philosophical associationism and mental *impotence* of Hume's metaphysics" (284). The deterministic, material model of the mind—which Leask identifies with Hume's "way of ideas"—is not simply a philosophical error, but a condition to which individuals can revert if their will fails. And of course, Leask points out, Currie sees this condition as "endemic to Burns's vocation as a poet" (283). Unlike Scott and Chambers, who see cognitive impairment as *mobilizing* poetry, Currie positions impairment as a useless category, one to which poets are particularly susceptible.

So, too, the celebrated "Ettrick Shepherd" was depicted in *Blackwood's* as a kind of rural savant. In an 1821 letter to Scott, Hogg complained of his treatment by John Wilson and his circle in the magazine's popular *Noctes Ambrosianae* series. Hogg refers to "the beastly usage of me by Blackwood, and some new cronies of his," who had reneged on their promise to cease using Hogg's name in the series once he had revoked his consent. "I am again misrepresented to the world," he protests: "I am neither a drunkard, nor an idiot, nor a monster of nature."[61] Here Hogg links poetry and "idiocy" in its pejorative sense, and, as in Currie's complaints about Burns, highlights the close association drunkenness and dissolution had with a more general pathology of mind, which makes the poet seem less than human.[62] The magazine's usage of Hogg is "beastly" both because *Blackwoods* is being inhumanely cruel, and because the

caricatured Ettrick Shepherd comes off (Hogg hints) as a strange phenomenon, a prodigious exception being documented like some rare species or "monster of nature."

The discourse of lyrical impairment, then, makes visible two different outcomes of poetic theory's origins in anthropology. From enlightenment anthropology, which found in poetry a model of the primitive mind and primitive cognition, arose one common Romantic troping of poetry as the mind's native language: what Hazlitt called "the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself."[63] But to that we must add a different approach to cognitive marginality, one that more pathologically associates poetry with geographical and cultural barbarism, and which has closer affinities with the proto-anthropological documentation of folk literature, and with musicology. The association with barbarism frequently migrates from the anthropological project of documenting rural traditions to the psychological characterization of the poet-collectors themselves. It also indicates the path studies of the embodied mind would take in the later 19th century.

By 1912 W.S. Crockett documents Jock Gray, apparently the popularizer of Hogg in Hogg's own Ettrick, with much the same attitude. Crockett's study of Davie Gellatley and Jock Gray hinges on a portrait of the latter by Smellie Watson. This portrait, we ought to assume, represents the man who Chambers had called "handsome," matching Scott's description of Davie in *Waverley*.[64] Crockett's reading is quite different. "A mere glance," he writes, "must deepen the conviction that it was Jock's veritable physiognomy which entered into the immortal portraiture of the fool of Waverley. Jock's is a rather handsome face," he admits, "but symptoms of the weak and stagnant brain are obvious" (37). Crockett draws here on a model of embodied mental life close to the one that I have

been tracing in this chapter. His emphasis on Jock Gray as a visible specimen of impairment marks one endpoint of the logic portrayed in medically-inflected writing about Burns and Hogg. Most importantly, it demonstrates a marked shift from Scott's and Chambers's lively and illustrative type of the poet, to the kind of "monster of nature" into which Hogg felt he, too, had been made.

Chambers's account of Jock Gray is influential on this physiological tradition. And this portrait of Davie soon found common cause with the physiological theories about the human mind he encountered in the Edinburgh Phrenological Society. In fact, Chambers is known to posterity not for his Scott criticism, but for his proto-evolutionary tract *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation. Vestiges* is Chambers's *magnum opus,* a work of amateur or lay science (though it has also been called pseudoscience). It is an attempt to link astronomy with human development, and thus the bring the various branches of science together under one "uniformitarian" aegis. In 1861, Charles Darwin took issue with the Lamarckian residues in Chambers's theory, but conceded that "it has done excellent service in calling in this country attention to the subject, in removing prejudice, and in thus preparing the ground for the reception of analogous views."[65] Among the Edinburgh phrenologists, Chambers would have heard ample evidence to connect lyric idiocy to the functionally differentiated mind. In the *Transactions*, for instance, George Combe's examples include several that resonate with Davie, including "some cretins" who, though "endowed with weak minds, are born with a partic[ul]ar talent for copying paintings, for rhyming, or for music" (32). In fact, the paradigmatic example of these distinct mental faculties is a local, Scottish example of the tuneful idiot. Combe writes, "In Edinburgh, an idiot is seen upon the streets who whistles correctly

Fig. 1, portrait of Jock Gray,
reprinted in W.S. Crockett, *The Scott Originals* (1912)

several tunes, but cannot connect three abstract ideas; while we all know men of powerful intellects, who cannot perform three notes of the gamut" (30). Such selective abilities, which Combe presents as if they would be familiar to anyone, serve as a kind of common sense evidence for an intuitive, proto-modular account of the mind. "When these facts are seen and considered by men of plain sense," he writes, "they are impressed with the conviction that the human mind is endowed with a variety of powers," which vary in degree among individuals (30). This leads to the folk-faith that Combe had identified, against the English unity of the mind, as an item of Scottish common sense: "the belief, on the part of the public, in the existence of distinct faculties of the mind" (31). The impaired songster here is not just evidence for the philosopher of mind, but has a substantial influence on the popular consensus.

Like the most hard-line phrenological materialist, Robert Chambers was convinced that all mental activity could be reduced to such automatic, physiologically instantiated faculties. At its boldest, this is a theory of the continuity of a material human mind with the animal forms from which it developed.[66] Impairment, for Chambers, remains a useful diagnostic tool. In the *Vestiges* he writes, "[W]hen the human brain is congenitally imperfect or diseased, or when it is in the state of infancy, we see in it an approach towards the character of the brains of some of the inferior animals."[67] Unlike Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy," *Vestiges* treats impairment as a window into the automatic basis of human actions, which are usually obscured in higher-functioning individuals. Fascinatingly, Chambers takes the emerging discourse of the functionally-differentiated mind (one where impairment serves as a diagnostic tool to isolate particular faculties) and twists it back to the track of stadial development. As a result, in his attempt to write

together the histories of animal and human life, Chambers reinstates a developmental

narrative into his theory of impairment. The instincts are primarily observable in

children, Chambers writes, or (as he tellingly conflates) "in barbarism or idiocy."

Impaired minds reveal the mechanism at work in human actions, but they do so by

showing the origins of such abilities in pre-human forms. As Chambers puts it, with

reference to G.J. Davey's observations at the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, signs of

"abnormal cerebration" in humans closely resemble "the specific healthy characteristics

of animals lower in the scale of organization" (298). Impairment, that is, may be health

from a different point of view. Chambers's work shows how entangled were the nascent

evolutionary model of the human mind-brain and stadial theory's developmental

narrative of human origins. Chambers draws on and subsequently influences the

discourse that produces the "idiot poet" as a particular symptom of the functionally-

differentiated mind; and that produces moreover the persona of Hogg. It is intriguing that

this line of thinking in Chambers's thought—which ultimately influenced Charles

Darwin—seems to have had its origins in his criticism of Scott.

Notes:

[1] Daniel C. Dennett, *The Intentional Stance: A Theory of Mental Content* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1987) 220.

[2] Walter Scott, *Waverley,* ed. Peter Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 41.

[3] John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) I.1.2.

[4] Alan Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Nancy Yousef, *Isolated Cases: The Anxieties of Autonomy in Enlightenment Philosophy and Romantic Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[5] On the Romantic lyric's entanglements with an earlier, balladic history see especially Steven Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) and Maureen N. McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[6] In contrast, Celeste Langan suggests that if Davie is "a kind of anachronism," he shows how Scott's "farewell to poetry, a farewell supposedly announced with the publication of Waverley, need not be complete" ("'The Poetry of Pure Memory': Teaching Scott's Novels in the Context of Romanticism," *Approaches to Teaching Scott's Waverley Novels,* eds. Ian Duncan and Evan Gottlieb [New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009] 70).

[7] Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 124.

[8] See especially Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense,* ed. Derek R. Brookes (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). On Reid, see chapter one, above.

[9] *Waverley* 320. Scott here paraphrases the often-repeated and varied line of "The Idiot Boy," which first appears in line 11 of Wordsworth's poem ("The Idiot Boy," *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800,* eds. James Butler and Karen Green [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993] 91-104).

[10] Coleridge complained that the poem offered "disgusting images of *ordinary, morbid idiocy,*" which when coupled with the "folly of the mother" made the poem seem "a laughable burlesque on the blindness of anile dotage" (Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,*

eds. J. Engell and W.J. Bate, volume 7 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983] 2:48). In response to John Wilson's similar complaint, Wordsworth asserted that "The Boy whom I had in my mind was, by no means disgusting in his appearance quite the contrary and I have known several with imperfect faculties who are handsome in their persons and features" (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, the Early Years 1878-1805,* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd. ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967] 357.

[11] Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment* 39-40.

[12] For detailed and sensitive discussions of the eighteenth century's "feral children," see Harlan Lane, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976) and Nancy Yousef, *Isolated Cases*. Wordsworth himself identifies the pleasure the poem gave him with a return to "human nature, as it has been [and eve]r will be." The goal is for readers, by "stripping our own hearts naked," can imaginatively sympathize with those "who lead the simplest lives most according to nature" (*Letters, The Early Years* 355).

[13] See *Lyrical Ballads* 745.

[14] Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment* 68.

[15] Alan Richardson seconds that opinion when he notes that Johnny has "a knack for figurative language" (*British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001] 168).

[16] The articulation of this "counter-enlightenment" tradition is usually associated with Isaiah Berlin (see Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000]). For a recent engagement with this terrain see Christian Thorne, *The Dialectic of Counter-Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[17] Johann Gottfried Herder and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Origin of Language: Two Essays*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) 117.

[18] The most important three are the "theory" theory (which holds that we make theoretical inferences about other minds); the modularity theory (which looks to the mind as a set of innate, modular mechanisms, one of which drives mindreading tasks); and the simulation theory (which holds that we pretend, or imagine what it's like to be that other person).

[19] As Nancy Yousef argues, such turns to origins risk effacing the social components of cognition, in favor of a uniform development of rational thought that arose from first-person sensation. See *Isolated Cases*.

[20] See especially Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1995). Baron-Cohen's work has been influential for theories of *normal* mental functioning, but he has also been quite influential in the study of autism-spectrum disorder itself.

[21] On this "false belief" task, see the Introduction, above.

[22] Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* 164.

[23] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 1:119-20.

[24] While dictating the *Biographia*, Coleridge was attempting to persuade Byron to recommend his collected poems to a more lucrative publisher than he could manage on his own. For a discussion of the fawning letters Coleridge wrote to Byron during the summer of 1815, see Earl Leslie Griggs, "Coleridge and Byron," *PMLA* 45.4 (December 1930): 1085-97.

[25] *Selected Works of William Hazlitt,* ed. Duncan Wu (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) 63. On Hazlitt, see chapter four, below.

[26] Locke, *Essay* 154-5.

[27] Coleridge, *Shorter Works and Fragments,* eds. H.J. Jackson and J.R. de J. Jackson. Volume 11 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 2:1136.

[28] *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 1:117.

[29] See Yousef, *Isolated Cases.*

[30] Paul Hamilton, *Metaromanticism: Aesthetics, Literature, Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) 121.

[31] In fact, there is a direct line of influence between William Browne's retort to Charles Bell's *Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression*, delivered in Edinburgh in 1826, and Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). It was Browne, in fact, who proposed Darwin as a member of the Plinian Society.

[32] See Darwin's M and N notebooks, known as the notebooks on man, mind, and materialism (*Metaphysics, Materialism, and the Evolution of Mind: The Early Writings of Charles Darwin*, ed. Paul H. Barrett [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974]).

[33] George Combe et al., *Transactions of the Phrenological Society* (Edinburgh: John Anderson, 1824) 29.

[34] It is not clear where Hume falls in Combe's primarily polemical opposition of national metaphysical trends.

[35] Of course, Combe thinks that Reid does this somewhat inadvertently. In fact, he notes, Reid himself remains too committed to armchair philosophy, and an introspective method of investigation, to say much about practical matters. Reid's system is "merely intellectual rather than telling us anything practical about, say, particular people, in the eyes of "courts of law" (*Transactions* 51). Combe is surely thinking here of phrenology's most often caricatured aspect, the feeling of bumps on the skull, as well as the still more dubious ramifications for the legal system.

[36] *Transactions* 38

[37] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow* 136.

[38] *Waverley* 17. For this sense of "narrative," see Dryden's and Pope's uses cited in the OED. Both instances, like Scott's, make narrativity a trait of those advanced in years. In novels this had often been a class marker, as in the gothic servants of Walpole or Radcliffe, who frustrate main characters with their plodding, roundabout method of getting to the facts.

[39] On Hume's histories and sentimental literature see especially Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[40] Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,* trans. G. Gregory (London: Joseph Johnson, 1787) 39.

[41] Burd Ellen is a disaffected mother who, when the young Tamlane asks her to rock her child, replies bitterly before Tamlane goes to sea. The first line locates her sitting "in her bower window." See James Francis Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Mineola: Dover, 2003).

[42] Southey, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, 2nd. ed, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1809) 90.

[43] Chambers, *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley*, 2[nd]ed. (Edinburgh: John Anderson, Jun., 1825) 16.

[44] See John O. Hayden, *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1970) 67-74, 70.

[45] *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge, (London: William Pickering, 1836) 2:197.

[46] For the Aeneid (and epic more generally) in Jacobite code, see Murray Pittock, "James Macpherson and Jacobite Code," in *Gaelic to Romantic: Ossianic Translations*, eds. Fiona J. Stafford and Howard Gaskill (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998).

[47] Langan, "The Poetry of Pure Memory" 75, 73.

[48] The brute force of memory had always been crucial for oral poetics, but it became particularly important for Jacobite song that found its purpose in group settings rather than private reading, and also in that manner kept out of the way of the law. See Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

[49] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[50] It is not clear, of course, that Peter, or any of the other eighteenth-century "wild children" or "idiots," bear diagnosis quite as easily as Vermeule suggests (i.e. that Peter is "not a wild child raised by bears" but "an autistic boy who suffered abuse in his family" [198]). Such an equation of idiocy with autism risks a verbal and a diagnostic slippage between "autism" in particular and "neurological deficits" in general. As Vermeule puts it, "Mind blindness is at once a specific neurological condition and a deep genre of social information that people can adapt to social purposes of their own" (197). This is a risky business, and risks reducing Autism Spectrum Disorder to a metaphor.

[51] "Shoegazing," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <www.oed.com>, accessed 5 December 2010.

[52] *Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958) 2:387.

[53] See Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

[54] *Critical Heritage* 438.

[55] See "The Old Cumberland Beggar," in *Lyrical Ballads* 28-34. In fact, in his response to Wilson's complaints about "The Idiot Boy," Wordsworth gestures toward a similar tradition, though he looks not geographically toward Scotland, but economically toward the poor. "Persons in the lower classes of society," he writes, lack the kind of privileged disgust that Wilson expresses. "[I]f an Idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken car[e of] and cannot be boarded out, as it would be by gentlefolks, or sent [to a] public or private receptacle for such unfortunate beings." Wordsworth hedges, though, and suggests that this might not be a natural sympathy, but an acquired tolerance, since the poor, "seeing frequently among their neighbors such objects, easily [forget] what[ever] there is of natural disgust about them" (*Letters, Early Years* 356).

[56] Shortly after reading *Waverley* in 1814, for example, Morritt of Rokeby mentioned to Scott that he took Davie to be "a transcript of William Rose's motley follower, commonly yclept Caliban." He was was one of the first to read the novel, and with Erskine and Lockhart was one of the only to know firsthand, and from the very beginning, that Scott was the author. Quoted in John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1887) 2:545.

[57] William Shillinglaw Crockett, *The Scott Originals: An Account of Notables and Worthies, the Originals of Characters in the Waverley Novels* (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1912) 34.

[58] There is no evidence that Hogg knew of Jock Gray, and no apparent connection between Jock and Hogg's own narrative "John Gray O' Middleholm" (who, incidentally, is introduced as a man "of little wit, some cunning, and inexhaustible good nature"). See Hogg, *Winter Evening Tales, Collected among the Cottagers in the South of Scotland,* vol. 1, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1821) 303.

[59] *The Works of Robert Burns,* Eds. James Hogg and William Motherwell, 5 vols. (Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton, 1835) 4:21-2.

[60] Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) 283.

[61] *Works of the Ettrick Shepherd,* ed. Thomas Thomson (London: Blackie and Son, 1874) xlix. See also Hogg's poem "Sandy Tod," about an encounter with an impaired boy while staying in Midlothian, which Karl Miller compares to "The Idiot Boy" ("Introduction" to Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner,* ed. Karl Miller [New York: Penguin Books, 2006]).

[62] Indeed, "idiot" in its nonspecific, perjorative sense is something of a keyword in the *Noctes*. See John Wilson, et al., *Noctes Ambrosianae* (New York: Redfield, 1854).

[63] *Selected Works of William Hazlitt,* ed. Duncan Wu (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) 2:165.

[64] Chambers, *Illustrations* 14. For Scott's description of Davie, see *Waverley* 41. Wordsworth, too, insisted on this, and wrote in response to Wilson's disgust that "The Boy whom I had in my mind was, by no means disgusting in his appearance quite the contrary and I have known several with imperfect faculties who are handsome in their persons and features." (Wordsworth, *Letters, Early Years* 357).

[65] Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life,* 3rd ed., (London: John Murray, 1861) xvi. While *Vestiges* was first published in 1844, all references are to what Darwin called the

"tenth and much improved edition" of 1853 (*Origin* xv). See *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,* 10th. ed. (London: John Churchill, 1853).

[66]In *Vestiges* Chambers writes, "The few gleams of reason, then, which we see in the lower animals, are precisely analogous to such a development of the fore-arm as we find in the paddle of the whale. Causality, comparison, and other of the nobler faculties, are in them[selves] *rudimental*" (298).

[67] Chambers, *Vestiges* 297-8.

Chapter 3

Distributed Thinking in the Wordsworth Circle

Romantic-era theory conceives the lyric in two ways. On the one hand, lyrical utterance is increasingly associated with a primal mode of cognition, and for that reason delivered effusions of inner, private mental life. At the same time, poetry was a property of *collective* identity. As scholars like Maureen McLane and Steve Newman have begun to show, Romantic lyric practice emerged from a poetical field saturated with ballads, and was attuned both to oral poetry's narrative affiliations and to "the communal orientation intimated by the ballad's ontology as song."[1] Those two assertions—that the lyric was the domain of the individual mind, and that it bespoke first-person life's entanglement with *other* minds—were frequently made at the same time. J.G. Herder, for instance, theorized the "spirit" of poetry both as the echo of the individual sensorium (the "firstborn child of sensibility") and as a culture's whole way of thinking.[2] Even as the lyric became affiliated with philosophical and scientific approaches to the individual mind, lyric forms remained indebted to competing, third-person, or outwardly-directed models of mindedness.

In chapters one and two, I showed how early Romantic poetics sought to integrate those two impulses—toward interiority and toward *other* minds—first by attempting to locate mindedness in the material world, and then by thinking about the matter underlying cognition, both in its basis in the brain, and in cultural technologies. One of the premises of the Romantic-era turn to traditional literature like ballads was that some of the most important parts of a person's "inner" mental life came from outside, whether

from sympathetic bonds with other minds, the socially-constituted and conventional background of private mental life, or the brute matter of poetic tradition. This chapter continues that focus on a technological poetics. The Wordsworth circle, I propose, theorized and practiced the lyric as a technology that supplemented, augmented, or "extended" the mind into the world of things.

Recently, critics have had a lot to say about the livelihood of "things," whether in terms of the role of objects in human life, or the life that things have apart from their human use value. For some, things have taken on a life of their own under the rubric of "thing theory," which often gets its critical traction from highlighting the importance of particular objects or commodities in literature and culture.[3] Others, working from a Heideggerian tradition, emphasize that things have a life of their own that exceeds their apprehension and use by humans. It is this latter turn to the world of things that has had the most to say about Wordsworth. Adam Potkay, for instance, reads Wordsworth's poetry as an engagement with "the determining system of things," a sum which is "not incompatible with human […] agency, but neither is it fully answerable to it."[4] A similar understanding of Wordsworth's theoretical sophistication respecting things underwrites his perceived affinities with "deep ecology" or with "object-oriented" approaches to the environment, which seek to integrate human life into a broader, nonhuman (or, occasionally, "posthuman") world of things.[5] These shifts to a grammar of "things" have involved the dispersal of agency across a wider field, as in Jane Bennett's appeal to Darwin, who suggested that the "small agencies" of worms needed to be accounted for, just as much as human agency, in a history of civilization.[6]

This chapter argues that Wordsworthian poetics sought a different way to spread the mind into the environment. The first section turns to one lyrical ballad—Wordsworth's "Lines Written in Early Spring"—as a case study in the environmental ambitions of the *Lyrical Ballads* project. It then proposes that the "extended mind thesis"—the claim that thinking is not an activity confined to the head, but is in many cases supported by and distributed across object networks in the environment—offers an alternative way to understand that project.[7] The extended mind thesis issues a challenge to a model increasingly common in popular science: a model in which the mind simply *is* the individual brain, and can be defined in terms of brain regions or neurological zones. If the extended mind thesis is right, though, explaining cognition is not a task that can be left to neuroimaging, but requires a "situated" attention to technological, linguistic and cultural artifacts. The thesis also matters in a specific way for literary history, since I shall argue that it articulates a position that was emerging in Romantic-era poetic theory.

Many Romantic writers—Wordsworth and Coleridge in particular—resisted contemporaneous attempts to reduce the mind to the brain, while still seeking to situate cognition bodily and environmentally. And, perhaps more importantly, that focus on embodied cognition was continuous with the way they envisioned the role of literature. Thinking of language as a technology that supplemented or in some cases even constituted mental states informed the Wordsworth circle's poetics at various stages. In the theoretical debate between William Wordsworth and Coleridge, it drove the divergence in their views of the nature and aims of poetry. And as a practical matter, it structured the *Lyrical Ballads* as a set of collaborations across close affective bonds. In

this regard, the "extended mind" offers an inroad into the Romantic-era interest in understanding human life as participating in an environment populated by other minds.

Pleasant Thoughts, Etc.

"Lines Written in Early Spring" stages the poetic encounter with the environment as an encounter with other minds. The first portion of the poem describes that encounter in the form of a confession of poetic faith:

> I heard a thousand blended notes,
>
> While in a grove I sate reclined,
>
> In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
>
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
>
>
> To her fair works did nature link
>
> The human soul that through me ran;
>
> And much it griev'd my heart to think
>
> What man has made of man.
>
>
> Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
>
> The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes;
>
> And 'tis my faith that every flower
>
> Enjoys the air it breathes.[8]

The poem describes a "nature" in which the poet participates in the life of natural objects, and which even as it "link[s] the human soul" to those "fair works," leads as a matter of course to a sense of humanity's difference and alienation from that object world. The poem's attempted remedy—the playful confession of faith in which the first half of the poem culminates—is to assert that the environment is *actually* minded. Whatever social amelioration the poem proposes will have to begin not with the relationships among people, but with the relationship between minds and objects.

Taken seriously, the claim "that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes" is a claim for the philosophical position known as panpsychism, which holds that mindedness is not only a property of highly organized systems (like people), but is a property of all matter.[9] Wordsworth knew of that proposition from various sources, including Spinoza's monistic account of mind and matter. Most directly, "Early Spring" draws on Erasmus Darwin's hypothesis that plants "are furnished with a common sensorium belonging to each bud."[10] Darwin's treatises as well as his poetry served as an important point of reference for the scandalous proposition that the mind was not a distinct substance but a property of bodies.[11] And there is a hint in "Early Spring," too, of David Hartley's necessitarian philosophy that correlated the mind with physical "vibrations," and which as a result depicted mindedness as a group activity, a physical system of interacting bodies that moved inexorably toward its culmination in "pure pleasure."[12] This is one way to describe the philosophical ambitions of the culture of Sensibility, which Jerome McGann (writing on James Macpherson's Ossian poems) describes as an orientation toward the environment that frames it as "a complex affective system."[13] On this orientation, private mental life is not actually private, but shows itself to be entangled

with a background of feeling that is impersonal, external, and contagious. The speaker of

"Lines Written in Early Spring" weds that recognition to the poetic pursuit of a vital

nature. Once mindedness becomes a property of physical systems, in other words, it

ceases to be name for what separates human life from the natural world, and starts to

appear as the medium or environment in which people live and breathe.

Ultimately, though, the poem undercuts that philosophical position. If the first

half of the poem asserts such a faith, the second half emphasizes that it is an item of faith

precisely because it is so uncertain:

> The birds around me hopp'd and play'd:
>
> Their thoughts I cannot measure,
>
> But the least motion which they made,
>
> It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.
>
>
> 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.
>
>
> If I these thoughts may not prevent,
>
> If such be of my creed the plan,
>
> Have I not reason to lament
>
> What man has made of man? (13-24)

This second half of the poem re-describes the encounter with nature as an act of projection, an act which is both susceptible to the challenges of philosophical skepticism, and which makes the speaker appear to be grasping at straws. The vital encounter the poem initially hypothesizes gives way to the language of interpretation and projection. The thoughts of birds cannot be measured, but only guessed at and judged according to what they "seemed" to indicate. The next stanza's "budding twigs" prompt an interpretive act that the poem puts ambiguously: the phrasing that the speaker "must think, do all I can" that the flora in question had pleasure suggests alternately that he *cannot help* but recognize a blatantly obvious affect, no matter how hard he might try; and that he must do precisely that—must 'think," must in fact do all he can, if he is really to impute something like mindedness to twigs bouncing in the wind, and to stake social amelioration upon a poeticized view of nature.

In short, a "creed" the poet "may not prevent," however hard he tries, still has the ring of human error and projection about it.[14] "Early Spring" dramatizes a set of tendencies to personify, to project intentions onto objects, and to translate motions into affects: in short, the habit of attribution (or over-attribution) that Hume made the ground of social life, but which Ruskin denigrated as the pathetic fallacy. What the poem ultimately captures, then, is a wish, a confession of faith that the poetical habit of projection might not lead us astray, but would instead find substantiation in the hypothesis emerging in natural philosophy, that minds interact physically in ways that do not need to be interpreted, but are simply self-evident. Mindedness would not consist of difficult encounters, and would not alienate humanity from nature, but could be reconceived as an ecology.

If that mental ecology remains a difficult proposition, the poem's immediate context offers a different one: an ecology of collaboration. William wrote the poem in April of 1798. About a year later, the following spring, Dorothy returned to it in her *Grasmere Journal*:

> The air & the lake were still—one cottage light in the vale, had so much of day left that I could distinguish objects, the woods trees & houses. Two or three different kinds of Birds sang at intervals on the opposite shore. I sate till I could hardly drag myself away I grew so sad. 'When pleasant thoughts &c—'[15]

There is a very different kind of intermentality at work in this passage than in the poem it quotes. The poem serves as a convenient marker for a particular mood that strikes Dorothy, one recorded as "Lines Written in Early Spring." While it is hardly surprising as a claim that poems give their readers words, thoughts, and feelings that they can apply to their own lives, Dorothy's quotations of William's poems bring more to light than her quotations of Shakespeare. When she quotes "Early Spring" she is quoting from a body of unpublished texts that emerged out of a sustained pattern of collaboration. Dorothy may be thinking with William's words, but, as scholarship of the Grasmere and Alfoxden journals has made abundantly clear, *he* thought and composed with *her* words. Elizabeth Fay has gone so far as to reframe the relationship between the two as an act of literary symbiosis, in which both have a hand in performing the persona that is "Wordsworthian poetics."[16] That authorial relationship—which often extended to Coleridge as well—involved entangled practices of memory, conversation, journal writing, quotation, and

versification. Moments like the quotation of "pleasant thoughts &c" thus frame writing and feeling alike as mental acts that take place continuously in an interpersonal medium.

The next day's entry underscores that intermentality's mundaneness. With disappointment at not hearing from William that day, Dorothy writes: "I had a bad head-ach—went to bed after dinner, & lay till after 5—not well after tea. I worked in the garden, but did not walk further. A delightful evening before the sun set but afterwards it grew colder. Mended stockings &c." (5). The concluding gesture mimics the prior entry's concluding quotation sonically and graphically, and plays on the equivalence between the "&c" of quoted song (as in the printing of a ballad refrain) and the "&c" of enumerating trivialities. This other echo of "Early Spring," in the logging of household economy, raises the possibility of a more thoroughly ordinary type of intermental environment, one illuminated by the collaborative practice of the *Lyrical Ballads*: a pattern of private thinking entangled with a group practice, or as Susan Levin has put it, "a family matter, a community product."[17] That practice is founded on intersubjective borrowings, and such borrowings are as routine as the mending of stockings.

Interestingly, there might be more than a metaphor at work when Levin goes on to describe that project as "a communal act of perception" (34). When the journal quotes "Early Spring," it literalizes the inter-mental concern that poem performs, and its pursuit of a mentalistic environment, by framing poetry as a shared or distributed cognitive act. As should already be clear, it is a different kind of intermentality from the faux-panpsychism of "Early Spring." To understand how the two are related, I turn now to one recent theory that helps highlight what the two have in common. The "extended mind"

thesis helps explain why poetic panpsychism and poetic collaboration raise some of the same conceptual problems.

The Extended Mind

An often cited shorthand for the Wordsworths' collaboration is William's claim about Dorothy in "The Sparrow's Nest," in which he writes, "she gave me eyes, she gave me ears."[18] In his study of multiple authorship, Jack Stillinger quips that Wordsworth "should have added that she gave him words, phrases, and images as well."[19] For those philosophers who accept what has come to be known as the "extended mind" thesis, however, that might just be another way to describe the same thing: another person's words, phrases, and images, that is, might be closer than previously imagined to embodied elements of cognition like eyes and ears.

Like "Lines Written in Early spring," the "extended mind thesis" claims that minds are not confined to inner life, but extend out into the world. However, rather than insisting, like panpsychists, that mindedness is a property of every atom, philosophers like Andy Clark and David Chalmers are more concerned with how human cognition might rely upon its environment. The thesis, in its simplest form, is one about the mind's location. Although the mind depends most crucially upon the brain, many cognitive acts also depend on a number of other physical systems, many of which are not part of the individual organism but parts of the local environment. Examples of such "environmental supports" include using pen and paper to perform complex mathematics, or the use of various tools, from notebooks to portable electronic devices, as aids to memory. When I

use a calculator, I employ a technological device in order to decrease the cognitive load on my own "in-house' hardware.

   To show how this works, Clark and Chalmers offer a thought experiment involving two people, Inga and Otto, who both want to go to the Museum of Modern Art. Inga thinks hard, and eventually manages to retrieve from her long-term memory that the museum is on fifty-third street. Otto, whose memory is impaired, has that information stored in a notebook. When he wants to know where the museum is located, he looks it up in his notebook. While Inga consults an embodied memory, and Otto consults written information, the two are engaging in homologous cognitive processes. Invoking Occam's razor, Clark and Chalmers assert that the simplest explanation of Otto's behavior would be that his *memories* are actually located in the notebook, which has taken the role ordinarily served by brain-based memory. Otto's mode of retrieving information involves more rustling of paper than Inga's, but it is functionally identical. For that reason, it should be considered the same mental act—remembering—which just happens to occur across a more widely dispersed physical network than usual. Otto is a limit case, but such acts of extended thinking are far more common and more everyday than Otto's special case—especially when language is considered as a technology analogous to a notebook or a calculator. Language has frequently been cited as the paradigmatic technology of thought, one that seems to have been coupled with human cognitive architecture from a very early stage.[20] If thinking increasingly complex concepts has entailed a higher cognitive load, "the advent of language has allowed us to spread this burden into the world. Language, thus construed, is not a mirror of our inner states but a complement to

them. It serves as a tool whose role is to extend cognition in ways that on-board devices cannot."[21]

The main target of this argument is a model of the inner, brain-bound mind that emerged as a result of the "cognitive revolutions" of the mid-to-late twentieth century. The first cognitive revolution was primarily a challenge to behaviorism, on the grounds that (counter the insistence of B.F. Skinner) a description of human action needed to have reference to internal states in the first place. The prevailing paradigm of the first cognitive revolution was computationalism, in which the mind was conceived as software running on the hardware of the brain. For computationalists, environmental factors may determine the "input" of a computation, but cognition only happens internally, when the brain processes that information. The second cognitive revolution, by contrast, turned from this type of symbolic processing or "language of thought" toward the unconscious, embodied processes that underlie cognition. Those structures are often described strictly in terms of mechanisms in the brain (a model visualized in its most exaggerated form by the popular press's obsession with neuroimaging, and the impulse to identify the mind as a set of brain regions), although proponents of "embodied cognition" also identify other parts of the body as essential to the way people perform cognitive acts like acquiring concepts or make decisions.[22] If Clark and Chalmers are right, though, computationalism, cognitive neuroscience, and embodied cognitivism are all insufficient, since they restrict mental processes to those things that happen within the closed bodily system. The move from behaviorism to cognitivism may have had the salutary effect of rescuing inner mental states, and reminding us that any thorough theory of human behavior should

account for them. But that vindication of inner life turned mental actors into discrete, self-contained systems.

If Clark and Chalmers are right, in other words, we have to change our sense of what a mind is. Individual minds, on their argument, do not just receive information from the physical and social environment; they are *constituted* by those objects, and exist in shared mental spaces, supported by linguistic and cultural artifacts. In fact, this is one of the attractions of the extended mind thesis for scholars of literature and culture. It emphasizes the difficulty of restricting a definition of the mind to its biological core, and, while remaining resolutely physicalist, reminds us that defining the mind accurately requires that we extend its definition to include cultural artifacts like language, which Clark describes as "a form of mind-transforming scaffolding."[23] Because engagements with these kinds of technology are so frequent and so central, Clark and Chalmers argue, much of what we call thinking actually happens outside the head, in the physical and cultural world. Thus, they write, "once the hegemony of skin and skull is usurped, we may be able to see ourselves more truly as creatures of the world" (232).

Clark and Chalmers's exuberance about becoming "creatures of the world" translates oddly in some ways to the Romantic project, especially as regards the recent emphasis on Romantic ecology. The extended mind thesis says little about objects in themselves, but much about how those objects might open themselves up as sites for *human* mindedness. It might therefore be objected, for instance, that extending the mind makes humans "creatures of the world" only in the same way that hydraulic fracturing (or other such appropriations) make us creatures of the environment. Indeed, Clark and Chalmers describe cognitive extension as a habit of "parasitizing the local

environment."[24] It is about—to quote "Early Spring" again—"what man has made *of* man," those absorptions or appropriations of the environment to which even Wordsworth's most ecologically-aimed poetry often remains susceptible. And that difference should remain important for critics who correlate Wordsworth's epistemological convictions with his ecological stance. The conceptual problem at stake in "extended mind" theory does not analogize easily with ecological concerns.

The extended mind thesis is helpful, though, within a different conceptual terrain, one about the mind's ontology, about how minds subsist in the physical world. Do they only inhere in brains, or do they extend out into the artifacts of culture? The authors' excitement makes sense, then, within philosophy of mind's longstanding worry about sequestering mind and world, a drawing of boundaries that is often seen as a vestige of Cartesian dualism. Philosophy of mind has been exorcising this particular specter for decades, from Gilbert Ryle's 1949 dismissal of inner mental life as "the ghost in the machine" to the cognitive sciences' mapping of mental acts onto bodily processes.[25] When they aspire to make us "creatures of the world," Clark and Chalmers take their inspiration from that same ongoing effort to erode the boundaries between inner thoughts and outer objects. In some senses, then, their exuberance resembles Thomas Reid's in his argument with David Hume, when he writes that basic human actions presuppose a reliable engagement with the external world, or even "society with other intelligent beings."[26] It also resembles Wordsworth's ambition in the prospectus to *The Recluse*, where he declares it his song's intention to show

> How exquisitely the individual Mind
>
> (And the progressive powers perhaps no less

> Of the whole species) to the external World
>
> Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
>
> Theme this but little heard of among Men,
>
> The external World is fitted to the Mind.[27]

Like those earlier, Romantic attempts to rid philosophy of its dualistic baggage, the extended mind thesis establishes a constitutive link between mental acts and the objects they encounter and employ.

One way of circumventing skepticism is to assert the self-evidence of other minds, as the speaker attempts to do in "Early Spring." Often, that self-evidence was associated with a way of seeing the world that has been lost, overshadowed or overlooked, and which it was poetry's task to recover. The problem with assigning poetry that challenge is that it has a history of affiliation with animistic projection. "Lines Written in Early Spring" toys with ways to redeem that logic of projection, namely by importing scientific speculation: it might not simply be a matter of human error to think of the landscape as joyful; there might actually *be* pleasure there. But as "Early Spring" demonstrates, it is hard to establish that pleasure as a fact about natural objects, except by a logic of poetic "faith" that looks suspiciously like projection. If, however, the human mind's dependence upon its environment is also the way that minds linked up to one another, that would circumvent the question of whether rocks and stones and trees need to be considered as minds, and would separate the problem of getting minds out into the

world into two distinct problems. One question is whether sentience or "phenomenal consciousness" is a property of all matter. That is the question that might be paraphrased "Do flowers enjoy the air they breathe?" A different question is whether the individual, human mind is inner and separate from the external world, or a part of it.

As an answer to Hume, that latter kind of extended thinking would be especially helpful insofar as it opens onto *socially* extended thinking, and thus helps establish the contact points at which minds not only recognize one another but inhabit shared physical spaces. Clark and Chalmers suggest as much when they move from extended cognition (relying regularly upon a notebook) to "socially extended cognition": relying regularly upon another person, such that my mental states might be "partly constituted by the states of other thinkers" (232). Whether cognition should be considered socially extended hinges on the same criteria as Otto's notebook: are my beliefs, desires, or essential pieces of information consistently offloaded onto another person? Clark and Chalmers's example here is someone who trusts his favorite waiter to remember his past preferences and make good recommendations based on them. To the extent that this patron relies upon the waiter, it may be entirely appropriate to identify some of his beliefs as located externally in another person. The same goes for highly interdependent couples, or close working relationships that bring one into a "coupled system" with "one's secretary, one's accountant, or one's collaborator" (231-2).

In that case, there is no reason, in principle, why we could not replace Otto with William Wordsworth, and Otto's notebook with the *Grasmere Journal*. It has long been established that William used Dorothy's journal to aid his own memory. When

Wordsworth sought to capture an experience—of daffodils, or an encounter with beggars—he supplemented his failures of memory with Dorothy's written record of those experiences. Like Otto with his notebook, he consistently considered Dorothy's prose a sufficient stand-in for his own memory. Whether the journal offered reliable transcripts of shared experiences and feelings is not quite what is at issue, nor does it matter much whether William was borrowing from descriptions of scenes he had actually seen (like the host of daffodils), or those from which he had been absent (like the encounter with the "very tall woman" that became the poem "Beggars").[28] The journals do not just record or reference a shared mental life; they form a part of a causal network for communal thinking, a cognitive act distributed interpersonally and textually, that draws on both internal and external repositories of memory.

Here, too, literary scholars have long had available a language for the way that poetry renders porous the boundaries of private mental life: the language of "Sensibility." Dorothy Worsdworth's use of William's words matches a longstanding logic of how feeling travels: as Adela Pinch writes of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, Romantic-era literature dramatizes as a fact about mental life that "there is no falling out of quotation."[29] One of the insights of the culture of sensibility was its depiction of mental states as freely circulating elements of the environment that imperceptibly influenced, constrained, or bled into private mental life. Yet the logic of sensibility does not quite escape from the constraints of skeptical projectivism, and that fact is underscored by Pinch's tracing of the logic of external emotions back to Hume:

On the one hand, [Hume's *Treatise*] asserts that feelings are individual, and that philosophy itself as well as social and aesthetic experience depends on individuals who can rely on the individual authenticity of their own emotional responsiveness. On the other hand, it also contends that feelings are transsubjective entities that pass between persons; that our feelings are always really someone else's; that it is passion that allows us to be persons, rather than the other way around. (19)

What I have been describing as a Romantic problem with the distributed mind—the simultaneous desire to do justice to the first person character of experience, and to its intersubjectivity—is a problem that Hume already articulates. And it is one that he bequeaths to his inheritors, in particular to a culture of sensibility for which the medium of affective transfer is sympathy.[30]

As a result, one of the attractions of the extended mind thesis is that it is a theory not only of where individual minds get their information, but of where those minds are located, and what they are made of. That is the aspect of Romantic anti-skepticism that the extended mind hypothesis helps illuminate. It is one thing to say that my mind is indebted to or germinates from external passion. In that case the mind would still be an inner sensorium that processes passions, whether those passions are mediated as vibrational pattern, a facial expression, or cluster of words. It is another proposition entirely to say that my mind is *distributed across* a network of media, and is thus located in the brain and nerves, but also in other minds and in verbal technologies. The Wordsworth circle did, at times, theorize poetry this way—as an act of interpersonal or extended thinking. At the root of that theory is a conversation about language (and poetry

as the "best part of language") in which the private mind's dependence upon external cognitive aids became central.

Poetics, Extended

It is Coleridge who comes closest to articulating the extended mind thesis in its current form, in terms of inner hardware and outer linguistic technologies forming an extended, interpersonal system. In an 1801 letter to Josiah Wedgewood, Coleridge turns to the errors which Locke and his followers have introduced into philosophy. He defends "mak[ing] ourselves accurately acquainted with the opinions of those who have gone before us" as a process of offloading cognitive labor. He writes:

> "Life is short, & Knowledge infinite; & it is well therefore that powerful and thinking minds should know exactly where to set out from, & so lose no time in superfluous Discoveries of Truths long before discovered. That periodical Forgetfulness, which would be a shocking Disease in the mind of an Individual relatively to its own Discoveries, must be pernicious in the Species. ~~I have faith~~ For I would believe there is more than a metaphor in the affirmation, that the whole human Species from Adam to Bonaparte, from China to Peru, may be considered as one Individual Mind.[31]

This passage is striking for a number of reasons, not least Coleridge's analogy between the "periodical forgetfulness" of new philosophical schools (which overlook the insights of their forebears and set out on their own crooked paths) and the impairment of memory in an individual mind. In fact, he claims that there is "more than a metaphor" here. Individual philosophers have access to a wider, textually distributed thought process.

They can offload their personal mental labor onto the texts and arguments of the past. Losing or ignoring those texts and arguments would *actually* represent a loss of memory, insofar as it would mean losing an important cognitive apparatus. We need "lose no time" working out the foundations of a philosophical problem, since the process can be accelerated with the help of textual artifacts that solve preliminary problems in much the same way that a calculator speeds up the solution of a complex equation. Like Otto losing his notebook, the philosopher who loses the texts and arguments of the past loses the external repository of valuable (here, collective) memory.

The passage is striking, too, for its resonance with the project of "Lines Written in Early Spring." Like the speaker's confession of faith that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes," Coleridge here confesses his faith in an extravagant model of shared mindedness. The passage invokes the Unitarian language of the "one life" in which Coleridge was still immersed, and which structured the pantheist or panpsychist sentiments expressed in "Early Spring" (in which "Nature link[s] / the human soul" to a minded nature), or Coleridge's own poem "Religious Musings," which names "God / Diffus'd thro' all" the universe "one Mind, one omnipresent Mind."[32] But Coleridge's verbal emendation—from "I have faith" to "I would believe"—moves from an enthusiastic confession of unprovable faith to a more modest, practical proposal for how minds might actually meet, or merge.

Coleridge would officially renounce Unitarianism within a few years' time, and the letter to Wedgewood gives an inkling of how the "one mind" argument would adapt in the more orthodox context of his later writing. The implied narrative of philosophical progress relies on specific moments of textually embedded thinking, to help individual

thinkers execute complex conceptual moves. In that respect—its foregrounding of specific cognitive aids—this model of philosophical progress resembles the model of linguistic change that Coleridge describes with his coinage "desynonymization": that language, as a tool for thinking, becomes better and more precise over time. While Coleridge is most immediately justifying his own distinction of "imagination" from "fancy," he describes that linguistic innovation on his part as something that would eventually take root in common usage. In fact, he relates it to "an instinct of growth" he sees "in all societies" that operates via language: "a certain collective, unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize those words originally of the same meaning."[33] Framing linguistic change this way implies that thinking clearly depends upon having adequate terms. Just as for stadial philosophers of cultural development societies move from hunting with spears to farming with plows, so for Coleridge knowledge progresses by improving the tools people use to think.

Poetic theory took up that the question of linguistic improvement, and its relationship to the differential relationship of minds across cultural boundaries, in the prolonged exchange that took place between Wordsworth's various prefaces to *Lyrical Ballads* and Coleridge's response in *Biographia Literaria*. The advertisement to the 1798 first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* described its project as "experiments" in terms of socio-economic differences in language, namely in "how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society" could serve poetry's ends. Those ends appear under various descriptions: to mobilize interpersonal "pleasure" (the term the advertisement singles out, and to which Wordsworth repeatedly returns); but also to capture the "best part of language;" and to illuminate with special clarity what the mind was like, at base

by "tracing […] the primary laws of our nature."[34] While Wordsworth consistently wants these aims to cohere in a naturalistic account of human nature, expressed in "the real language of men," Coleridge continually points out that people's language differs, and that a pursuit of human nature would have to account for that difference. Maureen McLane describes that discrepancy—which she shorthands with the question "Do Rustics Think?"—as an unintended course the Wordsworthian project takes. Wordsworth aims at representing "the dignity and generalizability of the rustic mind," though it actually winds up dramatizing the difference between minds that, because of their socioeconomic positions, have developed at different rates.[35]

A different way to put that thought—and indeed the way Coleridge puts it—is that poetry shows how socioeconomic differences condition the basic or "elementary" components of the mind by making available specific technological extensions. Coleridge was willing to conceive the whole species as one mind in the sense that it was bound together by a collective, textually-instantiated project of thinking and of honing increasingly complex concepts. Poetry, he thought, did something similar. One of the major points of contention between Wordsworth and Coleridge was whether rural language in fact represented "elementary" states of mind at all. Is the mind of man—on both arguments, revealed most directly in poetic language—best understood in terms of its primeval, rural, solitary origins or in terms of its social scaffolding?

Coleridge takes the latter side of the argument in *Biographia Literaria*, when he "den[ies] that the words and combinations of words derived from the objects, with which the rustic is familiar, whether with distinct or confused knowledge, can be justly said to form the *best* part of language" (53). He echoes Burney's review of the *Lyrical Ballads,*

which accuses Wordsworth of valorizing solitary, rustic life "as if men were born to live in woods and wilds, unconnected with each other!"[36] Coleridge builds on Burney's assertion that it is "to education and the culture of the mind that we owe the raptures which the author so well describes" in the contemplation of rural scenery and solitude.[37] Yet, while he emphasizes that the best part of language is not derived from a bare engagement with the object world, Coleridge does not write off rural thought and language altogether from poetic language. Rather, he suggests that what appears in rustic life as a solitary act of thinking is already profoundly social. He puts this in terms of social scaffolding:

> The thoughts, feelings, language, and manners of the shepherd-farmers in
> the vales of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as far as they are actually
> adopted in those poems, may be accounted for from causes, which will
> and do produce the same results in *every* state of life, whether in town or
> country. (54)

Geoffrey Hartman reads this passage as Coleridge merely "claiming that whatever poetic merits can be found in ordinary rural language derive from the Bible read in church," for which reason he "simply missed the point" Wordsworth was making about oral forms of transmission.[38] But for Coleridge that dispersal of aids to reflection does not simply reduce to education or instruction, since in Britain's remaining oral cultures, even "the most uneducated share in the harvest which they neither sowed nor reaped" (54). The seeds of that "harvest" are specific verbal phrases, which are sown in ordinary language, and Coleridge remarks that the casual observer "would be surprised at finding so large a number" of phrases "among our peasants" that were once "the exclusive property of the

universities of the schools." To be sure, the dispersal of verbal nuance begins with the Reformation, by which it is "transferred from the schools to the pulpit," but the result is that the resulting concepts "gradually passed into common life" (54).

The "best part of language"—which Coleridge agrees is what poetry crystallizes—is not a return to language's origins, but an accretion of this kind of socially-extended thinking. Like the philosopher who desynonymizes terms, and thereby hones the tools individuals use for thinking, what Wordsworth actually *does* (on Coleridge's argument) is craft newly refined verbal formulations, which possess an "independent weight or beauty" sufficient to make them endure in the reader's mind, and to spur on by their own momentum certain trains of thought. As evidence for this, Coleridge relates anecdotally that several "persons of no every-day powers and acquirements" have attested that "from no modern work had so many passages started up anew in their minds at different times, and as different occasions had awakened a meditative mood."[39] Beyond the mnemonic function Coleridge attributes to meter— which aids in the recollection of particular words or expressions—Wordsworth's poetry refines or improves upon vernacular speech to form what psychologists of music call an "earworm," arising spontaneously and getting stuck in one's head. In the case of Wordsworth's poetry, such earworms encourage or (in Coleridge's words) "awaken" a particular kind of thinking.[40] That is not a bad description of what seems to happen, as Dorothy Wordsworth tells it, when her encounter with a landscape coincides with the occurrence of a phrase from "Lines Written in Early Spring," and pleasant thoughts opened up onto less pleasing reflections.

Wordsworth actually warmed to this idea as he revised the preface. The 1802 additions make a slightly different case, one closer to Coleridge's later rebuttal, as they frame poetry as a kind of folk knowledge rather than a mere reflection of primitive wisdom. The relevant passage hinges on Wordsworth's opposition of poetry to science, and of the poet with the "man of science":

> The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual or direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. (752)

Poetry, in other words, distinguishes itself from scientific knowledge by its thorough integration into "our existence," a vague phrase Wordsworth seems to associate with social being, and with automatic, reflexive, or unthinking knowledge, as opposed to the "slow" labor of individual knowledge.[41] Accordingly, this later development of his argument for ordinary language redescribes poetry as an engagement with intimate forms of common knowledge, knowledge that becomes a part of (or, in Clark and Chalmers's terminology, couples with) people's basic mental makeup.

The "man of science" passage frames poetry as thinking in this common medium. But Wordsworth also gives poetry the task of honing and improving that intimate medium, in particular when he envisions a time when those abstruser sciences "shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings," science "familiarized to men" such that it "put[s] on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood." It is the poet's job to "aid the transfiguration" of abstract knowledge into embodied form

(753). Poetry, like desynonymization, is an activity of refining thinking in the vernacular. In this respect, Wordsworth agrees with Coleridge that we shortchange poetry if we understand it simply as a return to human origins (as an illumination of what "acts of mind" *are*), rather than as a tool for extending them further.

The Poetry of Extended Memory

I turn now to two poems in which Wordsworth explores the possibility that memory can be "offloaded," and invests that process with the philosophical weight of a retort to skepticism, involution, and solipsism. The first, "The Old Cumberland Beggar," looks back to an ideal of a traditional way of life, in which individual mental experience depends on the habitual forms in which it is embedded. The second, "Resolution and Independence," brings a similar concern to bear upon the poetic process, as distributed across poet and diarist.

Wordsworth turned to "The Old Cumberland Beggar," a poem he had begun years earlier, as *Lyrical Ballads* was quickly becoming a *less* collaborative project. After it became clear that Coleridge's *Christabel* would not appear in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* the Wordsworths returned to the older poem, with Dorothy doing much of the transcription, and within four days had sent the reworked and expanded poem to the publisher. The poem narrates an encounter with "an aged Beggar" the speaker has known since childhood, and who seems to live a largely automatic life: he seems unfathomably old, hardly moves ("so still" he is "In look and motion"), and has a field of vision restricted to the "one little span of earth."[42] Yet, though referred to as "solitary" three

times in the poem and apparently oblivious to other people, he elicits unasked charity from them with clockwork regularity.

Wordsworth described the poem as demonstrating the value of traditional practices of mendicancy and almsgiving, practices preferable to newer systematized practices of recruiting mendicants to workhouses, which he calls a "war upon mendacity in all its forms." In the course of describing the traditional practices of unquestioned almsgiving, one of the most interesting things the poem does is portray such practices as reflexive, unthinking acts of charity.

> Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
>
> The mild necessity of use compels
>
> To acts of love; and habit does the work
>
> Of reason. (98-101)

Interestingly, Wordsworth does not describe this encounter in terms of sympathetic identification, or for that matter of feeling of any kind. Instead, he suggests that traditional charity is an embodied practice that operates beneath the level of explicit thought. The "work" of thought that would usually be demanded—on Adam Smith's account, a sustained act of imagination—has been offloaded onto "habit," described as a set of bodily dispositions and interpersonal encounters that conduces, nevertheless, to love.

The automaticity of such embodied responses, and the conviction that they help develop the states of mind aligned with Christian virtue, are of a piece with the Hartleian or Priestleian tendencies of Wordsworth's (or Coleridge's) early poetry. However,

Wordsworth continues that train of thought, making the beggar both a bodily stimulus and a replacement for individual memory:

> While from door to door,
>
> This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
>
> Behold a record which together binds
>
> Past deeds and offices of charity,
>
> Else unremembered.

To be sure, the beggar is an anachronism or remnant of the past that serves a role in local cultural memory: he stands for a traditional way of life. But read alongside the necessitarian argument about individual mental growth, these lines also suggest that Wordsworth is seriously entertaining the idea that the beggar is an external repository of memory, which allows members of the community to continue their moral growth. The sort of embodied, habitual practice Wordsworth sees as conducive to such moral growth depends on the accumulation of small, trifling acts—what he terms, in "Tintern Abbey," the "little, nameless, unremembered acts" that form "that best portion of a good man's life."[43] "Tintern Abbey" was concerned with how memory of "forms of beauty" can have the same type of subtle influence on habits of mind. Explicit remembrance is continuous with what the poem elliptically calls "feelings of unremembered pleasure" (31-2). It would be possible, by this logic, to continue to feel the effects of unremembered experience, if memory can relocate from the mind to some other place where it might still remain accessible. In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth toys with shifting the work of memory onto the body, and its residues of unremembered experience that are "felt in the blood, or felt along the heart." "The Old Cumberland Beggar" moves the embodied site

of those memories outside the individual altogether, to social practices by which "unremembered acts" can continue to play a role in mental life, via the "record" that is the aged beggar himself.

We might consider the poem's closing polemic against the workhouse as acknowledging the threat of just this type of memory loss, as one such gross impairment wrought by modernizing society: to paraphrase Coleridge (and also Andy Clark) on extended thinking, it would be considered a gross impairment in the individual mind if an equivalent stock of memory were lost. Wordsworth's conservative critique of the welfare state, in other words, is that moving the poor to workhouses would not just mark a loss of cultural memory, as a reminder of earlier times: it would remove an important cognitive skill from an entire community. We have learned to read this celebration of a traditional social organization and its daily habits as the mark of Wordsworth's turn to Burkean conservatism.[44] If the beggar models a "faculty in which habit does the work of reason," that faculty has close ties to the Burkean language of custom, where, as James Chandler argues, "feeling [does] the work of willing, divine law the work of human law, providence work of political science" (89). Yet that providential meliorism also has close affinities with the radical necessitarianism associated with Joseph Priestley and "one life" Unitarianism. For Priestley—and briefly for Coleridge and Wordsworth—necessity was marked by a faith both in the materiality of the mind, and that the habitual interaction between minds would conduce to social improvement. For Coleridge, the idea of the human species as "one individual mind" could migrate from a pantheistic claim about matter and spirit to a hierarchical claim about the role of a leisured class or a "Clerisy" in the mental life of the rural poor. For Wordsworth, the urge toward embodied

intersubjectivity depicted in "Early Spring" could endure in a traditionalist critique of the liberal welfare state. In "The Old Cumberland Beggar," then, what we might call a Romantic-era extended mind thesis formed a hinge by which earlier, radical ideas could migrate and endure within later positions that have been traditionally understood to be more politically and theologically conservative. What survives Romantic apostasy, in other words, is a need to make social cohesion a fact about embodied mental life. In spite of its Burkean conclusion (that preserving tradition is preferable to political intervention), the poem retains that focus on inter-mental relationships, and attempts to describe "traditional" social forms more specifically in terms of individuals' cognitive dependency upon the beggar.

Moreover, insofar as the beggar is a figure of poetic tradition, "The Old Cumberland Beggar" edges toward the 1802 Preface's account of poetry as a distributed mental labor. If the poem "invites questions about the value of poetry," which like the beggar was frequently accused of being "useless," then Wordsworth reframes both mendicancy and poetry as usefully embedded in a society's collective mental life.[45] As he wrote to Charles Fox, his own poetic practice was a reckoning with the "rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society," the decay that "The Old Cumberland Beggar" aligns with the house of industry.[46] The work the beggar does— tying together past and present, and assisting in cognitive labor in ways that replaced individual memory—applies to almsgiving, but also to poetry. In an oral culture (like the one of which Wordsworth saw glimpses in Cumberland and Westmoreland), traditional literature could, like the beggar, come to supplement internal or "in-house" memory. As

Wordsworth put it in the 1802 preface, poetry was knowledge that had taken on "a form of flesh and blood."

Conclusion: Mindedness, Collaboration, Textuality

Poetry becomes a different kind of distributed mental labor in "Resolution and Independence," one of the poems most explicitly indebted to the *Grasmere Journal*. In that poem, Wordsworth's textual turn to the *Journal*'s external repository of memory offers a salubrious alternative to an earlier, panpsychist pursuit of mind in nature. The crisis the poem depicts follows a similar logic to "Lines Written in Early Spring," where "pleasant thoughts / Bring sad thoughts to the mind." Here, after an initial participation in the joys he perceives in the natural environment, the poet describes a moment in which,

> as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
>
> Of joy in minds that can no farther go,
>
> As high as we have mounted in delight
>
> In our dejection do we sink as low,
>
> To me that morning did it happen so;
>
> And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came;
>
> Dim sadness and blind thoughts I knew not nor could name.[47]

The poem aligns that dejection, again, with a sense of humanity's difference from the nature he beholds. But those "blind thoughts" are something else, something he attributes to habits of thought he suspects he has picked up from his poetic predecessors (namely Chatterton and Burns). Those habits have the same insalubrious tendency that, in "Early Spring," had been the mark of poetic thinking, the transition from pleasant thoughts to

sad thoughts that Dorothy Wordsworth found herself to have caught, as if by contagion. Here, a similar contagion characterizes poetry in general: "We Poets in our youth begin in gladness; / But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness" (48-9). The speaker suggests, in other words, that his melancholy train of thought is intertextual in character, a habit of thinking he has picked up from poetic precedent.

Like "Lines Written in Early Spring," however, the poem initially frames that dejection differently, as the problem of the human mind's alienation from its natural environment. It is that ambitious ontological question that the leech gatherer seems to answer. He enters the poem, like the old Cumberland beggar, as an immobile, aged figure in the landscape. He, too, seems impossibly old ("the oldest man it seemed that ever wore grey hairs"), as if he has always been there. In fact, the poem immediately attempts to make the leech-gatherer a part of the natural world: he seems "not all alive nor dead,"

> As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
>
> Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence;
>
> Wonder to all who do the same espy,
>
> By what means it could thither come, and whence;
>
> So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
>
> Like a Sea-beast crawl'd forth, which on a shelf
>
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself. (71, 64-70)

Also like "Lines Written in Early Spring," then, this is a poem that describes the central figure in terms of the pathetic fallacy. But instead of a flower that seems to have human qualities, "Resolution and Independence" offers a man who seems to be fully part of the natural world. In both cases, the question of the human mind's alienation from its

environment seems a problem that might be resolved by establishing continuity between the mental and the non-mental.

"Early Spring," I have argued, bypassed that problem in its second life in the *Grasmere Journal*, where it became a marker for poetic technologies that supplemented private thought. In "Resolution and Independence," that change of argument occurs within the poem, as the speaker stages his own correction. The leech gatherer turns out not to be an example of "natural man," but socially embedded man. That moment of correction occurs when the leech gatherer starts speaking, a conversation "scarce heard," so that, in a characteristic Wordsworthian "double-take," he must ask the man to repeat himself (115).[48] In short, Wordsworth depicts himself as receiving correction or "admonishment" from the man's mental fitness and his use of a more refined language ("[c]hoice word and measured phrase; above the reach / Of ordinary men; a stately speech!") than might be expected from a rural mendicant subdued by animal decay (119, 102-3). The concluding statement that "I could have laugh'd myself to scorn, to find / In that decrepit Man so firm a mind" could be read as a concession to Coleridge's argument that the "real language" of rural life is a figment of Wordsworth's imagination, and is in fact caught up in a broader movement, whether one characterized as "civilizing," philosophizing, or socially extended (144-5). The poem is striking, then, for its attempt to reframe the philosophical problem of the mind's place in nature, in terms of spontaneous, rural, or "natural" linguistic production. In both cases, the solitary absorption in the object world gives way to the supplements of culture, and to the ways that minds depend on minds.

It is telling, then, that to the extent that Wordsworth felt the poem to mark a crisis of poetry, that crisis found resolution by looking to Dorothy and to her journal. "Perplexed, and longing to be comforted," William turns to memory, as extended in that notebook. The movement between the seventh and eight stanzas—the introduction of the leech gatherer—moves from the description of dejection in 1802 to a favorite external repository of memory. At this point, the poem opens out to incorporate features and phrases from the *Grasmere Journal,* and becomes a collaborative thinking-through of a shared episode. As it happens, that episode, recorded in the *Grasmere Journal* entry for October 3, 1800, was a story about the fracturing of a skull. After a rainy morning, William and Dorothy "met an old man almost double" (23). His reduced physical stature, the journal records, was the result of a debilitating accident: "He had been hurt in driving a cart his leg broke his body driven over his skull fractured—he felt no pain till he recovered from his first insensibility" (24).

At first, the poem is invested in the leech gatherer's insensibility, where (just as for the "insensibly subdued" character described in "Old Man Travelling") age and hardship have returned the man to the state of "animal tranquility" here imaged in a sea beast, a mind emerging from brute, primeval nature. Ultimately, though—after the speaker's correction—it becomes clear that the old man's fractured skull has actually forced him into a state of *inter*dependency that parallels the poem's recognition about the rustic mind: that private mental life extends beyond the skull. In that respect, as an engagement with nineteenth-century models of the mind, the leech gatherer stands in sharp contrast to another character with a head injury, Louisa Musgrove in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Louisa's character is "'altered,' remarkably and apparently for life, by a

single incident, a severe knock on the head."[49] Where Louisa offers a reminder that the mind is embodied—and, moreover, was embodied in ways that were increasingly identified with the brain—the leech gatherer offers a different model, of a mind that is less brain-bound than socially extended. In the poem, the leech gatherer depends on the environment, and—fortuitously—that dependence is upon a species of worm that was itself parasitic. If the old man's moniker derives from those leeches, the image with which he is most frequently associated is his staff, with which, the speaker tells us, "Himself he propp'd, his body, limbs, and face" (77). In addition to being a simple bodily prop, supporting the old man's back and (more unusually) his head and face, the staff is the instrument of his trade, with which he stirs the waters in pursuit of leeches. The poem's main image of the old man "bent double," then, highlights the continuity between his (fractured) head, his physically supportive staff, and the watery habitat of the leeches that sustain him.

In that respect, the leech gatherer offers a fortuitous figure for the kind of distributed mindedness the poem itself enacts, as a collaboration between William and Dorothy. The act of poetry, too, comes to appear less about an individual encounter with the natural world than an encounter with a social world, one that happens through textually mediated, interpersonal thinking. In that respect, the poem's textual history literalizes its thematic pursuit. In Wordsworth's dependence upon the Grasmere journal, the poem solves its problem—of involution, the alienation of mind in nature—by turning to models of interdependence. Given the migration of phrases like "old man almost double" directly from journal to poem, it serves less as the representation of a past encounter with the leech gatherer than as the textual site of encounter between siblings.

As a point of comparison, it might be helpful to consider a later example of collaboration that, as Yopie Prins has argued, presents jointly composed poetry not in terms of a figure (like the leech gatherer himself, or the lyrical voice of the "Wordsworthian persona"), but as an interpersonal "topography." A case in point, for critics of Victorian poetry like Prins and Emily Harrington, is Michael Field, the joint, masculine pseudonym of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper. Michael Field has recently become a figure for a model of the lyric voice as shared, fragmentary, or "detachable."[50] "Rather than identifying with the 'voice' of Sappho and assuming a 'lesbian' identity," Prins argues, "Bradley and Cooper use Sappho's fragmentary text to turn writing into a homoerotic topography: a graphic field rather than a sublimated figure." As a result, the text becomes less the creation of a persona (even one jointly inhabited) than a site—a "topography" or (punningly) a "field"—at which contact occurs, and persons "mingle" (99). Even Bradley and Cooper's journals, "where we might expect glimpses of life," demonstrate how thoroughly mental life is "mediated by the many texts they read and write together" (106).

The model of textuality on offer here is enticingly close to the one at work between William and Dorothy. It helps articulate that "Resolution and Independence" does not just stage an encounter with the leech gatherer, but *is* an encounter of its own, one which William began one night, which Dorothy "wrote […] for him" the following day, and which later, walking uphill in the heat, they worked through together, as they "rested several times by the way, read & repeated the Leech gatherer" (94-5). The account Prins offers differs insofar as such "mingling" tends to *displace* the mentalistic onto the textual. Indeed, intertextuality in her account makes it difficult to talk about

intersubjectivity or intermentality at all. Yet if we follow the logic of cognitive extension, then a rich body of theory—on the mediation of private experience or the detachability and circulation of the ostensibly unitary lyric voice—can become a crucial adjunct to the philosophy of mind. Talking about textuality, in other words, might be a way to talk about mind, after all.

Notes:

[1] Steve Newman, *Ballad Collecting, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) 3. Maureen N. McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[2] See, respectively, the "Fragment of a Treatise on the Ode," in *Selected Early Works, 1764-1767: Addresses, Essays, and Drafts; Fragments on Recent German Literature*, eds Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992) 35-51, 36; and *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, trans. James Marsh (Burlington: Smith, 1833).

[3] One introduction to the range of approaches known as "thing theory" is "Things," a special issue of *Critical Inquiry*, ed. Bill Brown (Fall 2001).

[4] Potkay, "Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things," *PMLA* 123.2 (March 2008): 390-404, 393.

[5] For a recent, "object-oriented" approach to ecology, see Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[6] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) 94ff. The turn from human agents to a distributed account of "actants" owes much to the work of Bruno Latour and actor-network theory. See especially Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[7] For an introduction to the extended mind thesis (discussed further below), see Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," reprinted in Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 220-32.

[8] *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, Eds. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 76, lines 1-12.

[9] For a history of panpsychism, see David Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West* (Cambridge, MA: Massachussets Institute of Technology Press, 2005).

[10] *Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life,* 3rd ed, 4 vols (London: Joseph Johnson, 1801) I:145. On the Darwinian echoes in the poem see especially Richard Matlak, "Wordsworth's Reading of *Zoonomia* in Early Spring," *The Wordsworth Circle* 21 (1990): 76-81. On Darwin's own poetic practice, see Catherine Packham, "The Science and Poetry of Animation: Personification, Analogy, and Erasmus Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*," *Romanticism* 10.2 (July 2004): 191-208; Dahlia Porter, "Scientific Analogy and

Literary Taxonomy in Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*," *European Romantic Review* 18.2 (April 2007): 213-221; and Devin Griffiths, "The Intuitions of Analogy in Erasmus Darwin's Poetics," *Studies in English Literature* 51.3 (Summer 2011): 645-665.

[11] On Erasmus Darwin's reception as a materialist, see Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 14ff.

[12] Hartley, reprinted in Joseph Priestley, *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, on the Principle of the Association of Ideas, with Essays Relating to the Subject of It* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1775) 27. Priestley's notoriously partial rendering of Hartley's system made it the basis for his own radical materialism.

[13] McGann, *Poetics of Sensibility* 38. On the Ossian poems in relation to this model of sensibility, see chapter 1, above.

[14] In revision, Wordsworth sought to resolve that particular ambiguity by changing his faith from a "thoughts" he "may not prevent" to a "belief from heaven […] sent," and his personal "creed" to "nature's holy plan" (l. 21).

[15] Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals*, ed. Pamela Woof (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 5.

[16] Elizabeth Fay, *Becoming Wordsworthian: A Performative Aesthetic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

[17] Susan Levin, *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*, revised ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009) 34.

[18] "The Sparrow's Nest," *Poems in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807,* ed. Jared R. Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) 213.

[19] Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 72.

[20] For a good overview of this material in relation to literary theory (including the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Lev Vygotsky, and James Wertsch) see Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) 157ff.

[21] For the "Inga and Otto" thought experiment, see Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind" 226 ff.

[22] A landmark work in "embodied cognition" is Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson argue that the way people conceptualize objects and events (for instance, conceiving of a relationship as

a journey) depends on spatial metaphors that can only be derived from embodied experience.

[23] *Supersizing* 44.

[24] "Extended Mind" 225.

[25] See Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949).

[26] Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man,* eds. Derek R. Brookes and Knud Haakonssen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 68.

[27] *The Excursion*, eds. Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) 40, lines 63-7.

[28] *Grasmere Journal* 9-10.

[29] Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion from Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 192.

[30] The next chapter will consider one exception, in the writing of William Hazlitt, where feeling was parsed more explicitly as a matter of contagion prior to personhood.

[31] MS, British Library Egerton 2801 fol. 19 recto.

[32] "Religious Musings," *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose,* eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York: Norton, 2004) 20-34, lines 139-40, 114. For a reading of the letter to Wedgewood in light of the "One Mind" and transcendental philosophy, see Tim Milnes, *The Truth About Romanticism: Pragmatism and Idealism in Keats, Shelley, Coleridge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 181ff.

[33] *Biographia Literaria*. 2 vols. Edited by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate. Princeton: Princteon University Press, 1983. I:82-3.

[34] *Lyrical Ballads* 738; 743.

[35] McLane, *Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of the Species* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 53.

[36] Burney's unsigned review appeared in the *Monthly Review* of June 1799. See Robert Woof, ed., *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Routledge: 2001) 74-8.

[37] Woof 78.

[38] Geoffrey Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) xiii.

[39] *Biographia Literaria* II:106

[40] Oliver Sacks give a general overview of the "earworm" phenomenon in *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

[41] While the man of science gains knowledge of nature, the poet (in the language of the Prospectus to *The Recluse*) "considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other" (752).

[42] "The Old Cumberland Beggar," *Lyrical Ballads* 28-34. 60-1, 50.

[43] "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," *Lyrical Ballads* 117, line 34.

[44] James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

[45] For this analogy of the beggar's and poetry's uselessness, see Alex J. Dick, "Poverty, Charity, Poetry: The Unproductive Labors of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar,'" *Studies in Romanticism* 39.3 (Fall 2000): 365-96, 365.

[46] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805,* ed. Ernest De Selincourt, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 260.

[47] "The Leech-gatherer (Resolution and Independence),"*Poems in Two Volumes* 123-9, lines 22-8.

[48] On this characteristic Wordsworthian move, see William Galperin, "Wordsworth's Double-Take," *The Wordsworth Circle* 41.3 (Summer 2010): 123-7.

[49] On Louisa's fall as a depiction of character's dependence on "an embodied mind," see Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* 97.

[50] See Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). On the "detachable lyric," see Emily Harrington, "Michael Field and the Detachable Lyric." *Victorian Studies* 50:2 (2008): 221-32.

Chapter Four

Hazlitt and the Science of Reading One's Own Mind

Hazlitt had a vexed relationship with the biology of the mind. In his 1805 *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, he asserts that it is impossible to investigate the mind at all "if at the outset we completely cover over our own feelings with maps of the brain, dry skulls, musical chords, pendulums, and compasses, or think of looking into the bottom of our own minds by means of any other instrument than a sharpened intellect."[1] That early essay objected most pointedly to associationism's "mapping" of ideas and impressions onto particular nerves and fibers. Hazlitt would later critique Gall and Spurzheim's phrenology the same way, arguing that the mind could not possibly be made up of local*,* functionally specific organs of brain tissue. Instead, he asserted the unity of consciousness, and argued for a single sentient principle that could, at any time, have access to all of the mind's contents. On occasion he would refer to this item of faith as his "dull, cloudy English mysticism" (63) Against the materialist theories popular in revolutionary Paris, and later against the Scottish importing of German Phrenology, Hazlitt maintained this supposedly "English" model of strong inner life, against those who sought refuge in maps of the brain.[2]

Hazlitt might then therefore seem a strange choice to engage with today's so-called "cognitive turn," which is reintroducing "maps of the brain" into literary studies. That is, however, what this chapter will do. Recent work in this field has argued that reading literature offers particularly good exercise for our "theory of mind" (the ability to identify mental states in others, and to keep track of who thinks what, of whom).[3] Such "mindreading" supposedly explains why we treat fictional characters as real people.

William Flesch's *Comeuppance,* for example, explains not just how we come to care for literary characters, but also why we want to see them get what's coming to them.[4] For Flesch, our desire for narrative "justice" speaks to our innate, evolved desire to monitor social behavior; our sympathetic feelings and our urge to punish occur without regard to the reality or fictionality of the person or character. I would feel motivated in the same way to alleviate the thirst of a man in front of me, or Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. The point here is not that I confuse real and fictional characters, but rather that the same act of mind governs both real and fictive encounters—and, for that reason, both enables reading and makes it pleasurable. What most of this work has in common is the conviction that fiction "exercises" abilities we have, or, to put it more forcefully, that the structures of fiction are also the structures of the mind.

In fact, Hazlitt had already suggested something similar in his 1805 *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*. Despite his resistance to biological explanations of the mind, he is interested in a broader version of that project: highlighting the importance of fiction, and especially the fictional character, as a cognitive tool. It is especially important given the counterintuitive thesis of the *Essay*, which joins a long philosophical debate about the nature and causes of human action.[5] Philosophers like Hartley in England and Helvétius in France had brought back into vogue accounts of action that emphasized its causal, determined nature. According to such theorists, since we act in our own interest, and our interests are determined, human action can be understood as analogous to the motion of billiard balls. Hazlitt took issue with what he termed these "mechanical" philosophies, and his primary goal in the *Essay* is to defend the possibility of undetermined, altruistic action. Sensation and memory furnish the mind with ideas and

feelings, yet neither is enough to motivate action. Thus at the beginning of the essay he writes, "The imagination, by means of which alone I can anticipate future objects, or be interested in them, must carry me out of myself into the feelings of others by one and the same process by which I am thrown forward as it were into my own being, and interested in it" (I:1-2). All action implies a future of which we have no direct knowledge, and which we can only simulate imaginatively. Altruism is not simply something one might choose in a virtuous moment: it is the only option. Even when we act in our own interest, we are acting altruistically, on behalf of an imagined, future self.

On Hazlitt's account, then, the sympathetic imagination is the engine not only of all interpersonal relations, but of any human action whatsoever. We have but one vehicle—the imagination—through which we can envision unreal events (Mr. Darcy's proposal to Elizabeth Bennett, or one that I might make tomorrow), and also, more immediately, with which we feel our way into the mental experience of those around us. Altruistic motivation becomes, on this account, a basic, natural ability of the mind. Since he sees all volitional actions as acts made on behalf of another, Hazlitt argues that we always, without exception, act altruistically, whether that other is another person, or our own (imagined) future selves. The result is a rather idiosyncratic way of categorizing the mental states that motivate human action. We live in the first person when we are seeing or remembering or believing; but when we are desiring or intending—that is, when we act—we live vicariously and in the third person.[6] This intentionally counterintuitive theory makes outward-directed protocols like sympathy and altruism central even to ordinary, self-directed activities. In order to bridge the gap between the successive moments of our own lives, we are dependent upon the same imaginative strategies that

structure our social relationships. Hazlitt thus introduces a relationship with fictional characters into the fabric of private mental life, so that we seem to be constantly 'reading" our own minds. The *Essay*'s philosophical contribution is usually situated within the fields of personal identity theory, or of ethical decision making. This chapter argues that situating Hazlitt within a more recent, cognitively-inflected philosophical terrain—especially work on "theory of mind" or "mindreading"—helps illuminate the stakes of his philosophical project more clearly than those usual contexts. The *Essay* is above all a study of how our cognitive architecture structures our relationship to other minds. Hazlitt based his theory on the premise that the structure of the mind, as physically instantiated in the brain, circumscribes the limits of how one mind can countenance another.[7]

The chapter first recontextualizes Hazlitt's theory in light of today's interdisciplinary debates, then turns to the implications for Hazlitt's literary theory. Hazlitt gave careful thought to the cognitive architecture underlying our relationship with other minds, with striking and idiosyncratic results. Later on, he became an influential proponent of a fairly traditional, paradigmatically "Romantic" theory of the lyric. This is symptomatic of a broader discrepancy between Hazlitt's literary-critical practice and his theoretical writings—including the *Essay*, which is gaining an ever more prominent place in assessments of his career.[8] On the face of it, Hazlitt intricately weaves together an introspective theory of poetry and an outward-looking theory of fiction. But certain moments in the *Essay*, particularly those that focus on the physiology of the embodied mind, stick out like a loose thread, which, when pulled, unweaves that metaphorical rainbow. Hazlitt often ingrains sympathetic imagination deeply into the physiology of an

embodied mind, showing it to work at the level of nerves and fibers, of "irritabilities" and reflexes. He thus casts the imagination in a resolutely physiological light, installing aesthetic protocols at the center of his theory of human action, and offering a characteristically double-edged engagement with the science of mindreading, one that situates literature within an embodied approach to social cognition.

Hazlitt's "English Mysticism": From Sympathy to Mindreading

It has become a commonplace of Romantic scholarship that Hazlitt served as a changing of the guard between first generation fidelity to subjective inner life and the mistrust of the "egoistic" or solipsistic imagination that characterizes younger poets like Keats and Shelley.[9] The past decades' renewed attention to Hazlitt has therefore tended to reinforce his role as the chief critic of first-generation Romanticism, with its oft-noted turn from revolutionary activism toward inwardness and the consolations of memory.[10] As early as Terry Eagleton's 1976 essay "William Hazlitt: An Empiricist Radical," Hazlitt's philosophy of mind came to be seen as backing up his antagonism of the Lake School's retreat from radical politics.[11] Eagleton identifies Hazlitt's roots in eighteenth-century empiricist theories of the mind, theories that privilege sensation, keep close company with materialism, and surrounded the French Revolution. More recently, Jacques Khalip has argued that Hazlitt "intuitively unmasks the presumptuous attitudes of the late eighteenth-century subject, who on the surface champions inwardness as radical chic." In contrast, Khalip argues, Hazlitt identifies "a telling emptiness in the judging subject."[12] Hazlitt's defense of altruism has thus become an alternative to more traditionally Romantic accounts of the sovereign individual mind. His focus on the

outward-directed imagination has made him appear a forerunner to the supposed

emptiness of the Keatsian poet, who "has no self," but constantly seeks abroad for other

minds to wear like masks.[13]

Yet that close association of Hazlitt with Keats is often misleading, since Hazlitt

frequently emphasizes the importance of private inner life, as circumscribed by the

mind's physiological limits in the brain and the nerves.[14] Specifically, Hazlitt is a staunch

defender of the unity of mind, which he attributes to the presence of a single, unifying

principle of consciousness. "Consciousness," he writes, is the "faculty […] which opens a

direct communication between our ideas, so that the same thinking principle is at the

same time conscious of different impressions, and of their relations to each other."[15]

Hazlitt is often willing to depict this faculty as privative, inward, and mysterious. In fact,

he playfully terms it a kind of "mysticism," writing:

> If any one […] will give me a satisfactory reason why he denies the same
>
> consciousness to different minds, or thinks it necessary to circumscribe
>
> this principle within the limits of the same brain but upon the supposition
>
> that one brain is one power […] I shall then be ready to give up my dull,
>
> cloudy English mysticism for the clear sky of French metaphysics. (63)

Hazlitt's reference to an "English Mysticism" draws on a tradition of "English" resistance

to the rationalistic explanation of human life, one crafted most explicitly by Edmund

Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.[16] Against French "mechanical"

explanations of human action, Hazlitt defers to the uncertain, hazy intuitions of the

philosophical impressionist. And in so doing, he asserts that such introspective captures

something fundamental about how the mind is structured: it is one, self-contained power, and its domain is inward.

Hazlitt's overarching claim, then, cannot properly speaking be about the *emptiness* of subjectivity. Rather, the *Essay* is a theory about why individuals with such strong, self-contained inner lives feel compelled to take an interest in the mental lives of others. To do so, Hazlitt attempts to make social feeling—what we might call feeling in the third person—just as important as feeling in the first person. The resulting essay is a labyrinthine attempt to have it both ways: to show the structure of the human mind to depend on both the physical limits of the individual mind-brain, and the outward-directed power of social concern. The *Essay*'s true target, in this respect, is Adam Smith, whom Hazlitt accuses of insufficiently theorizing the sympathetic imagination.[17] For Smith, our experience of other minds depends on "the imagination only," which brings the other's experience home to us.[18] We only care about other people to the extent that we can translate them into a first-person language of sensation, the language in which we can *feel*. Hazlitt takes issue with that sequestering of self and other, and argues that we come to care about ourselves in the same way. Indeed, one reason Hazlitt is often seen as "impersonal" or "averse to self" is because he makes the process of taking an interest in others play a crucial role even in self-directed action. To complete the simplest task, which for Hazlitt requires that one "anticipate unreal events and to be affected by his own imaginary interest," one "must necessarily be capable in a greater or less degree of entering into the feelings and interests of others and of being consequently influenced by them" (20). We never act on our own behalves, but only on behalf of our fictional, future counterparts.

On this account, all action presupposes sympathy: it presupposes that we are capable, in the first place, of entering into another's feelings; and, secondly, that we all constantly turn this ability back toward our own minds. Without this ability, one must be "insensible to every thing beyond the present moment, altogether incapable of hope, or fears or exertion of any kind, unable to avoid or remove the most painful impressions, […] to withdraw his hand out of the fire, or to move his lips to quench the most burning thirst"(20). For Hazlitt, then, we need to be able to read another's mind before we can do anything: before we can pursue our own interests, before we can accomplish a desired aim, before we can put one foot in front of the other.

In other words, for Hazlitt minds still consist of individual, bounded brains. But such apparently autonomous individual minds can only *do* anything by borrowing from the structure of interpersonal relations. Our relations with other minds must be built into our account of the mind's basic acts, whether in terms of what Thomas Reid called its native faculties, or what contemporary philosophers of mind call the "propositional attitudes." For Hazlitt, there is a difference between acts like seeing, feeling, believing or remembering on the one hand; and desiring, willing, and intending on the other. The former types of attitudes involve simple physiological processes: the functioning of the optic nerve, or the retrieval of memories. The latter, on Hazlitt's argument, require more elaborate, third-person strategies, from perspective-taking to sympathetic feeling. Recently, such strategies have reemerged at the intersection of philosophy and cognitive science, where they are referred to collectively as "mindreading."

Hazlitt's relevance to this more recent philosophy of mindreading was first established in Raymond Martin and John Barresi's 1995 essay "Hazlitt on the Future of

the Self." Interestingly, according to Martin and Barresi, Hazlitt's most counterintuitive claim has been borne out by developmental studies within the cognitive sciences. They cite increasing evidence that young children lack a self-concept, and develop one only gradually as they become better able to read others' minds. The relevant experiment here is not the "false belief" experiment, but one involving the social emotions of infants. To put it simply, when exposed to another infant crying, infants tend to cry themselves. Such infants only gradually learned to differentiate between their own affect and that of others. Between ten and eighteen months of age, it was observed, children become able to recognize that such sympathetic feeling has a source outside the self, but still retain the impulse to alleviate the pain they perceive. In Martin and Barresi's words, at this stage the child is still "perfectly balanced between egoism and altruism," and feels "an impulse to relieve the distress it experiences by helping the other." Children thus experience a truly "impersonal" attraction to the good (much as Hazlitt suggested), until the development of a self-concept more clearly demarcates the boundaries of self and other.[19] Placing Hazlitt in the context of developmental psychology reminds us that he is indeed making a developmental argument, refuting a theory of native egoism with one of native disinterest. It is encouraging to learn that Hazlitt's intuitions have been vindicated by later scientific discoveries, especially as some modern literary scholars have turned in ahistorical fashion to models of mindreading developed by cognitive science, in the hopes of explaining why we read. They might have done better to turn to Hazlitt.

In the past decades, the conversation around "folk psychology" has developed into a set of positions on what actually happens when one person "reads" another's mind, and attributes mental state concepts like beliefs and desires to the other person. The most

prominent are the "theory" theory (which holds that we make theoretical inferences); the modularity theory (which looks to the mind as a set of innate, modular mechanisms, one of which drives mindreading tasks); and the simulation theory (which holds that we pretend, or imagine what it is like to be that other person). There are also a variety of "hybrid" theorists, which hold that mindreading involves a combination of these strategies. Some aspects of Hazlitt's philosophy seem to fit within the "rationality theory," which argues that our theory of mind is indeed a theoretical, inferential process, and we develop a theory of another person's mental states primarily by rational thought.[20] As we have seen, Hazlitt thought that most mental processes could be explained without recourse to "maps of the brain." Unlike modular-nativist theories, which delve into the anatomy of the brain, rationality theorists consider mindreading to occur at least primarily at the level of conscious thought and explicit reasoning. This is why the work of Alison Gopnik and others is often referred to as the "child scientist" theory of mindreading: children, on her account, deploy general methods of knowledge-acquisition to develop theories gradually over the course of their psychological development.[21] By gathering information and, like philosophers of mind, developing a good hypothesis of behavior, they will eventually be able to navigate the social world.

More provocatively for students of Hazlitt, Gopnik has advanced the controversial thesis that we deploy inferential reasoning not only to attribute mental states to another, but even to know our own mental states.[22] Gopnik's claims hinge on another set of experiments with young children as participants, building on the foundational "Sally-Anne" experiment that tested for the ability to attribute false beliefs to another person. In a variant of that experiment known as the "deceptive box test," researchers tested for

children's ability to report false beliefs they previously held. Researchers showed young children a tube that usually held candies, but in this case actually contained a pencil. Before seeing inside the deceptive tube, the children guessed (unsurprisingly) that it contained the candies its packaging advertised. After seeing that it really held a pencil, the children were asked what they *initially* thought the container held. Surprisingly, while most children four years or older correctly remembered what they had previously thought, many children under four were unable to do so, incorrectly reporting that they had thought there was a pencil in the tube all along. Gopnik concluded that children who cannot yet attribute false beliefs to another cannot make sense of their own false beliefs, either. There seemed to be no privileged faculty of introspection that enabled the children to report about their own beliefs with greater reliability than the beliefs of another.

Gopnik's claim has been both influential and controversial largely for the same reason Hazlitt's *Essay* is seen to be: both look to the early stages of human development to demonstrate an original homology between self and other, between first-person and third-person strategies of mindreading. And, strikingly, both claim that private mental life actually depends on those outward-directed strategies. Like Gopnik, Hazlitt offers the counterintuitive claim that private mental life actually depends on strategies of mindreading.[23] Of course, Hazlitt insists on the validity of introspection, and that will muddy the waters significantly. Hazlitt argues for the existence of a "superintending principle" that would, by definition, go beyond sensations and offer unmediated access to the contents of our own minds. We do not have to infer what we previously thought, but access memory directly. In fact, Hazlitt thinks that consciousness and memory delimit the bounds of identity: "so far as their operation extends (but no farther) is man a personal, or

if you will a selfish being" (36). Given Hazlitt's model of a "superintending faculty" of mind, then, it is unlikely that he would have predicted the results of the deceptive box test. While Martin and Barresi link Hazlitt's "metaphysical discovery" to recent studies on the development of self-concepts, what determines the holistic structure of memory and consciousness is not a concept of self (which Hazlitt saw as an abstraction), but something he characterized as a basic ability. Hazlitt's philosophy demands an "inward" principle that would yield "a consciousness of what passes in our own minds," that is, full access to our own mental content (34).[24]

Such a defense of introspection is on offer, however, in the third, "simulationist" account of mindreading.[25] Simulationists, most recently Alvin Goldman, suggest that we do not need a special mechanism to read minds, nor do we need to think very heard about what goes on in someone else's head, since we have available the far simpler strategy of pretending: of "simulating" another person's mental states on our own mental hardware. Mindreading, on this account, is not a theoretical proceeding, but an imaginative simulation, by which we put ourselves in that other person's shoes. If I see you stub your toe, or to use one of Goldman's more dramatic examples, if I am watching a movie about a green slime that attacks a city, I do not need to theorize about what those people will feel. I can simply imagine what I would feel in that situation.[26] Goldman argues that "there is some sort of *asymmetry* between first-person and third-person situations, such that first-person reports have a higher credibility or trustworthiness than third-person reports" (224). A basic premise of simulation theory is that there is "a special role for the classification of one's own states." Goldman argues:

Third-person mindreading by simulation borrows classifications of one's

own states to classify states of another. In decision prediction, for

example, one makes a simulated decision, metarepresents it as a decision

with a specific content, and attributes it to the target. So under ST,

classification of one's own state plays a role even in third-person

ascription. (223)

In salient aspects Goldman defends the classical formulation of sympathetic imagination

under his coinage "enactment imagination" (or "E-imagination"): the kind of vicarious,

projective imagination he sees as fundamental to putting oneself in another's shoes.[27]

"It's of the essence of E-imagination," Goldman writes, "that it aims to produce a state

that replicates, in relevant respects, some 'genuine' mental state" (284). It is thus the kind

of imagining we do when we read another's mind, but also when we read a fictional

narrative.[28] If I see you stub your toe, or more dramatically, if I am watching a movie

about a green slime that attacks a city (the example Goldman uses), I do not need to

theorize about what those someone will feel. I can simply imagine what I would feel in

that situation. I would recoil with sympathy at your stubbed toe. I would feel real fear of

the fictional green slime.

Goldman's simulationist account of cognition offers the attractive possibility of

bridging the gap between Hazlitt's vindication of "inwardness" and his conviction that

private life borrows from the structure of interpersonal relations. Indeed, if we translate

Hazlitt into contemporary language, he begins to look much like a simulation theorist: we

have special, privileged access to our own inner, mental lives. We use those first-person

mental states as the basis for simulating the mental lives of others, by "translating" their

third-person information into our own first-person stance. Strictly speaking, Hazlitt does not think that one's relationship to one's own interior life is distanced or mediated by theory, at least not in the way that rationality theorists like Gopnik think that it is. Instead, on his account we have an irreducible and immediate relationship to the contents of our own minds. However, he does think that motivations to action require *some* kind of mediated engagement with one's own mind. Simulationists see a limited role for this kind of explicit self-simulation, or what Goldman calls "intertemporal attribution": say, when I imagine myself sitting at dinner tonight. I would then be simulating the mental states of my future self. However, Hazlitt thinks that explicit self-simulation, "intertemporal attribution," is a constant feature of private mental life. [29] Of course, simulationists do not think that we walk around all day simulating ourselves. That remains the idiosyncrasy of Hazlitt's theory. They do, however, run simulation deeper into everyday, embodied action, and not just conscious thought or rational decision-making. One of the cases in point is the role of mirror neurons, which are the reason that yawning is contagious. We do not think about it, but it happens at the level of the neuron. At other moments in the *Essay,* to which I now turn, Hazlitt walks a fine line between explicit reasoning and that type of automatic action.

Reading One's Own Mind

Hazlitt sometimes makes mindreading look like an explicit process, governed by rational choice: do I want my future self to suffer, or to be happy? In these cases his model is the ethical decision that I make on behalf of another, or my fictional future self. Yet he often goes further, bringing such sympathy close to the level of nerves and fibers,

of "irritabilities" and reflexes. For example, without the faculty of "entering into the feelings and interests of others," Hazlitt writes, it would be impossible for someone to complete the simplest actions, "to withdraw his hand out of the fire, or to move his lips to quench the most burning thirst" (20).

This example, pulling one's hand away from a flame, bears closer attention. It is paradigmatic in the philosophy of action, and Hazlitt returns to it repeatedly. Hazlitt's most sustained discussion of this situation begins with a statement of his recurring theme: without the imagination, all we see is a flame, and perhaps, a memory of some time when we have been burnt. What follows, however, is a strange hypothetical on what would happen "if he had no other faculties than these," that is, if he were stripped of imagination, or if the imagination were impaired:

> He would see and feel his own body moved rapidly towards the fire, but his apprehensions would not outrun its actual motion: he would not think of his nearer approach to the fire as a consequence of the force with which he was carried along, nor dream of falling into the fire till he found it actually burning him.

In other words, he would be helpless. This is Hazlitt writing science fiction, asking his readers to imagine what it would be like to be an automaton. The passage vividly renders his interpretation of what David Hartley's philosophy would mean for human life, were it true. For Hazlitt, Hartley makes us into impossibly passive beings. He continues:

> Even if it were possible for him to foresee the consequence, it would not be an object of dread to him; because without a reasoning imagination he would not and could not connect with the painted flame before him the

idea of violent pain which the same kind of object had formerly given him

by its actual contact. (21)

Needless to say, this remains a fiction, and is not how Hazlitt actually thinks anyone would behave. Rather, a real human agent has recourse to the imagination. In reality, the subject "*imagines* his continued approach to the fire till he falls into it," and, Hazlitt writes, "conceives of an ideal self endued with a power to feel," and by sympathizing with that character seeks to secure him from harm (21).

This is an incredibly slow-motion account of such a simple action. Pulling away from a flame comes to seem strangely, overly rational. But it is not the only language that Hazlitt uses to describe this paradigmatic example of learned avoidance, or the only model of human action at work in the *Essay*. Elsewhere, he writes:

Our shrinking from that which gives us pain could not in any respect be considered as an act of volition, or reason, if we did not know that the same object which gives us pain will continue to give us pain while we remain in contact with it. The mere mechanical movement which generally accompanies much pain does not appear to me to have any thing more to do with self-love properly so called than the convulsive motions or distortions of the bodily disease. (9-10)

This passage allows for two different types of shrinking from pain: one is "an act of volition, or reason," an altruistic act for the benefit of our future selves. The other is what he calls the "mere mechanical movement," qualified twice as *generally* affecting *much* pain. In all of the passages dealt with thus far, Hazlitt seems to be countering the Hartleyan conviction that we pursue pleasure even at the sub-rational, automatic level.

The first sentence of this passage does so by rendering even "shrinking" from pain a rational decision. It may be a quick one, but if we slow it down and analyze it, we can see how the decision is made. This reinforces Hazlitt's conviction that the mind works by thought, and that the proper method of "looking into the bottom of our own minds" is not the scalpel but the "sharpened intellect" (56). However, the qualification offered by the second sentence implies that, much of the time, physical reactions just might be a simple matter of reflex; the sharpened intellect could only reveal that it was not involved in the action. By the end of the passage, it is the earlier, rational proceeding that seems hypothetical: we *would* have to read our own minds to pull back from the fire, except that at least in many cases, it is typically an affair of nerves and fibers, and not something about which we must think.

Hazlitt concedes much here to David Hartley, who uses the same example in his *Observations on Man.* There, Hartley writes that "[t]he appearance of the fire, or of a knife, especially in circumstances like to those in which the child was burnt or cut," triggers a corresponding idea or "vibration" in the mind, and ultimately leads to the chain of vibratory motion that results in the movement of the limbs.[30] Hazlitt grants the existence of such automatic actions. He takes aim not at automatic actions, but at egoistic ones. So, pulling away when burned might be this kind of action, a mere affair of nerves and fibers. But it edges close to Hazlitt's main example of a volitional action, pulling away *to avoid* being burned. And as he had already suggested, an ability to read one's own mind is necessary even "to move one's lips to quench the most burning thirst." When you bring rational decision-making down to that minute level it begins to look

quite different. Outward-directedness comes to appear an attribute of even quick, apparently reflexive actions: a fact not just about ethics but about embodied life.

Importantly, then, while Hazlitt grounds his argument's ethical thrust in largely rationalist assumptions, he is more than willing to leave open or imprecise the question of the body's involvement in cognitive processes. Since the *Essay* is primarily an argument for *rational* volition, we might easily miss the domain Hazlitt grants to the automatic physical reactions that, without the principle of consciousness, would be "an unmeaning game of battledore and shuttle-cock kept up between the nerves and muscles" (72). These automatic actions extend from the unsurprising example of diseased convulsion—bodily processes analogous to the cardiac or digestive movements for which Hartley had coined the term "automatic"—to the more significant case of pulling away from a fire, an act that we might expect Hazlitt to class as requiring agency. Sometimes, we have seen, he does. The treatment of recoiling from the flame thus registers a conflict between Hazlitt's different aims. His primary goal—to vindicate rational acts of altruism against a "mechanical" philosophy—comes into conflict with his secondary project, which seeks to instill altruistic motivation even into the sub-rational mechanics of human action. Placed in its historical moment, this conflict of interests makes perfect sense. Hazlitt was attempting to fend off enemies on both sides: Hartley's language of automatic vibrations on the one hand, and proponents of rational self-interest on the other. Neither a conviction in the body's automaticity nor a defense of reasoned decision-making would, in itself, be enough to overturn the complex intellectual formation he saw himself up against.[31]

Once Hazlitt has defended his centralized model of the mind, his claim that "one brain is one power," he is often willing nevertheless to countenance the physicality and automaticity of these quick transfers of affect. He thought these transfers were fully compatible with the first-person basis of sympathy. For instance, when attempting to demonstrate that we can only relate to another's pain if we have some personal experience to draw on, Hazlitt writes, "When a boy, I had my arm put out of joint, and I feel a kind of nervous twitching in it to this day whenever I see any one with his arm bound up in consequence of a similar accident" (23). He would not, he implies, sympathize as strongly with some other injuries, since he would lack first-person knowledge of the particular pains they involved. However, when memory serves, such moments of sympathy become so automatic that they often seem like direct transfers of affect. Hazlitt writes that "there is no communication between my nerves, and another's brain, by means of which he can be affected with my sensations as I am myself" (36). However, the mechanism of sympathy seems to do something just as good. His almost stoic claim that "man when he acts is always absolutely independent of, uninfluenced by the feelings of the being *for whom he acts*" sits uncomfortably next to the anecdote of wincing at another's dislocated arm.

The relevance of this more basic kind of affective relation in Hazlitt's philosophy was first pointed out by Martin and Barresi, who link it to the phenomenon of "emotional contagion." Emotional contagion is rooted in those protocols, like facial recognition, that Goldman has made central to mindreading. Martin and Barresi write, "In humans, unlike lower animals, emotional contagion is typically a stage on the way to affective empathy and sympathy" (479ff). That is, they see emotional contagion in early childhood as

evidence for Hazlitt's claim that we lack a self-concept at that early developmental stage. The development of a theory of mind allows us to attribute these acquired emotions, which had previously seemed free-floating, as likely mine as another's. However, for Hazlitt, as for the simulationist account of mindreading, emotional contagion is an enduring factor in intersubjective life, and not merely an evolutionary stopping-point en route to higher-level sympathetic identification. Emotional contagion has an important role to play as a mode of direct, unmediated exchange between minds. On the simulationist account, mindreading continues to involve emotional contagion throughout adult life. Emotional contagion opens pathways of affect between individuals, with separate cognitive architectures. Crucially, these phenomena of transference continue to depend on first-person experience.[32]

Given the close parallels between Hazlitt's principles of action and simulationist accounts of mindreading, Goldman offers one model for a cognitively oriented Hazlitt, one who enables theories of transferable affect, and yet privileges the first-person not merely in terms of sensation, but in terms of central processing. This model does justice to several aspects of Hazlitt that have been important to literary criticism: to the sense of a bodily, materially-minded Hazlitt, eminently sociable and intersubjective, who nevertheless theorizes the unity of consciousness. He defends inwardness to the death, yet also, and without fundamental contradiction, has us living vicarious lives by which we are constantly "reading" our own minds by reading the minds of others. Goldman traces the simulationist account of cognition back to the empiricist accounts of sympathy that were so influential for Hazlitt: Hume on "mental mimicry," and Smith on "bodily and affective mimicry."[33] For Smith, our senses will never penetrate another's experience, but

we can use information we gain from third-person observation to imaginatively replay our own senses—data stored, as Goldman would say, on our own cognitive hard drives—and thereby approximate another's mental life vicariously. Goldman's relation to Smith resembles Hazlitt's. Both adhere to the structure of Smithean sympathy. But both develop Smithean sympathy into a theory of mindreading: in its contemporary usage, a theory of the everyday attributions of mental states that structure our concepts of mental states as such. The way we attribute minds to others (and in some cases, to ourselves) is a way to understand the mind's basic abilities, like desiring, intending, or wishing. Like more recent accounts of mindreading, Hazlitt brackets the question of "other minds" skepticism, and instead turns to a developmental account of the mind's social abilities. The question remains, though, whether the mindreading debates have finally rid themselves of skepticism's ghost, or continue to be haunted by it.

Cognitive Fictions

That challenge is particularly important for Hazlitt. After all, by introducing an "other minds" problem into private mental life, his theory invites comparisons with the strongest forms of philosophical skepticism. But consider the following anti-egoistic passage, which takes issue with

> the attempts of some Philosophers to reduce all our social affections to
> certain modifications of self-love. The Author of our being intended us to
> be social beings, and has, for that end, given us social intellectual powers,
> as well as social affections. Both are original parts of our constitution, and

the exertions of both no less natural than the exertions of those powers that
are solitary and selfish."

This sounds like Hazlitt. Yet it comes not from his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action,* but from Thomas Reid's *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man.*[34] Reid is, characteristically, deriding those over-analyzing philosophers who make "mysteries, and even contradictions" out of what should be matters of common sense. If we emphasize Hazlitt's resemblance to Reid, his critique of consciousness looks rather different. While his direct antecedents are in the "sentimental" tradition of Hume and Smith, Hazlitt reinterprets them to verge on something closer to Reid's focus on the mind's original constitution. Hazlitt too thinks that other-directedness and "social affections" are "no less natural" than self-interest and self-directed actions.[35]

In short, Hazlitt's theory of action is best understood in light of broader philosophical movements that highlighted the social nature of cognition, and which displaced the concerns of "other minds" skepticism by turning to the positive knowledge we do have. In particular, Reid's focus on native faculties paved the way for subsequent, more positivistic approaches to cognitive abilities (a legacy marked most dramatically by the Edinburgh phrenologists' claiming of Reid as a progenitor). Of course, that positivistic turn remains liable to Stanley Cavell's critique of skepticism, a critique rooted in Romanticism's supposed resistance to science. For Cavell, Romantic writers show a "disappointment in the idea of taking the success of science, or what makes science possible, as an answer to the threat of skepticism, rather than a further expression of it."[36] On Cavell's account, the new positivism of which we see glimpses in Reid and Hazlitt may just be skepticism by another name. By and large, today's proponents of "theory of

mind" theory really do still think we engage in such projection, whether we do so by sympathetically imagining our way into other minds, by rationally inferring what mental states are likely there, or because innate, evolved mechanisms constantly draw our attention to certain sense data. Daniel Dennett captures some of the ambiguity inherent in the mindreading debate with his description of our knowledge of other minds as a "stance" we take toward the world. Goldman, writing with a more explicit sense of his own theory's genealogy, traces his philosophical roots to Hume and Smith, and thus comes closer still to countenancing the proximity between mindreading and the skeptical tradition. Generally, though, both modularity theory (in some ways the more direct descendant of Reid's nativism) and simulation theory (in the tradition of Smith and of Hazlitt) simply sidestep that question altogether. Perhaps, as Cavell suggests, this means that they do not "answer" skepticism, but simply represent a shift in skepticism's history—its relocation from the philosophical armchair to the experimental laboratory. As Hazlitt had early pointed out, the science of mindreading, whether the mind in question is another's or one's own, depends on a fiction of the imagination.

The relationship of skepticism and fiction is underscored by the current affinity between cognitive methods and the realist novel. The scholarship that has gained the most visibility has largely associated "theory of mind" with the generic structures of the novel. Lisa Zunshine's *Why We Read Fiction*, for example, analyzes the various ways "fiction engages, teases, and pushes to its tentative limits our mind-reading capacity" (7). On this argument, reading about fictional characters provides a kind of mental workout, since it exercises the cognitive faculties we use to survive in a social world, specifically our methods for tracking other social agents. We must attend to such information,

evolutionary psychology suggests, both in order to keep tabs on potentially suspicious activity as well as to seek out potential alliances in the complex web of relations that constitutes the social world. Such strategies, which have come to be known as "Machiavellian intelligence," are also required of anyone who picks up a novel by Austen, Woolf, or Tolstoy.[37] Another way of putting this, of course, is that our mindreading abilities enable us—or render us liable—to treat fictional characters as people.

It is a short step to the skeptical conclusion that our faculties deal only in fictions. Ian Duncan has recently underscored that possibility in his discussion of fiction and the Humean legacy. In *Scott's Shadow,* Duncan historicizes the novel's decisive rise to cultural ascendancy at the hands of Walter Scott and those in his orbit, in the years that coincided with the return of Hume's philosophy to the philosophical mainstream. In this period, Duncan argues, the historical novel emerges as the fictional counterpart of Hume's philosophy, since in Scott's hands the overtly fictional novel "activate[s] skepticism rather than faith as the subjective cast of their reader's relation to history" (29). Modernity is marked by the way "fiction" ceases to be a pale imitation of real-world relations, and instead "comes to designate a cognitive engagement with reality" (124); and Scott's concomitant rise marks "the cognitive fitness of the novel as the genre of modern life" (114). The phrasing of that last assertion carries a faint echo of Wordsworth's *Prospectus*, in which the external world is asserted to be peculiarly fitted to the human mind. But, more in keeping with Duncan's generally anti-Wordsworthian emphasis on narrative, the more pertinent context is those other proponents of narrative's

"fitness": those scholars of narrative who have turned to Darwin. In both cases—for Hume and in the novel as the paradigm for cognition—projectivism rules.

Cognitive approaches to narrative illuminate much of Hazlitt's theory, specifically as that theory defends the utility of fictional engagement. We have an irreducible interest in simple matters of "what happens" in a plot. In many ways Hazlitt anticipates the current enthusiasm for narrative in cognitive approaches to literature. Hazlitt's *Essay* thus serves as one signal of the historical linage between skepticism and biological approaches to other minds, and one clue why skepticism seems to live on in the cognitive sciences. The question has not been answered, Stanley Cavell would say, but only sidestepped. Yet both Reid and Hazlitt saw their work as doing something more. Reid for his part was emphatic that sidestepping the question was refutation enough. Hazlitt's response is similar: like Reid, he sidesteps the "other minds" problem by turning from the realm of epistemology to a developmental account of cognitive abilities. On this account, Hazlitt de-fangs projectivism: whether one turns to projection or native faculties (or in more recent language, to simulation or modularity), the effect is the same. Either way, we no longer have to ask how a subject can reliably know an object. Instead, we can ask what abilities we have and how they develop. That we do not read minds clairvoyantly is, as Thomas Reid would say, common sense. In his philosophy of language, for example, he is perfectly willing to admit that language is a fallible medium. We can have quite a difficult time interpreting the specific contents of another's mind, even when they are expressing themselves through language. In contrast, Reid's interest is in the origin of people's native ability to articulate or recognize mental states at all, through the natural language of facial expressions, gestures and cries that seemed to govern even the actions

of infants. Once Hazlitt makes his version of that methodological shift, ethical egoism and epistemological skepticism alike fall by the wayside.

The point is well illustrated, in fact, by a comparison to cognitive literary theory. Of particular note is William Flesch's recent book *Comeuppance*, which in a few respects comes strikingly close to Hazlitt. Like Zunshine, Flesch thinks that reading engages our basic social faculties: we take an interest in fictional characters because it exercises our strategies of monitoring and surveillance, which ultimately serve to detect cheaters, punish wrongdoing, and maintain the communal good. Flesch gives these arguments a turn that is particularly interesting for students of Hazlitt, since he is primarily interested in *altruism* as a feature of reading. As its subtitle indicates, the premise of *Comeuppance* is that "altruistic" motivation is one of the "biological components of fiction." Flesch most strongly resembles Hazlitt in his argument that "vicarious interest is an irreducible and primary attitude that we take toward others," one that "comes before any identification with those in whom we are interested.[38] And, for Flesch, "such an interest will turn out to imply an interest in narrative, that is, in what others have done and suffered and in the causal relations among the things they have done and suffered."[39] Hazlitt, too, had turned to physiological theory to argue "that such a feeling as general benevolence or kindness to persons whom we have never seen or heard of before does exist" (69). This "general feeling," he writes elsewhere in the *Essay*, "can only arise from an habitual cultivation of the natural disposition of the mind to sympathize with the feelings of others by constantly taking an interest in those which we know, and imagining others that we do not know" (15). Imagining other minds is attributable to a

fundamentally sociable interest in others, real or fictional. It is not a feat of negative capability, but a fact about living in the social world.

But Flesch's premise is still fundamentally Humean. Altruistic acts ultimately serve one's own interests, since we are innately motivated to accept certain disadvantages (for example, expending energy to punish someone who steals another's property) because it maintains the integrity of the social world on which we depend.[40] Flesch thinks that narrative activates our biological drive toward such regulatory feelings. Altruism comes about as a side-effect of a more farsighted drive toward self-interest and self-preservation. This is precisely the egoistic position that Hazlitt regarded a fallacy, and that motivated his defense of altruism as a primary act of the mind. In fact, since we do not naturally pursue our own interests, human action cannot be understood as a calculus of sensation. It must be the prerogative of a unitary, active mind, which stands apart from particular sensations. Hazlitt's *Essay* thus serves as a refutation of the principle of self-interested reading, and effects a broader methodological turn to the mind's abilities.

Hazlitt's Lyric Mindedness

It is unsurprising, given his attention to the cognitive uses of fiction, that Hazlitt is often described as the critic of the fictional character, or even as a pioneering critic of the novel. He remains one of the most enduring critics of Shakespeare because of his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. Moreover, his *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* helped the novel in its accrual of cultural capital. It has even been claimed that this makes Hazlitt a figure of resistance to the lyrical trends of his age. One critic thus argues that "during what has been termed the age of the lyric, Hazlitt is weakest in his handling of

lyric poetry […] Since there are no characters to discuss and no story to follow, and since he would not analyze structure, he found little to say when dealing with lyrical poems."[41] While, on my argument, Hazlitt has interesting things to say about poetry, I think it is worth pursuing this passage's alignment of Hazlitt's critical idiosyncrasy with his approach to character. The implication is that what Hazlitt does best involves dealing with character and attending to story. His focus on the fictional character, and his tendency to read poetry biographically, sets Hazlitt squarely within the dominant critical trends of the era.[42] But it also has affiliations with the social-mindedness that have traditionally made Hazlitt the antagonist of Romantic egoism. Whether in regard to the political, ethical, or psychological aspects of his poetic theory, criticism of Hazlitt involves a persistent sense that he stands aslant the poetic values of his age.

How then should we account for the profoundly anti-narrative rhetoric that informs his poetic criticism? When it comes to his critical allegiances, Hazlitt is of two minds. He anticipates one important aspect of cognitive literary studies: our primary motivation to take an interest in the lives and doings of others. Yet he frequently demonstrates an aversion to literary forms dependent on plot, in favor of the "poetic," which requires an ability to feel deeply, to know human nature intimately, and above all to have taste. As we have seen, Hazlitt had good philosophical reasons for privileging the first person. As early as the 1805 *Essay*, he had articulated his conviction in the unity of the mind, that subjective, impressionistic faculty he called his "English mysticism." Such impressionism drives his critical concept of "gusto," for example, which he calls simply the "power or passion defining any object." The artist proceeds by "giving this truth of character from the truth of feeling […] always in the highest degree of which the subject

is capable."[43] Whether judging poems or writing them, one can only proceed impressionistically.

While everyone, simply by virtue of being human, has the ability to navigate fictional narrative, only a few acquire the lyrical sensibility. This tension between lyric and plot emerges most clearly in his rendition of a familiar complaint about Shakespeare's reception. "Why is Shakespeare popular?" Hazlitt asks, and suggests that his perennial popularity comes "[n]ot from his refinement of character or sentiment, so much as from his power of telling a story."[44] Shakespeare is popular, that is, for both good and bad reasons. While he has much to offer those of refined taste, he also slakes the 'degrading thirst" for narrative that Wordsworth cites in his own polemic against the novel.[45] In moments like this one, where he closely echoes Wordsworth, Hazlitt is more clearly of a piece with the spirit of his age. His ethical "discovery" aside, Hazlitt's theory of action squares with the most traditionally "Romantic" lyric theory. Thus in his *Lectures on the English Poets,* he can define poetry in patently subjective terms, as "the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself" (II:165). On some accounts, Hazlitt's early theory offers an antidote to the notion of "lyric as the expression of an autonomous and self-coincident subjectivity."[46] More often, though, his critical pronouncements reinforce that notion. He writes, for instance, that Dante interests by exciting our sympathy with the emotion by which he is himself possessed. He does not place before us the objects by which that emotion has been created," but rather shows us *himself*. "Accordingly," Hazlitt writes, Dante's poems "gives the same thrilling and overwhelming sensation, which is caught by gazing on the face of a person who has seen some object of horror."[47] Hazlitt's prose here effaces Dante's use of a linguistic medium,

and casts poetry instead in terms of a face-to-face encounter, analogous to the "natural language" of facial expressions. So too Hazlitt describes the odes of William Collins as "leav[ing] stings in the minds of his readers, certain traces of thought and feelings which never wear out, because nature had left them in his own mind" (271). He hardly mentions Collins's language, deferring instead to the realm of embodied affect: the nerve, the fiber, and the trace.

Occasionally, Hazlitt's early theory does offer one intriguing change to theories of "lyric consciousness." He retains the premise of expressivist speech, but injects the insight of the 1805 *Essay* by highlighting a lyrical futurity, in moments where the speaker turns to his future self. Hazlitt's philosophical "discovery"—the inaccessibility of the future self—goes some way toward explaining why he had such praise for Southey's short lyric "The Holly Tree." This short lyric, which Hazlitt read as autobiographical, announces its intention to "moralize" the natural symbol of the holly tree—which remains "cheerful" when all else is "bare and wintry"—and to make it an emblem of the speaker's own "harsh and austere" character, which he hopes will give way to a serene old age. The fifth stanza expresses that wish:

> And should my youth, as youth is apt, I know,
>
>> Some harshness shew,
>
> All vain asperities I day by day
>
>> Would wear away,
>
> Till the smooth temper of my age should be
>
> Like the high leaves upon the holly tree.

While here the poem speaks of a desire to "wear away" that youthful harshness, the seventh and final stanza makes the poet's "austere" youth a prerequisite for his wished-for, "smooth tempered" winter years:

> So serious should my youth appear among
>
> > The thoughtless throng,
>
> So would I seem amid the young and gay
>
> > More grave than they,
>
> That in my age as cheerful I might be
>
> As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

This poem is rarely anthologized, perhaps for good reason; but it is one Hazlitt liked. For starters, it allowed him to take an *ad hominem* jab at Southey, since he thought the poem showed the poet to be conscious of his own failings, especially the inconstancy of character of which Hazlitt would repeatedly accuse him.

More to the point, the poem would have been particularly attractive to Hazlitt because it allowed him to deploy his early philosophical "discovery": that individual mental life requires an act of imagination in order to bridge the temporal gaps of identity. He repeatedly called it "the most pleasing and striking" of Southey's poems, and included it in his anthology of living British writers. In *The Spirit of the Age,* where he reprints much of this material, Hazlitt calls "The Holly Tree" the one place where

> with a mild melancholy, [Southey] seems conscious of his own infirmities
>
> of temper, and to feel a wish to correct by thought and time the precocity
>
> and sharpness of his disposition. May the quaint but affecting aspiration

> expressed in one of these be fulfilled, that, as he mellows into maturer age,
> all such asperities may wear off.[48]

In the *Lectures on English Poets* he called it "an affecting, beautiful, and modest retrospect on his own character," and concludes with the wish, "May the aspiration with which it concludes be fulfilled!" (317). By turning from Southey's "retrospect" to his "aspiration," Hazlitt identifies a poetic stance answerable to his theory of human action, one with a heightened awareness of the gap between selves present and future and, accordingly, between the first-person and third-person capacities of the lyric. Narrative futurity here impinges upon the lyric, but does not fundamentally alter its status as a different, expressive vehicle, rooted in the unity of the mind.

For Hazlitt, poetry in particular merited this affiliation with the mind's unitary nature. In his essay "On Dr. Spurzheim's Theory," a critique of the phrenology Hazlitt encountered in Edinburgh, he spills much ink over Spurzheim's allusion to an "organ of poetry." Hazlitt concedes that musicality might plausibly be assigned to its own, mechanical organ, since it "relates to one sort of impressions only," and proceeds more or less mechanically. Poetry, in contrast, "relates to all sorts of impressions, from all sorts of objects, moral and physical."[49] It more closely resembles the domain-general way that the mind itself works. Poetry is an affair of the whole mind, and, as Coleridge puts it, "brings the whole soul of man into activity."[50] Hazlitt develops this line of thinking further—and applies it to narrative—toward the end of the essay, in a long footnote on Walter Scott. Hazlitt informs the reader of a curiosity he has read in "an ingenious paper published by Dr. Combe of Edinburgh," namely "that three heads," most notably Scott's, "have caused considerable uneasiness and consternation to a *Society of Phrenologists* in that city." The

conundrum of Scott's head is that it apparently lacked the "organ of imagination," just as

the other two "learned persons" lacked organs proper to their own stations. In Scott's

case, Hazlitt archly observes, this seems "a needless alarm," and "would incline me

(more than anything I have yet heard) to an opinion that there is something like an art of

divination in the science." Elsewhere, Hazlitt repeatedly accuses Scott of lacking

imagination, and of excelling instead at the lesser, popular art of narrative. Here, though,

he casts Scott's achievement not in terms of narrative in general, but as a strength in "a

sort of *traditional literature*" that Scott accumulates without altering: "whatever he

accumulates or scatters through his papers, he leaves as he finds it, with very few marks

of the master-mind upon it."[51] That rote, mechanical process of transcribing "traditional

literature" *is,* for Hazlitt, conceivable as a function of innate abilities: or here, in the

hypothetical portrait of Scott as a phrenological subject, with a deficiency that leaves him

only the domain of popular narrative.

On Hazlitt's account, in other words, Scott is Shakespeare without the poetry. He

is adept at popular narrative, but has no genius with which to compensate for that vulgar

practice. Hazlitt thus calls Scott the poet of plot, and accuses him of being incapable of

Shakespearean "refinement." While he recognizes Scott's narrative skill as a strength, he

subjects Scott to some of his characteristic faint praise. In his *Lectures on the English*

Poets he writes that Scott "selects a story such as is sure to please, full of incidents,

characters, peculiar manners, costume, and scenery; and he tells it in a way that can

offend no one" (307-8). There is a continual undertone of mediocrity here. Scott's

"poems are only entertaining," to a public whose interests derive from that broad

engagement with incidental details, doings, and foibles that characterizes life in society

(308). Scott "[h]as no excellences, either of a lofty or a recondite kind, which lie beyond the reach of the most ordinary capacity to find out" (307).

The phrenological context gives a new turn to Hazlitt's anti-narrative polemic. He thought the mind was essentially unitary; and yet poetry only seemed to exemplify that holistic function in excess of its narrative properties. Such narratives, meanwhile, come to appear the product of a *part* of the mind possessed by all. There are, in other words, two kinds of ability, two models of "human nature," corresponding to the two reasons one might appreciate Shakespeare. Narrative plotting, the domain of other minds, was— as it was for Reid—a matter of common sense. But common sense, by definition, is so ubiquitous and effortless a domain of mental exertion that it hardly merits special praise. As Hazlitt puts it, "Common sense sympathizes with the impressions of things on ordinary minds in ordinary circumstances; genius catches the glancing combinations presented to the eye of fancy, under the influence of passion" (*Lectures* 89). So, while Hazlitt concedes much to "common sense," he ultimately subordinates it to "genius." The least populist moments in his criticism take aim at man's common abilities, namely the tendency to take an interest in plots.[52]

In fact, Hazlitt's fragment "Why the Arts Are Not Progressive" links that dual conception of the mind to a broader, nascent division between the "arts" and "sciences." The expectation that the arts should improve over time "proceeds on a false notion," Hazlitt argues, "for the analogy appealed to [...] totally fails; it applies to science, not to art" (II:158). He accordingly distinguishes the progressive sciences, which are "mechanical, reducible to rule, or capable of demonstration," from art, which is "not mechanical or definite, but depends on genius, taste, and feeling" (II:158). Importantly,

his comments about vulgar narrative are tied into this history. What *looks* like progress in poetry—like a diffusion of taste to the masses—is more often a popularization of good authors for bad reasons. One knows one *ought* to appreciate Milton, but he becomes popular in name only. One knows to read Shakespeare, but he becomes popular merely for his plots. The terms here echo a familiar Wordsworthian division and a familiar Wordsworthian theory of poetry. And indeed Hazlitt here shows the influence of the critical and philosophical traditions that drive the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads.* His definition of poetry as the "heart's language" bears marks of Lowth and Herder's tradition on feeling as the centralized undifferentiated holistic faculty of consciousness or "spirit." And "Why the Arts are Not Progressive" is above all his response to the Scottish Enlightenment's stadial theories of development as they bore upon literary criticism. His argument there is reminiscent of the primitivist, nostalgia-driven responses to stadial theory one finds in James Macpherson's Ossian poems (which Hazlitt loved), and ultimately in Wordsworth. For Hazlitt, the arts are perfected in their earliest incarnations. Poetry is best in Homer, or Ossian, and "very soon becomes stationary, or retrograde" (II:158). The so-called "diffusion of taste" does not popularize these early, perfect specimens, but sees them displaced by vulgar narrative.

Hazlitt's fragment on progress in the arts thus pivots on the denigration of narrative, and on an analogy between the sciences, which can progress, improve, and be propagated, and popular literature, the key feature of which is plot. Lyrical "genius" and narrative "common sense" correspond to different types of cognitive ability. The former alternatives are based in the refined, first-person protocols of feeling. The latter are what everybody shares, and are based in the ability to process facts about the world or about

other people. It is this same trend that would soon enable John Stuart Mill to reverse

Hazlitt's chronology: once narrative is made a common cognitive ability in its own right,

it too can be traced back to the primitive cultures in which literature had its origin. So, for

Mill, the "childhood of society" is marked not by primitive, lyrical utterance, but by the

"passion for a story." Even though poetry explores more basic elements of mind—what

Mill calls "the deeper and more secret workings of human emotion"—it remains for him

a high water mark of *social* development. In this respect Mill takes the modern side in the

debate between the ancients and the moderns. He thinks that the vulgar arts arise first,

and that sensibility improves in more refined ages of society.

At stake in Hazlitt's writing, then, is the question of whether first-person and

third-person literatures are continuous or radically divergent. If they represent different

categories of ability, then the difference between lyric and narrative corresponds to the

difference that Hazlitt saw emerging in the disciplines. That division is still with us,

especially in literary theory that turns to the cognitive sciences. In Hazlitt we find one

origin of the tendency to offer up narrative to the sciences of mindreading, while

"poetics" remains a broader terrain of cognitive experience somehow immune to third-

person re-description. Yet Hazlitt's early theory had disarticulated mental abilities from

genres. As such it had offered to bring together the two perspectives: sensation and

imagination were the shared mechanisms of *both* private and social life, of individual

action and altruistic intervention. The very language of the early *Essay* implies continuity

between the sympathetic methods shared by "genius" and "common sense." This is an

insight on which Hazlitt occasionally verges—as in his thoughts on Southey's short lyric.

But by and large it is something his criticism fails to recognize, an insight of his theory and not his practice.

Notes:

[1] *Selected Writings of William Hazlitt,* Ed. Duncan Wu (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) 1:56.

[2] Alan Richardson notes that the opposition to phrenology made strange bedfellows, since it led to "liberals like Hazlitt and Jeffrey for once finding common cause with the conservative writers for *Blackwoods* and the *Quarterly* (Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001] 24).

[3] Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006) and Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[4] See Flesch, Comeuppance: Costly Signaling, Altruistic Punishment, and Other Biological Components of Fiction (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[5] On earlier debates regarding the causes of human action, including the Hobbesian foundations of the arguments Hazlitt opposed, see Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[6] This is why Jacques Khalip has recently described the *Essay* as a theory of "virtual" or "anonymous" conduct. See Khalip, *Anonymous Life: Romanticism and Dispossession* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[7] On the *Essay*'s continued engagement with the sciences of the mind, see Frederick Burwick, "Schelling and Hazlitt on Disinterestedness and Freedom," in *Metaphysical Hazlitt: Bicentenary Essays,* eds. Uttara Natarajan, Tom Paulin, and Duncan Wu (New York: Routledge: 2005) 137-50. While Hazlitt insists that anatomy can offer little to the metaphysician, Burwick argues, he also "realized that a metaphysical explanation could never solve the problem of mind as an entity apart from the brain," and consequently sought alternatives to egoism that would "adhere to the contemporary science of the brain" (144).

[8] Hazlitt's revived reputation as a philosopher can be seen in a critical history that now includes David Bromwich's *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) and Uttara Natarajan's *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense: Criticism, Morals, and the Metaphysics of Power* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998). More recently, a full volume was dedicated to the *Essay* itself. See *Metaphysical Hazlitt.*

[9] Romanticism's representations of interiority have been cause for suspicion for some time, as marked most forcefully by Jerome J. McGann's *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). McGann's critique is aimed largely at what he sees as the effacement of cultural-material factors on literary

production, in favor of what he calls, following Hans Magnus Ensenzberger, "the consciousness industry."

[10] Hazlitt's critique of the Lake School was most influentially deployed by E.P. Thompson in "Disenchantment or Default: A Lay Sermon," reprinted in *The Romantics: England in a Revolutionary Age* (New York: New Press, 1997) 33-74.

[11] Terry Eagleton, "William Hazlitt: An Empiricist Radical," *New Blackfriars* 54:634 (1973): 108-117.

[12] Khalip, *Anonymous Life* 27.

[13] *Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1958) 2:387.

[14] As Uttara Natarajan has demonstrated, Hazlitt's philosophy is predicated not on a Keatsian attenuation of the self, but on "a powerful self, an egotistical sublime that Hazlitt does not apologize for, but celebrates" (*Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense* 9).

[15] *Selected Works* I:49. Hazlitt remarks in a footnote to this passage that "[t]his subject of consciousness […] which bids the completest defiance to the matter of fact philosophy […] has been accordingly passed over by the herd of philosophers from Locke downwards" (1:64n). While in fact Locke is one of the first to use the term "consciousness" to refer to the faculty of perception, or what is now called "phenomenal consciousness," Hazlitt is attempting to correct what he saw as the typically empiricist error that the mind is a passive receptacle for sensations.

[16] There, Burke lamented the "new conquering empire of light and reason," by which "all the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off." See Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Oxford, 1999) 77.

[17] For a treatment of Hazlitt's continuities with eighteenth-century theories of sympathy, see Roy E. Cain, "Hume and Adam Smith as Sources of the Concept of Sympathy in Hazlitt," *Papers on English Language and Literature* (Spring 1965): 133–40.

[18] See Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

[19] Raymond Martin and John Barresi, "Hazlitt on the Future of the Self," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56:3 (1995): 463-81. For emotional contagion and a developmental treatment of altruism, see 479ff. See also their "Self-Concern from Priestley to Hazlitt," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11:3 (2003): 499-507.

[20] Alan Leslie traces the "child scientist" view to Piaget's model of developmental learning, in which, "[a]s in classical associationism, core architecture is assumed to be homogenous and unstructured" ("ToMM, ToBy, and Agency: Core architecture and

domain specificity," in Lawrence A. Hirschfeld and Susan A. Gelman, eds, *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press] 119-48) 123.

[21] See especially her article with Henry M. Wellman, "Why the Child's Theory of Mind Really Is a Theory." *Mind and Language* 7.2 (1992) 145-171.

[22] Gopnik reports these findings in "How We Know Our Minds: The Illusion of First-Person Knowledge of Intentionality," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (1993): 1-15, 90-101.

[23] If Gopnik's position adequately represents Hazlitt's, then it would reinforce Jacques Khalip's argument that Hazlitt asks us "to profoundly question the belief that the self's relation to itself is one of privileged knowledge" (*Anonymous Life* 27). However, it is crucial to keep in sight the privileged relationship Hazlitt *does* think we have with our own minds.

[24] One such hypothesis comes from Shaun Nichols and Stephen P. Stitch, who hypothesize a "self-monitoring mechanism" that grants the individual privileged access to his own mental states. Knowing our own minds requires that we "metarepresent" our own states, that we translate them into a representational form that matches the kind of representations we use when mindreading. The difference is simply that self-monitoring is more reliable than our methods of gathering data about other minds. The "self-monitoring" model accommodates some of Hazlitt's concerns rather well: we relate to ourselves the same way we relate to others; however, we also have the kind of access to our own mental states that is also so important to Hazlitt's organic model of the mind. For a full elaboration of Nichols and Stitch's theory, see chapter 4 of *Mindreading: An Integrated Account of Pretence, Self-Awareness, and Understanding Other Minds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

[25] For important articulations of the simulationist position, see Robert Gordon, "Folk Psychology as Simulation," *Mind and Language* 1, 158-71 and Alvin Goldman, *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (New York: Oxford, 2006).

[26] *Simulating Minds* 284.

[27] See *Simulating Minds* 47. Goldman's terms bear some resemblance to the distinction between "semantic" and "episodic" memory, where semantic memory deals with propositional knowledge and episodic memory draws on lived experience.

[28] While Martin and Barresi have noted that recent science bears out Hazlitt's conviction of "the importance of imagination in the development of moral sensibility," this seems underwhelming as a potential contribution to literary study (481).

[29] *Simulating Minds* 164.

[30] See Hartley, *Observations on Man,* 2 vols. (London: Joseph Johnson, 1791) I:143. The same principle underlies the more generalized economy of pleasure and pain as motives in Hazlitt's other target, Helvetius.

[31] William Galperin has addressed the ideological motivations underlying Hazlitt's idiosyncrasy: "Hazlitt very clearly means to have it both ways in this criticism, acceding to an imperial self or to a godhead, which he proceeds, for political reasons, to situate at a perpetual remove. Thus, while the romantic ideal of mind-over/as-nature is a model still in Hazlitt, it is an ideal that must, for the sake of equality, be abandoned or never quite reproduced." See *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 143. On my account, working at this site of ideological conflict allowed Hazlitt to develop apparently contradictory areas of empiricist moral psychology.

[32] Goldman calls this "unmediated resonance" and "unconscious mimicry," and cites a study in which participants saw someone smile, their muscles responded as if they were miming the action, even when the subjects were attempting to keep a blank expression (207). Goldman does not think that mirroring qualifies as mindreading in and of themselves, since mindreading is directed largely toward propositional attitudes like intentions to action. However, he thinks the importance of simulation theory is its ability to include such experiences in its account of mindreading.

[33] Goldman, *Simulating Minds* 17. Jonathan Kramnick has engaged with the deep lineage of Goldman's philosophy, which he argues has a particular payoff for questions asked by literary scholars. For instance, "under what sort of social, technological, and cultural pressures did the period come up with a model in which introspective mind reading became both possible and urgent, and according to what formal devices did writers evoke and render palpable a process understood to be mental and imperceptible." See "Empiricism, Cognitive Science, and the Novel," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 48:3 (2007): 263-285, 278.

[34] Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, eds. Derek R. Brookes and Knud Haakonssen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 69.

[35] For an alternate reading of Hume, in which social feeling *precedes* the concept of the self, see Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*. Hazlitt's argument, of course, is quite different from Reid's. He makes inter-mental recognitions structure even individual action—something that sounds almost more Humean, and that is hardly common sense. Yet the effect is the Reidian one of making recognition a primary act of mind. Indeed, for all Hazlitt concedes to what Reid termed the Lockean "way of ideas," his critique of "mechanical" empiricism works to a similar effect: to show that the mind's acts and abilities did not result from a mere calculus of sensations.

[36] Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 52.

[37] For the coinage "Machiavellian intelligence" see N.K. Humphrey, "The Social Function of the Intellect," in Bateson and Hinde, eds., *Growing Points in Ethology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976) 303-21.

[38] Flesch, *Comeuppance* 15.

[39] *Comeuppance* 17. Flesch's broader polemic here is against the Freudian theory of identification with a character; he even recruits Hazlitt as a proponent of the earlier sense of "identification," which "originally meant a kind of predication," citing Hazlitt on the feeling in youth that "identifies us with nature," that is, shows that we are of the same category. This kind of identification, Flesch writes, is made from the outside and is more like an objective judgment (in this case false) than an emotional commitment" (14). It must be pointed out, of course, that Hazlitt was convinced that we *do* identify with characters in much the Freudian sense, as his essay on *Coriolanus* makes clear. See *Collected Works* I.

[40] This is the subject of Book III of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature,* ed. Ph.H. Nidditch, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

[41] See Charles I. Patterson, "Hazlitt's Criticism in Retrospect," *Studies in English Literature* 21:4 (Autumn 1981): 647-63, 655.

[42] The classic study of the Romantic period as the era of expressivist rhetoric is, of course, M.H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

[43] See the *Round Table* essay "On Gusto" (*Selected Writings* 2:79-81) 79.

[44] *Selected Writings* 2:161. Hazlitt omits this passage when he incorporates the essay into his *Lectures on the English Poets.* On the multiple constructions of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century, see especially chapter three of Jonathan Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Kramnick argues that eighteenth-century critics of Shakespeare render him both the archetype of the "literary," associated with the lyric, and the essentially human or populist writer, associated with genres like the domestic novel.

[45] Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, Eds. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 747.

[46] "Romanticism and the Death of Lyric Consciousness," *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, ed. Patricia Parker and Chaviva Hosek (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 194-207, 197.

[47] *Selected Writings* 2:179-80.

[48] *Selected Writings* 7.

[49] *Selected Writings* 8:153.

[50] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* eds. J. Engell and W.J. Bate, Volume 7 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 2:15-6.

[51] "On Dr. Spurzheim's Theory," *Selected Writings* 8:156n. On "traditional literature" as an alternate model for the lyrical, see Chapter 2 above.

[52] For a defense of the novel as a popular genre, on the grounds of "Machiavellian intelligence," see Blakey Vermeule, "Gossip and Literary Narrative," *Philosophy and Literature* 30 (2006): 102-117.

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