SOMEPLACE ELSE: THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HISTORY AND COGNITIVE

SCIENCE OF LITERARY TRANSPORTATION

By

ELIZABETH OLDFATHER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The Eighteenth-Century History and Cognitive Science of Literary Transportation

by ELIZABETH OLDFATHER

Dissertation Director:

Jonathan Kramnick

This thesis traces the interchanges of culture and cognition that helped to produce a unique eighteenth-century discourse of reading as a transport into an imaginary world. The figure of reading as a mode of transportation is present during many historical periods; however, it becomes more culturally prominent in eighteenth-century Britain, and it is during this period that "literary transportation" takes on many of the discursive features that have come down to us today – notably the association of enjoyable reading with the experience of vicarious spatial relocation of the self, and the particular use of this trope of vicarious relocation as a slander against bad reading, or "escapism." I claim that this foundational work on the figure of transportation was enabled by eighteenth-century writers broad interest in exploring the psychology of imagination. Following work by neuroscientists such as Raymond Mar, I treat literary self-projection as part of a fundamental cognitive capacity for temporal and spatial imaginative self-projections of

many kinds, including self-projection into one's own past (autobiographical memory) or future (future-prospection), into another's "shoes" (sympathy). Eighteenth-century writers were unusually engaged in explorations and speculations of human cognition; I claim that this cognitively and neurologically basic function of imaginative self-projection, "autonoetic consciousness," is a prominent theme in those explorations – one that has been overlooked by conventional historical studies of imagination in the period. A broad constellation of key poetic forms and literary movements – loco-descriptive poetry, theories of the sublime, travel narrative, Romantic visionary poetics, sentimental novels, even Gothic terror – all engage centrally with the dynamics of self-projection, both as theoretical topic, and as performative literary practice. Reading these movements as close psychological kin, I argue for a culture of imagination that wavers between ecstatic embrace and fear of transportation's dissolutions of the boundaries of selfhood, breaking away from the familiar genealogy of "creative imagination." I trace these dynamics through the seminal "Preromantic" poems – Thomson's *The Seasons*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Cowper's *The Task* – along with Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and, finally, Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," producing a history of eighteenth-century poetic imagination informed by the cognitive underpinnings of imaginative self-projection.

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Introduction: A Brief History of Getting Lost In Literature

From 1983 to 2006, the enduring PBS television program "Reading Rainbow"

enticed a generation of children to the joys of reading with its opening song:

> Butterfly in the sky
> I can go twice as high
> Take a look, it's in a book,
> A reading rainbow.
> I can go anywhere…[1]

The power of literature to effect our transportation – to lift us to exultant heights, take us

to new places, even make us over as new selves (a later verse adds "I can be anything") –

is the millenial generation's version of "to delight and instruct", our defense of the worth

of literature. And although it may be difficult for us to imagine a time when well-told

tales did not make their audiences feel somehow present in the story world – or, at least,

as if the members of that audience had for a time, somehow gone elsewhere – it is also

the case that not all eras have talked about literature in this particular way, at least not to

the extent that we do currently. Transportation, in other words, seems to contain both

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[1] The official youtube site of "Reading Rainbow," now relaunched digitally thanks to an astonishing five million dollar Kickstarter campaign, has a sing-along video with lyrics viewable at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIhbYmO6aks (Reading Rainbow, "Reading Rainbow Theme Song – Sing-A-Long." Online videoclip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 27 March 2013. Retrieved 4 February 2015).

ubiquitous and historically contingent aspects of the culture of reading. As a result, it is a formulation ideally positioned to open a dialogue between the deep cognitive structures that underpin the process of reading, and the way we describe, and perhaps even experience, those structures.

The figure of transportation appears most commonly as an act of border-crossing, an event in which we set aside mundane life and take up art. When Dante famously finds himself in a dark wood, taking us along with him there, he enacts his own transportation alongside our own, bringing us to the lip of a strangely unreal kind of "place." In *The Divine Comedy*, the moment of sudden immersion in a wood is enabled by the layering function of allegory; moral mid-life crisis is symbolically represented as being lost in the forest, which then in turn becomes the new scene for the action. Allegories have no trouble maintaining so many "places" through the action of representation: Dante the morally confused, alone and dreaming, is the same as Dante the man standing in the forest, conjoined by a shared tenor of meaning that is present in both. To put it in another way, it's simple to be two things at once symbolically, to shift schemas by traveling along the axis of shared signification. In fact, one could potentially be very many more different symbolic things at once, limited only by the imagination's ability to conceive them.

Being in two places at once is more difficult, however, when the places are conceived as physical locations that must be experienced by the mind that is reading about them: that is, when we consider the figure of transportation at its psychological wellspring, the work that the brain has to do in order to give us our sense of place. It is impossible to be both sitting reading Dante in a room, and also spatially present with him

in the forest. Yet we still have some kind of experience of that forest and the rest of

Dante's journey, perhaps even an experience that is sufficiently rich to merit our

describing it with the phrase "it was as if I were there." In more psychological terms, we

are able to cognitively process the information that comes from the fictional medium in a

certain kind of way that results in a reality-like experience. And what that experience of

vicarious presence consists in – how we achieve it, what features it has, whether it is an

artifact of our in-the-moment process of understanding fictional information or a post-hoc

creation, in memory, of the reading experience – is a question cognitive science is far

from settling. It appears in different critical, psychological, and media studies as

immersion, transportation, telepresence, recentering, or "aesthetic illusion"; the technical

term I have chosen to adopt is "transportation."

This thesis tells part of the history of how we came to think about reading as

mental transportation. It is centered on Britain in the long eighteenth century, a time of

unprecedented interest in and speculation on the way the imagination worked. I will show

that the figure of transportation constitutes a crucial part of imagination's eighteenth-

century history – although it does not precisely originate in this period, no more than does

imagination itself. The figure of the transported reader was transformed and emphasized,

during this period, through poetic, critical, and psychological explorations of imaginative

life that emphasized the vicarious spatial mobility of the self, and questioned the

significance of these experiences of self-projection. The history I am uncovering cannot,

however, be told through archival research and analysis alone. I stake my historical

analysis on a theory of literary transportation first raised by neuropsychologist Raymond

Mar. Mar proposed in 2004 that self-projection into a narrative world – as he puts it,

"personally experiencing oneself in a story" – might be a neurological relative of other processes of imaginative self-projection, such as into memories of one's past or prospections of one's future. These kinds of temporal projection of the locus of consciousness are called "autonoetic consciousness."[2] Given how fundamental such experiences are to mental life, I propose that eighteenth-century thinkers, when they examined the phenomenology of their own imaginations, encountered this autonoetic, motile quality of the self, and began to explore it through the many domains where imaginative speculation was centered in the period – not only through theories of sympathy, in which self-projection is a well-known dynamic, but also through literary and critical movements such as loco-descriptive and sublime poetics, Gothic terror, and critiques of escapist reading. These movements, linked by the common cognitive structure of imagination that they explored, together articulate literary self-projection as a crucial missing category in eighteenth-century histories of imagination.

The connection between transportation and eighteenth-century theories of imagination leads my analysis to revisit some familiar critical ground, and some familiar figures – notably the "preromantic" poets Thomson, Young, and Cowper – in order to call new attention to the way the psychology of self-projection informs and links their poetics. The psychology of transportation does not radically alter the contours of eighteenth-century poetic history; rather, it allows its surrounding explanatory themes and discourses to fall into a new order, one informed by the principle that the structural properties of cognition exert an influence on the history of art. As Alan Richardson argues in his book *The Neural Sublime*, the value of cognitive science to the literary critic

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[2] "The neuropsychology of narrative: story comprehension, story production and their interrelation", *Neuropsychologia* 42 (2004):1414-1434, 1422.

often stems from its ability to contribute to critical "cruxes" of past scholarship.[3] The psychology of self-projection, I maintain, can help perform that work for the crucial eighteenth-century history of imagination, in no small part because it reminds us that the introspective phenomenologies of imaginative life presented by essayists and philosophers like Addison, Hogarth, Smith, and by decades of poets of sentimental and natural experience, do not, in fact, have a blank slate or cultural palimpsest for their object. Rather, when eighteenth-century poets and philosophers scrutinized their mental functions, there was something more structural there for them to see; and this act of looking itself caused mental functions that had always been at play in art to become more salient, and subsequently to appear more prominently in new works.

In making this claim, however, I do not intend to adopt a framework in which poetry is reduced to an illustrative example of psychology – nor a framework in which historical scholarship becomes a search for this or that cultural factor that enabled the revelation of a now-known truth about the mind, as if some flash of fortunate enlightenment had occurred in the midst of the murky ignorance of the past. For one, "known truths" about the mind in the brain and behavioral sciences are by far outnumbered by open questions, and this is particularly so when it comes to literary cognition. As Jonathan Kramnick argues, it is essential for critics relying on cognitive work to be mindful of such ongoing debates.[4] When I describe self-projection as a fundamental characteristic of imagination, I am not bringing a settled matter of psychological fact into my account of history; rather, this is a hypothesis that I have

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[3] *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010): xii.
[4] "Against Literary Darwinism," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (2011): 315-347.

adopted precisely because eighteenth-century literary history seems to bear it out. Experimental evidence is a source of information that should be applied to open questions in the psychology of literature. So, equally, I would argue, are cultural history and poetic practice.

Another reason to be cautious about applying experimental findings to literary cognition is that readers' responses, by necessity, involve "cognitively penetrable" mental processes. This phrase, which I borrow from Zenon Pylyshyn, refers to mental processes that are malleable to change in response to context, suggestion, introspection, and so on, and that, as a result, are difficult if not impossible to study reliably using behavioral experiment.[5] In other words, some, if not most, literary cognition is influenced by culture, and thus subject to historical change. If we want to better understand the literary mind as a whole, the brain sciences and traditional literary scholarship are necessary complements. Experience-based figures like transportation are created by the interactions of cognition and culture, and cannot be adequately described by either alone.

1. Cognitive-Cultural Ecology

Cognitive literary study, historicist or otherwise, has at times come under scrutiny as a form of what E.O. Wilson calls "consilience" – one discipline, a discipline that is

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[5] See e.g. Pylyshyn's "Is the Imagery Debate Over? If So, What Was It About?", in *Cognition: a critical look. Advances, questions and controversies in honor of J. Mehler,* Ed. E. Dupoux, S. Dehane, and L. Cohen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.) Ellen Esrock reviews similar skeptical objections made by literary critics and philosophers in *The Reader's Eye: Visual Imaging as Reader Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), 1-6, 151-177.

seen as more basic, taking over the entire explanatory function on behalf of another.[6] The use of neurobiology to explain psychology is a classic example of consilience – and one that creates a distinct parallel: even as literary scholars raise fears of an explanatory takeover by cognitive psychology, cognitive scientists themselves are facing an even more pressing concern about being overwhelmed by neuroscience.[7] These concerns can be very real, particularly when it comes down to the brass tacks of university priorities and funding, and thus cannot simply be dismissed. As applied to the state of our or knowledge of psychology, however, such fears of consilience are far less pressing, because we still know so little. All three subdisciplines – neuroscience, behavioral experiment, and literary and historical scholarship that addresses mental experience – can be understood as approaches to the explanation of a common object, the mind, rather than as attempts to explain one another's fields in entirety. Thus, the lack of disciplinary recursivity is not a major concern for cognitive literary study. It does not matter that whereas the neurological structure of vision might help explain literary imagery, traditional literary scholarship is far less likely to give us such directly useful information about the neurological structure of vision. Rather, traditional literary scholarship and neuroscience each tell us different kinds of things about literary imagery. The image of literature as a receptive, threatened discourse in cognitive criticism is a fundamental

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[6] Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Knopf, 1998).
[7] The dissenting faction in cognitive science is largely located at Rutgers University – for a recent example, see Gallistel and King's recent book *Memory and the Computational Brain: Why Cognitive Science Will Transform Neuroscience* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), which offers a critique of the paucity of neuroanatomy as an explanation of mental functions, staged from the perspective of a more computation-centric model of the mind.

misconception of the critical orientation of the field, which is to better understand literature by using any tool at our disposal, including experimental evidence.

Cognitive science, in fact, acknowledges openly and often that much of mental experience lies beyond its purview. This principle is crucial to research design. It was, for example, a major sticking point in the mental imagery debates of the 1970's and 1980's, which addressed the question: does the mind represent visuospatial information in an analogous form – an image as an image, that is – or as logical propositions, like computer code? Several ingenious studies, many of them by Steven Kosslyn, had shown striking effects of timing in mental imagery – most famously, subjects took longer, proportionately longer, to judge geometric figures in rotation as congruent when the degrees of rotation were greater, as if they were mentally rotating an image. The principle opposition, Pylyshyn, argued that acknowledging the simple ability to form mental images, and have them behave the way we want to, does not mean we have learned anything structural about the mind. In other words, if a mental trick like imagining a geometric object helps us to solve a geometric puzzle, we can perform that trick, and the performance will be reflected in such matters as timing; however, this merely proves that we have an ability to simulate images when an experiment seems to suggest it. "Having an image," writes Pylyshyn, "is like having a thought – it seems as though we can think any thought there is to think. Consequently which image property or thought we have depends on what we want to do, and this generally depends on what we believe."[8] Although few cognitive scientists are as trenchant on this point as Pylyshyn, his objection is an important one: it reminds us that mental behavior is a slippery thing to measure, one

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[8] Stephen Michael Kosslyn, *Image and Brain: The Resolution of the Imagery Debate* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994); Pylyshyn, *ibid.*

open to suggestion and influence in unpredictable, and at times perhaps unavoidable,

ways. And in this, cognitive science and traditional cultural criticism are more allied than

opposed – both share a well-warranted concern over the constructedness, whether cultural

or experimental, of mental behaviors and experiences. For cognitive science, however,

that concern about construction is a practical, defining constraint rather than an

ideological stance – a problem for experimental design to tackle. "Thought," as Pylyshyn

notes, may indeed be plenipotent, but it is still powerfully informed by neurological and

structural cognitive principles, difficult as it may be to isolate them experimentally. In

effect, cognitive science cedes much of the mind to cultural studies.

Psychological research on transportation offers a good example of some of the

problems that face experimentalists attempting to study complex – that is, hybrid –

mental experiences. Richard Gerrig's *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, an extended study

of the experience of transportation to, and mental performance of, narrative or fictive

worlds, takes its cue from the commonality and prominence of figures of transportation in

"readers' reports of their experiences": a datum, in other words, that stands at a double

remove of both introspection and self-report from the cognitive processes themselves.

Both of these removes are open to cultural influence, especially for the "Reading

Rainbow" generation. Gerrig, indeed, acknowledges this distinction by treating the notion

of transportation as a figure – a "metaphor" that "itself does not constitute a theory of the

experience of narratives."[9] Yet this principled line between metaphor and experience

does not always hold firm in research practice. A recent paper by Busselle and Bilandzic,

for instance, treats transportation as if it were a far more straightforwardly experiential,

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[9] Richard Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On The Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993): 1, 24.

and indeed a fairly holistic and self-contained, process: "transportation into narrative," the authors write, "is interpreted as a flow-like state accompanied by a loss of awareness of self and the actual world."[10] Transportation has become a theorizable psychological unit, rather than a metaphor for something deeper and less consciously accessible. The danger of crossing this line, of treating transportation as if it were a basic structural principle of the mind, is that it enables the omission of the possible cultural influences behind the metaphoric appeal of "transportation" – the very influences that, from a critic's perspective, become a clear target not for exclusion, but rather for careful historical research.

The plenipotent area of belief, suggestion, and conscious thought that lies between culture and the structural behaviors studied by strict cognitive science is a causally complex space, but not an impossible one. So far I have described two kinds of influence – fundamental cognitive processes that affect imaginative life, the traditional terrain of cognitive literary criticism; and cultural influences that affect, or from an experimental perspective contaminate, mental experiences that had been thought structural. These are only two of the many ways that culture and cognition interact, however. Cognitive theorists have long expounded on the crucial role that "top-down" processes of prediction and inference based on past experience play in even very basic cognitive operations, such as perception: not only our beliefs and thoughts, but even our perceptions of the world, are shaped by our experiences of world we have already encountered thus far in our lives. Fictional worlds, too, are imaginative co-creations,

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[10] Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic, "Fictionality and Perceived Realism in Experiencing Stories: A Model of Narrative Comprehension and Engagement" (*Communication Theory* 18 [2008]: 255-280), 256.

informed by mental processes that fill in missing information and populate narratives written by others with pieces of ourselves – Elaine Auyoung's readings of nineteenth-century realism discuss this at length, and I address it from a slightly different angle in my discussion of *non finito* aesthetics in chapter three, here.[11] Lisa Zunshine's pioneering work on the levels of representation of other minds – "he knows that she knows that he knows," and so forth – showcases the limitations that cognition may place on literary form, a dynamic that I return to in my fourth chapter; cognition may also, more subtly, cause certain aspects of the world to be more salient than others, or push us toward certain associations, certain structures of experience or of feeling. Cultural influences may also encourage, more directly, the study of cognitive process – as I argue happened following Locke – and, as it does so, lend special salience to some cognitive processes over others due to practical or fashionable relevance. It is no coincidence that so many cognitive historical accounts – notably Blakey Vermeule's account of social cognition; G. Gabrielle Starr's, of aesthetics and the sister arts; Alan Richardson's, of the sublime; and Margaret Kohler's, of attention in poetry – have focused on eighteenth-century and Romantic Britain. The mutual resonances of that era and our own stem from the eighteenth-century's broadly exploratory interest in the dynamic operation of mental

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[11] "Partial Cues and Narrative Understanding in Anna Karenina", in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts et al. (Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 2013): 59-81. See also e.g. Gerrig, p. 29, for a review of prior experimental work on minimal inferencing and literary narrative; and A.C. Graesser, Brent Olde, and Bianca Klettke, "How Does the Mind Construct and Represent Stories?", in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. M.C. Green, J.J. Strange, and T.C. Brock (Mahwah: L. Erlbaum, 2002): 229-262.

processes, an interest that then extended to both poetics and philosophical works, but that is today more narrowly confined to the discipline of psychology proper.[12]

What is needed, in short, is an ecological model in which cognition exists in a complex, networked relationship of influences, constraints, and feedback with the world – including the imaginary "worlds" of ideas, literature, and art. Such ecological modeling of the interactions between a mind's constituent processes and the environment in which it finds itself has often been practiced in the cognitive sciences; I am after the same kind of model, but one drawn up from the cultural side, with the aim of adumbrating the rich and reflexive terrain against which and within which cognition manifests. Transportation, both currently and in the eighteenth century period, constitutes a piece of that ecology of mind and world – a very small piece, but, I will claim, one that has nonetheless had great and enduring cultural impact. It is neither a straightforward cultural translation of cognition – a metaphor for the same essential process that changes its clothes according to the times – nor a discourse spun from pure ideas and forces, manifesting in a featureless, plenipotent mental terrain. Transportation is indeed a powerful metaphor, one that had been inherited by the eighteenth-century in one cluster of forms and associations, and was passed down to us in another. It is also an experience whose features reflect the nature of the human brain. These two sides of its hybrid nature, however, stand in a complex and shifting relationship to one another. In writing transportation's eighteenth-century cognitive history, I trace several of these ecological threads: its cultural origins

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[12] Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2006); Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010); G. Gabrielle Starr, *Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Richardson, *ibid*; Margaret Koehler, *Poetry of Attention in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

and manifestations, the way it grounds connections between eighteenth-century poets, its relationship to the project of mental introspection, its movement toward a kind of metaphorical self-sufficiency, and also the possible recursive effects that its expectations and biases engendered in readers' minds, and poets' words.

I echo, thus, Michael Clune's plea for a cognitive literary scholarship that engages with cognitive science by choosing a particularly literary object of study, rather than application of external cognitive discussions to literature, as for example visual distinctions between figure and ground applied to poetic imagery, or sympathetic cognition applied to literary characterization.[13] Unlike Clune, however, I do not think it is necessary for literary scholars to defend the particularity of literary cognition, and the possible lessons it may hold for cognitive science, in order to hold our own. Psychology has only begun to skirt the boundaries of inquiry into literary experience, and yet in doing so, it has already raised many open questions that literary scholars stand poised to address in our own right, taking part in active debate and discussion through our own expertise as professionals in the study of the literary mind. Literary study is better equipped than experimentalism to confront, for instance, the difficult terrain of cultural influence and interaction that is an essential part of cognition, particularly as neuroscience moves inevitably toward the study of imagination, daydreaming, and the full complexities of human mental life. Our contributions to those ongoing research areas and debates hold out the promise of workings in a combined endeavor of literary psychology, rather than a kind of recursive interdisciplinary exchange.

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[13] Michael W. Clune, *Writing Against Time* (Stanford UP, 2013), 19.

2. Transportation and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination

The growing field of neuroimaging places greater emphasis that does cognitive science on pure description of the brain's activity. As a result, this newer approach has been, perhaps inevitably, the source of psychology's most recent turn toward some of the creative and imaginative capacities that are central to human life. I say "inevitably" because the origin of a significant portion of this research on imagination lies in the fact that experimental subjects in neuroimaging machines had been, as so many of us so often are, daydreaming. The imagination, in effect, refused to be excluded or ignored. Daydreaming minds exhibited a characteristic pattern of regional activation, one that experimenters soon also observed during the activities of future-prospection, autobiographical memory, map-reading, imaginative scene-creation, and sympathetic identification – although the last point is debated.[14] This pattern, called the "Default mode network" (DMN), has attracted interest from critics, generally those who work on imagination. Richardson, for example, reads it as a neuroscientific rediscovery of the Romantic creative imagination; Wise and Braga, as the seat of creativity more generally; and in her recent book on neuroaesthetics and the experiential kinship between the "sister

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[14] Randy L. Buckner and Daniel C. Carroll, "Self-projection and the brain" (*Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11, no. 2 [2007]: 49-57). Spreng, Mar, and Kim defend the link between autobiographical memory and sympathetic self-projection in "The Common Neural Basis of Autobiographical Memory, Prospection, Navigation, Theory of Mind, and the Default Mode: A Quantitative Meta-Analysis" (*Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 21:3 [2008]: 489-510). Rosenbaum et al. dispute the connection to sympathy, and defend its cognitive particularity, in the brief "Theory of Mind Is Independent of Episodic Memory" (*Science* 318 [2007]: 1257. See also the fuller discussions of this region presented, this document, chapter one, section two; and chapter three, section two.

arts", Starr notes an empirical connection to deeply moving art experiences.[15] Its

association with mental time-travel (future prospection and autobiographical memory),

the features of autonoetic consciousness, also link it to Mar's proposals about literary

self-projections. The relationship of the DMN to artistic cognition, is, in short, one of the

most promising research areas of modern neuroaesthetics, and literary transportation may

well be part of this repertoire.

Although it is unlikely that any of the research areas mentioned above –

autonoetic cognition, intense experiences of art, imagination – perfectly capture the full

significance of the DMN's functions in the human brain, the capacious scope of the term

"imagination" in eighteenth-century and Romantic criticism very nearly matches it. Even

if we exclude its discursive associations and spiritual frames of meaning to focus only on

its supposed primary function, "imagination" includes everything from visual and other

sensory imagery – a role similar to the classical *sensus communis* – to the ability to

entertain propositions and combine them into complex ideas, to the mind's creative

process, to emotional functions like sympathy and sublime awe, and, in Romanticism,

still more.[16] From the perspective of current psychology, imagination is inextricably

[15] Alan Richardson, "Defaulting to Fiction: Neuroscience Rediscovers the Romantic Imagination" (*Poetics Today* 32, no. 4 [2011]: 663-692; Richard J.S. Wise and Rodrigo M. Braga, "Default Mode Network: The Seat of Literary Creativity?" (*Trends in cognitive sciences* 18:3 [2014]: 116–117); Starr, *passim*.
[16] David Summers outlines the complex tradition of *sensus communis* from Plato to the early modern era in his book *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge UP, 1987). Like eighteenth-century imagination, *sensus communis* played a central mediating role between sense and reason, between the different senses themselves, and between the self and the social world through its capacity for judgements very similar to what would later be called "taste", or tact. Although the theory of *sensus communis* is distinct from the vocabulary and discussions of imagination, Summers' history does indicate that the conceptual novelty of the eighteenth-century imagination is overstated by more revolutionary accounts like James

entangled with questions of consciousness – which are sometimes referred to by philosophers as the archetypical "hard problem" – and, relatedly, to attention; but given its additional link to the more elusive wellsprings of creativity, even these do not exhaust it. Cognitively speaking, imagination is a jumble; historically, an unavoidable one. Part of the promise of the current wave of neurocriticism on imagination is that it might, hopefully, begin to articulate the inner structure of this maelstrom.

Through the poetry and philosophy produced by the synthesis of eighteenth-century literary culture and autonoetic cognition, I read an eighteenth-century history of imagination that is unchanged in its basic contours, but articulated by different causal connections and themes. Engell's *The Creative Imagination* has charted, with copious evidence, the rise and unifying power of writings on imagination in both Britain and Germany during this period; John Brewer's *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, a complementary practical instantiation and flourishing of imaginative life. More recently, numerous articles have described the relationship between historical theories of imagination and developments in contemporary sciences of mind.[17] Scholarly work on maginative self-projection, on the other hand, offers no such coherence, but rather a genealogy-in-parts, told in bits and pieces by critics in different conversations. David Marshall's book on the blurring of the lines between art and life in eighteenth-century literary culture, Miranda Burgess's articles on Romantic metaphors of transportation as symbols of mobility, Peter DeBolla's various writings on transport and the sublime, and

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Engell's *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981).

[17] Engell, *ibid.*; Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997). See Richardson, "Reimagining the Romantic Imagination" (*European Romantic Review* 24:4 [2013]: 385-402), for a review of recent neurocritical approaches to imagination.

numerous works on sympathetic self-projection give important clues toward its nature.[18]

Nevertheless, imaginative self-projection has not yet been articulated as the significant

sub-movement of eighteenth-century imaginative culture that it is: a preoccupation with

an ecstatic, dangerous motility of the spatial, temporal, and even ethical self.

      Imaginative self-projection conforms in certain ways to the conventional story of

imagination in eighteenth-century life: that interest in it was sparked by a penchant for

direct exploration of the phenomenology of mental life, and that the Romantic era

gradually brought on an attempt to find different systems of meaning within the figure.

Moreover, as Tuveson has argued about eighteenth-century imagination in general, self-

projection is often yoked to spiritual meaning – perhaps even more so than is imaginative

recreation or representation, because self-projection can easily encompass experiences

and images of alterity and self-alienation, including the self-alienation of conversion, as I

discuss in my second chapter.[19] The emotional and thematic dynamics of autonoetic

experience are far more particular than "spiritual meaning," however, and at times cut

against the grain of conventional histories of imagination in the period. At times,

autonoetic figures appear in the guise of a powerful overwriting of presence – soaring

like Longinus' hubristic soul, puffed with power "as if it had itself produced what it had

heard," or like Gilpin's and Addison's picturesque spectator who extends ownership over

all he surveys: an exultant egotistical sublime that will be quite familiar to cultural and

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[18] David Marshall, *The Frame of Art: Fictions of Aesthetic Experience, 1750-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005); Miranda Burgess, "Transport: Mobility, Anxiety, and the Romantic Poetics of Feeling" (*Studies in Romanticism* 49 [2010]: 229-260); Peter De Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics and the Subject* (Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 1989).
[19] Ernest Lee Tuveson, *The Imagination as a Means of Grace* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1960).

literary historians.[20]And yet at other times, the projected self is instead half-effaced –
maybe tangling into endless mazes of wondering, wandering perception in Thomson's
landscapes or Keats's idylls, or spinning anxious ruminations into one of Radcliffe's
mysteriously closed doors; but always vulnerable, adrift, and often joyfully so. These
dynamics of alienation, of loss of self, but also of great joy and engagement, are echoed
in Starr's study of the DMN, which is, she notes, strongly associated with cognitions that
reach "deep into one's sense of self."[21] Yet autonoesis also inverts the symbolic meaning
of having a "deep" self, with all of the adjective's connotations of an "inward turn." An
era preoccupied with psychology is not necessarily an era turned "inward," as if the mind
were merely an empty space we might peer into. Rather, autonoesis is that which, when
we look to our own selves, moves us immediately "out" – just like the daydreamers
closed up in the cacophanous magnet of a neuroimaging machine, idly letting themselves
go and be someplace else.

3. The Historical Genealogy of Transportation

Because of their deep connections to emotion and to selfhood, the motile
imageries and experiences of literary transportation are not, and never have been, a
straightforward matter of vicarious spatial relocation; or it might be more accurate to say
that vicarious spatial relocation may be more cognitively and personally significant than
we would expect. Spatial relocation is, however, where I will focus my own analysis of
literary transportation, because such imaginative relocation of the self is the essence of

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[20] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (London: Cambridge UP, 1899): 55.
[21] Starr, 51.

the figural form employed by many eighteenth-century poets. In my research, I have found that discussions of transportation into imaginary worlds that occur from earlier in the century tend to use the vocabulary of transportation quite deliberately, as if the writer is attempting to explain a novel experience; but later in the century, depictions of literary transportation become more fluent, more referential, and more common. A further leap towards commonality seems to be in process during the decade of the 1790's, at which point the "Eighteenth Century Collections Online" database unfortunately ends, leaving me unable to paint a further picture of lexical developments during the Romantic era. However, the way a poet like John Keats uses figures and references to transportation indicates a qualitative change as well, and transportation as a metaphor for reading is fairly well established by the nineteenth century.

To say transportation's figural life begins in the eighteenth century, however, would be inaccurate. The eighteenth century vocabulary for talking about autonoetic experiences of art typically emphasizes liminalities of presence and projections of the locus of the self. Because of that emphasis, figures of vicarious imaginative presence within fictive places – books as a space, readers as travelers entering that space – are well established as well. The psychological roots of transportation, however, do not obey discursive boundaries, and writings involving figures of transportation are also common prior eras, particularly the seventeenth century, differing in their specific features and entailments rather than their central preoccupation. Eighteenth-century literary transportation's closest precursors are, first, the rhetorical trope of "enargia," the description of objects and events as if they were present at hand in an attempt to summon them to the eyes and imaginations of the audience – Quintilian, notably, describes the

resultant effect in strikingly autonoetic terms, which I discuss in my second chapter –

and, second, the figure of virtual or "armchair" travel, and virtual pilgrimage, dating to

medieval devotional writings, and likely earlier. Transportation also overlaps

conceptually with the development of perspective in art, and realism in literature; but

these movements are related more tangentially to its central structures and concerns.

Enargia's connection to impassioned oratory, to religion, and later to the

developing rhetoric of the sublime, lent it impact through the early modern era as both

pulpit practice and rhetorical discussion. However, by the eighteenth century, it seems to

suffer from the general decline of neoclassical rhetorical theory, and the term itself – as

well as its intact theoretical structure – becomes less relevant. Still, the history of enargia

indicates that the practice of theorizing transportation into imaginative worlds is not

without its own tradition – a tradition that seems to have been carried forward, in part,

through the popular stage.[22] As both Heinrich Plett and David McInnis have noted,

Shakespeare's prologues are notable examples of this kind of rhetoric (though McInnis

refers to this quality as "mind-traveling", his own term, rather than "enargia.")[23] One of

Plett's examples is the prologue to *Henry V*:

> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
> Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times, ... (26-30)[24]

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[22] Heinrich Plett, *Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age: The Aesthetics of Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), *passim*.

[23] McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[24] William Shakespeare, *The Life of Henry V*, ed. John Russell Brown. (New York: Signet Classic, 1988):4.

Although enargia itself loses significance as a topic for eighteenth-century criticism,
Shakespeare's works certainly had great significance, as to a lesser extent did the works
of Edward Young, who seems to have been significantly influenced by the trope.
Enargia's influence on sublime rhetoric in the period is more diffuse, but perhaps even
more profound. Because of the conceptual similarities and direct cultural link between
enargia, the rhetorical sublime and literary transportation, I discuss enargia's mutations
and significance in my second chapter, in connection to Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Virtual travel writing, as a genre, has also long relied upon the figure of self-
projection into an imagined world, and may even take on, as Michael McKeon notes,
implications of spiritual transit or of religious conversion as well, diving into the deeper
personal stakes of transported readership.[25] Dante's journey is an example in this mode,
as are the many spiritual voyages, tours of the cosmos, and even prospect poems that are
part of his legacy. Touati's *Fictions of the Cosmos* describes the way these voyages
functioned, for seventeenth-century readers, not only as means of vicarious travel, but
also as spaces for hypotheses, or even modes of evidence – just as enargic rhetoric had
been used as a mode of proof by means of vicarious vision.[26] On the narrative side, travel
tales like *Purchas his Pilgrimage*, as well as the increasingly proliferating true voyage
tales – or sometimes false ones – engendered the practice of "armchair travel," reading
conceived as a vehicle to faraway lands. That this is a figure of transportation is

[25] McKeon, "Virtual Travel." Conference presentation at *Scenographies du voyage en Nouvelle France et en Europe* (Quebec, 20-21 Sept. 2012).

[26] Frédérique Aït-Touati, *Fictions of the Cosmos: Science and Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2011). See also Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Voyages to the Moon* (New York: Macmillan, 1948) and *Newton Demands the Muse* (Princeton UP, 1946); on evidence and virtual witnessing, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (Princeton UP, 1985).

undeniable; that it expresses an underlying autonoetic mental process is also fairly

uncontroversial. But the figure of "armchair travel" lacks the specificity of the changes in

imaginative thought that I am tracing in eighteenth-century culture. Its metaphoric

vehicle – the idea of travel – is extremely available in many ages, leading

to a number of purely figural genealogies of transportation that source it to increased

travel in whatever period happens to be at the historian's hand: hence, McInnis places

"Mind-Traveling" in the Early Modern age and links it to increased travel; Burgess

places "transportation" in the Romantic era and links it to increased travel; and Alison

Byerly calls "virtual travel" a Victorian realist trope and links it, yet again, to increased

travel and tourism.[27] An eighteenth-century genealogy and metaphorical origin story for

transportation begins to look inevitable, particularly given the recent dates of Byerly's,

McInnis's, and Burgess's accounts. There is no doubt truth to these three history: travel

and personal mobility continue to rise throughout all of these periods, and so does virtual

travel. For this reason, I will not belabor the point again in my own genealogy of

transportation. Instead, I trace a different kind of origin: one not centered on broad

cultural and thematic changes, but on ways of thinking about imagination and about

travel that are quite specific to literary contexts; and on detailed, close exchanges of form

and of theory between individual poets in the loco-descriptive and sublime traditions. The

story that says that the more people travel, the more they are likely speak of autonoetic

experiences of books with that metaphor, is very likely perfectly true, but it has already

been told; and it is, per the cognitive hybridity of experiences of transportation, by

necessity only half of the story. What I am after is the very intricate cognitive poetics of

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[27] McInnis, *ibid.*; Burgess, *ibid.*; Byerly, *Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

autonoetic imagination that took place during the eighteenth century, that qualitatively altered the associations and figurations within the idea of "transportation" itself, that gave its theorization a philosophical home and its practice a poetic meaning beyond simple analogy, branching instead into some of the most central personal and aesthetic issues of the time.

That tighter, more directly imagination-centric focus is also the reason I concentrate on poetics in this thesis. It was in the practices and critical writings surrounding poetry and imagination that the conversation about imaginative self-projection largely, and certainly most overtly, took place. Particularly in early eighteenth-century criticism, novels are often not taken as seriously as imaginative works, and do not participate in the same aesthetic conversations. And yet this, in itself, provokes some interest: the novel, and narrative more generally, is currently considered the more prototypical site of transported reading, and eighteenth-century readers do seem to have experienced novels in these terms as well. As David Marshall discusses in *The Frame of Art*, a dominant feature of early novels is a blurring of the lines between art and life – features such as quixotism, claims to documentary reality (or "claims to historicity," to borrow, as Marshall does, a term from McKeon), even public celebration of the fictional triumph of Pamela's wedding – are aesthetic transgressions that do indicate a certain fascination with living life "as if we were there," or at least with obsessing about whether or not it is right to do so. These kinds of urges to participation are described by Gerrig as part of the psychological apparatus underpinning experiences of transported reading.[28]

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[28] Gerrig calls them "p-responses," specifically. On "claims to historicity," see McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987), *passim*.

These experiences do give rise to a somewhat separate conversation on transportation, but one centered figurally on escapism, idleness, and vacuity. I discuss this shadow discourse to poetic transportation in my third chapter, "Gothic Fugue," in reference to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* – a text whose evident indebtedness to the loco-descriptive tradition of Thomson's *The Seasons* allows it to act as a kind of link between the two figures, the positive poetics of transportation into imagination, and the negative fears of captivation and self-loss through engrossment in romance.

As Cynthia Wall notes, Radcliffe was also a vehicle for the entry of detailed, "realist" description into narrative, transmitting the loco-descriptive imaginative tradition into the Victorian realist novel: Walter Scott, for example, famously credits Radcliffe with integrating into her romances a descriptive richness that "had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry."[29] The story of realism's connection to transportation, that is, also may well run through the imaginations of eighteenth-century poets. However, the Victorian novel is quite simply beyond the scope of this project, and eighteenth-century proto-realisms do not fully overlap contemporary discussions of imaginative self-projection. Essentially, the overlap would have to inhere in one of two things. First, there is the idea that realism's presentation of topics closer to common life is aimed at or results in greater transportation; but given readers' propensities toward fanciful and unrealistically sentimental transportations, this seems an unlikely rationale. Writers from Aristotle onwards have often annexed imaginative self-projection to the ability to directly perceive truths, or to the principle of *incredulus odi*, detesting things that are unbelievable; but these theoretical values are not typically borne out in either the matter

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[29] in Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 2006): 201.

of reading that occasions transportation, or the writerly and poetic practices used to induce it, beyond the undoubted value of a writer's also being a keen sensory observer.[30] Second, there is the idea that realism is intended to provoke a literal illusion that the reader is somewhere else – something closer, that is, to realism or perspective in painting. This connection I willingly concede, especially where the realism of the plastic arts itself is concerned. Artistic perspective, which Panofsky described as constructing – and abstracting – an implied perceiver through perspective by mathematizing "psychophysiological space," is a close kin to contemporary conversations about poetic description and the "sister arts"; and, indeed, loco-descriptive poetry was directly influenced by the illusions of space in landscape painting, as I discuss in my first chapter.[31]

All of the above brings me to an important distinction in the historical genealogy of transportation: since, as is evident, related forms had long been present in the arts of rhetoric, stagecraft, devotional and philosophical imagination, and painting, part of the rise of a figure, specifically, of a transported reader must be attributed simply to the acceleration of print culture, and the rise of reading, during the eighteenth century, as a popular ludic activity. The more people read, that is, the more they discussed the psychological experience of reading. And this is, in part, no more than a confirmation that self-projection is an essential part of the imaginative apparatus of the mind. It was

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[30] Aristotle, *Poetics* XVII: "the poet should place the scene as far as possible, before his eyes. In this way, seeing everything with the utmost vividness, as if he were a spectator of the action, he will discover what is in keeping with it, and be most unlikely to overlook inconsistencies." (*Poetics*, Trans. S. H. Butcher [New York: Hill and Wang, 1961]: 87).
[31] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991 [1927]). On the connection between landscape painting and the loco-descriptive poetic tradition, see John Barrell's *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972).

the heady interchanges between poetics, criticism, and introspective observation of mental process that generated, however, the form and features that transportation would take on as the century progressed – a cultural milieu whose belief in the relevance of artistic experience as a means to understand the mind originated the kind of hybrid cognitive and literary inquiry to which today's neurocriticism, in a way, stages a return.

4. Plan of the Thesis

The four chapters that follow center on four significant moments in the eighteenth-century poetic history of literary transportation, and four different forms that it presents: a "raptured" eye, a soaring soul, a void or "fugue" of presence, and finally, the interrupting song of two distant birds. The first two chapters treat Thomson's *The Seasons* and Young's *Night Thoughts*, two of the (then) most enduring long-form poems, both completed around the mid-century. The discussions of these two poems are intended as complementary. The chapter on Thomson describes the way loco-descriptive form enacts a kind of embodied relocation of the reader into the landscape, consisting in a multisensory, and almost sensual, abandonment to perception. I describe this perspectival shift through a discussion of the core principles of autonoetic consciousness.

In the second chapter, on Young, I account for the interaction of this kind of spatial and embodied relocation with the older tradition of emotionally-mediated transportation – or "transport" – and use that discussion to adumbrate a relationship between enargia's persuasive rhetoric, and the newer psychological rhetorics of the religious sublime. In making this argument, I draw upon behavioral research on

transportation, persuasion and emotion, arguing that the psychological kinship of these three concepts is oddly overlooked by contemporary criticism on the sublime. These two chapters, taken together, establish the cognitive foundations of experiences of imaginative self-projection, and describe the way mid-eighteenth-century poetry refigures and interprets such experiences through images of voyage and loss of self.

My third chapter moves forward to the final decades of the century, and to a paired historical and cognitive critique of the values accrued by transported readership as its own idiosyncratic conversations developed. I read the dark and anxious suspenses of Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and Cowper's *The Task* in light of contemporary critiques of escapism, which are often transparently sexist and classist, but also in light of the neurological connection between the DMN and depressive rumination, which lends some credence to the concern about transportation – although not to its social apparatus. The chapter also describes Henry Home, Lord Kames's essential theory of "ideal presence," which gave the later century a technical term around which to organize discussions of autonoetic consciousness.

My fourth chapter closes the eighteenth-century history of transportation through a reading of two works by one of its most enthusiastic proponents, John Keats. Keats's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" gives a crowning emblem to the figural aspect of reading as a transportation to an imagined world. Another kind of closure occurs, however, in the "Ode to a Nightingale," where Keats stages a failure of transportation by attempting the same kind of virtual travel by means of the ear, rather than the eye. This kind of intersensory cognition, Keats finds, does not lend itself well to what he wants to do – but that, it turn, generates its own poetic power for his lyric.

Through these discussions, I sketch the relevance of, and shared conversations within, the eighteenth-century hybrid figure of imaginative self-projection. The relevance of imaginative self-projection to sympathy, a major part of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, is so well-known and commonly discussed that I have omitted it. In addition, I have wished to move away from the idea so popular in cognitive criticism, especially eighteenth-century cognitive historicism, that sympathy or social cognition is the principle *raison d'etre* of all fiction, at least where the brain is concerned – a view represented, for example, in works by the critics Zunshine and Vermeule, as well as a notably overreaching paper by Mar and Oatley.[32] I propose, instead, that imaginative self-projection stands on its own, placing transportation beside sympathy, if not precisely on level ground, as a significant force in eighteenth-century artistic life.

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[32] Zunshine, *ibid.*; Vermeule, *ibid.*; Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley, "The Function of Fiction Is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience" (*Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3:3 [2008]: 173-192).

Chapter One: "Snatched" into *The Seasons*

Cognitive research is often most valuable to literary history when it serves not as explanation, but as inspiration, placing emphasis on ideas and structures that differ from those we are accustomed to in our own discipline. The significant interest that cognitive neuroscience has recently lavished upon the nature and role of imagination offers historians of eighteenth-century literature an opportunity to revisit a familiar topic armed with some new inspiration. It is a central claim of this chapter, and indeed of this thesis as a whole, that one such overlooked area is the wide-ranging conversation, among eighteenth-century poets and philosophers, about the illusion of imaginative self-projection. From the perspective of pure history of ideas, this might seem only an additive quality: imagination with the self tacked on. However, recent studies in neuroimaging suggest that this is not so. Rather, self-projection may be a fundamental constituent of imaginative experience. The experience of being a projected self is, thus, from a psychological perspective, a candidate for being a quite basic property of cognition, and this has significant implications for how we ought to read the poetic and philosophic works that discuss it.

This chapter will provide an exposition of the neuroscience underpinning the claim for a psychologically basic capacity for self-projection, and describe its appearance in the formal principles of loco-descriptive poetry. The art of natural description

developed by loco-descriptive poets grounds much of the figural work that will become associated with its most literary idiom: transportation into imaginative worlds. I focus specifically on Thomson's experiments with imaginative self-projection in *The Seasons*, which, I maintain, still carry insight into the psychological nature of transportation, and thus allow the eighteenth century's own era of cognitive explorations to speak back to our own. Historical poetics is poised to explore this kind of question about the interaction of cognition and culture, because it offers a case study in how culture molds and constrains the expression of cognitive processes; and also because historical poetry's divergence from our own aesthetic commonplaces demonstrates the rich variety of literary experience that any psychology of ludic reading must encompass. Returning to the eighteenth century vogue for imaginative self-projection, for example, we encounter a version of literary transportation that is more unstable and varied than the one we may find described in modern theories, suggesting that transportation may be mediated by a variety of different kinds of self-projection.

Eighteenth-century literary history also indicates a strong relationship between transportation and what memory researchers call "autonoetic consciousness," or "autonoesis" – a connection first proposed by neuropsychologist Raymond Mar, as I have already briefly discussed in the introduction to this thesis.[33] "Autonoetic consciousness" refers to our ability to move our spatial or temporal locus of self, which in turn enables us to experience memories, engage in future-prospection, and perform other self-referential imaginings, including sympathetic identification. Autonoetic consciousness is a debated point in cognitive science, but it makes a particularly compelling theory from the

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[33] Mar (2004): 1422.

perspective of eighteenth-century literary history. Many notable literary movements of the period, including sublime writing, sentimentalism, and loco-descriptive verse, are deeply engaged with autonoetic modes of thought. Literary transportation, although a lesser scion, belongs to this same family of autonoetic forms, all of which proliferated during the century, often in dialogue with empiricist explorations of imagination.

Following the empiricist studies of perception that inspired him, Thomson's portrayals of imaginative self-projection in "The Seasons" are unusually centered on visual experience. In his descriptions, visual perception takes on a quality of intense, embodied immediacy that can become almost tactile, pulling the perceiver into a sense of presence within the landscape. These exploratory, experimental, and often exuberant perceptual encounters elide the uncertain boundary between subjective mind and objective nature. As a result, they pose a challenge to the association of loco-descriptive poetry with distance and hierarchy that predominates in readings such as those of John Barrell and Tim Fulford.[34] Thomson's rhetoric of embodied sensation represents a synthesis of autonoetic cognition with the historical moment of early empiricism – an instance of the rich mixture of cognition and culture that comprises the literary mind.

1. Transportation as Spatial Imagination

Most historical studies that address the eighteenth-century figure of literary "transport" refer to a now archaic, but then commonplace, definition of the term: excessive emotional response, a surge of sentiment that carries us away from our selves –

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[34] John Barrell, *ibid.*; Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

or at least our senses – but not in any particularly spatial way.[35] A few critics, however, have begun to tease out a significant poetics of vicarious mobility within the term, both as it applies to emotion and as it applies to the less-common sense of vicarious spatial "transport" into an imagined world. Miranda Burgess theorizes that "transport" was a metaphor tracking the rise of other real and figural kinds of mobility during the Romantic era: economic mobility of goods, physical mobility of persons, and sympathetic mobility of emotions.[36] Burgess' theory casts a very wide discursive net; James Chandler, on the other hand, offers a focused genealogy for vicarious experiences of "going beyond ourselves" in his work on the vehicular hypothesis. According to the Cambridge Platonists, Chandler writes, the soul rides in the physical "vehicle" of the sensorium, which literally vibrates as it receives sensation, producing emotion, and – by a kind of conservation of momentum – translating felt passion into the self-projections of sympathy.[37] While Chandler himself confines his theory to affect and sentimental writing, a reply by Anne Janowitz extends the vehicular soul to the poetic subgenre of the "mental tour of outer space," including the roving-eye descriptions of prospect poetry, which she argues "enact mental vehicularity." Janowitz's argument ties vehicular self-projection to a broader vogue for Newtonian action-at-a-distance.[38]

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[35] Peter De Bolla, for instance, calls emotion-impelled transport "the habitual trope of the eighteenth century reader" in *The Discourse of the Sublime*, p. 249.

[36] Burgess, *ibid.*.

[37] James Chandler, "The Languages of Sentiment," *Textual Practice* 22, no.1 (2008): 21-39.

[38] Anne Janowitz, "Response: Chandler's 'Vehicular Hypothesis' at Work," *Textual Practice* 22, no. 1 (2008): 41-46, 42. Janowitz's "mental tour of outer space" significantly overlaps with the "cosmic voyage" subgenre described by Marjorie Hope Nicolson in *Voyages to the Moon*.

All three accounts of psychological mobility tie transportation closely to the rise of theories of sympathetic affect, and this emphasis on emotion is, indeed, historically justified: in eighteenth-century aesthetics, the figure of vicarious physical transportation pales in comparison to the cultural significance of both sympathy and emotional rapture. Yet the spatial sense of "transport" does occur more frequently as the century persists; moreover, unlike its emotional cousin, it seems to be particularly associated with the genre of nature poetry. Thomas Tickell announces his intervention into pastoral poetry by declaring that its "pleasing delusion" can "transport us into a kind of *Fairy Land*"; later in the century, critic John Langhorne remarks, "What poet can read scenes in Virgil's Georgics, and Thomson's Seasons, without being transported to the very places they describe, and feeling the enthusiasm from which they flowed!"[39] While these spatial versions of transportation share thematic ground with their affective cousin, they are conceptually, psychologically, and often generically distinct. The representational imagination seems to have its own inherent logic of transportation, one whose difference should not be occluded through analogy to related forms and themes.

During the early eighteenth century, nature poetry became deeply invested in techniques for depicting real acts of seeing and sensing space. This trend toward poetics of "contexts and placements," as Eric Rothstein puts it, began to orient natural description toward forms that enabled the illusion of real presence in a vicarious place, reinforcing a continuity between the experiences of seeing the "Book of Nature," and of

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[39] Thomas Tickell, *The Guardian* no. 22 (April 6th, 1713), (London: J. Tonson, 1714): 128-132, 128; John Langhorne, *The Effusions of Friendship and Fancy* (London: T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1763), 59.

reading a book.[40] Such a continuity would have found validation in reputable

contemporary psychology: the faculty of the "fancy," which mediated both primary

perception and recreative mental imagery, provided a link between the experience of real,

physical presence in a landscape and the virtual presence experienced when reading about

that landscape. Thomson depicts this easy elision between real and read scene in

"Spring":

> Or lie reclined beneath yon spreading ash
> Hung o'er the steep, whence, borne on liquid wing,
> The sounding culver shoots, or where the hawk,
> High in the beetling cliff, his eyrie builds.
> There let the classic page thy fancy lead
> Through rural scenes, such as the Mantuan swain
> Paints in the matchless harmony of song ;
> Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift
> Athwart imagination's vivid eye ;
> ("Spring" 451-459)[41]

The very familiarity of the scene that Thomson describes – a retreat to a quiet place,

away from the intrusions of the physical senses, that proceeds almost seamlessly to a

further retreat within the pages of a book – conceals the unusual effort the poet makes to

depict its psychological transitions. The two birds placed into the scene (including a

"culver," or dove) act as emblems for the reader's liberated soul, reinforcing the requisite

leap from physical body to wandering mind. Moreover, Thomson emphasizes the spatial

motion of that transition with a network of deictic prepositions – "beneath," "o'er,"

"whence," "where," "there," "through," "athwart" – that meticulously place and move us

through the logic of the scene. The transportation that reads as commonplace for a

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[40] Rothstein, *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Poetry 1660-1780* (Boston: Routledge, 1981), 48.
[41] All quotations from *The Seasons* are taken from Thomson, *The Seasons and The Castle of Indolence* [1746], ed. James Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

modern reader seems to be more novel for Thomson, or at least to require a carefully idealized and controlled setting.

The care that Thomson takes with transportation in *The Seasons* tracks contemporary usage of the vocabulary of transport among critics. During the early century, remarks about literary transportation tend to be presented as new observations; by the 1760's, however, the term becomes more frequent, as well as more stable and consistent. Langhorne's 1763 reading of Thomson presents transportation as an occasion for aesthetic praise; John More, in 1777, even uses it to excuse the poet's botanical inaccuracies, explaining that "Thomson, in every season, generally transports his readers to that part of the globe which feels and discovers its influence most remarkably."[42] This increasing acceptance of spatial transportation in critical vocabulary coincides with a shift in loco-descriptive technique that transformed the already highly spatialized genre of prospect poetry into an invitation to self-projections into the poetic scene.

At least since Denham's "Cooper's Hill," prospect poems had used the act of visually scanning a landscape as an index for the poet's mental speculation, externalizing shifts of mind into shifts of vision. The landscape becomes an epistemic map, one capable of uniting pastoral, georgic, and political verse under the auspices of an exploration of man's place in "God's dispensation."[43] The signal formal technique for the prospect poet is transitioning from topic to topic through the device of embodied ocular movements, often resulting in a turn to exploration of the nature of perception itself. Thomson, writing at the height of the loco-descriptive tradition, elaborates on this

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[42] John More, *Strictures, critical and sentimental, on Thomson's seasons* (London: Richardson and Urquhart, 1777), 34.
[43] Rothstein (1981), 48.

wandering-perception structure to emphasize the act of self-projection latent within it. A

paired encounter in "Autumn," for example, seems to translate the topical-indexical

wandering of Milton's "l'Allegro" / "il Penseroso" into a meditation on different

occasions of imaginative travel:

<div style="text-align:center">

[1]
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes ;
Inflames imagination ; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness ; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
[…]
Oh ! bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales,
(1010-1013, 1030-1031)

[2]
Oh ! lead me to the wide extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe !
[…]
While there with thee the enchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of Attic land ;
(1041-1042, 1054-1056)

</div>

In [1], the speaker responds to a mood of "philosophic melancholy," which prompts him

to seek the isolation of "visionary vales"; in [2], he is walking the grounds of the

neoclassical garden at Stowe. Neither presents a straightforward prospect poem, but both

are engaged in the same loco-descriptive logic. The latter Stowe episode transforms a

physical movement into a kind of imaginative temporal displacement. The melancholic

episode in [1] is its inverse, segueing from a psychological mood into a cry for literal

physical relocation. Both place the characteristic loco-descriptive emphasis on physical

place and its relationship to topic; but Thomson, rather more than Denham or his other

predecessors, is quick to interpose the mediating faculties of fancy or imagination to

literalize and explain that topical shift. In a poem like Milton's "l'Allegro," a mood of mirth might occasion a shift of scene to a meadow filled with larks and daisies simply as a matter of metaphorical association; in *The Seasons*, on the other hand, the poetic speaker doesn't suddenly travel to ancient Greece – it is only his detached fancy that "treads" its groves in thought. Conventional metaphor has been transposed into the odd metonymy of imaginative self-projection.

Classical georgic gets a similar Thomsonian update. The close of "Autumn" is, as Kevis Goodman notes, a rather direct quotation of Virgil's second *Georgic*; but Thomson takes Virgil's visionary revelation, and turns it into a vicarious voyage.[44] "Spread before my eyes / The planets and the stars" (477-8), Virgil asks his muse, "Reveal the hidden motions of the sea, / That force the waters up and sink them down" (450-1).[45] Thomson, in contrast, begs Nature, "Snatch me to heaven" (1354), removing himself to the location of the revelation; and then, "through the disclosing deep / Light my blind way" (1358-59), as if physically following the trace of the events. The specificity of Thomson's update marks the eighteenth century's new interest in perception as not only a means of revelation, an inside mental reflection of the outside world, but as something more – a faculty that could, at least in illusion, carry us across the boundaries separating mind from world, real from fantasied.

The evolving kinship between prospect form and imaginative travel is evident in the critical genealogy of pictorialist description that Ralph Cohen traces in *The Art of Discrimination*. The new poetic significance of description in Thomson's era, Cohen

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[44] Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 60.
[45] Virgil, *Georgics*, trans. Smith Palmer Bovie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 50-51.

notes, was registered in discussions of vivid imagery and experiences of "immediate presence" – qualities linking visual imagination to the capacity for mental travel. Cohen ascribes these traits to an inward turn in poetics, arguing that Thomson's descriptions belong to the "visionary imagination," rather than mere visual perception.[46] Yet Cohen's desire to partition imagination from vision overlooks the psychological complexities that Thomson and his empiricist contemporaries found within perception itself. Close attention to the visual act is precisely what allows Thomson's descriptions to act as a mediating technology for imaginative self-projection. His focalization hews so closely to the perceiving eye that sometimes we may seem quite simply to have followed it into the landscape – or, rather, to have been involuntarily drawn into it. Elaine Scarry has suggested that we read such rich poetic imagery as "instructions for the production of actual sensory content" in readers' minds, much as sheet music gives instructions for the production of actual music.[47] But where Scarry's readings of visual imagery focus on qualities like color, solidity, and vivacity, Thomson's descriptions often center on spatial and motor properties – primary qualities of Lockean imagination, where Scarry's are secondary. The mental performance of this kind of imagery might well provoke Thomson's readers to experience the self-projection he describes:

> At length the finished garden to the view
> Its vistas opens and its alleys green.
> Snatched through the verdant maze, the hurried eye
> Distracted wanders ; now the bowery walk
> Of covert close, where scarce a speck of day
> Falls on the lengthened gloom, protracted sweeps ;

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[46] Ralph Cohen, *The Art of Discrimination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 131-187, 137.

[47] Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming By The Book* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 6.

<div align="center">
Now meets the bending sky, the river now
Dimpling along…
("Spring" 516-523)
</div>

The mix of ocular and perambulatory imagery in these lines conflates perception of nature with presence in the natural scene. The eye "sweeps" in a way that feet cannot, but it also "meets" the sky with figurative touch; wandering and hurrying describe perception in metaphorically bodied terms. The repeated deictics "now," "Now," "now" insist on a serial experience of the scene, an imposition of the structure of walking, or at least tracing with a finger, onto the act of seeing. Thomson's phenomenology of vision is a reminder that sensory experience is not necessarily cognitively simple. As Ellen Esrock points out in *The Reader's Eye*, such mental imagery may have "unique cognitive and affective consequences" beyond simple comprehension.[48] Transportation, for Thomson, is just such a "cognitive consequence" of performing mental imagery. It raptures us into the immediate presence of each image the poet describes, just as the "finished garden" has "snatched" the poetic speaker's own eye.

2. Autonoetic Imagery

Thomson's exploration of the way imagery vicariously relocates us took place during a historical period of intensive, empirically-motivated speculations about perception and its relationship to imagination, and the influence on *The Seasons* of both Addison's philosophy of imagination and Newton's experiments in optics is well

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[48] Ellen Esrock, *The Reader's Eye: Visual Imaging as Reader Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), vii.

known.[49] Given their common orientation toward empirical observation of perception, it should not surprise us that Thomson's poetry echoes many studies on imagination conducted in our own modern era of empirical psychology. Studies of mental scene-creation have increasingly found that mental schemas are encoded with self-referential, embodied modes of interacting with the objects and spaces they contain – for example, distances represented in terms of reach, or locations in terms of visual perspective, rather than as objective absolutes. Studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have also tied scene-creation to a network of brain regions that are associated with autonoetic phenomena, or modes of mental travel: autobiographical memory, future-prospection, sympathetic identification, and even map-reading.

Before reviewing these studies, I would like to clarify once more that I do not intend to adopt a framework in which poetry is reduced to an illustrative example of psychology; nor a framework in which historical scholarship becomes a search for this or that cultural factor that enabled the revelation of a now-known truth about the mind, as if some flash of fortunate enlightenment had occurred in the midst of the murky ignorance of the past. I maintain that we should, however, acknowledge the influence of human psychology on the development of literary and cultural movements.[50] The recently-uncovered functional and neurological link between different kinds of autonoetic self-projection suggests a compelling new framework for the relationships between the

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[49] Alan Dugald McKillop, *The Background of Thomson's "Seasons"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1942), *passim*. A more recent account of Thomson's connections to early modern optics has been given by Goodman (38-66).

[50] This principle of cognitive literary historicism is discussed at more length in foundational works such as Ellen Spolksy's "Cognitive Literary Historicism: A Response to Adler and Gross" (*Poetics Today* 24, no. 2 [2003]: 161-182), and Alan Richardson's "Introduction: Cognitive Historicism" (in *The Neural Sublime,*1-16).

concurrent eighteenth-century vogues for sympathy and moral sentiments, prospect poetry, the figure of the transported reader, and the sublime: all belong to the natural category of autonoetic cognition. Grouping them under its aegis allows us to account for their thematic relationship with the strong explanatory tie of common neurological ground, while allowing for the looser thematic links and discursive, cultural particularities of each mode. Under this model, literary transportation emerges as neither an epiphenomenon of sympathy, nor part of a grand cultural meme of mobility, but rather a culturally and psychologically distinct offshoot of the well-known empiricist explorations of the phenomenology of imagination, a category which ought to be expanded to include autonoetic forms of imagination.

Treating transportation as one possible cognitive mode of autonoesis, experienced in response to acts of imagining fictitious scenes, also enables a historicist critique of the more holistic modern understanding of transportation. The visuospatial transportation that Thomson gives us in *The Seasons* does not entirely resemble the kind of all-encompassing, reality-abnegating experience that we mean today when we talk about being transported to, say, James Cameron's cinematic world of Pandora, or immersed in a novel. Instead, modern readers are likely to find reading *The Seasons* effortful rather than immersive, in stark contrast to the responses of Thomson's near-contemporaries More and Langhorne, leaving us wondering if the two eras are even talking about the same phenomenon. It is entirely possible that we are not; the oddly spatialized transportation of *The Seasons* poses a problematic case that challenges our preconceptions about what kinds of cognition literary transportation ought to entail. We should not only question the similarity of the historical and modern "transportations," but also open the possibility that

the response we now call "transportation" might be inherently diffuse, both in its psychological origins and experiential corollaries – a category of related modes of autonoetic response to literature.

The term "autonoesis" originates in cognitive science's debates about memory, although it has recently been extended to the variety of imaginative functions I have adumbrated above. In the 1970's, Endel Tulving noted that both self-referential memories and future-prospection required the ability to project our sense of self into different temporal frames – a re-experienced past, a virtual future – and theorized that this was a basic cognitive function, which he named "autonoetic consciousness." Tulving later found evidence for the neural basis of autonoesis in a patient, K.C., who had suffered traumatic brain injury that left him with autobiographical amnesia, but unimpaired factual recall: K.C. remembered information that he had learned, but not the experience of learning it. K.C. was also significantly impaired in projecting future actions. In short, he could not imaginatively shift his temporal perspective.[51] Recently, using fMRI evidence, Buckner and Carroll, as well as Spreng, Mar, and Kim, have connected Tulving's autonoetic consciousness to a range of other tasks, including map navigation and sympathetic perspective-taking, that are associated with a network of regions called the "default mode network." Buckner and Carroll posit that these tasks are all autonoetic, requiring the ability to organize information around a vicarious spatiotemporal position. Hassabis and Maguire have disputed Buckner and Carroll's argument by additionally linking the default mode network with imagining fictional scenes, arguing that scene-

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[51] Tulving recounts the evolution of his idea of autonoesis in "Origins of Autonoesis in Episodic Memory" (*The Nature of Remembering: Essays in Honor of Robert G. Crowder*, ed. Roediger et al. [Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001]: 17-34).

creation, not self-referentiality, is the shared function.[52] However, the two positions may not be so distinct; numerous studies in cognitive psychology indicate that our ability to comprehend fictional scenes involves a number of self-referential cognitions.

When we read texts, we create mental schemas as part of our process of comprehension. Schemas are simply mental representations of the actions and information in the text, not pictorial, life-like images; they can be quite sketchy, not terribly accessible to phenomenal consciousness, and need not preserve much spatial information.[53] When spatial information is salient, however, schemas tend to entail the presence of a perceiving self, which provides a spatial and emotional vantage, and also embodied, action-directed means of representing the objects in the scene. The presence of a focalizing figure in a scene – whether object or person – makes nearby objects more salient for recall, for example, and readers will preferentially use a scene-internal perspective for spatial comprehension.[54] Recent studies show an even more structural intervention of self-referential cognitions in imagining space. In one study, Dennis Proffitt found that simply wearing a backpack made people visually estimate a slope as objectively steeper; Longo and Laurenco, in another, found that people with longer arms

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[52] Randy L. Buckner and Daniel C. Carroll, *ibid.*; Spreng, Mar, and Kim, *ibid.*; Demis Hassabis and Eleanor A. Maguire, "Deconstructing episodic memory with construction" (*Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11, no. 7 [2009]: 299-304). See also Mar (2004), 1422, 1429; and Edward A. Vessel, G. Gabrielle Starr, and Nava Rubin, "The brain on art: intense aesthetic experience activates the default mode network" (*Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 6, no. 66 [2012]).

[53] Graesser et al., *ibid.*

[54] Mike Rinck and Gordon H. Bower, "Anaphora Resolution and the Focus of Attention in Situation Models," *Journal of Memory and Language* 34 (1995): 110-131; David J. Bryant, Barbara Tversky, and Nancy Franklin, "Internal and External Spatial Frameworks for Representing Described Scenes," *Journal of Memory and Language* 31 (1992): 74-98; and Amy Coplan, "Empathetic Engagement with Narrative Fictions," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 62:2 (2004): 141-152 for a review.

defined a wider area around themselves to be "near." Studies like these support a growing

consensus in psychology that mental representations are embodied and multimodal,

rather than propositional: the bodies that we use to perceive and act in the world retain an

essential presence in the various spatial, proprioceptive, and sensory modes with which

we cognitively represent that world. We not only inhabit our mental schemas; we inhabit

them with the ghostly traces of our own physical and sensory bodies.[55]

Because vision plays a key role in triggering spatial awareness, Thomson's loco-

descriptive emphasis on the visual qualities of experience leads him fairly easily into this

kind of embodied imagination. It is not so much that his roving eye carries selfhood as a

vehicle would, as that it acts as a seamless extension of his perceiving consciousness – a

phantom self-concept that reaches into the scene he describes. This kind of continuity

gives Thomson's prospect poems the easy gait of a walk, rather than the rupture of the

sublime. The poet's eye simply takes up the stroll where the man himself has ended it,

extending the boundaries of the self to the limits of visual perception.

> Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course ?
> […]
> Say, shall we wind
> Along the streams ? Or walk the smiling mead ?
> […]
> or ascend,
> While radiant Summer opens all its pride,
> Thy hill, delightful Shene ? Here let us sweep
> The boundless landscape ; now the raptured eye,
> Exulting swift, to huge Augusta send…
> […]

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[55] Dennis R. Proffitt, "Embodied Perception and the Economy of Action," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 1, no. 2 (2006): 110-122; M.R. Longo and S.F. Laurenco, "Space Perception and Body Morphology: Extent of Near Space Scales with Arm Length," *Experimental Brain Research* 117 (2007): 285-90; Lawrence W. Barsalou, "Grounded Cognition," *Annual Review of Psychology* 59 (2008): 617-45.

There let the feasted eye unwearied stray…
("Summer" 1401-1417)

These lines, from the Hagley Park episode of *The Seasons*, transform a moment of prospective wandering into the more liberated imaginings of visual autonoesis. The "unwearied straying" of the "feasted eye" continues, joyfully, for a further thirty lines, before the poem turns to a panegyric on British flourishing. Thomson's suggestion is that the spirit might easily continue what the physical body, having achieved the limits of its hill, can no longer sustain: the "boundless" landscape requires the "unwearied" eye.

3. Textures of Perceptual Exchange

Thomson's poetic techniques for the projection of a self into a scene offer a corrective to the persistent critical tendency to account for the prospect poem genre as an expression of cultural themes of power and stability. Political, rather than psychological, readings of loco-descriptive vision have dominated Thomson criticism since John Barrell's influential account of *The Seasons* in *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place.* Barrell claims that "Thomson is able to see the landscape, not as something in which he is involved, and which is all round him, but as something detached from him, *over there*: his eye may wander over the view, but his own position is fixed, and from his viewpoint he can organize the landscape into a system of parallel bands and flat perspectives by which only he can comprehend what he sees."[56] The well-bred poet exercises power and taste by unifying the landscape in a hierarchical aesthetic scheme, like the careful compositions of the Italian landscape painter Claude. Following Barrell,

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[56] Barrell, 21.

Tim Fulford explicitly associates this aesthetic division with Gilpin's theory of the picturesque, arguing that Thomson takes a gentleman's distant point of view over the landscape, divorced from the peasant's, or "swain's," labour-based relationship to the land. Even ostensibly psychological accounts are not immune to Barrell's politics of vision; Patricia Meyers Spacks, for instance, turns away from visual phenomenology to claim that the visual descriptions in *The Seasons* are best understood as subordinated to Thomson's grander didactic and hierarchical purpose.[57]

These readings give genuine insight into Thomson's use of the natural world to praise both patron and Providence, but they can tell only a partial story. Thomson's commitment to the nationalist aims of his Whig patrons, and his allegiance to a hierarchical, orderly, Anglocentric universe, are indeed explicit in *The Seasons*. The form his descriptions take, however, does not echo this system of belief. Thomson's verses are not the orderly, hierarchical machines of an Alexander Pope; they are sprawling, metonymic structures, so copious and diffuse that the poet was able to drop in, take out, and move lengthy sections more or less at will over a decade of revision. That metonymic structural organization is also reflected in Thomson's mode of visual narration, which Goodman describes as a "dialectic of distance and proximity," zooming between the

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[57] The trend of associating Thomson's eye with hierarchical or political power is quite persistent. Evan Gottlieb elaborates on the connection between Thomson's powerful, uniting eye and the "colonizing rhetoric" of Addison's "diffusive touch," which I read rather differently later in this essay; both Gottlieb and Kevis Goodman identify the extended imaginary tour of the "torrid zone" ("Summer" 629-979) with an incipient imperialism that unites vision with possession, Goodman somewhat hesitatingly. (Fulford, *passim*; Gottlieb, "The Astonished Eye: The British Sublime and Thomson's 'Winter,'" *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 42, no. 1 [2001]: 43-57; Goodman, 57-58; Patricia Meyers Spacks, *The Poetry of Vision: Five Eighteenth-Century Poets* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1967]).

external, unifying vista, and the detailed, intimate work of the "wandering" eye.[58] Privileging Thomson's unity over his details disregards an integral part of what Thomson was doing with natural description.

The theory of autonoetic cognition gives us a new framework for understanding the cultural and historical significance of Thomson's rapturous wandering, not just its neurological basis. An overemphasis on Thomson's desire for unity and control has lead to some questionable reading of the poem's autonoetic moments. Barrell, for example, is forced to read well against the poetic grain in order to account for the agentic abandon of Thomson's eye, its tendency to become "raptur'd" or "snatched" into the texture of perceptual acts, closely tracking the organization of the objects it finds. Barrell explains that Thomson's odd passivity in these moments is attributable to the objects themselves, which "resist the organizing tendency" of the poet, enacting a grand struggle between poet-subject and natural object.[59] Yet this antagonistic reading must ignore the positive affective tone of Thomson's descriptions of abandon; the experience of the eye's passivity is not marked by anxiety, but rather by pleasure. The "dialectic" that Barrell reads as struggle is, I would suggest, better understood as an exploration of the autonoetic possibilities of visual imagination, which Thomson portrays as a poetic impulse to merge with the objects of perception. The eye that was "Snatched through the verdant maze" ("Spring" 516) constantly moves between natural objects, entangling and losing us in a pleasant, gradual world.

A notable passage from "Autumn" reveals Thomson's embodied descriptive technique at work:

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[58] Goodman, 40.
[59] Barrell, 26.

From heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence shook
Of parting Summer, a serener blue,
With golden light enlivened, wide invests
The happy world. Attempered suns arise
Sweet-beamed, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm ; while broad and brown, below,
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep they stand ; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain ;
A calm of plenty ! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow.
Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky ;
The clouds fly different ; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds the illumined field,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along –
A gaily chequered, heart-expanding view,
Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
Unbounded tossing in a field of corn.
("Autumn" 25-42)

Artfully composed descriptions like this one create a feeling of natural abandon and intimacy by carefully weaving an implied perceiving eye into the texture of the landscape itself. As the description begins, the scene metaphorically *opens*—it is "invested" with a light that stretches it wide, almost like the opening of a great eye. Then Thomson proceeds to trace our perceptual attention with his motion verbs: the "attempered suns" that "arise" pull us to the top of the scene, and then we begin to move gracefully down, "shedding" through the clouds to the wheat "below," whose heads of grain "hang" on their "deep" standing stalks, bringing us down to the very earth. Barrell has described this gradual process as a hierarchical layering, like the layers of depth in a landscape painting of Claude; but what Thomson emphasizes is not compositional stasis, but progressive motion. Barrell's own quotation from the painter Richard Wilson—that "you may walk in one of Claude's pictures and count the miles"—suggests that even in painting, eighteenth

century criticism conceived of perceptual depth-of-field in roughly autonoetic terms. The impression of depth is about more than order: it is about creating a scene that we can enter by projecting our awareness along the vector of our perceiving eyes.[60]

The perceiving eye is our window into the work of scene-creation, but Thomson also encodes an embodied presence deep in the form of his description by placing emotional and agentic qualities within its trajectories of motion. The sun sheds "calm," not light; the grain is not only "silent," it is "heavy." In other words, not only does our eye wander through the scene, but the rest of our perceiving, experiencing, emotional self also follows behind. Adding to that intricate texture, the second half of the passage seems to transfer momentum from the perceiver into literal motion within the natural scene itself. The air "falls," tracing the path of our eye has just traveled, and, upon the verb "gives," hands its momentum to the breeze—and suddenly we are all in outward sweeping movements: the sky is "rent," its shadows "sweep along," and the perceiver's heart is also "expanded" by the view. Motion crosses between perceiver and scene in a poetic abandonment of the logic of causation. Finally, Thomson explicitly reveals the eye itself, whose literal body, in a formal echo of its "circling" work, recapitulates the subjective perceptual acts that have just taken place as an "unbounded tossing" – as if it has been released from the bounds of both poet's and nature's control.

Thomson's description elides the distinctions between perceiver, object, and representation by taking us so close to nature that we in effect become the landscape. Moments appear, transfer momentum, and slide us across the textures of the perceptual encounter – ocular motion, spatial orientation, affect, action – creating a fragile and

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[60] Quoted in Barrell, 8.

transient network of allegiances, much like the transience of the alliterations ("broad and brown," "hang the heavy head") that lend visual motion an auditory echo. The imbrication of sensory and physical properties performs our involvement and our transport into the scene: it is as if the whole body, not only the eye, travels between the natural elements as we attend to each in turn. This attenuation of self can result, at its most extreme, in a sort of *disjecta membra poetae*, as described by Heather Keenleyside in her article "Personification for the People" – the landscape of *The Seasons* is littered with bodily figures and images, detached eyes, personified objects, sympathetic transferences, that work to trouble the division between human agency and natural objectivity.[61] *The Seasons* is a permeable space – not simply a world that can be visited, but a domain of subjective and objective exchange opened by perceptual cognition.

The permeability of Thomson's landscape signals a far more complicated and surprising picture of eighteenth century autonoetic experience than vehicular theories, or modern ideas of distinct "fictional worlds," might suggest. While the device of a vehicular "fancy" that detaches and carries selfhood does structure some of Thomson's descriptions, such as the lengthy bird's-eye tour of the tropics in "Summer," his autonoetic figures become most urgent and intricate in explorations of vision itself. Thomson is particularly fascinated by light, whose tenuous matter enables him to juxtapose subjective and objective aspects of vision so closely as to make them functionally identical:

> Young Day pours in apace,
> And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
> The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top

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[61] Keenleyside, "Personification for the People: On James Thomson's *The Seasons*," *ELH* 76, no. 2 [2009]: 447-473).

> Swell on the sight and brighten with the dawn.
> ("Summer" 52-55)

In these lines, light is figured as a kind of fluid – it "pours" and spreads "wide," like wine decanted into a broad-based vessel. As the description proceeds, our visual perspective rises to follow it—the fluid level rises up, past the rocks to the mountaintop, where literal dripping water and mist accentuate the metaphor. Light is standing in for the motions of an implied perceiving eye, a functional metonymy of light as perception, the optical medium as the optical act. The culminating image emphasizes the interpenetration of perceptual acts with the physical medium that enables them. The rocks "swell on the sight" as they brighten, again taking a fluid, malleable metaphor to express the action of light. Following that metaphorical movement that has governed the description thus far, the mountains "swell" because we now see them, the light has made them bloom in us, they are appearing on our retinas. But they also "swell" in another, more physical sense: the refraction of light in the particles of mist, a Newtonian topic that Thomson was fond of, would have given the rocks a quite literal aura of light. In the mountains that "swell on the sight," the physical mechanics of light and the phenomenology of perception, which had been linked throughout the description, are joined in a single image and moment, as if they truly were the same thing.

Thomson's conflation of internal perception and its exterior targets extends beyond what Frances Ferguson calls the essential "hybridity" of all mental objects, which "cannot be assigned to either subjectivity or objectivity" – a problem that she traces through eighteenth century sublime philosophy.[62] Rather than collapsing the world into a

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[62] Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.

solipsistic internal representation, Thomson joyfully projects perception out into the material world, broadening the liminal domain of visual exchange so far that it threatens the ontological boundary between the world and its mental representation. Thomson's poetic faith rests in the reality of autonoetic illusion, the perceptual action-at-a-distance that gives us the sensation of proximity to the perceived.

4. Empiricists on Perceptual Autonoesis

The illusion that the self extends to the bounds of its perceptual sphere currently lies somewhere between fanciful metonymy and psychological tic. For the early empiricists, however, the ontological status of perceptual acts and their mental representations remained a more open topic of speculation. In her reading of *The Seasons* in *Georgic Modernity*, Goodman describes the way new technologies for sensation-at-a-distance, like the microscope and telescope, led to rising philosophical interest in the way vision generates our ideas of spatial order. Goodman's reading concerns the way these technological mediations disrupted the natural alignment of vision with spatial cognition, but I would like, instead, to pause and expand upon that natural alignment itself, because it parallels the structure of Thomson's visual autonoesis.

As Goodman notes, Berkeley finds a natural connection between visual perception and haptic, action-oriented cognition, writing that "the objects perceived by the eye alone have a certain connexion with tangible objects, whereby we are taught to foresee what will ensue upon the approach or application of distant objects to our own

body."[63] Sight doesn't exactly let us touch these "tangible" objects, but it gives us

information about what would happen if we were to touch them: vision, that is, causes an

automatic prospection of the future, a kind of habitual autonoetic simulation that is forged

by our past experiences. Embodied, autonoetic cognition becomes naturalized to mere

vision, cued by "the eye alone." In "The Pleasures of Imagination," Addison takes up

Berkeley's point as a means to explain how vision can, at a distance, grasp information

and generate knowledge. Sight, Addison tells us, is a weird version of tactile sensation, a

"more delicate and diffusive Kind of Touch" that "brings into our reach some of the most

remote Parts of the Universe."[64] Addison's language summons an image of sight as a

ghostly hand that stretches out beyond us, like Longo and Laurenco's arm-referential

field of perceived "nearness." It is unclear how literally Addison intends his image, but it

does give visual epistemology a materialist logic that is highly intuitive. Addison uses

vision as a haptic, proprioceptive faculty, extending our touch – our ability to have

physical, even if "diffusive," contact with objects – past the bounds of our physical reach.

As Starr has pointed out more recently, Hogarth's descriptions of vision also have these

kind of haptic and embodied qualities; he describes three-dimensional objects as a

process of imaginatively inhabiting them from the inside out, which, as Starr points out,

"involves a projection of self" (71-2), and also writes that the famously sinuous line of

beauty has the effect of "lead[ing] the eye a wanton kind of chase" (139), a performative

maze that echoes many of Thomson's.[65]

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[63] Goodman, 47.

[64] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* No. 411 [June 21, 1712], in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965), 3:535-539, 536.

[65] Starr, 71-2, 139.

The use of concrete, bodily properties as a means to conceptualize spatial and objective cognition allows visual perception to become part of the same material continuum as the rest of the natural world, undermining strict representational dualism. Like Thomson's descriptions, these philosophical explorations of embodied and autonoetic imagination open the possibility that perception and physical reality might be stitched into the same ontological plane. Genuine epistemic causation becomes possible between the distant object and the ghostly hand, just as, in "Summer" 51-54, the phenomenal experience of perceiving a mountaintop is identical to the physical refraction of light in dawn mist. The idea that a distance perceived "out there" could produce a commensurate distance in the mind, for example, is very concrete in Hobbes' more overt materialism. "The mediation of nerves and other strings and membranes of the body, continued inwards to the brain and heart," writes Hobbes, "causeth there a resistance, or counter-pressure, or endeavor of the heart to deliver itself; which endeavor, because *outward*, seemeth to be some matter without. And this *seeming*, or *fancy*, is that which men call *sense*."[66] Not only does light literally touch our eyes, that moment of contact materially shapes the experience that we have of a world of distances and directions. Hobbes' empirical logic of spatial perception transforms cognition into a kind of naïve physiological mirror: sensation simply *is* the impression we have that things really are out there, and that very impression is itself part of the causal and material "springs" that comprise the physical world, including the physical mind.

Perceptual materialism opens the bounds that keep imaginative representations securely in our heads, providing a counter-discourse within empirical philosophy itself to

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[66] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1668], ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994): 6.

empiricism's dangerous potential for solipsism. No matter how refined our philosophical justification of solipsism, autonoetic and embodied experiences of imagination stubbornly refuse to acknowledge a strict boundary between mind and world, providing an intuitive justification of our membership in the material world. In *The Seasons'* treatments of light, that justification of the material nature of perception appears as an almost animist Providentialism, wherein spiritual, physical, and perceptual qualities animate nature both subjectively and objectively. McKillop traces this idea to the influence of Isaac Newton, who had made the controversial anti-dualist claim that the universe might be "God's sensorium," uniting all of creation in the form of a physically realized thought within the mind of the deity.[67] In *The Seasons*, the metaphor of the sun as a kind of eye – both physically lighting and metaphorically perceiving the world – seems to work this way, analogizing the animating gaze of a human perceiver to the divine animation of the world via the heat and light that invigorate vegetable life, sending the earth into its seasonal cycle.

The literal transformation of material light into perceptual life is responsible for Thomson's fullest realizations of the coextensivity of imagination and landscape. In Newton's work, the animism of light is more than metaphor; it is also the very physical transformation of solar energy into earthly forms. "The changing of bodies into light, and light into bodies," writes Newton, "is very conformable to the course of nature, which seems delighted with transmutations."[68] Likewise, in *The Seasons*, the sun is the grand and god-like perceiver of the world, whose "gaze" invests life and nutrition into the

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[67] McKillop, 33-34.

[68] Isaac Newton, "Queries to the Opticks" [1721], in *Philosphical Writings*, ed. Andrew Janiak (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 130.

world. When Thomson hails the sun as "Informer of the planetary train ! / Without whose quickening glance their cumbrous orbs / Were brute unlovely mass" ("Summer" 104-106), it is that animating material perception – the "glance" – that reaches out to "quicken" the planets. In the terrestrial sphere, light begets life, setting the ground in sensual motion:

> the penetrative Sun,
> His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
> Of vegetation, sets the steaming power
> At large, to wander o'er the vernant earth
> In various hues ; but chiefly thee, gay green !
> ("Spring" 79-83)

Light usually "generates" colors by means of illuminating and revealing them to a receiving eye. Here, however, the color is generated by a material "force," as if the earth itself were a retina in which perception might be realized in physical form.

Thomson's poetic account of Newton's famous decomposition of a rainbow connects this materialist perception with the boundary-eliding autonoetic experience of the perceiver, whose liberation from the dualist division between the physical and the imaginary lets him wander into a maze of engagement with the natural world.

> Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
> Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism ;
> And to the sage-instructed eye unfold
> The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
> From the white mingling maze. Not so the swain ;
> He wondering views the bright enchantment bend
> Delightful o'er the radiant fields, and runs
> To catch the falling glory ; but amazed
> Beholds the amusive arch before him fly,
> Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
> A softened shade, and saturated earth
> Awaits the morning beam, to give to light,

Raised through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
The balmy treasures of the former day.
("Spring" 208-221)

Thomson's description is a poetic labyrinth, connecting three aspects of autonoetic

perception through a unity of figure: they are all described as mazes. The perceptual

medium, white light, is itself actually a "various twine" of colors, a physical, structural

maze that is untangled through the refractive action of rain. The perceiver, the swain,

runs toward the rainbow, and as he approaches, becomes "amazed": he allows himself to

be caught up, like the eye that runs into the maze of the landscape. Finally, the perceptual

act is registered in the earth itself. Here, as in the earlier passage from "Spring," the earth

becomes a kind of material imagination, transmuting water and solar energy, through the

capillary action of the "plastic tubes," to generate all the forms of visible life. Medium,

subject, and object are all textures of perception, all caught up in the same maze.

This reading of Thomson's swain stands in direct opposition to one presented

recently by Ingrid Horrocks in *ELH*.[69] Horrocks argues that Romanticism transmutes the

structure of prospect poetry from its organization around a centered, commanding view to

organization around a wandering, uncentered poet. She identifies Thomson strongly with

prospect poetry, and identifies the figure of the swain as a purely objective precursor to

the later figure of the fully subjective, Wordsworthian wandering poet. While I do not

dispute Horrocks' literary genealogy, she too easily dismisses the acts of joyful

wandering that Thomson undertakes in *The Seasons*, which place his poetic voice and

function in parallel with that of the swain. Thomson, and the reader who follows his

commands to "see" and to "go," allows himself to become displaced from his easy sense

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[69] Ingrid Horrocks, "'Circling Eye' and 'Houseless Stranger': The New Eighteenth-Century Wanderer (Thomson to Goldsmith)," *ELH* 77:3 (2010): 665-687.

of where he is, caught up instead in his immediate surroundings, and passively, inexorably guided forward. Vision becomes Thomson's paradigmatic means to literary transportation because of the poet's willingness to take the position of that objective presence within the scene – to become the "amazed" swain, racing with foolish literalism to the limits of perception.

Such abandonment, however, can go too far, particularly when self-projection falls not into the spatial universe of light, but rather the passional economy of desire. In a cautionary note to lovers, Thomson describes too-rapt rapture in terms of overly constrained vision: the absence of the beloved results in a kind of tunnel vision, as the "dark" depressed affect of longing, and the narrow focus of amatory desire, are synthesized in a universe of epistemic closure:

> …the darkened sun
> Loses his light…
> …and yon bright arch,
> Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.
> All Nature fades extinct; and she alone
> Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
> Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
> ("Spring" 1009-1015)

As the beloved's presence, the "sun," passes away, the scene darkens, but the horizon's "bright arch" does not simply fade; instead, it "contracts" into an enclosed "dusky vault." The extreme closeness of the lover's focus on his beloved delimits his connection to the natural world, as though vision has been reduced to a conduit. As the poem proceeds, "his wafted spirit flies" through this tunnel "To the vain bosom of his distant fair" (1019-1021), leaving his body "Exanimate by love" (1052), a condition that he soon consummates with a literal suicide. Sensory rapture can utterly divide the soul from its

seat – unless, that is, as Thomson insinuates, we keep our eyes open to the broader "arch" of light and nature. The unfortunate lover is echoed in Thomson's depiction of a hapless swain drowned in a bog at night, bereft of the "fair power / Of light to kindle and create the whole" ("Autumn" 1143-4). In both cases, the lack of a well-lit "gay variety" (1142) to pull the eye into a more lively, diverse relationship with nature leads to a tragic utter abnegation of the self.

Several different modes of autonoetic projection are also joined in the poet's description of a startled hare:

> … o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
> Vain is her best precaution ; though she sits
> Concealed with folded ears, unsleeping eyes
> By Nature raised to take the horizon in,
> And head couched close betwixt her hairy feet
> In act to spring away. The scented dew
> Betrays her early labyrinth; and deep,
> In scattered sullen openings, far behind,
> With every breeze she hears the coming storm ;
> ("Autumn" 409-417)

The hare, in these lines, is the living center of a perceptual maze. She has trailed her own scent in a "labyrinth" through the wheat field in a futile attempt to mislead the pursuing hounds (figuratively, the "storm"), and her own trace also mirrors the physical qualities of the landscape that contains her – the "mazes" of the brook in whose bank she hides. The maze of scent has been left by the past motions of the hare's body, and is waiting to be followed by the dog's keen nose and pursuing body. This animal tableau is accessible to us, however, only as past memory, future prospection, and animal sympathy with the impossible sensory register of canine smell. Formally, the hare's labyrinth mirrors the kind of performance Thomson demands of us, the saccades of a wandering eye on a

landscape; yet this is a performance that can only be achieved if we navigate several shifting modes of mental travel. The description is a poetic showpiece of the autonoetic loco-descriptive imagination.

If autonoesis is the general capacity for mental travel, the transported reader is an autonoetic traveler let loose on fictional matter. She may be transported by her embodied mental recreation of a landscape, or by her sympathy for a hare, or through the ecstatic delight of a sudden rainbow, or the "exanimation" of ecstasies in a more amatory vein. The variety of these eighteenth-century forms of self-projection suggest that transportation is a cognitively diverse phenomenon – a refraction of autonoesis as realized through different mental registers. The loco-descriptive imagination slides smoothly between real perception and literary imagery, reminding us that our cognitions of literature are not categorically discrete. Although, as Scarry notes, the mental imagery we perform when reading is categorically and psychologically distinct from the act of viewing the real world, it remains unlikely that reading should have its own idiomatic species of autonoesis. What I am calling "transportation," like the other literary experiences that have been called by related terms such as "transport," "telepresence," and even "immersion," is likely an amalgam of many different dimensions of autonoetic experience, determined jointly by a poet's technique, a reader's inclination, and a myriad of other contingent cultural assumptions.

Thomson's loco-descriptive performances of transportation – sensual, immediate, intricately observed – evince a remarkable power to transform simple acts of seeing and reimagining into a capacity for mental travel. The natural descriptions in *The Seasons* are

exercises in the limits of spatial imagination, allowing Thomson to develop loco-descriptive form to the logical extent of its potential for autonoesis. It is a development that provocatively mirrors other empiricist explorations of autonoetic cognition that began to peak during the mid-eighteenth century: treatises on sympathy, on the sublime, and perhaps even the attempt to re-experience, as in the "majestic paradise of Stowe" ("Autumn" 1038), the space of classical antiquity within the careful bounds of the formal garden. I turn, in the next chapter, to one of these other forms, whose deep-rooted discursive presence in eighteenth-century culture played a powerful role in determining the associations and ethical valences of literary transportation. "Transport," the soaring self-displacement of strong passion, also has its autonoetic entailments, and these reach far further back into transportation's history of figuration and metaphor.

Chapter Two: Transport and Transfiguration

It was essential, in the opening chapter, to distinguish the more elusive sense of transportation – that is, embodied and sensory relocation into the scene one is reading about – from the then far more pervasive critical vocabulary of "transport," intense or excessive emotion, often in response to art or literature. In practice, however, the figures and forms of imaginative self-projection often overlap with those of emotional excess, particularly in writings on the sublime. The crucial figure of such overlap is provided by Longinus, who remarks that "our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has only heard."[70] Longinus' remark quite evidently employs self-projection as a metaphoric expression of the hubris and "high" emotional tenor of the sublime; however, the psychological literalism of that metaphor is more difficult to ascertain. Are we to read this simply as a figure employing height and perspective shift to signify strong emotion, or as, in addition, a representation of the subjective experience of soaring motion – in short, as something closer to the autonoetic?

There are many indications that the eighteenth-century sublime writers who followed Longinus, at least, did often connect emotion to the psychology of vicarious relocation. That connection is not, however, typically based on an identity between the emotion and the sense of self-projection, but rather is predicated on a relationship of

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[70] Longinus, 55.

correlation, or at times causation. This is, I will argue, a psychologically significant distinction. John Dennis, to give one example, gives Longinus' definition of the sublime the gloss "an invisible force transporting the Soul from its ordinary situation, and a Transport": Dennis imports the familiar emotional experience with a capital letter, and without definition, but clarifies its connection to self-projection more carefully, as if the two are correlated with one another, but not identical.[71] Nor is Dennis alone – although he seems to be the only writer who so directly splits the vocabulary of capital-T Transport and transportation. The shared, yet non-identical, dynamics of passion and vicarious psychological relocation are particularly active in Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, as they had been already in the "Hymn" to Thomson's *The Seasons*. Moreover, Longinus' example takes up a far deeper tradition of rhetorical speculation on that shared connection: the tradition of *enargia*, the use of vivid rhetoric to create illusions of presence that both move and persuade. Although both the enargic and sublime traditions in rhetoric conceptually distinguish these different species of vicarious movement – emotional, spatial, and hortatory, motions of persuasion – their link remains historically persistent, even as critical theories have shifted with the times. It even recurs, strikingly, in modern psychology research on transportation and belief change.

The relationship between that persistent connection between emotion and transporting experiences of art, on the one hand, and the figural alterations that it undergoes in eighteenth-century sublime writing on the other, is crucial to the historical claim of my project: that the deep cognitive structures that underpin reading are not

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[71] John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (London: Richard Parker, 1701): 47.

unique to the eighteenth century, but are, rather, figurally accentuated and thus made

increasingly psychologically salient during this period. Peter DeBolla claims in *The*

Discourse on the Sublime that "transport" was "the habitual trope of the eighteenth-

century reader," a symptom of broader trends of emotional enthusiasm, and concomitant

discourses devoted to its control and regulation.[72] But emotion alone does not exhaust the

trope of the sublime "transported reader." Part of the work of sublime transport is

precisely to emphasize the dynamics of imaginative projection and self-estrangement

within experiences of emotion. This is particularly true for Young's religious sublime, in

which strong desire becomes sublime precisely because it is inherently self-alienating:

passions transport us because they already belong to another world, the free, spiritual

realm where we were designed to exist. By attending to the experience of emotional

transport in this world, we realize the soul's heavenly telos, and restore its conative

vector to its correct end. As a result, transport is, for Young, both a foreshadowing of

spatial relocation in a quite literal sense, and also a species of persuasion and conversion;

his sublime "unworlds" us, to borrow a term from Shaun Irlam, by recentering the

functions of the self within a heavenly frame.[73] Young's didactic aim, with its reoriented

passions and ecstatic persuasive effects, borrows greatly from enargia – and yet in both

form and content, it places far more emphasis on exploring the motion and moment of

transportation.[74] *Night Thoughts* also involves, that is, the characteristic eighteenth-

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[72] De Bolla, 249.

[73] Shaun Irlam, *Elations: The Poetics of Enthusiasm in Eighteenth-Century Britain.* (Stanford UP, 1999): 187.

[74] The relationship of Young's poem to traditional Christian apologetics and conversion narrative is well known – see, e.g., Daniel Odell, *Young's Night Thoughts and the Tradition of Divine Poetry* (Muncie, IN: Ball State UP, 1971); Alan Dugald McKillop, *English Literature from Dryden to Burns* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948).

century move toward autonoetic psychology that I have already described occurring in Thomson's *The Seasons*.

Sublime transport thus carries echoes of both rhetorical precedent, and of the cognitive link between emotion and autonoesis. And, indeed, Young's multidimensional species of poetic motion – combining visuospatial, emotional, and persuasive movement – supplies an essential piece of the eighteenth-century sublime that contemporary criticism has too often overlooked. Since Samuel Holt Monk's genealogy, itself following a statement made by Longinus, criticism on the eighteenth-century sublime has divided it into two separate paths – a neoclassical, rhetorical sublime, and a psychological sublime – separating its hortatory function from its qualitative experience.[75] Rhetoric, persuasion, and praxis have been too often treated by modern critics as historical, cultural curiosities; while the more psychological accounts of Burke, Kant, and the Romantic poets are taken for valiant efforts to uncover a phenomenon of human experience that still bears a great deal of cultural currency for our understanding of reading. Weiskel's Freudianism, Ferguson's critique of deconstruction, Hertz' self-alienating focalization, and Alan Richardson's neural self-betrayal all work in this latter mode, treating the sublime as a living critical category; meanwhile, accounts of the religious sublime, such as Morris', approach the topic from the perspective of the history of rhetoric.[76] Yet, as

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Irlam notes, in particular, its typological solutions to the human problem of the passions, and its relation to the structure of Pauline conversion (184-204). Young's connection to enargia, however, is less well described in current criticism on *Night Thoughts*.

[75] Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* [1935] (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1960), 12-13, *passim*.

[76] Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1976); Ferguson, *ibid.*; Neil Hertz, *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1989); Richardson (2010); David B. Morris, *The Religious Sublime:*

research from modern psychologists of transportation, such as Melanie Green, has reminded, persuasion and belief change are also themselves powerful modes of psychological liminality and self-estrangement, modes that can be mediated by transported or immersive states. Segregating historical rhetorical understandings of sublime othering, or "unworlding", from psychological theories thus results in a distorted picture of the sublime, both historically and psychologically.

The religious sublime's connection to rhetorics of conversion, and the archetypical status of religious experiences and texts as examples of sublime experience, makes it a central player in this connection between psychological and rhetorical sublimes. And yet, as Morris notes in his monograph on the topic, that very ubiquity lead to a lack of specific treatises and theorists of the religious sublime, resulting, for current critics, in the necessity of returning to poetic praxis rather than to the critical works that are more typically analyzed in accounts of the eighteenth-century sublime.[77] Following Morris' suggestion that a return to practice over theory is necessary to restore the eighteenth-century religious sublime's topical centrality, I have not attempted to reconcile Burke or Kant to my reading in this chapter, but have concentrated instead on the psychology of the sublime present in the religious-didactic poem *Night Thoughts*. I begin by tracing, at some length, the connection between Young's religious sublime and enargia, in order to outline the thematic changes that had been taking place in an essential historical precedent for eighteenth-century literary autonoesis. Where the primary work of the previous chapter has been to introduce the relevance of the psychology of

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Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in 18th-Century England (Lexington, KY: UPof Kentucky, 1972).
[77] Morris, 98-103.

autonoesis to eighteenth-century literature, that is, the primary onus here is on describing

transportation's historical genealogy, which lies primarily in passional rhetoric.

1. *Night Thoughts* and the Long History of Transport

Young's *Night Thoughts* stands out for its engagement with the "complex

Renaissance framework of Christian neo-Platonism that was gradually shed during the

eighteenth century," as Irlam puts it. It is a universe of meaning whose old-fashioned

resonances are tempered by Young's more modern embrace of passion and religious

enthusiasm – which, Odell notes, extends even to typically ill-regarded emotional states

like ambition.[78] Within the poem itself, however, traditional and contemporary passional

theory are not so easily distinguished; and, indeed, much of the project of "self-

estrangement and alienation" that Irlam discerns in the *Night Thoughts* is attributable to

the Christian Renaissance framework that Young brings to bear in licensing passion. In

part, as Irlam has already described, this is produced by a typological schism between

earthly and heavenly senses of man; but the principle that Young uses to reveal and,

ultimately, to bridge that schism is passion, in particular, passion as it was understood to

operate in the particular Christian tradition of enargic rhetoric.

The strictest definition of enargia – also called *evidentia* (Cicero), and later also

hypotyposis, *illustratio*, or "vision" – is the depiction of a scene as if it were being

directly witnessed, in the moment, by the orator or poet. This is the definition Blair uses,

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[78] Irlam, 172; Odell, 8.

for example.[79] For earlier eras, however, enargia also involved a more capacious

rhetorical theory: that vivid imagery, depicted as if currently taking place, could create an

illusion of presence – either an illusory presence of the object, hanging like Macbeth's

dagger in a hearer's mind, or a vicarious transportation of the audience into the scene

itself – and thereby occasion both stronger passions, and more evident belief. Quintilian's

definition, for instance, describes enargia as the oratorical depiction of "images by which

the representations of absent objects are so distinctly represented to the mind, that we

seem to see them with our eyes, and to have them before us," such that "our feelings will

be moved not less strongly than if we were actually present at the affairs of which we are

speaking"; but later in the same section, he writes as if this illusion were a form of

transportation: "the images… beset us so closely that we seem to be on a journey, on a

voyage, in a battle," an experience, Quintilian notes, that is familiar because of its

similarity to daydreaming. The illusion of presence is the essential differentiating factor

between enargia and mere vivid imagery, or between enargia and sympathetic

identification with an orator's perspective. And, as Heinrich Plett argues in a recent

monograph, enargia was a crucial feature of both classical and early modern rhetoric; its

relevance, for instance, to Shapin and Schaffer's discussion of a proto-scientific culture

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[79] Rhetorical manuals are quite divided in their vocabulary. "Enargia" seems to be the commonest early modern English spelling; *enargeia* is more correct in Latin. Puttenham (*The Arte of English Poesie* [1589]; in Plett, 21) and John Holmes (*The Art of Rhetoric Made Easy; Or, The Elements of Oratory* [London: A. Parker, 1739]) both prefer hypotyposis/hypotiposis (Puttenham), though Holmes adds quite a litany of alternate terms: "*Lively description* … CHARACTERISMUS, *Characterizing*, ENARGIA, *Clear Expression*, VISIO*, Vision*, EICON*, Image*, a Representation of Things distant and past as if seen and present" (I.54-5); Sherry (*A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, 1550) has "Enargia, euidence or perspicuitie called also descripcion rethoricall, is when a thynge is so described that it semeth to the reader or hearer yt he beholdeth it as it were in doyng" (65). Later, Hugh Blair (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, [1783] 6th ed., London: Printed for A. Strahan, 1796) simply uses "Vision" (Lecture XVII, p. 416).

of "virtual witnessing," which propagates experimental proof that could not be directly witnessed through illustrations and meticulous verbal description, is evident, although Plett does not himself draw this connection.[80]

Young's most direct example of enargic rhetoric, both in Blair's technical sense and the broader sense offered by Quintilian, occurs in a pivotal depiction of the crucifixion near the end of Night IV. The lines open with an injunction to read typologically – Christ as a "*Comment*" whose "publication" changes the meaning of everything that had come before – one that in turn enables man to read himself, too, as an immortal creature rather than a terrestrial "worm," one of Young's central paradoxes of human existence. Yet in the crux of the conversion itself, Young turns to enargia as a mediating force:

> But the grand *Comment*, which displays at full
> Our human Height, scarce sever'd from Divine,
> By Heaven compos'd, was publish'd on the *Cross!*
> Who looks on that, and sees not in himself
> An awful Stranger, a Terrestrial God?
> A glorious Partner with the Deity
> In that high Attribute, immortal Life!
> If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a Worm:
> I gaze, and as I gaze, my mounting Soul
> Catches strange Fire, Eternity! at thee,
> And drops the World – or rather, more enjoys:
> How chang'd the Face of Nature? how improv'd?
> What seem'd a Chaos, shines a glorious World,
> Or what a World, an *Eden*; heighten'd all!
> It is another Scene! another Self!
> (4.491-504)[81]

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[80] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, VI.ii.32, 30 (Trans. John Selby Watson [London: George Bell, 1892]:427-428); Plett, *passim*; Shapin and Schaffer, *passim*. Plett in fact goes much further than this "not one stylistic concept among others, but the fundamental constituent of all the verbal arts" (196). This sweeping claim I find unlikely, but Plett does provide a wealth of example for the wide-spread relevance and significance of the enargic trope of presence and persuasion through vivid visual imagery.

The initial lexical schema – metaphors about commentary, publication, interpretation – is completely abandoned with the new verse paragraph, exchanged for a panoramic visual mode – "displayed in full," "sees," "looks," "shines," and the repeated evocation at the heart of the encounter, "I gaze … I gaze." Young stages a dual repetition here – the doubled "gaze" follows a doubled "bleeds," the visual act echoing its visual and visceral object. The intensity of the visual act prompts, first, a moment of passion as literal sublimation – the soul "catches strange Fire." This rising image, and the upturned gaze, provides the upward vector that enables the poetic speaker to "drop the World," and, as if having climbed the prospect rise of a staggeringly high cross, see it laid out shining below once again. That the typological change occurs in the subjective perspective of the interpreter, not in the restoration of the object itself, is nothing extraordinary; yet Young's verse emphasizes the visual and ecstatic work that mediates that subjective shift, and generates the estrangement that creates "another Scene! another Self!" from the enargic figure of ecstatic transportation and transfiguration.

The shift from a lexical to a visual frame is typical of enargia. In rhetorical contexts, Plett writes, vision "compensates for the disadvantage of the ear as opposed to the eye" – or, as Horace puts it in *Ars Poetica*, "Less vividly is the mind stirred by what finds entrance through the ears than by what is brought before the trusty eyes."[82] Yet Young is not precisely painting a vivid picture; the iconography of the crucifixion would presumably enable his readers or auditors (the poem was often read aloud) to supply

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[81] Quotations from Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* refer to the Cambridge edition edited by Stephen Cornford (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).
[82] Plett 196; Horace, *Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough; in Plett, 59.

richer images from the stock of their own imaginative and artistic experience, but imagery itself is manifestly not his focus. Rather, his emphasis rests on the moment of transportation itself – the experience of personal change and higher significance as a transition from one state to another, what Weiskel describes, in his "working definition" of the sublime, as "that moment when the relation between the signifier and signified breaks down and is replaced by an indeterminate relation," when the meaning of the self undergoes its typological transition.[83] Young's use of enargia, that is, is reflexive: he not only employs it, but is also more deeply invested in its passional structure and phenomenology. That reflexive interest generates the striking figure of transportation and self-alienation that appears here, and elsewhere in the poem, as both a metaphor for and a practical psychology of personal change.

The moment of passional and perspectival shift that takes place in Young's depiction of the crucifixion is also an important rhetorical principle for the poem as a whole, particularly for Nights VI and VII, which are largely dedicated to rehabilitating man's ambition by reorienting its ends from earth to heaven. Young's poem poses such choices quite schematically –

> To wretched Man, the Goddess in her Left
> Holds out *this* World, and in her Right, the *next;*
> (4.549-50)

– and their simple relocation of worldly motives to otherworldly ends led at least one reader, George Eliot, in a famous attack, to accuse Young's vaunted spirituality of being "other-worldliness": Eliot accuses him, in other words, of committing worldliness by other means, pursuing religion as a matter of naked self-interest, with the result of

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[83] Weiskel ix.

spiritual and sympathetic paucity.[84] From the perspective of Christian passional practice, such an exchange of ends was, however, a classical Augustine means to the rehabilitation of passion: annexing the virtue of an action to the moral quality of the will that directs it.[85] As Debora Shuger has described, seventeenth-century preachers and divines used Augustinian passional theory to license enargic rhetoric, employing a strategy of "subversive otherworldliness" : although vivid rhetoric was somewhat suspect due to its manipulative effects on audiences, its illusions of presence were valuable for connecting congregations to the remote and intangible ends of futurity, "dramatizing, picturing, and amplifying what would otherwise be too remote for our weakened minds to grasp or wills to desire."[86] This need to authorize passion by fixing it to a correct end is registered in Young's odd use of the preposition "at" in the crucifixion enargia. When the poetic speaker catches fire, it is "strange Fire, Eternity! at thee" – not passion alone, that is, but passion *at* something, an unusual locution that is accentuated by the diction of the line, which collapses the passion onto its desired object – "Fire, Eternity!" – by delaying the connecting proposition. In effect, Young has drawn the two endpoints of the passional vector, and then connected the line.

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[84] Eliot, "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness," *Essays and Leaves From a Notebook* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1884: 1-78; see also Merrill D. Whitburn, "The Rhetoric of Otherworldliness in *Night Thoughts*." *Essays in Literature* 5 (1978): 163-174; Irlam, 172-219.

[85] On the general history of the passions in the early modern era, see Anthony Levi, *French Moralists: The Theory of the Passions, 1585 to 1649* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964); on the neostoic/Augustinian split, see especially pp. 2, 17-18. William Bouwsma provides a more extensive discussion of the split in "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought," in *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1990):19-73).

[86] Debora Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), 130-131.

Older Christian rhetorics had not, however, read this connection between passion and spatial motion nearly so literally as Young does. Rather, portrayals of passion as a kind of motion, even one that could become vectors moving up and down, are a characteristic feature of seventeenth-century passional treatises. Lamy's rhetorical manual *The Art of Speaking*, for example, offers a characteristic instance of the figure of the soul in passion as a storm-tossed ship:

> Our Passions do many times produce contrary effects, transporting the Mind, and in an instant carrying it through several variations: They force our considerations from one Object, and throw it upon another: They precipitate, interrupt, and divert it. In a word, Passion in a Man's Heart, has the same effect as the Wind in the Sea: Sometimes it forces the Waves upon the shore, sometimes it hurries them back into the deep; on a sudden it mounts them and dashes them against the Sky, and presently tumbles them into the very Centre of the Earth.[87]

If passion is an agitation of the soul, its vibrations cast the self, like an internal ship, into chaotic vectors of motion: notably, here, vertical motion, "hurrying" and "dashing" us up and down in an allegory of heightened and depressed emotion that is so familiar it cannot even be excised from the spatial vocabulary used to characterize it. The account here is quite evidently figurally rich; but it also has strong links to the ontology of passion. As James Chandler has shown, the seventeenth-century philosophers Cudworth and More had written about passion and motion as a kind of psychological conservation of motion. Passional impressions would run in from the body through the mind's *sensorium* – a faculty closely akin to the eighteenth-century imagination – and then out as action and will, and perhaps also, Chandler argues, experiences of imaginative self-projection. Passions thus conserve momentum, in Chandler's account, as if transferred through a

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[87] Bernard Lamy, *The Art of Speaking*. London: W. Godbid, 1676: 93-94. The common figure of the "storm-tossed soul" was pointed out to me by Robert Dimit.

"human junction box… between motion in and motion out."[88] Writings like Lamy's

indicate that we do not need to go so deep into philosophy to encounter this idea in

seventeenth-century English culture. At least in figure, and very likely in experience as

well, contemporary passional writers quite typically accounted for emotion in terms of

psychological mobilities. The opening of Young's *Night Thoughts* references this kind of

figural mobility in terms very familiar to Lamy's genre, as the poetic speaker describes

his anguished mental state upon waking during the night:

> I wake, emerging from a sea of Dreams
> Tumultuous, where my wreck'd desponding Thought
> From wave to wave of *fancy'd* Misery
> At random drove, her helm of Reason lost;
> (1.9-12)

Rather than passion, Young's storm substitutes terms of imagination – "Dreams," "*fancy*"

– casting the poetic speaker as a virtual traveler in a purely speculative world, where

"Nor Eye, nor list'ning Ear an object finds" (1.22). The speaker soon fixes on a divine

guide to "lead my Mind … thro' various scenes of *Life* and *Death*," establishing his

virtual pilgrimage in a Dantean vein, although construed from the start as imagination

rather than allegory. Unlike the mental illusions of presence in enargia, all of this motion

is almost completely figural, a trope rather than a psychology of passional motion; one

whose connection to other kinds of vertical motion, such as the moment of expansive,

totalizing vision enabled by the perspectival shifts of a prospect poem, can be annexed

into a metaphorical system with tremendous potential for blended images. The force of

Young's *Night Thoughts* comes largely from its intuitive appeals to the many registers of

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[88] Chandler, 31.

meaning – moral, emotional, autonoetic, eschatological, even postural and physiological

– that can be combined within a simple spatial framework.

Yet the transport that Young's poem employs as its signature feature is more than

just a resonant figure. By combining the enargic and Augustinian tradition of passional

vectors with his own idiomatic species of pneumatology, Young turns the "strange fire"

that enables the soul to reach heaven – the experience, that is, of transporting passion –

into a kind of metonymic sign of the grander spiritual destiny of man, when we will

"Spring from our Fetters; fasten in the Skies" (3.531). The metaphysical liberation of the

soul from the body, in other words, is what is expressed in the soaring hubris and enargic

presence that is awakened by passions like ambition. The soul's unquenchable thirst on

earth is a sign that its intended object is ontologically, and temporally, different. Hence,

> MAN's Heart th' ALMIGHTY to the *Future* sets,
> By secret, and inviolable Springs;
> And makes his Hope his sublunary Joy.
> Man's Heart eats all Things, and is hungry still;
> "More, more," the Glutton cries: For something New
> So rages Appetite, if man can't Mount,
> He *will* Descend.
> […]
> Man *must* soar;
> An obstinate Activity within,
> An insuppressive Spring will toss him up
> In Spite of *Fortune*'s Load.
> (7.119-124, 389-391)

Such images of flight, of soaring, and of the "obstinate Activity within" that carries its

momentum out, are more than simply evocations in a metaphorical conceit where God =

up, although that is certainly part of Young's poetic schema. The ability to be moved by

passion or ambition, the "secret and inviolable springs" of passion, also produce the kinds

of experiences that allow the future to be grasped even in the present moment – that is, the autonoetic capacity for future-prospection. Passions and desires constitute a forceful impetus out of conventional life, an experience of transport that is destined to become a literal truth, a real voyage of the soul. The constituent parts of enargia and of figural passion-as-motion remain discernable, but the picture of compulsive self-excursus Young draws here has evolved into another trope entirely: sublime transport.

2. The "Narrative Persuasion" Model

The psychology of transportation can help account for the historical persistence of such links between being moved physically, emotionally, and persuasively. Their connection is often signalled in the vocabulary we use for passion – the classical rhetorical term *movere*, for example, encompasses all three, the Greek *ekstasis* both passion and motion, and in English "transport," being "shaken," and being "moved" cross the same familiar conceptual boundaries. Psychology cannot in itself account for why the autonoetic dynamics of that equation become so prominent in Young's work, in the sublime, and in eighteenth-century culture more generally, however; and, notably, behavioral research on transportation in spatial and emotional senses conflates the two nearly as often as does our vocabulary. Part of this confusion, however, stems not from a lack of caution, but rather from a theoretical precept: that emotional and spatial reorientation of the self in a new frame are not wholly distinct. Although there has been some debate on this point, including an important critique from Keith Oatley, who approaches the problem from the side of emotion rather than transportation, drawing

some important distinctions, the correlation between emotion, persuasion, and transportation has been established repeatedly in experiments. Put simply, the embodied experiences of presence and projection that I discussed in my previous chapter are not affectively neutral. Emotion is at least a common correlate of autonoetic experience, and may even be an essential component of any such experience.

In numerous behavioral studies, researchers working on "narrative transportation," most prominently Melanie Green and her research collaborators, have drawn an equation in which vivid, emotionally and semiotically charged imagery transport readers and produce changes in belief. The semiotic charge is an essential part of the equation; Green writes that the images must be "activated" by meanings in the story, and itself "prompt a poignant narrative account" in the mind – description alone is insufficient.[89] Green and Brock's seminal study involved a text called "Murder at the Mall" that had been pre-selected for its wrenching imagery – it is a fictionalized true-crime narrative about a child stabbed by a psychiatric patient – because the authors believed these qualities most likely to elicit transportation, based on prior work by Victor Nell, who had found correlations between readers' use of imagery and their involvement in texts after predicting that it would have no effect.[90] Green and Brock found that readers who reported themselves as having been transported by the story were likelier to change their attitudes about the mentally ill, as well as to identify with the story's protagonist.

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[89] M.C. Green and T.C. Brock, "In the Mind's Eye: Transportation-Imagery Model of Narrative Persuasion" (in Green, Strange, and Brock [2002]: 315-342): 323. See also Maya Djikic, Keith Oatley, Sara Zoeterman, and Jordan B. Peterson, "On Being Moved By Art: How Reading Fiction Transforms the Self" (*Creativity Research Journal* 21:1 [2009]: 24–29).

[90] Victor Nell, *Lost in a Book: The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988): 246; Green and Brock, 322.

They do not, however, speculate about whether the vividness or the emotion of the image was more central to the effect of persuasion, or indeed to the experience of transportation itself. More troubling, the studies on transportation and belief change that have followed Green and Brock's have continued to define the experience of transportation as a composite of attentional shift, imagery and emotion. Carpenter and Green, for example, define transportation as complete immersion in a narrative involving "not only… attention, but also imaginative imagery and emotional involvement", and mark transportation's "ability to leave people with attitudes changed by the narrative" as its most important "empirical aspect." Other recent accounts, such as Busselle and Bilandzic's, center on attention as the principle causal mechanism behind narrative transportation and persuasion.[91]

Although work in the field of "narrative persuasion," as its name suggests, focuses on narrative – stories with a defined beginning, middle, and end – to the exclusion of other rhetorical modes, this should not dissuade us from drawing the fairly evident connection to enargia. It is highly likely that images may be "activated" by factors other than narrative meaning *in situ*, such as a reader's personal "knowledge" or familiar cultural scripts like the crucifixion, or even a particularly visceral image in itself. Indeed, the choice of a bloody wound as the pivotal image in both Green and Brock's experimental text and Young's enargic crucifixion caps the substantive similarity of what enargic rhetors practiced, and what researchers on narrative persuasion study – a transhistorical echo that deserves some weight. The historical and cross-disciplinary

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[91] Jordan M. Carpenter and Melanie Green, "Flying with Icarus: Transportation and the Persuasiveness of Entertainment" (In *Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the Lines Between Entertainment and Persuasion,*ed. L.J.J. Shrum 2nd ed. [Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2012]: 169-194); Busselle and Bilandzic, *ibid.*.

persistence of a connection between persuasion, imagery, and emotionally transporting

experiences makes it a likely candidate for a structural property of the mind – although

the specific structure of that cognitive connection still needs significant parsing. To take

one example, sympathetic identification alone is an important potential explanation for

persuasion that takes place in the context of stories– and it is a connection that Green and

Brock's study notes, that more recent work has begun to explore, and that even

eighteenth-century writers on enargia had considered; Blair, for example, makes an off-

the-cuff attribution of the rhetorical effects of enargia to sympathetic identification, part

of his dismissal of the trope.[92] The different possible mediating roles of emotion and

imagery, too, are sometimes left entangled.

These entanglements reflect the central cognitive premise of Green and Brock's

work on narrative persuasion: namely, that the transportation that mediates it is an

expression of a "convergent" effect in the mind, an attentional process in which "all

mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative."[93]

Just as Young's Christian rhetoric involves a transportation produced by reorienting

passion and thought from earthly to heavenly objects, for Green and Brock, as well as,

later, Busselle and Bilandzic, transportation is an attentional effect that reorients all the

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[92] See e.g. A. de Graaf, J.W.J. Beentjes, H. Hoeken, and J. Sanders, "Identification as a Mechanism of Narrative Persuasion" (*Communication Research* 39: 6 [2012]: 802-823); Blair, Lecture XVII.

[93] Green and Brock, 324. Green and Brock do elsewhere distinguish different cognitive factors that play a role in producing transportation – for example, they write that the "ability to create vivid images and to experience absorption are two conceptually distinct capabilities that may fnction multiplicatively to facilitate transportation," citing prior work on personal differences in the ability to perform mental imagery and to "immerse oneself" in experiences – although they claim that differences in natural propensity to visual imagery may be overridden by an author's capacity to induce imagery, following Nell, for example (Green and Brock 327). However, these differentials in ability do not contradict the presentation of a "convergent" picture of transportation.

functions of the mind – beliefs, desires, emotional states, perhaps also sensory experiences – to the story-world we are attempting to imaginatively reconstruct.[94] The process is thus very similar to what Marie-Laure Ryan and other narratologists and possible-world theorists refer to as "recentering," a reorientation of all the co-ordinates of cognitive life within a fictional possible world; the addition of the brain's limited attentional resources produces an explanation for the state of self-loss and presence that takes place during a "recentering."[95] The attentional reorientation is also coherent with the model of transportation as a kind of autonoetic consciousness via embodied scene-creation that I presented in my first chapter. Indeed, consciousness and attention are often linked in theories of cognition.

Self-loss and self-projection are easily understood as consequences of a shift of mental focus, but the reason that this "convergent" process of recentering and redirected attention ought to produce persuasion requires a little more cognitive explanation. There are a few measures that behavioral psychologists use to assess readers' cognitive processes of belief during reading. Green and Brock's "false-noting" directs readers to circle parts of the story that ring false after reading it; Gerrig's method, while testing

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[94] Busselle and Bilandzic define transportation as "experiencing flow while constructing mental models," where "Flow" means, essentially, being fully attentionally present in a task, such that no attentional resources can be devoted to other cognitive tasks such as self-monitoring or awareness of the rest of the world. See Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990)

[95] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991): *passim*, e.g. 21-22. See also David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) and Thomas Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986), for two early explorations of the applicability of Possible Worlds Theory to literature ond reading – the former from a philosopher's perspective, the later, a critic's. Werner Wolf, in "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction" (*Style* 38:3 [2004]: 325-351), gives an analysis of the role of recentering in transporting and illusory experiences of fiction, approached from a narratological perspective.

suspenseful and unsuspenseful stories about Lindbergh's attempt to cross the Atlantic, was to measure how long readers took to evaluate the truth or falsehood of a proposition that interrupted the story; Potts used a more complicated timing measure to test whether or not readers were more "primed" to respond to a novel word that had been introduced by a story – in his case, the imaginary bird "takahe" – when they read a prompt about birds that replicated story information, or a prompt that gave an unrelated story about birds. Potts found that "takahe" was only primed only in context of information from the original story – in other words, readers seemed to have formed a special memory "node" for representing the story's contents. This theory supports, Gerrig notes, Daniel Gilbert's suggestion that surrendering to fiction is not a matter of suspending disbelief, but that belief is, rather, the primary process; judgments of truth or falsity are only applied afterwards, as a second-order corrective that involves the integration of the story "node" into the rest of the mind. The degree to which this integration occurs occupies many of Gerrig's studies in *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*; and he, as well as Green and Brock, all note that transportation seems to delay the process. The suspenseful story of Lindbergh's flight caused participants to make slower judgments about commonsense facts of the matter relevant to the story's content – in other words, suspense interfered somehow with relevant, preexisting factual knowledge, as if participants were still thinking in a separate "node." Green and Brock found less "false-noting" among readers who reported greater transportation. Although Gerrig in particular is somewhat agnostic about why suspense produced this effect, Green and Brock suggest that cognitive load –

attentional demand, essentially – is to blame. Stories that captured attention were judged less critically, as if the process of disbelief had failed to completely take root.[96]

The work on narrative persuasion by Gerrig, Green, and others paves the way for a revisiting of Longinus' famous distinction between sublime transport and persuasion, a key passage for later critical divisions between the rhetorical and psychological sublime. According to Roberts' translation, the passage runs as follows:

> The effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion but transport. At every time and in every way imposing speech, with the spell it throws over us, prevails over that which aims at persuasion and gratification. Our persuasions we can usually control, but the influences of the sublime bring power and irresistible might to bear, and reign supreme over every hearer.[97]

Longinus does here first draw a distinction between treating elevated language as a simple means –"that which aims at persuasion and gratification" – and as an end in itself, a "spell it throws over us." The second sentence, however, clarifies that distinction as still part of the aegis of rhetorical effect. The difference between persuasion and transport is not that persuasion is effect, and transport an experience that exceeds it, but rather that transport's sublime "influences" run deeper than the kinds of persuasion that can be controlled. To put it in terms Green and Brock might find more amenable, a powerful transport affects our belief through a different cognitive mechanism than would a rhetorical argument. And later sublime writings on the experience of transport continue to write about its effects as a kind of persuasion, one that often manifests precisely through

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[96] Green and Brock, *ibid.*; Daniel Gilbert, "How Mental Systems Believe" (*American Psychologist* 46 [1991]:107-119); Potts' two studies are reported by Gerrig, pp. 212-215; Gerrig 161-176, 196-241.
[97] Longinus, 43.

attentional limitation. James Burgh, for example, writes that sublime rhetoric "ought to hurry us out of ourselves, to enlarge and swallow up our whole attention; to drive everything out of our minds, besides the subject it would hold forth, and the point it wants to carry. The hearer finds himself as unable to resist it…."[98] DeBolla, who cites this passage in his book, is right to read it as evidence of transport's threat to subjectivity and self-control, but that reading misses the more central implication of Burgh's words. The problem with sublime transport is not only the experience of self-loss, but the threat of the self's subordination to someone else's message. What Burgh fears is a profound vulnerability to the imposition of alterity – to involuntary persuasion.

The swallowing of attention that Burgh depicts, and the rich experiences or transportation that Thomson describes, have quite different emotional tenors and cultural roles, and I do not mean to say that such experiences are identical. Indeed, this is a fundamental question that writings on the sublime might pose to the model of "narrative persuasion": what is it that divides the very basic cognitive processes of scene-creation and recentering, or even rich and vivid experiences of autobiographical memory, from the overpowering force of the sublime? Even a story like "Murder at the Mall," with its horrifying depiction of the stabbed child, might quite conceivably transport us and change our minds – perhaps subconsciously, perhaps with a deliberate decision – without provoking a sense of paralyzed self-alienation. Keith Oatley, in particular, has argued against the association of transportation, which he sees as a kind of shallow, joy-riding mode of readership, with the processes that let literature mediate belief change. Oatley

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[98] James Burgh, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*, in Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996): 117.

claims that other, more emotionally reflexive modes of reading provide the real link – for example, "by means of the story our emotions may be transformed by having them deepened or understood better, and they may be extended toward people of kinds for whom we might previously have felt nothing."[99] The kinds of emotions that Oatley has in mind, like love and disgust, are the bones of personal change, and so I have little doubt that they do play a more pivotal role in literary persuasion than the smaller effects of false-noting or priming.

And yet we need not dismiss the possibility that transportation might play an important role in mediating the attachments of emotion, much as vivid imagery and its incumbent self-projections worked in the theory of enargic rhetoric. As Marie-Laure Ryan writes, fictional recentering "pushes the reader into a new system of actuality and possibility," not only into a new vicarious location, expanding and altering the mind's repertoire of potential connections, and perhaps ethical choices.[100] Ryan's discussion provides a structural reason for the hortatory relevance of recentering, one that carries even more weight if we accept that the attentional focus so marked in immersive reading is a sign that such recentering has been more fully realized in a reader's mind. Moreover, further empirical evidence is provided by Starr's study of the role of the Default Mode

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[99] Oatley, "Emotions and the Story Worlds of Fiction" (in Green, Strange and Brock [2002]:39-69), 43. The power of literature as an agent of moral change through processes of sympathetic identification is, notably, the thesis of Martha Nussbaum's *Poetic Justice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). For a recent study on the role of transportation in mediating such emotional change, see P.M. Bal and M. Veltkamp, "How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation" (*PLoS One* 8:1 [2013]). On the many different ways fiction can cue emotion – including by sympathy, affective contagion, atmospheric and stylistic emotions, and so on – see Amy Coplan's review in "Empathetic Engagement with Narrative Fictions."

[100] Ryan, 22.

Network – the region hypothesized by Buckner and Carroll, and by Spreng et al., as the common neurological basis of imaginative self-projections – in aesthetic cognition. Starr examined brain scans of individuals who viewed paintings, and found that the Default Mode Network was only activated after the individual reached a certain "tipping point" in the intensity of the aesthetic experience. Noting the role that this neural network plays in imagery and self-referential cognition, Starr hypothesizes that "intensely felt imagery (primarily multisensory imagery and imagery of motion) is one of the links that unites both the arts and our most intense experience of them."[101] Although I am not certain that "intensely felt imagery" is the right variable – an autonoetic experience may involve, for instance, both imagery and intense feeling without the imagery itself being the precise locus of that feeling, even if it plays a mediating role – Starr's experiment does provide a further confirming link between intense experiences of art, and the neural apparatus of autonoetic self-projection.

In summation, while psychological studies of persuasion and transportation provide compelling evidence for a cognitive association of some kind between intense, even belief-changing emotion and experiences of immersion and transportation, the theories often still lack distinctions necessary to reflect both the effects of, and the distinctiveness of experiences of, literary engagement – for example, distinctions between presence in transportation and the more intense overwhelming experience of sublime transport, or between recentering and the specific instantiation of emotional processes in recentering.[102] Nonetheless, these studies provide a reminder of how remarkably

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[101] Starr, 24-25

[102] In part, this reflects the novelty and small size of the field. Green, for example, has already called for many studies that would be helpful in answering such questions – see

significant persuasion is to human psychology, and especially how deeply it is entangled with cognitive processes of belief, emotion, attention, and self-referential thought. That entanglement has important implications for how we read the history of the sublime. It suggests that we should not be hasty to divorce its rhetorical origins from its eighteenth-century psychologies, because the two are not necessarily distinct. The psychology of persuasion through literary means – through imagery, emotion, deictic recentering – remains an active presence in eighteenth-century conversations about the transporting, rapturous effects of sublime writing. Far from turning poetics away from rhetorical concerns, the introspective, metacognitive inclinations of eighteenth-century sublime writings instead produce a return to one of the fundamental concerns of the rhetorical endeavor: the eerie gap between believing one thing and believing another; our fundamental receptivity to persuasive relocation.

3. Two Axes of Transportation

It is that metacognitive interest in the experience of persuasive shift that produces, in Young's work, such extraordinary imageries of movement, reframing or recentering, and self-alienation. Enargia had already accounted for image- and emotion-based persuasion through a schema emphasizing vicarious motion and reframing. On top of this, Young's eighteenth-century religious sublime, pulling on interest in imagination in general, and imaginative self-projection specifically, translates that recentering affect into a powerful and, as I have discussed above, often ontological figure of self-projection.

Green and Brock's (2002) concluding discussion, and Green, "Research Challenges in Narrative Persuasion" (*Information Design Journal* 16:1 [2008]: 47-52).

Central to Young's poetry is an act of metaphorical blending that annexes different kinds

of motion, some generated by autonoetic psychology, some more simply traditional, to

create a schema of two axes of psychological and passional motion. One is vertical: it

expresses the spiritual and heaven-bound gaze that directs correct desire and future-

prospection, foreshadows the soul's eschatological destination, and symbolizes upright

moral stature. The other, horizontal and outward, world-bound, expresses the perversion

of the soul's undeniable, teleological mobility, experienced as ambition and other passion

that "sends celestial Souls on errands vile / To cater for the Sense" (3.475-477). The

sense of autonoetic mobility and freedom that we experience in passion or future-

projection is, for Young, a linear vector, and one whose endpoint determines our final

end. The experience of emotional transport releases us because it wants to pull us: to

another system, to a new "scene" of rhetorical example, to an act of prospection, and

finally, to heaven. Such psychological, autonoetic liberation is the essential nature of

Young's concept of soul, and gives to passion the form that it will take in his poetry: an

"obstinate Activity within, / An insuppressive Spring" (7.391) that compels us ever up

and out, linking the self to destiny by a movement of imaginative future-prospection.

The rehabilitation of passion that Young's poem works to accomplish is a

traditional part of Augustinian passional theory, as I have described in my first section;

yet the starkly spatialized division of the axes, and the poem's obsessive oppositions,

often bear a closer resemblance to the more absolutist Stoic opposition of passion and

reason. In those theories, rational cognition is marked by an essential stability in the

substance of the soul itself. The soul functions correctly when, secure in its own seat, it

exerts its outward force of will to move the body, while remaining itself unmoved by the

corrupting impositions of the world and the body that would shake it – namely, the forces of passion and appetite. The rational soul's own imperviousness to change is godlike, connecting it to divinity; the motion of the soul in passion is a corruption that marks its fallen state. The latter is turbulent, worldly, and low; the former, high, serene, and linked to heaven. Despite Young's embrace of the impulse and motility of passion, the trace of this Stoic opposition is evident in the way he contrasts the righteous axis (represented by the pronoun "They," here) and the sinful ("Thou"):

> With inward Eyes, and silent as the Grave,
> They stand collecting ev'ry Beam of Thought,
> Till their Hearts kindle with divine Delight;
> For all their Thoughts, like Angels, seen of old
> In *Israel's* Dream, come from, and go to, Heav'n.
> […]
> Thy Thoughts are Vagabonds; All Outward-bound,
> Mid Sands, and Rocks, and Storms, to cruize for Pleasure.
> (8.943-7, 985-6)

The silent, still contemplations of the righteous "They" reenact the Stoic connection of the rational soul to heaven, but play upon the Biblical *topos* of Jacob's ladder – itself a visionary transport – by imbuing those thoughts themselves with motion and passion, making thought itself a traveler on that ladder. The lines echo the image of sublime fire – here, a softer kindling "Delight" – as if turning thought inward has not stilled its passional impetus, but rather redirected it, forcing it to take a sublime spiritual route that leads outward in a metaphysical and devotional "up," rather than leading to action. The vertical imagery of the descending "Beam," the rising fire of the heart, the route in and out of heaven, thus echoes the hotter enargic scene of the crucifixion. The "Vagabond" route to haphazard pleasure and sensuality, on the other hand, remains unchanged from

its neostoic source; and yet in Young's schema, avoiding its dangers is simply a matter of exchanging one direction of mobility for another, not abjuring passion altogether. If we can exchange one axis for another, transmute the horizontal vector of passion into the vertical, then, like the worldly Lorenzo, Young's addressee, we will have restored its transporting impulses to their right function – a simpler, more mechanical alteration than Augustine's proposal. In effect, Young has appropriated the schematic Stoic antagonism of reason and passion, with its starkly geometric choice, and transformed it into an antagonism of two possible vectors of self-projection. As Levi notes, such mixtures of neostoic and Augustinian philosophy are not uncommon in early modern writings.[103] Young, however, is an unusually strong advocate for the passions; thus, his adoption of an equally strongly expressed neostoic disgust for wrong passions, and his appropriation of stoicism's upward link between soul and heaven, may well be a strategic maneuvre – an attempt to license a particularly extreme vision of the passions by affirming the skepticisms expressed by the other side.

Young is far more poetically invested in describing the vertical axis of motion than the horizontal, to shake "moor'd" thought into giving "a ply to future Scenes" (2.389-390). Although turbulent voyagers certainly appear, upward vectors are a much more common figure, and Young is remarkably willing to find evidence for his autonoetic human telos. In Night 9, vertical transportation appears as a Providential signal, through human morphology, of the special destiny of mankind:

> *Nature* no such hard Task injoins: She gave
> A Make to Man directive of his Thought;
> A Make to set upright, pointing to the Stars,

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[103] Levi, 2.

(9.869-871)

And, in Night 7, an even more biological sign,

> Art divine
> Has made the Body Tutor to the Soul;
> Heav'n kindly gives our Blood a moral Flow,
> Bids it ascend the glowing Cheek, and there
> Upbraid that little Heart's inglorious Aim,
> Which stoops to court a Character from Man;
> (7.345-50)

Not just posture, but even the physiology of blushing, become legible in the schema of

the vertical axis – signs of the orientation of the soul, the body, morality, and human

endeavor. This strategy of repetition creates a kind of master symbol within the poem that

is not an object or even an image, but rather an impulse: an arrow, everywhere seen,

pointing up.

Despite the oppositions between the "vagabond" worldly thought and the correct

upward direction, the two axes are largely congruent, transposable; in particular, they

reflect an equal impetus, with the capacity for motion on one axis predicting motion on

the other:.

> Thy [Ambition's] strength in Man, like length of wing in Birds,
> When disengag'd from Earth, with greater Ease
> And swifter Flight, transports us to the skies.
> (6.400-402)

In passages like this, the entire seventeenth-century genre of complex, intricately

differentiated treatises on the passions collapses into a manageable scheme of

alternatives: passion is a means of psychological motion, and it can be channeled along

whatever axis we wish. The problem with the passions, for Young, is not that they are excessive or immoderate; it is that they are literally unearthly, their earthly objects mismatched from the correct objects of man:

> "His sateless Thirst of Pleasure, Gold, and Fame,
> "Declares him born for Blessings infinite;
> "What, less an Infinite, makes unabsurd
> "Passions, which all on Earth but more inflames?
> "Fierce Passions so mismeasur'd to this Scene,
> "Stretch'd out, like Eagles Wings, beyond our Nest,
> "Far, far beyond the Worth of all below,
> "For Earth too large, presage a nobler Flight,
> "And evidence our Title to the Skies."
> (7.511-519)

The notion that passions are "mismeasur'd to this Scene," detrimental only within the context of the world, is a common device in the religious sublime, whose proponents often argue for heavenly objects in poetry because those objects can provoke greater passions. Describing the work of John Dennis, an influence on Young and many of the writers in this tradition of promoting sacred poetry, Irlam refers to this idea as a "logic of proportion and incommensurability": great objects produce great passions, and correspondent potential for change of an audience.[104] Yet both in Young and in Dennis, as well as Blackmore, the "incommensurability" of passion and earthly behavior is also a more direct occasion for the depiction of transportation, an attempt to resituate the self in a more appropriate frame. Young figures this quite literally, with images of wings, birds and ownership, a familiar sublime soaring. In Blackmore's "An Essay Upon Epick Poetry," in the section "Of the Sublimity of the Thoughts," it appears in the guise of

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[104] Irlam, 179.

visual perspective: the "great and elevated" manner of thinking acquired through contemplation of heavenly objects, Blackmore writes, will make a man "enabled to rise to the heights of heaven, and from thence to cast himself down with a generous freedom and resolution, and plunge amidst the depths of nature, to discover the secret springs of her wonderful operations."[105] Dennis' version is most complex. In *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, Dennis had argued that as both poetry and religion raise the passions, they ought to help one another; near the end of the treatise, he presents an argument that poetry can restore "the Harmony of the Human Faculties" by allowing the darker, more turbulent passions to be experienced as a species of aesthetic pleasure, returning "nature" to a kind of Edenic innocence, a "happy primitive state":

> He who forsakes all the world for Poetry…is for a time restored to Paradise…
> Transported he beholds the Gods ascending and descending, and every Passion in
> its turn is charm'd, while that his Reason is supreamly satisfied. Perpetual
> Harmony attends his Ear, his Eye perpetual pleasure. Ten thousand different
> objects he surveys, and the most dreadful please him. (172-3)

The connection between emotional experience and recentering suggests that Dennis' portrayal of the literary ascent to heaven is not as straightforwardly metaphoric as it appears, particularly in the context of similar writings from both seventeenth-century treatises on the passions and the tradition of enargic rhetoric. The overt thrust of the image is a metaphor of transportation used to express a change in a man's passional state: being in harmony is like being in heaven. Yet the passage is also so rich with its perspectival and emotional dimensions of relocation that it also carries the intimation of a

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[105] Blackmore, "An Essay Upon Epick Poetry," *Essays Upon Several Subjects* (London: E. Curll,1716): iii-185, 94-97.

psychological experience of recentering, one where altered passion and shifted perspectives are contextualized in an overarching frame of self-projection.

Spatial self-projection, that is, is more than a metaphoric scheme in the vertical axis; it references the work of recentering that opens the "new system of actuality and possibility" mentioned by Ryan. For Dennis, rehabilitated passion creates the reframing of the self, and its autonoetic association to imaginative and literary experiences of heaven; yet even here, the sense of a literal, visual perspectival shift has also begun to control the terms of the schema. In Young's vertical axis, the more directly perspectival apparatus of the prospect poem performs that shift. In his dedication to the "Poem on the Last Day," for example, Young had written that "Sacred Poetry," especially eschatological, future-prospective works, appeals because "it's very first Mention Snatches away the Soul to the Borders of Eternity, Surounds it with Wonders, Opens to it on every hand the most Surprizing Scenes of Awe, and Astonishment, and Terminates it's view with nothing less than the Fullness of Glory, and the Throne of God."[106] Although the echo of Dennis' metaphor is quite direct, instead of harmony, satisfied reason, and "ten thousand" pleasing objects, Young's theory of celestial poetic transport offers a dizzying visual trajectory of jumps and halts: from snatched to surrounded; from an open scene to the mental shocks of "Awe, and Astonishment," passional pauses in the mind; and that last long view like an arrow that points towards the divine.

In this respect, *Night Thoughts* differs profoundly from the natural vision presented in *The Seasons*. Thomson's embodied, sensory natural descriptions recenter by means of a gradual communion with an alterior space; Young's vertical also performs a

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[106] Edward Young, *A Poem on the Last Day* , 2nd ed. (Oxford: Edward Whistler, 1713): Dedication.

perspective shift, but it does so through a shocking act of reframing, a wrenching shift

that tosses us up into a view so wide that it requires a radically altered position to

comprehend it. The attempt to mentally recreate his imagery produces a swift, vertiginous

view, as when, having imaginatively climbed, with the "*Ambitious*!" Lorenzo, to the

height of the clouds, Young presents a lengthy survey of the landscape seen from a

prospect:

> What seest Thou? wond'rous Things!
> Terrestrial wonders, that eclipse the skies.
> What Lengths of labour'd Lands? What loaded Seas?
> […]
> What levell'd Mountains? And what lifted Vales?
> […]
> High thro' mid Air, *here*, Streams are taught to flow;
> Whole Rivers *there*, lay'd by in Basons, sleep.
> *Here*, Plains turn Oceans; *there*, vast Oceans join
> Thro' Kingdoms channel'd deep from shore to shore;
> (6.764-787)

Like Thomson, Young makes use of repeated deictic phrases – the *here / there / here* that

ask us to cast our vision around, to travel in sight – but where Thomson rolls us smoothly

through his delicately observed landscapes, even when he is engaged in more sweeping

sorts of excurses, such as the tour of the "torrid zone" in "Summer," Young's

perspectival movements instead dart around in sharp saccades that demand, quite

abruptly, an immense canvas to reconcile them.[107] We must jump immediately from

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[107] Compare, for example, the following lines from Thomson's "Summer" :

Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
That on the high equator ridgy rise,
Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays;
Majestic woods of every vigorous green,

"Plains" to "vast Oceans," "mid Air" to deep "Basons," level the distinction between "Mountains" and "Vales," until, panting to keep up with the poet, we have done our best to encompass all of it, to unify all within a single frame of vision. His imagery demands that we adopt a point of view so radical that it is capable of resolving essential contradiction – an act of reframing that does not so much coax as shock us into adopting an altered perspective. That sudden reframing, recalling Abrams' comment on the "right-angled" paradigm of Christian history[108] – the singular moment in which everything changes – enables a perspective that "straitens Nature's Circle to a Line" (3.370) by allowing the "lightned Minds" of the virtuous (3.383) to move so far up the vertical axis that the horizontal diminishes into a single point:

Stage above stage high waving o'er the hills,
Or to the far horizon wide-diffused,
A boundless deep immensity of shade.
Here lofty trees, to ancient song unknown,
The noble sons of potent heat and floods
Prone-rushing from the clouds, rear high to Heaven
Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
Meridian gloom. Here, in eternal prime,
Unnumbered fruits of keen delicious taste
And vital spirit drink, amid the cliffs
And burning sands that bank the shrubby vales,
Redoubled day, yet in their rugged coats
A friendly juice to cool its rage contain.   ("Summer" 646-662)

      Although these lines serve a similar function to Young's – presenting an awe-inspiring panorama enabled by a soaring, heavenly perspective – Thomson maintains his characteristic tendency to conserve and trace motion, and to fill his landscapes with multisensory detail that enables presence – for example, we follow up rising mountains and thence plunge down the streams, climb the woods "stage above stage" into a waving motion that releases the momentum toward the horizon; trace the thrown "gloom" off of tactile and bristling "thorny stems", and so forth. In effect, even when following the "unworlding" impetus of the sublime flight, Thomson "worlds" as well. Young shows little interest in this kind of descriptive elicitation of presence.

[108] M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: Norton, 1971), 114.

> Their glorious Efforts wing'd with Heavenly Hope,
> Each rising Morning sees still higher rise;
> Each bounteous Dawn its Novelty presents
> To worth maturing, new Strength, Lustre, Fame;
> While Nature's Circle, like a Chariot wheel
> Rowling *beneath* their elevated Aims,
> Makes their fair Prospect, fairer every Hour;
> Advancing *Virtue*, in a Line to *Bliss*.
> (3.384-393)

In Young's vision of the good life, the future becomes, through rightly-directed actions, an ever-climbing, ever-expanding prospect poem. The parallax of perspective that is accomplished through that vertical axis reproduces, figurally, the opposition between heavenly aims and the worldly aims of "Nature's Circle," with its endless churns. The act of the prospect climb produces the image of the line, while the new perspective it implies, looking down "*beneath*," flattens the map of nature, turning it horizontal. Following Young's words, we, too, imagining our future climb, might feel ourselves and our current state flattened and diminished by the glory of our point-of-view-to-be; and this is precisely Young's point in presenting the "prospect" of virtue's line, drawing us forward and upward into a visual diminution of present, worldly existence. The final climb, through action, will lead into the literal transport to heaven, though we can only access it at present by means of autonoetic future-prospection. Irlam's comment that Young's poem moves away from "the spatial prospects of landscape poetry and the natural sublime to embrace prospects of *time*"[109] thus misses an important point: the self-projections of landscape poetry are instrumentalized, in Young's poetry, to produce the temporal displacement necessary to grasp the Christian eschatological schema at stake in

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[109] Irlam, 177.

his rhetoric. Young gives us the prospect poem as an act of faith, future-prospection as perspectival shift.

4. The Reframed Self

Numerous critics have commented on the use of prospect poetry as a device for accessing a profounder kind of perspectival unity, one associated with eschatological destiny. As I note in my first chapter, Gottlieb, Fulford, Spacks, and Goodman have all commented on the unifying effects of vision in Thomson, connecting its extension of selfhood with the imperial expanse of British power. McKillop also notes Thomson's use of the prospect poem to suggest the larger perspectival shift made possible through religion: in particular, the replacement of human vision's "bounded view" ("Winter" 1066) with a broader, heavenly perspective portrays human destiny as a new capacity for vision, recalling both the general association of vision with knowledge, and, more specifically, Henry Grove's final *Spectator* essay on the reformation of the senses that will take place in heaven.[110] That reformation of the senses is also well connected to the idea that heavenly, broader objects occasion greater powers of mind: hence, as Tuveson notes, Langhorne's *The Enlargement of the Mind* enacts the expansion of selfhood through the soul's prospect rise to a height where it "darts from *Planet to Planet*, and takes in Worlds at one View!".[111] The schema in which the heavenly prospect-poem reforms and alters the self is, in other words, a fairly broadly available poetic trope. What differentiates Young's practice is the way the poet emphasizes the moment of reframing

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[110] McKillop, 21-25.
[111] Quoted in Tuveson, 146.

itself, the exultant and alienating moment of insight when all the nodes that had "placed" us are shaken free to recoalesce around something new. Reframing, unlike the cautious recentering enabled by poetic description, moves us with a kind of shock, a violent wrenching that is typified in passional movements like those of Lamy's storm-tossed ship. Young does not fully perform the transportation of his readers, but rather induces the sense of motion at the heart of such removes.

At times, Young seems to think about this work of reframing in an almost literal, painterly sense, placing himself as an implied point, for example, amidst the grandeur of the stars:

> O what a Confluence of ethereal Fires,
> From Urns un-number'd, down the Steep of Heav'n,
> Streams to a Point, and centers in my sight?
> …
> My Heart, at once, it humbles, and exalts;
> Lays it in Dust, and calls it to the Skies.
> (9.751-756)

The image of the streaming starlight – once again, a motion activated by "Fire," one of Young's set passional images – recreates the familiar vertical vector, here in the domain of sight; but here it is also an artist's perspectival grid, tracing and placing the implied perceiver at the nexus of the heavens. The night sky has become another canvas a spectator might walk into. These lines are part of the lengthy preamble to the more typical celestial voyage that Young gives us at the end of "Night 9," and the way they foreshadow its imagined bodily voyage is instructive: it provides a structural echo of Young's broader claim that autonoetic imagination is the precursor to literal heavenly transit. Because we can see the sky, we can go there – at least, for now, in imagination or

"in spirit," and later in spiritual truth. The lines also give a hint of the way Young is thinking about contexts: much as Dennis had done, he seems to regard them as a kind of mathematical determiner for the locus of the self.

Young does not always rely on such a finely delineated visual scheme to do this work. More typically, the ecstasy of transport comes on in the rush of a cruder conceptual antithesis, one that demands a different kind of ideological and temporal frame, rather than a spatial motion. The antithesis "Death wounds, to cure: We fall; we rise, we reign!" (3.530) is one of many such examples found in the *Night Thoughts*. God, whose infinite being unites every perspective in a single, universal axis uniting Heaven and the grave, provides an absolute, yet eternally motile resolution to such evident conflicts that becomes increasingly available as the poem reaches its final "Consolation" – for example, "My soul flies up and down in Thoughts of THEE, / And finds herself but at the Centre still! (9.1587-8), or "THOU, whose broad Eye the *Future* and the *Past* / Joins to the *Present,* making One of *Three* (9.2196-7). A freedom of autonoetic perspective is necessary to achieve these realizations to the logical antinomies that Young gives. They are riddles whose solution is to force the mind out of its habitual earthly place, to set us out of ourselves:

> An Heir of Glory! a frail Child of Dust!
> *Helpless* Immortal! Insect *infinite*!
> A Worm! a God! I tremble at myself,
> And in myself am lost! At home a Stranger,
> Thought wanders up and down, surpriz'd aghast,
> And wond'ring at her *own*:
> (1.78-83)

One of Young's earliest moves had been to set up just such an opposition between the place of the self in the scheme of earthly worth, and of spiritual value in God's plan for us ("A Worm! a God!"). Yet the poetic outcome is not a simple realization that one schema is superior to the other, despite the fact that such a realization is the overt didactic purpose of the entire *Night Thoughts*. Instead, Young syntactically collapses each oppositional phrase to bring us to the absolutely irreconcilable point. There is simply no way that the self can exist in both of these schemas at once; and so instead, the poetic speaker's "thought" is cast into an unstable, liminal state of wandering, quite literally un-homed within itself. The figure of the "Stranger" expresses the moral confusion and wandering Young's poetic speaker experiences in the earlier portions of the *Night Thoughts*, but also something more: the fundamental instability of an identity subjected to the possibility of context.

Young does not, however, find this alienation absolute. It is simply one more problem of framing. Once the soul is in heaven, surrounded by more fitting passional objects and spiritual substances, the sense of an *unheimlich* self resolves quite simply:

> Nor, as a Stranger, does she wander There;
> But, wonderful Herself, thro' Wonder strays.
> (9.1025-6)

The sense of imaginative projection and liberation does not conclude or resolve – as well it cannot, in Young's ontology, where mobility is an essential part of the soul's nature. The "stranger within" presented in the *Night Thoughts* does not, ultimately, provide an anxious kind of mobility and alienation, but rather an exultant one, a revelation of the soul that awaits within the experience of imaginative and emotional self-projection.

Young's religious resolution to the problem of strong, self-alienating passion is his own, not one that I am suggesting others adopt or even seriously consider. However, it does provide an indication of the generative role that religious thought played in the psychology of sublime alienation: it could provide occasion and impetus, as well as cultural license, for autonoetic thought like future-prospection and the shifting of perspectival frames. Indeed, the religious sublime does serve, as DeBolla reminds us, as a discourse of direction and control upon the experience of the sublime: Young's opposition of the two axes is a manifestation of this attempt to channel intense passional experience into a correct vein.[112] Yet religious devotional experiences, particularly of the ecstatic kind Young favors, are also generative of the experience of immersion and of transportation, making religious passion a crucial source, not only a repressive control, for the sense of self-projection encoded in the vocabulary of sublime transport. Young's widely popular poem shows the eighteenth-century taste for the religious sublime overlapping greatly with its taste for autonoetic experience, and this overlap births a powerful reflexive system of metaphor, figure, and phenomenology of imagination. Religion, in other words, helps to establish the notion that imaginative experience takes us somewhere else. However, this does not become literary transportation by any simple process of secularization.[113] Rather, religious poetry enables the conversation wherein the

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[112] DeBolla, 36-40.

[113] The canonical account of the natural sublime's secularization of religious poetry is provided by M.H. Abrams' *Natural Supernaturalism;* see also Tuveson's *The Imagination as a Means of Grace* and "Space, Deity and the 'Natural Sublime,'" (*Modern Language Quarterly* 12:1[1951]:20-38), and Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1959). Young presents as something of an outlier for this story, because his sublime "unworlds" by turning away from nature quite directly, rather than by imbuing nature with immanent meaning. His poem certainly takes imagination and passion as a "means of grace," that is, but in a way that suggests

idea of a reframed, unworlded, and transformed self becomes a salient means of talking about what imagination does.

The Seasons provides an example of the way the psychology of imagination enters into poetry through multisensory, embodied performances of presence in an imagined place; *Night Thoughts*, the way the liminality and motility of the self in passion – an idea with a much longer history – is accentuated and spatially figured, in particular, in the account of sublime transport. Both are modes of recentering the self, one through spatial and sensory means alone, the other either through the impetus of passions directed toward futurity or distant heavenly subjects, or through the shock of a perspectival shift that alters and liberates the mind from its normal compass of connections. The latter is not always autonoetic, but the strong connection – both historically and psychologically – between reframing, personal change, and shifting the coordinates of the self, makes for very common overlaps, where the lines between phenomenology and figure are frequently obscure, and perhaps often with good reason. A figure, after all, is not simply a register of a tradition. If that figure continues to resonate and to be reiterated, as it does so obsessively in Young's lines, it is because there must be a tenor that that figure is still struggling to express.

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we need not place its role as a mediator between sense and the soul as essential during the period. For Young, passion, and to a lesser degree the imaginative work enabled by temporal perspectival shift, enables unworlding through a more direct kinship that it has with spirituality.

Chapter Three: Gothic Fugue

Sublime raptures, for all their dangerous liminality and ecstatic emotion, are permitted the power to "unworld" readers along vectors of transport that lead toward God as in Young's poetry, or at the very least, as in Thomson's, toward nature; but when the targets of such transports are matters more evidently fictional and trivial, their danger and emotional impropriety come in for censure. The criticism of escapist reading – often a woman or servant's reading, and often of a sentimental story or a suspenseful Gothic romance – attacks transported reading from an external perspective: rather than emphasizing visually rich imagery and sensory and emotional presence experienced by the reader herself, the critique of Gothic paints self-projection as the voiding of present experience, as emotional dysregulation, as absence. Although the concerns represented by this anti-escapist tirade are easily revealed as a disciplinary discourse levied by critics at servants who ought to be working, or at women who ought to be reading something more socially acceptable, or the like, the critique of Gothic, and of transporting experience more generally, cannot be thereby entirely dismissed. Because of its neurological nature, transportation may lie uncomfortably close to psychological experiences characteristic of depression, notably depersonalization and anxious rumination. This cognitive kinship to ruminations provides the later eighteenth century's autonoetic literature with a darker palette, a "Gothic" version of literary transportation that refracts the aesthetics of imaginative elaboration into horrified speculations, split selves, and other vanishments of consciousness into the maze of mind or text.

This "Gothic Fugue," a flight into the mind's own process of extrapolation, connects the practice of Gothic suspense, particularly in the poetry-conscious novels of Ann Radcliffe, with the autonoetic processes more familiar to loco-descriptive poets. In this chapter, I will read the "Brown Study" lines of Cowper's *The Task* as a kind of Gothic document. The poem's dynamics of anxious self-projection have recently been raised in work by Kevis Goodman, and later Mary Favret,[114] and I describe this tenor in Cowper's work as a development within the autonoetic poetic tradition that parallels the cognitive structure of Gothic suspense. However, particularly since Cowper famously suffered depression himself, it is important to raise one caveat. In using the term "fugue," I do not intend to impose a highly specific psychological diagnosis onto Gothic readers or writers. I am arguing, rather, that Gothic writings, including Cowper's, exploit a neural architecture that underlies the ruminations typical of anxiety and depression, and that writers like Cowper and Radcliffe explore and provoke these phenomena for their literary effect.

The architecture in question is the "default mode network," or DMN, a network of linked brain regions which I have thus far discussed because of the role it plays in imaginative self-projection, or autonoetic consciousness; especially autobiographical memory and future-prospection.[115] The DMN is not limited to its role in autonoetic processes, however. In neuroscientific literature, it is more typically described as a region related to self-referential cognition in general. Particularly relevant to my purposes here, part of the evidence for the DMN's role in self-referential cognition comes from studies

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[114] Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity,* 67-105; Mary Favret, *War at a Distance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009).

[115] See, for example, the discussion in section two of chapter one, this document, and the briefer mention at the end of chapter two, section two.

on the alterations it exhibits in depressive self-referential cognition, including accentuated negative self-judgment, the circling self-referential thoughts characteristic of rumination, and changed manifestations of both autobiographical memory and future-prospection. The DMN is involved not only in imaginative self-projection, but also in a particular kind of fractured self-projection that is strikingly evident in Cowper's "Brown Study," and performed in Radcliffe's Gothic suspense, subverting the dominant eighteenth-century mode of literary transportation.

The historical conditions leading to Cowper's and Radcliffe's poetic ruminations lie both in the popularization of an aesthetics of transportation, following Kames' account of "ideal presence" in *The Elements of Criticism*; and in the eighteenth-century practice of imaginatively extrapolating poetic descriptions. Eric Rothstein has explored the common ground of Kames' illusionism and the work of visual extrapolation in his article "'Ideal Presence' and the 'Non Finito' in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics"; David Perkins additionally connects Kames' work and its associationist grounding to the dreamy associations of Romantic "revery."[116] I will turn toward this historical link between presence and extrapolation in order to explore its implications for untethered imaginative extrapolation of a different and darker sort. According to Kames, "complete images" can "transport the reader as if by magic into the very place of the important action": that is, by realizing the partial images of poetry, a reader actively participates in the pleasurable reverie of that transport.[117] Kames' visuocentric, active version of transportation, like many discussions in the *Elements of Criticism*, adapts and psychologizes familiar

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[116] *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9:3 (1976): 307-332; David Perkins, "Romantic Reading as Revery," *European Romantic Review* 4:2 (1994): 183-199.
[117] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 2 vols. [1762].1785. Reprint. London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1993: II.329.

principles of critical wisdom. Kames' tenets are prefigured by Thomson's loco-descriptive practice, and also evident in both Cowper and Radcliffe, especially in the travelogues of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Yet Cowper and Radcliffe also twist the eighteenth-century aesthetic of imaginative extrapolation to strikingly different ends, leading readers not into delightful mazes of rich visual imagery, but rather into obsessive worry. What has become of Mme. Charon? What did Emily see behind the veil? Or, as Cowper asks in response to that other eighteenth-century vehicle of anxious suspense, the newspaper:[118]

> have our troops awak'd?
> Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
> Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
> Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
> And Jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
> Or do we grind her still?
> ("The Winter Evening" 25-30)[119]

The identification of Cowper's news-reading as a form of anxiety is Favret's, following Goodman; however, I add here its connection to the dynamics of Gothic escapist reading, and to the neural architecture of the DMN, which together raise a deeper possibility: that anxiety and delighted reverie might be very close cognitive kin. The questions that are implicit in the process of reading a novel like *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are made explicit in Cowper's portrayal of newspaper-reading, and they lend themselves always to furtive, nebulous glances, rather than the complete pictures Kames'

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[118] Favret, 3-4, 59-68; Goodman, 67-105.
[119] Quotations of Cowper's *The Task* and all other poems by Cowper (unless otherwise noted) refer to the Longman edition, *The Task and Selected Other Poems*, Ed. James Sambrook (London: Longman, 1994).

theory of "ideal presence" calls for. The litany of alternative possibilities and spheres of action – wakefulness or drugged sleep? A free India, or an embattled nation? – are suggestive both of the shuffling physical newspaper and its quick bites of information (a point that Goodman explores extensively), and, more germane to my own analysis, as to Favret's, to states of nervous uncertainty.[120] Cowper's insistent suspense fails to sustain a singular scene, instead fracturing into a series of tantalizing fragments; thus, the lines open to reader extrapolation, and yet foreclose upon any richer, more complete extrapolations by interposing the next question, the next image. In this, his lines illustrate the cognitive process of the reader of suspense fiction: her imagination is thrust into an endless series of feverish possibilities that all serve to feed an obsessive desire to turn the next page, and thus extinguish them. In order to explore the origins of these questions, and their connection to the "void" of consciousness expressed in the "Brown Study" that follows upon their heels, I will turn first to the historical-psychological connection between Kames' "ideal presence" and Gothic description, and then to its manifestation in a literary transportation composed of anxious projection, depersonalization, and self-loss.

1. Poetic Elaboration and Gothic Suspense

Kames' *Elements of Criticism* is best understood in its mid-century context. During this period, philosophy and criticism had produced several major treatises that articulated forms of imaginative self-projection in increasingly well-elaborated and

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[120] Goodman discusses the fragmentation of daily newspapers, with their "random or dissociated particles of news" (71), in reference to Cowper's *The Task* in the chapter "Cowper's Georgic of the News: The 'Loophole' In The Retreat" (*Georgic Modernity*, pp. 67-105); see especially 72-78. Favret, *passim*.

psychological terms. Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* does so for sympathy; Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful,* for sublime aesthetics; Kames' *Elements of Criticism* for the autonoetic experiences of autobiographical memory and transportation into narrative worlds. Kames' discussion of the self-projections of "ideal presence," one piece of a far larger work, is less systematic than Burke's treatise on the sublime, and it is much less extensive than either Burke's or Smith's discussions. Yet all three works nonetheless play a similar cultural role: each draws upon a wealth of prior theory and criticism on its topic, but develops that topic through more deliberate phenomenological analysis. This rash of critical interest is indicative of the increasing establishment and popularization of already extant autonoetic forms – modes of relocating the self in space and time – at the mid-century. The popular establishment of an ideal of literary transportation is reflected in a rise, following Kames, in the commonality and familiarity of references to transported reading. It begins to be a phenomenon that writers can push against, not simply note. For example, by the time of *Evelina'*s publication, Burney can not only refer to transportation quite casually as a consequence of reading in her preface, but also position her work in explicit opposition to the experience of "being transported to the fantastic regions of Romance," a place for naïve girls who lack a soberer taste for reason and probability.[121] Transportation into a Romance is a mark of questionably enthusiastic and unreflexive permeability to text; transportations into poetry, in contrast, remain part of the somewhat idealized work of imagination. The conceptual popularization of literary transportation, although closely linked to poetic value and imaginative prowess, nonetheless helps to

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[121] Frances Burney, *Evelina* [1778] (London: Oxford UP, 2002), 10.

ground an ongoing critique of novels, particularly Gothic novels, that often echoes

Burney's disdain.

Kames' own account of "ideal presence" both prefigures Burney, and follows

Tickell's earlier comment on the "fairy-land" of pastoral poetry, in the way it describes

transportation as a "magic," fanciful encounter with a text. However, for Kames,

transportation is an admirable, even praiseworthy element in the experience of reading.

His account of "ideal presence" can be outlined as follows:

1) an illusion of proximity to objects or scenes,

2) achieved through rich description,

3) that is a necessary precursor to the fiction's emotional effects.

Kames' account thus provides a very close echo of enargic rhetoric, the structure of

presence and persuasion that Young had adopted in the *Night Thoughts* – although

Kames is either unaware of or at least uninterested in this connection. Despite

acknowledging that something like "ideal presence" is a part of "many rules of criticism,"

he presents his theory as an original insight on the nature of memory: "I am talking of a

matter exceeding clear in itself, and of which every person must be conscious," he writes,

"and yet I find no small difficulty to express it clearly in words; for it is not accurate to

talk of incidents long past as passing in our sight, nor of hearing at present what we really

heard yesterday or perhaps a year ago … I have not words to describe this act, other than

that I perceive the thing as a spectator, and as existing in my presence."[122] This

vocabulary of spectatorship likely came to Kames directly through its recent use in

Smith's work on sympathy. Kames, like Smith, employs a vocabulary of eye-witness and

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[122] Kames, I.88-104, 90.

spectatorship to describe the link between rhetorical presence and emotional effect, writing, for instance, that "lively and distinct images" are a key to presence, and that "the reader's passions are never sensibly moved, till he be thrown into a kind of reverie; in which state, forgetting that he is reading, he conceives every incident as passing his presence, precisely as if he were an eye-witness."[123] From a historical perspective, such a near complete appropriation of the principles of enargia to an empiricist account of psychological experience is remarkable in itself; the close connection between Kames and Smith on spectatorship creates a novel bridge between loco-descriptive pictorialism and moral sentiment that substantially replicates, even as it effaces, a fundamental similarity to centuries of thought on imaginative presence and its effects on emotion. The extension of "ideal presence" beyond the terrain of literary and rhetorical emotion, however, to the psychology of memory and of future-prospection, is indeed the novel observation that Kames took it to be – a revelation that was, in part, enabled by that new psychologized context, and by the connection to the theory of thought as association.

"Ideal presence" musters associationism for its support, and this results in some questionable features, for example, an endorsement of the Horatian principle of *incredulus odi*, the link between disbelief and dislike.[124] Whereas "a chain of imagined incidents" related, vividly, in the "order of nature" will gain "easy admittance into the

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[123] *ibid.*, 93.

[124] On the use of *incredulus odi* in eighteenth-century criticism, and particularly in censures of Gothic and romance, see E.J. Clery and Robert Miles' *Gothic Documents, 1700-1820* (Manchester UP, 2000): 173, 198. On the psychological side, Busselle and Bilandzic, in their work on narrative transportation, note that although judgments of perceived realism are associated with reports of transportation, engaging stories are often "both fictional *and* unrealistic"; the authors speculate, rather, that engagement itself may generate "a sense that the story was authentic" (256). Busselle and Bilandzic's hypothesis that fits comfortably with research by Green and Brock showing that transportation interferes with "false noting."

mind," improbabilities fracture the "waking dream" of illusory presence and banish "relish and concern."[125] Illusionism and realism, through their capacity to induce transportation, are made central to the power of literature. Reid follows Kames in linking both literary productions and fancy to the "train of thought," and argues that this train of associations can "transport" us into our own futures. Beginning with present circumstances, all a young man or woman needs to do is mentally time-travel forward by moving from one idea to the next, "hurry[ing] the thought into scenes that give them play," such that a boy becomes a poet or general, while a girl is "transported into a brilliant assembly, where she draws the attention of every eye".[126] This is the "train of thought" that Eric Rothstein uses, quite rightly, to connect "ideal presence" to the aesthetics of *non finito*: the incomplete work that satisfies more, and perhaps produces a better illusion of presence, because we imaginatively extrapolate it ourselves. One of Rothstein's clearest examples of *non finito* extrapolation, which I reproduce here, comes from a commentary by Aulay Macaulay on Virgil's first Eclogue:

> By an easy association of ideas, we are transported into the cottage, where we behold the day laborer, after his day's work, surrounded by his little offspring, each emulous "to share the envied kiss": — then we represent to ourselves the busy housewife preparing the simple, but wholesome repast, and hear all the innocent tales and jokes that circle round the fire-side." (*Essays*, 1780)

Macaulay, like Reid, engages in an act of extrapolative projection through the chain of ideas, starting from a fiction whose very incompleteness encourages enjoyable

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[125] Kames, I.102.

[126] In "On the Train of Thought in the Mind." *Essay on the Powers of the Human Mind,* Vol II (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1803): 78; see also 98, 95-106. Reid is eager to note that the "train of thought" and association of ideas are not slavish principles of poetic composition, however.

imaginative participation. The very domestic setting itself seems to encourage Macaulay to bring Virgil home to himself, as he fills the cottage with "tales and jokes" that – we may well infer – will be rather more familiar and resonant to Macaulay than they would have been to Virgil.

Rothstein's article provides overwhelming support from classical and eighteenth-century primary sources for the ideal of imaginative elaboration as a pleasurable component of reading. I diverge from his account, however, when it comes to ideal presence, which Rothstein treats primarily as a principle of realism, a mode whose power and attractiveness stems from its amazing illusion of truth. An extrapolator like Macaulay derives enjoyment, Rothstein might say, from making a situation more life-like. Yet the pleasure, and the urge, need not stem from the illusion, I would argue, but rather may inhere in the extrapolation itself, and the greater familiarity and self-relevance that it grants to fictions. As Perkins points out, for Romantic readers, the process of associationist reverie allowed the production of idiosyncratic experiences of texts, a value quite different from realism; a passage from Archibald Alison's 1790 *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, for example, describes how "trains of pleasing or solemn thought" in the mind may give rise to emotions "of which the objects before us seem to afford no adequate cause."[127] Alison locates pleasure in the mind's capacity for self-amusement, rather than in an external quality of an object, or a text. Lessing's *Laocoon* similarly pushes against the ideal of visual mimesis through the alternative pleasure of imaginative extrapolation. In effective plastic art, Lessing argues, painters choose scenes precisely because they allow extrapolation's pleasurable "free

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[127] In Perkins (1994), 184.

play," such that "the more we see the more we must be able to imagine; and the more we imagine, the more we must think we see."[128] A painting is not simply a faithful reproduction; it is an occasion for prospective desire and anxiety, animated by the demands it makes for our interaction – demands which eighteenth-century readers may have been particularly eager to grant.[129] The associating mind, as Perkins notes, allowed for resonant analogies between the states of reading, writing, and also dreaming.[130]

On the subject of the similarity of dreams to "trains of thought," I will say only that the experience of dreams depends a great deal on post-hoc imaginative reconstruction, which does bear some promising relationship to autonoetic self-projection and scene-construction; however, dreams are a quite neurologically distinct phenomenon, very different from the brain's waking activities. When it comes to daydreams, on the other hand, there is some material evidence we might apply. The shared ground of ideal presence and extrapolation is reflected in the mind – as is their connection to other kinds of mind-wandering. Part of "mental time travel," the imaginative self-projection that I have connected to literary autonoeisis, is the capacity to project the self into the future – to extrapolate, much as Reid's children do, often from one's store of memory and prior experience (including, of course, fictional, literary, and artistic experience, which there is

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[128] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay Upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry* [1766]. Trans. Ellen Frothingham. 1898. Reprint. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005.

[129] Alan Richardson has raised the possibility that Thomson's steep decline in popularity during the 20th century stems from a change in readers' willingness to participate in the work of mental recreation. Since Thomson's descriptive technique relies on an audience eager to bring his images into "imagination's vivid eye" (Spring 459), his poetry is tailored to an audience that no longer exists, almost as if it had been written in a lost dialect. (*The Neural Sublime,* 56.) Rothstein (1976) also notes the unusual eagerness of eighteenth-century readers to participate in imagery.

[130] Perkins (1994), 184.

no principled and certainly no biological reason to exclude from memory's store.) Kames initially derives "ideal presence" not from literature, but rather from a phenomenological account of different states of memory, much as Tulving had derived autonoeisis. Like "autonoeisis" had for Tulving, "ideal presence" offers Kames a way of differentiating semantic memory from the qualitative "re-experiencing" of episodic or autobiographical memory. As such, Kames' "ideal presence" provided a principle for qualitatively differentiating a phenomenon that was very familiar to eighteenth-century empirical philosophies such as Hume's which treated memory as a store for imagination. Although Kames typically turns to the vocabulary of visual witnessing and spectatorship to explain this difference, he seems even more interested in tracing the overlaps between experiences of autobiographical memory and of imaginative presence. This interest carries Kames' theory of "ideal presence" very close to the modern origin and canonically principle function of autonoeisis and the DMN: namely, mental time travel.

Temporal self-projection lends itself well to the kinds of loco-descriptive technique I have thus far described; Thomson even uses it himself in *The Seasons*, as when, seeing flower buds in the spring landscape, the "raptured eye" gains the capability of "seeing" the future fruit that "Lies yet a little embryo, unperceived, / Within its crimson folds" ("Spring" 100). Such imaginative mental time travel, however, qualitatively and cognitively distinct from the kind of visual presence of the perceiver in the scene that I described in my first chapter. Cowper's take on a wheat-field description provides an illustration of the subtle differences and overlaps between these two distinct kinds of imaginative self-projection, manipulating layers of autobiographical temporality in a sometimes uneasy complement to purely visual perception:

> I saw the woods and fields at close of day
> A variegated show; the meadows green
> Though faded, and the lands where lately wav'd
> The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
> Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
> I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
> With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
> By flocks fast feeding and selecting each
> His fav'rite herb; …
> (311-319)

Cowper's poetry is quicker than Thomson's, flitting between different modes of mental travel to fluently animate the past and future of his scene. The entire episode is retrospective, opening in a vague, out of focus, "variegated" show; then we dart still further back, following the visual of how the meadow has "faded" to its present green. Here Cowper plays subtly with the temporal nuance of the layered memory: although we are moving into the past of the meadow, which ought to be turning still greener in our eyes – rather like a film run backwards – the poem's palette instead moves from green to a "golden harvest" and then to a "mellow brown," as if following the suggestion of the verb "faded" in a more logical temporal progression. This is the result of a poetic sleight of hand: Cowper has shifted subtly from describing the meadow to a now-barren field beside it. The shorn field, too, is difficult to grasp in the mind's eye: the grain there "lately wav'd" – a harvest that has already taken place, in the single adverb "lately," before we see it at all; and indeed Cowper repeats his "lately." Memory is experientially serial, repeating itself; it has already taken place, but it is always also in the future, because we can always remember again. Finally, looking "far off," the poem moves into the future itself, considering the profit in the "flocks" who graze the grasses. The scene's

"variegated" first impression becomes, in retrospect, a description of the entire experience of memory's temporal collage, its blend of retrospection and prospection all caught up in one instance of experience. The lines leave the sense that we are not simply capable of moving in time, but psychologically present in all times at once, pulled into the past, past's-future, and future's-present.

The difficulties – and potentials – of narrating temporally disjointed presence, or any disjointed state of being, also resonate through Kames' vacillating vocabulary of "ideal presence." For one, its relationship to mental time travel is registered in a striking sensitivity to temporal shifts: Kames expresses vexation over the lack of a tense that would describe the blend of illusory presence and objective pastness in vivid memory, but later advocates tense-shifting to the present in particularly dramatic poetic scenes in order to actually induce a state of ideal presence.[131] "Ideal presence" also has a rather uncertain relationship to awareness, consciousness, and agency. Kames is open to a great deal of variability of qualitative experiences within ideal presence – he describes the state as "variable without any precise limits" – and these may range from a kind of reality-like experience to something more closely resembling mere "superficial…remembrance."[132] Additionally, although Kames initially describes ideal presence as arising from an active effort to summon a vivid memory, this is quickly overtaken by a more passive experience in which the rememberer is "imperceptibly converted" into a spectator to his own past. This temporal fracture in identity is also reflected in the odd hybridity of a final term, "*waking dream,*"[133] an emphatic italicized definition of the state of ideal presence in

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[131] Kames, I.90, 98.
[132] *ibid.*, I.91.
[133] *ibid.*, I.91.

which consciousness is represented as being both present and absent. These areas of hesitancy, vagueness, and hybridity in Kames' account of self-projection, which emerge at the edges and limits of his inherited critical precepts, reveal the uncharted spaces that Gothic forms of self-projection will explore.

In Gothic fiction, descriptive extrapolation does not generally lead to a place as pleasant as Macauley's bucolic cottage or Cowper's field; yet, at least for Radcliffe, it often begins in the same process. As Marshall Brown has noted, in her own time, Radcliffe was particularly known for her "popular landscape descriptions,"[134] descriptions that tend to proceed in a loco-descriptive manner that is highly indebted to Thomson's visuocentric poetry. Quotations from *The Seasons*, indeed, pepper the Alpine travelogue in Book I of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Radcliffe's debt to Thomson's psychologically resonant, porous school of landscape description already tells us a great deal about the "contemplative immersion," as Brown puts it, that characterizes her natural scenes.[135] Moreover, their extensiveness, and their popularity with a female readership who would never get the opportunity to undertake a real Grand Tour, also connects them to a long history of virtual travel literature written for persons who lacked the mobility or opportunity to travel themselves.[136] Most virtual travelogues, however, do not invite quite the kind of imaginative participation occasioned by descriptions like this:

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[134] *The Gothic Text* (Stanford UP, 2005): xv, 4.

[135] *ibid*. 109.

[136] See e.g. McKeon (2012); McInnis, *passim*; and Kathryn Beebe, "Reading Mental Pilgrimage in Context: The Imaginary Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri's 'Die Sionpilger'" (*Essays in Medievel Studies* 25 [2008]): 39-70. Beeble's detailed account of the religious use of virtual pilgrimage is an interesting counterpoint to Radcliffe's virtual travelogue. Fabri's audience, cloistered nuns, demanded not just description, but the real experience of a voyage to the holy land, and Fabri's narrative in fact accords special spiritual and perspectival privileges to those who have been lucky enough to travel in

> Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these
> people, shewn by the fire, which heightened the romantic effect of the scenery, as
> it threw a red dusky gleam upon the rocks and on the foliage of the trees, leaving
> heavy masses of shade and regions of obscurity, which the eye feared to
> penetrate. (40)

What does a reader well-versed in loco-descriptive, imaginative extrapolation make of a passage like this? The description of objects by means of their illumination by firelight, and their echoes in Emily's perceiving eye, is pure Thomson; at its close, however, the light – and the gaze – move away into "regions of obscurity," leaving our own imaginations to fill in "heavy masses of shade." It is fear, in this case, anxious imagination, that continues on where "the eye" fears to tread, marking a transition from the mode of loco-descriptive extrapolation to a kind of perceptual suspense. Radcliffe employs the structure of loco-descriptive transportation not to invite us to complete unfinished imagery, but rather to seduce us into a furtive attempt to dream a void.[137]

Emily St. Aubert herself dramatizes this mode of prospective elaboration in one of the more humorous and reflexive moments of *Udolpho*. While crossing the Alps, Emily extrapolates a prospective scene as part of her appreciation of the dramatic vista. She translates the images that come "to her mind" into a poem that she calls the "Storied Sonnet," which concludes as follows:

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spirit rather than in flesh. Fabri's narrative thus turns on its head the tendency to conceive of "virtual" experience as a mere copy of, and lesser substitution for, the real.

[137] In "The Eye of Power: Ideal Presence and Gothic Romance" (*Gothic Studies* 1 [1999]: 10-30), Robert Miles also uses ideal presence as a way to examine the visual dimension of Gothic novels; however, Miles situates his critique in a Foucauldian analysis of modes of power and resistance, centered on the way Gothic texts leveraged ideal presence as visual power. Miles argues that Radcliffe's "female gothic" employs Kames' theory of ideal presence straightforwardly. This chapter makes the claim, *contra* Miles, that Kames' theory was, rather, translated to the different experiences of presence and projection characteristic of Radcliffean Gothic.

> But, if between some hideous chasm yawn,
> Where the cleft pine a doubtful bridge displays,
> In dreadful silence, on the brink, forlorn
> He stands, and views in the faint rays
> Far, far below, the torrent's rising surge,
> And listens to the wild impetuous roar;
> Still eyes the depth, still shudders on the verge,
> Fears to return, nor dares to venture o'er.
> Desperate, at length the tottering plank he tries,
> His weak steps slide, he shrieks, he sinks – he dies![138]

Despite a somewhat bathetic final couplet, the "Storied Sonnet" is an excellent

illustration of the aesthetics of the "non finito" gone awry – we might even say, gone

over a precipice. It is tempting to recall St. Aubert's admonishing words to his daughter

about the "dangerous quality" of excess sensibility, "which is continually extracting the

excess of misery, or delight from every surrounding circumstance" – an unfortunate

mental habit in a world that contains, at least according to St. Aubert, rather more misery

than it does delight.[139] Fanciful elaboration, Radcliffe shows, is likely to produce

nightmarish visions – and perhaps also questionable verse, a point that I will return to at

the conclusion of my essay: after all, both Radcliffe's narrator and St. Aubert have

already evinced some skepticism about Emily's poetic abilities. Nonetheless, Emily's

naïve doubling of her own fearful gaze in the fearful gaze of the doomed man in the

"Storied Sonnet" does allow Radcliffe to portray another, recursive level of the horrified

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[138] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (London: Oxford UP, 1970): 165.
[139] Radcliffe, 80-81. Scott MacKenzie, in "Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Narrative and the Readers at Home" (*Studies in the Novel* 31:4 [1999]: 409-431):423-4, also notes the way St. Aubert's opinions of his daughter's compositional prowess parallels critiques of the novel, but reads this as allying Radcliffe with the critics. My own reading opposes this, presenting a Radcliffe who employs the critique of novels in a more reflexive, parodic manner.

fascination of Gothic spectatorship. Where Emily plays out the poetic process of *non finito* extrapolation in nightmarish verse, her ill-fated marionette acts out the psychological state that produces such extrapolations: fixated on the sensory vividness of his surroundings, the man becomes literally paralyzed by all the possible dangers that he imagines in his future. He "fears to return, nor dares to venture o'er," until, presumably weakened by such mental struggle, he succumbs to Emily's own ultimate fear, and tumbles into the chasm.

Although Emily does not literally imagine her own self into the "Storied Sonnet," its recursive play between poet's and character's fearful gaze suggests that extrapolation may turn fictions far more simply, and engrossingly, self-referential than a poet's own imagery or a reality-like effect of illusion can. In elaborating or extrapolating a schema, we must pull from our own pasts for events, emotions, and associations, making the literary work personally relevant. However, such an extrapolation also has the potential to pull us away from richly construed, reality-like, perception-like experience – the kind of experience that Kames, and Rothstein, connect to "ideal presence" properly construed. Instead, states of extrapolation and prospection are untethered, wandering creatures, as Elaine Scarry points out in *Dreaming by the Book*; in language borrowed from Sartre, she describes such daydreams as "thin," "dry," "two-dimensional," and "inert" when compared to genuine perception, or to mental imagery produced in response to poetic descriptions that have been carefully wrought to restore vivacity and richness to imagination.[140] But there is a notable problem in Scarry's distinction of sensory perception and mental imagery on a scale of richness. Individual people may have very

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[140] Scarry, 22-23.

striking differences in their capacity for mental imagery – not everyone's daydreams will be "thin" and "dry." Just as Kames argues of ideal presence, a wide array of possible states of vividness and verisimilitude are possible in mental imagery, with important consequences for transportation; and, indeed, Green and Brock found a correlation between subjects' personal capacities for mental imagery and their tendency to experience transported states while reading.[141] Poets, too, have palates of degrees of "presence" to paint imagery with, just as they have colors, passions, even – as in Cowper's "woods and fields" description – temporal states of awareness. The imagery and sense of presence that a poem occasions in us may align more with memory, with vision, with fancy, daydreams, or even sleep, depending on the passage and on the reader in question.

The degree of engagement and immersion we experience thus has a complex relationship, not a direct correlation, to the degree of richness of imagery with which a text presents us. Lessing and Alison each provide contemporary examples of engagement built on the active dynamics of suspense and elaboration, rather than on static dwelling in an image. Moreover, intuitively, daydreams, ruminations, and pensive states can certainly be quite immersive, suggesting that poetry or fiction that invokes such states in a reader's mind may also provoke a sense of immersion or transport, regardless of vividness or realism. The neuropsychology of autonoeisis supports this view. The kinds of autobiographical memories and associations that extrapolation relies upon are key players in mental time travel, and Daniel Schacter and Donna Rose Addis have even proposed that personal memory, imaginative construction, and future-prospection are all part of the

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[141] Green and Brock, *ibid.*.

same cognitive system. Our past experiences provide the raw material for both imagination and for mental construction of the future, and episodic memories are also themselves mental constructions, as we imaginatively recreate our pasts anew every time we remember.[142] Self-referential cognition in poetic contexts – a flash of personal identification with a character's past, say – might well break the "spell" of a narrative by causing us to become a self-conscious part of the texture of reading; but equally, and perhaps more subtly and pervasively, such cognitions might deepen the transportation by wrapping more strands of self into the work of imaginative extrapolation. A fuller account of the problem requires me to go a little deeper into the neurological underpinnings of autonoetic cognition – the "default mode network," or DMN.

2. Daydreams and the DMN

Thus far, I have described the DMN, following the hypotheses of Mar and Spreng and of Buckner and Carroll, as a region that supports different kinds of imaginative self-projection, or autonoetic consciousness. Yet, as I mentioned in the introduction to this

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[142] Daniel L. Schacter and Donna Rose Addis, "The ghosts of past and future" (*Nature* 445 [2007]: 27); Daniel L. Schacter, Donna Rose Addis, and Randy L. Buckner, "Remembering the past to imagine the future: the prospective brain" (*Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 8 [2007]):657-661). See also Donna Rose Addis, Ling Pan, Mai-Anh Vu, Noa Laiser, and Daniel L. Schacter, "Constructive episodic simulation of the future and the past: Distinct subsystems of a core brain network mediate imagining and remembering" (*Neuropsychologia* 47 [2009]: 2222–2238). Alan Richardson discusses this "*constructive episodic simulation hypothesis*" in his article "Defaulting to Fiction: Neuroscience Rediscovers the Romantic Imagination" (2011), noting its similarity to the views of Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, and Coleridge, and connecting it to Romantic lyric poetry's exploration of memory and prospection. The connection between Romanticism and mental time travel also stems, as I have argued above of Cowper's wheat-field, from a long eighteenth-century history of imaginative self-projection in loco-descriptive poetry.

essay, the DMN was not originally identified with autonoeisis; and although its connection to the phenomenon of "mental time travel" is not disputed, the functions attributed to it by neuroscientists range well beyond this. The DMN was discovered and defined in early fMRI studies as the pattern of neural activity that was observed when subjects in the scanner were being imaged in between experimental tasks; it was the "default mode" of the mind against which the scans taken during the task itself could be statistically compared. The idea that this between-tasks state of mind was a kind of neutral control, a default kind of existence, however, soon had to be abandoned. Having piqued the interest of researchers, the DMN has since been studied under the hypothesis that it plays a role in the kind of daydreaming, mind-wandering processes that are actually going on in our heads when we are supposedly not doing anything at all.[143] The most common hypothesis of such research is that such tasks share a kind of self-referential cognition – say, reminiscing (autobiographical memory), planning one's lunch (autobiographical prospection), worrying (prospection and self-judgment), thinking about one's personal relationships, and the like. These self-referential tasks are not, it is important to note, experiences of "self-consciousness" in the sense that a philosopher or theorist might invoke: they are states of mind that involve a representation of the self, but not in any particularly reflexive or conscious way. When I plan my lunch, I am involved in that plan, but I am not precisely thinking "about" myself. An alternative theory hypothesizes that the DMN may play an even broader cognitive role: it decouples actions from perceptual inputs, allowing for the performance mental simulations such as putting

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[143] See e.g. J. Smallwood & J.W. Schooler, "The restless mind" (*Psychological Bulletin* 132 [2006]: 946–958); Smallwood et al., "Escaping the here and now: evidence for a role of the default mode network in perceptually decoupled thought" (*Neuroimage* 69 [2013]: 120-125).

oneself in another's shoes – tasks requiring that the content of thought be kept distinct from the behavior of the body.[144] Cognitions like future-prospection are a kind of mental simulation, for example: we do not typically mime cooking and eating dinner when we mentally rehearse what we are going to do. Because of its supposed role in simulations and/or self-referential cognitions, the DMN supports a link between the supposedly "thin" experience of daydreams and the experience of self-projection, somewhat in defiance of the canonical link between self-projection and vividness described in the historical and psychological review that I presented in chapter two.

The hypothesis that the DMN supports self-oriented thought suggests that daydreaming and extrapolation are likely to provoke an increase in the personal involvement and transportation we experience in artistic contexts. The study on preferences and emotional judgments of paintings conducted by Vessel, Starr, and Rubin provides some support for this view. When people rated their preference for artworks, the DMN was only active for the paintings that had been reported to be most moving, indicating a qualitative difference, rather than a simple continuum, between people's experiences of strong engagement with art and their experiences of mere preference. The authors hypothesized that the DMN activity revealed a "personal relevancy" that the subjects had to those artworks – or, as Starr put it in her later book, it revealed acts of

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[144] On decoupled thought, see Smallwood (2013); and also Igor Marchetti et al., "The Default Mode Network and Recurrent Depression: A Neurobiological Model of Cognitive Risk Factors" (*Neuropsychological Review* 22 [2012]:229-251). On the simulation hypothesis of the DMN, see R. Nathan Spreng and Cheryl L. Grady, "Patterns of Brain Activity Supporting Autobiographical Memory, Prospection, and Theory of Mind, and Their Relationship to the Default Mode Network" (*Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 22 [2009]: 1112-1123).

"reaching deep into one's sense of self."[145] But that sort of an inward turn also can have significant downsides. The DMN's role in self-referential cognitions has made it a research target for studies on depression and rumination as well – an association that connects its functions back to the structure of Gothic suspense.

Depressive and anxiety disorders are often characterized by obsessive self-monitoring, rumination, and negative self-judgment, and more than one study has linked this depressive self-focus to altered activity in the DMN. In a provocative behavioral analysis based on self-reports of mental states during daily activities, Killingsworth and Gilbert found that when people reported that they had been mind-wandering, they also reported greater unhappiness.[146] Research on the DMN in depression complements this behavioral finding: it becomes more active during depressive episodes. The DMN, as a "default mode" activity pattern of the brain, is typically not observed during fMRI scans when the brain being scanned is engaged in a more proactive experimental task, yet Sheline et al. found that this does not happen in depression: the DMN of depressed participants remains active even while they are engaged in a task that ought to deactivate it. As the authors put it, the persistence of activity in the DMN may mark an "impaired ability to suppress attention to internal emotional states." Sonuga-Barke and Castellanos additionally hypothesize that this internalized activity can interfere with external tasks and perceptions, perhaps accounting for the cognitive deficits and sluggishness that are often associated with depressive episodes. Moreover, the more severe the depression and sense of hopelessness, the stranger the alterations in the typical connectivity and function

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[145] Vessel et al., *passim*; Starr 51.
[146] Matthew A. Killingsworth and Daniel T. Gilbert, "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind" (*Science* 330 [2010]:932).

of the DMN, as Grimm et al. have demonstrated. The altered neurological behavior of the DMN in depression, finally, also seems to be directly connected to behavioral alterations in mental time travel, although the evidence for this is more mixed. Northoff (2007) reports a behavioral deficit in future-prospection among depressed persons, but an increase in ruminating over past events, whereas Williams et al. (1996) found that both prospection and memory retrievals produced in response to word cues were less detailed and specific for suicidally depressed subjects. These studies paint a still evolving, but coalescing, picture of the correlations between protracted and excessive tendencies toward mind-wandering and imaginative self-projection, and the symptoms of major depression.[147]

The negative ruminations, obsessive re-evaluations of past actions, fearful and nebulous projections of the future, the hopeless inaction, the stupor that results from the failure to escape the running extrapolations of the mind – all these link the conventional domain of self-projection, through alterations in neurological function, to Gothic modes of anxious imagination and extrapolation. Moreover, they suggest that the degree of internality and self-relevance involved in an experience of transportation may be

[147] Sheline et al., "The default mode network and self-referential processes in depression" (*PNAS* 106 [2009]: 1942-1947); E.J.S. Sonuga-Barke and F.X. Castellanos, "Spontaneous attentional fluctuations in impaired states and pathological conditions: A neurobiological hypothesis" (*Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 31 [2007]: 977–986); Simone Grimm et al., "Altered negative BOLD responses in the default-mode network during emotion processing in depressed subjects" (*Neuropsychopharmacology* 34:4 [2009]: 932–943); Simone Grimm et al., "Reduced negative BOLD responses in the default-mode network and increased self-focus in depression" (*The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry* [2011]: 1–11); G. Northoff "Psychopathology and pathophysiology of the self in depression – Neuropsychiatric hypothesis" (*Journal of Affective Disorders* 104 [2007]:1–14); J.M. Williams et al., "The specificity of autobiographical memory and imageability of the future" (*Memory and Cognition* 24 [1996]:116–125).

correlated to the intensity of the experience. Here, the line between cognitive criticism and reductivism becomes especially thin. Cowper's well-documented severe depressive disorder is unquestionably relevant to his poetics, and may be reflected in phenomenologies of perception and mind-wandering he presents in descriptions in *The Task*. Yet to simply diagnose that disorder in his descriptive practice, to equate extraordinary poetic achievement with non-normative psychology, is both dismissive and disingenuous to his creative agency. A poem is not a symptom. Nor do I want to imply that readers who extrapolate in a Gothic mode are literally, at that moment, suffering depressive or anxiety disorders. Yet reading, like any human activity, does alter one's immediate neurological state – and, through both memory and habit, its future states as well. Although reading certainly does not replicate depression, no more than does memory replicate – either cognitively or experientially – future-prospection, there is a shared substrate between the state of self-projection and that of depressive rumination, one that lies closer to the surface of experience in certain kinds of reading practice.

What I am proposing is that writers like Cowper or Radcliffe exploit a potential for obsessive internal rumination that is a natural cognitive kin to the more sociable, positively-experienced transportation praised in late eighteenth-century poetics. These writers occasion in their readers temporary and partial states whose features appear very similar to the features of depression and anxiety. Authors and poets may, as a result, trigger, explore, and playfully reveal the dimensions of presence, disturbing vacuity, and even depersonalization within the function of autonoetic imagination. These dynamics are particularly active in the "Brown Study" section of *The Task*'s "Winter Evening," which I quote in its entirety below:

Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause
Nor need one. I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amus'd have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition prophesying still
Though still deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the frost
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within.
(282-310)

Cowper's portrayal of daydreaming, despite the comforting note on which he ends, nonetheless contains several paradoxical descriptions. After giving a lengthy account of the subject matter of his wandering thoughts – churches, trees, the prophecy of a stranger at the door – the poetic speaker yet describes his "understanding" as vacant, sleeping; the mind is "quiescent" even as it is supposedly "amus'd," "sooth'd" despite the "ludicrous and wild" visions of fancy. And although he points self-deprecatingly at the

indolence concealed beneath an appearance of being "task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost," absorbed and lost is precisely what he seems to be – losing "an hour" of life, only recalled "home" from his mental wandering by a violent "snapping" of the threads of fancy, as those threads had been the tether of a kite. This reflexive, wry, and uneasy account of imaginative self-projection carries a constant tension between presence and absence, as the poet's self-proclaimed "thoughtless" consciousness teeters on the "glassy threads" that he describes.

Why do the fanciful visions presented here also summon such a vocabulary of loss and void? The biographical reply, that in this description Cowper may also be standing at the brink of the depressive ruminations and hallucinations from which he suffered throughout his life, is certainly relevant, and may well have prompted Cowper's initial interest in the phenomenon of daydreaming; but, as Kevis Goodman notes, the odd divisions of the study are also in dialogue with a Lockean conversation about personal identity, a poetic attempt "to probe the very vacant spaces in thought that the *Essay* had suggested but not explored, to imagine at some length the 'unthinking mind' (281) that is not just a sleeping mind."[148] The idea that conscious presence might be divorced from one's immediate surroundings is also implicit in the concept of imaginative self-projection, particularly in the shiftable self that religious rhetoric requires to effect emotional alteration and conversion. Part of what Cowper's "Brown Study" does is to bring such poetic and fanciful self-projections into the eighteenth-century philosophic conversation about identity, with the effect of making the fracture that it produces in the

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[148] Goodman, 89-90.

self more explicit.[149] His poetic "I" becomes an overtly estranged spectator to its own

mental processes, as in oddly externalized phrases like "myself creating what I saw" –

and yet that spectator is oddly unable to experience the visions it ostensibly witnesses,

producing only unfocused fragments of "houses" and "churches." The consequences of

Cowper's daydream are also quite distinct from the continuity of present awareness

represented in Kames' theory of "ideal presence." Cowper's poetic speaker is snatched

away and becomes "lethargic" and "quiescent," lulled into a "stupor" that can only be

broken by the irruption of outside stimuli. Even after the "glassy threads" have snapped,

and Cowper returns to a richer retelling of the contents of his vision – the "Brown Study"

is immediately followed by the "fields and woods" passage quoted earlier in this chapter

– still the poem seems to register a split of self rather like Emily St. Aubert's in the

"Storied Sonnet," a rush of poetic creation that attempts to retroactively recreate

something more ineffable that has come before. The snow that finally coats this poetic

landscape draws a parallel to the speaker's own frost-encased dwelling, a "thick'ning

mantle" beneath which "tender" nature "Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil" (330-

332). The paradoxical warmth of Cowper's retreat beneath the chill is also a retreat that

comes, it seems, at some cost. The "freezing blast" cannot be completely resisted – either

within the home, or, later, within the vision of snow as a warm blanket, which Cowper

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[149] Marshall Brown accounts for the fractured nature of the "Brown Study" by arguing
that it marks a new independence of consciousness, described as a "minimal state of
intellectual existence," from consciousness-of (i.e., of the immediate perceptual
environment) (*Preromanticism* [Stanford UP, 1991]:69). Etymology aside, Brown's
observation of a minimal kind of awareness in the "Brown Study" is acute, as is the
general sense that an important fracture between presence, awareness, attention, and
mental being takes place in Cowper's lines. However, as Goodman points out, the
purportedly new division between consciousness and consciousness-of is indebted to
extant philosophical conversations in both Locke's *Essay*, and in Descartes' writings on
the self – Cowper, she notes, even paraphrases Locke in lines 284-5 (Goodman, 89-90).

transmutes quickly into a description of the cruelty of the world. The entire "Brown Study" episode is a vision encased in ice, echoing the larger structure of *The Task* itself, where the season of winter eclipses fully half the poem's length instead of staying within the proper proportions of its seasonal quarter.

Cowper's self-aliened, doubled account of idle fancy explores the thin terrain of the passive daydream, and follows it down into a deeply absorbed state of non-awareness, opening a depersonalizing rift in the heart of imaginative self-projection. That split self is echoed in a memorable image that opens "The Winter Morning Walk." Walking down a snow-covered path, the poetic speaker observes the elongated shadow of his own legs:

> Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
> In spite of gravity and sage remark
> That I am but a fleeting shade,
> Provokes me to smile. With eye askance
> I view the muscular proportion'd limb
> Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair
> As they design'd to mock me, at my side
> Take step for step, and, as I near approach
> The cottage, walk along the plaister'd wall,
> Prepost'rous sight! the legs without the man.
> (11-20)

Here the familiar loco-descriptive device of light becomes an overt revelation of the objective presence of the observer in the landscape.[150] The emotional tenor of the description is playful, but also ambiguous. Cowper offers us, instead of a straightforward

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[150] In "The End of the Line," Neil Hertz gives a deconstructive account of the inevitability of such reflections of the perceiving, or reading, presence within texts. I note that the ghostly proxy-selves we find within texts may also be read, through cognitive science, as part of the embodied work of mental scene-creation. The figure itself, as Hertz notes, is not unusual; rarely, however, is that mirroring of self so explicitly depersonalized as in Cowper's poetry.

didactic lesson, two possible suggestions. The allegorical "sage remark" takes the

distorted shadow for an intimation of mortality, a visual division of self from self that

predicts and reveals the teleological truth. The second reading laughs, with the poetic

speaker, at the "Prepost'rous sight," unmasking the shadow as no more than a trick of the

light – an illusion whose disturbing subtexts of dismemberment and wasting disease

constitute mockery rather than threat. Yet as in the Radcliffean Gothic, the demystifying

resolution is insufficient to dispel the threatening image of the "shapeless," disembodied

second self that stalks beside, "mocking" its original. The visual representation of a

shadow becomes a disturbing rumination on agency and depersonalization, as we watch

Cowper watch his own legs walk by, headless and mechanical.

The dark tenor of self-estrangement in Cowper's imaginative projections marks

his departure from the more pictorialist forms of ideal presence, and brings "The Winter

Evening" into conversation with the psychology of Gothic reading. Cowper's poem

stages a pastoral retreat to the comforting tranquility of daydream and domestic

retirement – Davidoff and Hall, for example, describe the poet as a recluse whose fireside

shutters closed out "the social disorder of the 1780s," helping to establish a separate and

honorable sphere of manhood "centred on a quiet domestic rural life rather than the

frenetic and anxiety-ridden world of town and commerce"[151] – but, as Goodman points

out, it is a retreat with a "loophole." Cowper, that is, maintains a "sensible path" to the

exterior world through newspapers and their "globally telescopic eye," permitting an

influx of information that Cowper attempts to mediate and domesticate into his poetic

form; this kind of suspense by spatial remove, rather than suspense by temporal remove,

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[151] *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850.* (Chicago UP: 1987), 165, 166.

occasions his state of suspended animation in the "Brown Study".[152] Cowper's retreat had

always been imaginatively porous to meditations on the plight of the enslaved, England's

colonial wrongs, even the more local cruelties of fox-hunting; and while such

disapproving excurses on the outside world are typical elements in the generic structure

of pastoral, Cowper's betray an unusually sympathetic, self-implicating conscience that

moves him to flesh out the otherwise merely abstract harms wrought by the powerful.

These imaginative explorations and connections to the plight of distant others can also be

unusually anxious, like the fearful tale of the unremarked, drowning sailor he would later

describe, as an extended simile for his own personal travails, in "The Castaway." As both

Favret, and Michael McKeon, note, the necessity of this kind of conceptualization of

things happening at some great remove, but with critical import for the immediate self,

was accelerated by Britain's increasing economic and military imperialism. McKeon

refers to this societal change as a rise in forms and ideas of the "virtual"; Favret connects

it to a "sense of distant calamity" borne of foreign wars, and notes the way that the

combination of personal powerlessness and mental projections of self may produce "a

welter of conflicting feelings" that "hollows out the here and now," and paralyzes

action.[153] This kind of paralytic "welter" seems, like the news and alongside it, to filter

into Cowper's retreat. He figures the captivation of newspaper-reading, at the opening of

"The Winter Evening," as literal captivity, "four pages" that hold him "Fast bound in

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[152] Goodman, 69, 88-98.

[153] McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009);
Favret, 22, 72. Throughout his book, McKeon traces the rise of multiple forms of
"virtual" conceptualization during the eighteenth century, including the virtual body of
the public sphere, the virtual currency of the stock market, and the virtual travel of
voyages of discovery. Out of these various modes, only virtual travel is directly related to
autonoetic imagination; but indirectly, imaginative shifts of presence might well be part
of the cognitive work of planning and monitoring long-term and distant ventures.

chains of silence" (53); and, near the close of *The Task*, writing on the potential abnegation of patriotic duty caused by his withdrawal, he attempts to locate a kind of negative ethics in the restraint from action, writing of the recluse that "if his country stand not by his skill / At least his follies have not wrought her fall" ("The Winter Walk At Noon," 975-976.) Imaginative engagement in the outside world authorizes his retreat, but also permeates its emotional boundaries, as both Goodman and Favret note, with its "freezing blast" – a reminder that a withdrawal into one's own mind, too, is not necessarily a retreat to any particularly safe place.

3. Escapist Extrapolation

The dynamics of imaginative retreat that characterize Cowper's domestic pastoral bear a striking similarity to a rather more trivial, and maligned, kind of imaginative escape: into the pleasurable world of a novel. Goodman reads the "vacuity" of Cowper's "Brown Study" in the context of his earlier newspaper-reading, pairing it with several commentaries on idle thought and newsreading.[154] The larger connection, however, made available through the neuroscience of self-projection and imaginative elaboration, is to the broader critique of romance-reading. This connection, moreover, allows Cowper to become a kind of bridge between the brighter poetic elaborations of the *non finito*, and the immersive suspensions of its Gothic cousin.

Historically, the tastes for loco-descriptive poetry and for Gothic novels overlap quite significantly in the Romantic era; as William St. Clair notes, in poetry "the three

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[154] Goodman, 101-2.

favorites" of Romantic readers were the poets Young, Thomson, and Cowper, who

continued to be widely read alongside the rise of Gothic and sentimental fiction.[155] The

structural similarity between loco-descriptive extrapolation and Gothic suspense provides

an even closer link between the genres. Like the reader of a good Gothic yarn, Cowper

sits pleasantly in his warm cottage, engaging in an escape that trades the icy blasts of the

real world for different, more intimate dangers. Favret has already described these

"dangers" that leak through the mind and its affects as translations of the literal peril

taking place at a distance, much as the imaginative flights of the Gothic give us, in a

villain like Montoni, a defamiliarized translation of a much more local threat of

patriarchal sexual coercion.[156] The danger I am describing, however, is a slightly

different one: not a leaking-in of real external threats through the supposed "loopholes"

of fancy and feeling, or even of reading, but rather a direct cognitive predicament shared

by any fancy-prone imaginative voyager. This cognitive threat may be responsible for

producing some of the effects that critics of the sentimental and Gothic novel found most

deeply disturbing.

　　　Criticisms of novel-reading serve a disciplinary function that supports hierarchies

of class and gender in a fairly evident way, leveraging fears of societal and moral

upheaval under the guise of aesthetic principle: women ought to attend to babies, not

novels; poetry and history, the traditional genres of literary privilege, ought to be

defended from incursions of the scribbling rabble; and the poor ought to be working, not

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[155] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge UP, 2004): 113.

[156] Favret, 75. See also Scott MacKenzie's "Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Narrative…", which ties Radcliffe's private imaginary horrors to the French Revolution's public horrors; and Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), on the Gothic's defamiliarization of the "marriage plot."

reading at all.[157] Yet writings on novel-reading delinquency also often also reference

states of vacancy, drained life, and uncontrollable rumination that echo Cowper's frozen

void of daydreaming extrapolation. A letter in the *Monthly Review* of 1761, for example,

lambasts readers "who read, not for the sake of thinking, but for want of thought"; one

from a "W.W." in the *Scots Magazine* no. 64 of 1802, that women might "return with

palled senses, to the world's concerns, after reveling in the luxurious and voluptuous

descriptions, which appear in the pages of a novel"; Thomas Clarkson, in his *Portraiture*

of Quakerism, describes how the "excess of stimulus on the mind … affects the organs of

the body, and relaxes the tone of the nerves," producing the nervous and sickly

constitution typical of "educated females"; and Coleridge, in *Seven Lectures on*

Shakespeare and Milton, would ultimately slam the habit of novel-reading for causing

"the entire destruction of the powers of the mind," an "utter loss to the reader" that kills

time by "fill[ing] the mind with a mawkish and morbid sensibility, which is directly

hostile to the cultivation, invigoration, and enlargement of the nobler powers of the

understanding."[158] The conflict between an inappropriate fictional world and a soberer

and more rewarding reality is only one portion of such critique; novels are also

represented as producing a measurable drain of the cognitive powers, and of cognitive

presence, as if a part of the reader has been literally sucked away into the fictive world of

imagination; and, for Coleridge in particular, the void is replaced with a too-feeling, too-

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[157] See e.g. John Tinnon Taylor, *Early Opposition to the English Novel: The Popular Reaction from 1760-1830* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1943), *passim*; De Bolla's comments on transported reading and gender in chapter ten of *The Discourse of the Sublime* also bear relevance here, particularly his analysis of the use of rhetorical manuals to legislate the emotions of the private sphere of silent reading by imposing a frame of social, oratorical performance.

[158] Passages quoted in, respectively, Taylor, 15; Clery and Miles, 212; Taylor, 107; Taylor, 106.

empathetic tendency toward flight. A lengthier excerpt from the 1785 *Sylph* paints a

picture of these unfortunate, drained-out and emotionally draining women:

> I have actually seen mothers, in miserable garrets, *crying for the imaginary distress of an heroine*, while their children were *crying for bread*: and the mistress of a family losing hours over a novel in the parlour, while her maids, in emulation of the example, were similarly employed in the kitchen. I have seen a scullion-wench with a dishclout in one hand, and a novel in the other, sobbing o'er the sorrows of a *Julia*, or a *Jemima*.[159]

The immobilized, delinquent mothers depicted in the *Sylph* stand like ghosts in the

tapestry of domesticity, apparitions whose every thought and emotion is directed at

another realm; only their physical outlines protrude out of fiction and into the real world.

In this, they strikingly resemble Cowper's daydreamer, who, in Goodman's words, "has

so absented himself that he resembles a stranger in his home."[160] Cowper's "brown

study," in the light of such critiques, ought to begin to feel quite familiar. Its moments of

ruefully self-deprecating tone, such as the "indolence" of the vacuity, or the deceitful

appearance of engagement that masks lethargy, indicate that Cowper may well have been

aware of such distasteful "romantic" elements in his own daydreaming confessional. It is

as if Cowper's poetic speaker has snuck off, a bit guilty and defensive, for a bit of

fanciful, potentially delinquent pleasure-reading: a moment of escapist indulgence, sans

novel.

Reading Cowper in this way, as a kind of poet-*cum*-Gothic-reader, subverts the

picture of his poem as a defense of quiet and daily life. Davidoff and Hall rightly describe

his motivations to inhabit a country sphere "centred on a quiet domestic rural life rather

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[159] Taylor, 53-4.
[160] Goodman, 92.

than the frenetic and anxiety-ridden world of town and commerce."[161] But for Cowper in

particular, it is worth remembering, those daily domestic tasks could also be a

manifestation of compulsive thought and the attempt to control a recalcitrant mind:

> Absence of occupation is not rest,
> A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
> ("Retirement")[162]

Following the common medical advice that stimulating activity might stave off the torpor

of "spleen," Cowper often turned to writing as a mode of self-distraction, to alleviate the

"distress" of an empty mind – precisely the condition that descends upon him in the

"Brown Study." The promise of an introspective retreat, best represented in Young's

Night Thoughts, had been that its stability and silence would occasion virtuous, upward

meditation – thoughts that "like Angels, seen of old / In Israel's Dream, come from, and

go to, Heav'n" (*Night Thoughts* 8.946-7) – but even for Young, this had been a

production of effortful devotion. Pastoral retreat, and its deeper link to the condition of

the blessed and unworldly soul, extends the hope of introspective imagination; the

ruminations of Gothic fugue represent introspection's free rein, a freedom that Cowper

seems more willing than prior poets to acknowledge and to express. The warm cottage, in

other words, does not stand very far from the stormy heath.

Despite all its trappings of privileged panic, the critique of Gothic escapism thus

contains an intuition of the genuinely threatening, unusually powerful mode of

autonoeisis that awakened in the texts of Cowper and Radcliffe. Although Young's

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[161] Davidoff and Hall, 165, 166.
[162] *The Poetical Works of William Cowper,* Ed. H.F. Cary. London: William Smith, 1839:
44.

religious rhetoric was already aware of the dangers of emotional porousness to the text, or to the fallen world, Cowper's poetic lines painfully stake out the personal psychological consequences of transportation's porousness – the self-abandonment and depersonalization that it entails, as we simultaneously feel that we have been present and conscious within our own fancy, and also have been nowhere at all; as we sense that in throwing ourselves into reverie, we risk sacrificing not only agency, but even identity. This is the vacuum of autonoetic imagination when it is conceived, as Cowper conceives it, not as a seamless extension of one's self, but as a fracture within consciousness itself. The tenuous contacts and reflected images of the "Brown Study" – its firelight shadows, glassy threads, its objects that are named instead of evoked or described – are Cowper's attempt to provide a positive, concrete image for a process that is, in essence, a vanishment into the text that can only be described from the outside.

The Mysteries of Udolpho is remarkable for the degree to which Radcliffe both recognizes the danger of this kind of wandering vacancy of thought, this literary fugue, and also playfully turns it against her critics. As Walter Scott notes, she was the first great master of suspense, the author whose works taught later novelists "to break off the narrative, when it seemed at the point of becoming most interesting—to extinguish a lamp just when a parchment containing some hideous secret ought to have been read—to exhibit shadowy forms and half-heard sounds of woe."[163] Radcliffe knows exactly what effect she is aiming at – and the precise way in which it will be critiqued. In one episode in Book IV, Ludovico, the lover of Emily's servant Annette, offers to spend the night in a chamber that is reputed to be haunted. He decides, just as we have ourselves decided

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[163] Walter Scott, *Biographical Memoirs of Eminent Novelists, and Other Distinguished Persons* (Edinburgh: R. Cadell, 1834): 368.

when we pick up *Udolpho*, to pass his time reading an antique ghost story. Radcliffe sets

out for us the old picture of the wintertime escapist, drawing his chair "nearer to the

crackling blaze" as the wind "howl[s] mournfully at the casements," provoking him to

escape a growing "melancholy" with a "Provençal Tale" of a Baron and a strange ghostly

knight. As this interpolated story grows increasingly tense, Ludovico begins to break

away it, as if nervous about becoming too immersed in its supernatural horror. The initial

break comes after the knight warns the Baron that he must trust him and follow, or else

sacrifice his own future peace:

> ' "Sir knight," replied the Baron, "how is it possible, that my future peace can depend upon my present determination?"
> ' "That is not now to be told," said the stranger, "I have explained myself to the utmost. It is late; if you follow me it must be quickly ; -- you will do well to consider the alternative."
> 'The Baron mused, and, as he looked upon the knight, he perceived his countenance assume a singular solemnity.'
> [Here Ludovico thought he heard a noise, and he threw a glance round the chamber, and then held up the lamp to assist his observation; but, not perceiving any thing to confirm his alarm, he took up the book again and pursued the story.] (553-554)

At the moment when Ludovico breaks out of the story, The Provençal Tale has

just reached a crucial juncture: does the Baron follow the alarming stranger (who has

mysteriously appeared in his chamber without any evident means of entry), or leave that

particular plot alone? The ambiguity of the warning – a blank "the alternative" that we

know, only, to contain no peace – is ripe for anxious elaborations of the future.

Radcliffe's decision to set the noise that distracts Ludovico at this exact moment thus

plays upon the uncanny resemblance across the diegetic levels: Ludovico, like the Baron,

could decide not to "follow" his ghostly guide further in, but if he does do so, he will tread into the terrain of anxious rumination.

Ludovico's dreamlike fits and starts allow Radcliffe to playfully explore the moment of entry into the "spell" of transportation. The next re-emergence of Ludovico also follows upon an autonoetic projection within the interpolated narrative: the Baron, who has consented to be led from his castle out into the cold night, imagines "the comforts of his warm chamber, rendered cheerful by the blaze of wood," and feels "for a moment, the full contrast of his situation" (555). This moment of wishful self-projection on the Baron's part prompts Ludovico, who, unlike the Baron, is actually still in his room, to stir his own fire. Radcliffe allows the Baron's desire to transfer to Ludovico, revealing the porousness of Ludovico's mental state as he reads, and also turning Ludovico into the Baron's puppet: he performs what the Baron only wishes he could. Not only is Ludovico evidently far too emotionally involved in the story, the story seems to have gained the ability to invade and control his actions. Radcliffe is nudging at critical fears about the dangerous co-option of readers by Gothic texts.

At the conclusion of the "Provençal Tale," Radcliffe's meta-critique of Gothic escapism becomes even more extravagantly playful, but also more foreboding. As Ludovico falls asleep in his arm-chair, the narrative focalization zooms out and doubles:

> In his dream he still beheld the chamber where he really was, and, once or twice, started from imperfect slumbers, imagining he saw a man's face, looking over the high back of his armchair. This idea had so strongly impressed him, that, when he raised his eyes, he almost expected to meet other eyes, fixed upon his own, and he quitted his seat and looked behind the chair, before he felt perfectly convinced, that no person was there.
> Thus closed the hour. (557)

If we read this passage from the perspective of the lesson on diegetic interpenetrability that we have just been given, Ludovico's supernatural fears become very literal. I know that of course there really is a person "behind" Ludovico's chair: myself. While reading this episode of *Udolpho*, I have in effect been looking over Ludovico's shoulders and into the book he reads for the last five pages. The eyes he imagines meeting are my own, which, as they literally peruse the page in which he appears, do imaginatively contact his. The Provençal Tale has transformed the ghostly "presence" of a reader within the text into an actual haunting. This breaking of the fourth wall may well induce a shiver, as it disturbs our own presence in the text, making the reading self into an object being seen by a character who ought not be capable of any kind of subjective action in our own diegetic sphere. Radcliffe out-critics the critics, all of whose censure could not have come up with a more palpable way of showing us our vulnerability when taking up imaginative presence within a fiction.

The trick accomplished, Radcliffe caps the Provençal Tale with a joke about literary transportation: as if he has transgressed one diegetic limit too many, Ludovico, like many a character in *Udolpho,* promptly and inexplicably vanishes, only to reappear some fifty pages later with a mumbled excuse about pirates and secret passageways. By presenting deixis as a kind of supernatural absorption, Radcliffe's final turn is to cleverly mock the alarmism of critiques of Gothic escapism: these critics with their fears about absorption, she seems to say, are actually as credulous as the poor benighted Gothic readers they purport to protect. And yet the shiver remains a real one – one more Gothic terror that feels more genuine than its post hoc rationalization.

The "Storied Sonnet," like the "Provençal Tale," makes an intrusion into the deictic frame that contains it, although not until much later in *Udolpho*. Coming to a bridge made of a felled pine "thrown across" a chasm, the Lady Blanche is seized with the same paralyzing terrors as the man in Emily St. Aubert's poem; but unlike him, she survives. Blanche first stands "trembling on the brink, and listening to the roar of the waters," as Radcliffe's description carries us down with the falling waters for a closer look at "the deep abyss, where their white surges gleamed faintly in the moon-light" (603). Blanche's survival of the scene that killed Emily's character serves to declaw and demystify even the playful anxiety of a literary extrapolation, a resolution that can only be achieved by a bit of deictic treason. The "Storied Sonnet" would have been as forgettable as many of Emily's other poetic efforts in *Udolpho* were it not for this seeming attempt, on Radcliffe's part, to give closure to a "mystery" that was never really a mystery, or a threat. Resolving its dangers turns the "Storied Sonnet" into an even more direct echo of the many moments of anxious extrapolation and unsatisfying resolution that occur throughout *Udolpho*.

But unlike our own performances of suspenseful transportation, in which we fill the text's epistemic gaps with our own nebulous imaginings, Emily's "Storied Sonnet" attempts to fill in the anxiety for us in full, present text. Her poem models the process of extrapolation that readers attuned to loco-descriptive imagery would have brought to Gothic texts, playfully reminding critics that the dangerously liberated fancy that they so feared is precisely the high-culture process of poetic reading that they rely upon themselves. Moreover, the externalization of Emily's fears in verse makes for fairly silly, childish poetry. An anxious projection exposed to the air quickly goes flat. Such

imageless, intensely internal states resist depiction: they can be elicited or provoked, they can be performed, but they cannot be represented, except from the outside. The eerie reappearance of the "Storied Sonnet" in Blanche's story encourages a reading of *Udolpho* as a space of interlocking diegetic threads, where internal anxieties manifest in a startling literalism that goes beyond the general tendency of supernatural fiction to provide concrete symbols of more nebulous fears. Radcliffe not only literalizes Emily's own fears – that is, literalizes fears that exist within the level of her own text – she also suggests that our own personal imaginative fears, our own extrapolations, might become literal manifestations, too, even as Emily's anxious embellishment seems to have produced, through diegetic disobedience, this narrative of Blanche. Radcliffe's audacity is to acknowledge the genuine danger of Emily's way of reading, and to extend it to her readers as entertainment anyway.

"Escapism" is, at first glance, nothing more than literary transportation turned bludgeon; once Kames and the loco-descriptive poets have established it as a feature of rhetoric, it becomes fair game for use in slanders as well as praise. The critique of Gothic as dangerous, absorbing escapism does, however, open a paradox in eighteenth-century critical wisdom about art. In order to be escapist, a Gothic fiction must have the quality of absorption, transport; and yet the oldest and loudest critique of romance, Horace's *incredulus odi*, has at its core the insistence that fantastic texts are bad precisely because they are not transporting, and can never be so: they are too unnatural, too improbable, too unbelievable to engage their readers. It is tempting to simply dismiss these critiques as alarmist and innacurate, but the practice of extrapolation and immersive reading tells a different, more complex story. Transportation, in Gothic practice, is open to strangely

ruminative, and even terrifying, modes of pure fancy that already go far beyond the suggestions of Kamesean ideal presence; the division is real, but not well-captured by the theoretical postulates that attempt to distinguish it. In second-generation Romanticism, that split between associationist theory and literary practice will become both more overt, and more final.

Chapter 4: Cheating Fancy

Ideas rarely have well-defined endpoints or origins in time, but they do have

moments of utterance that rise out of the conversation, like points on a graph, to signal

the crest of a change. I opened this history with one such utterance, Thomson's *The*

Seasons, which articulated a particular kind of visual and haptic autonoetic encounter

with the landscape. I close with another, Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (Appendix I), in

which that trajectory reaches a kind of converse point: an attempt to find a poetry of self-

projection construed without the use of sight. These moments do not in themselves

suffice to inaugurate and close, respectively, the eighteenth-century tradition of

transportation, but they are defining points of the hybrid cognitive-historical figure I have

been describing: a poetic engagement with the way the mind's autonoetic tendency

creates illusions of projection and presence, that helped give rise to a particular means of

talking about literary imagery as productive of those illusions. Keats inherits the figure of

transported reading as part of his native soil; he repeats it throughout his poetry with a

newly fluent ease of reference, and even articulates many of its visual dynamics as a

foundational myth in the sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Yet the very

availability of self-projection also enables new kinds of critique, explorations of the

limitation and exhaustion of its poetic viability. Keats's critique of escapism in the "Ode

to a Nightingale" locates one such limit within the modality of sound, which bears an

odd resistance to imaginative displacement. In these two works, Keats gives literary

transportation, respectively, its crowning emblem, and its most enduring skeptic. Both are signals of a profound change in its history.

Literary transportation's historical manifestations had always had a strongly metaphoric element, although such metaphorical manifestations, as I have traced in my second chapter, often seem in turn to be rooted yet again in autonoetic psychological experience, and to register through contemporary discourses of the mind, such as rhetorical theories of persuasion or theories of the passions. In Romanticism, transportation in its particular eighteenth-century character, focused on visual elaboration, spatial self-projection and liminality, becomes an increasingly self-sufficient figure for the act of reading, and for other acts of autonoetic imagination. But imaginative self-projection no longer requires the apparatus of psychological explanation that had often buttressed eighteenth-century accounts; by the Romantic era, it has become a commonplace of poetry, grounding figures of literary transportation in its own right. What I am describing, in short, is a shift in the metaphor of literature as a form of travel. The autonoetic features that had been accentuated by eighteenth-century psychology have become an essential part of its figural nature, but are more apt to be divorced from the phenomenologies of perception and emotion that had originally made them culturally relevant. Romantic literary transportation has become transportation in its modern contours: an idea generally accepted, and accepted without particular need for further explanation. Poets certainly continue to explore the psychological contours of autonoetic experience – but they do so within a culture that already privileges this mode as a foundational myth. Indeed, an essential part of my reading of Keats's Nightingale ode is precisely that Keats is pushing against an assumption of imaginative self-projection for

which generations of loco-descriptive and sublime poets had prepared him. I refer to this quality of literary transportation, here, as its mythological status – its new popularity as a trope for any act of reading, a kind of figural plenitude that allowed it to be unpacked and examined reflexively in itself.

Keats's poetics of self-projection do overlap with his vexed relationship to escapism, and in his later work, to rejection of escapism. As I have discussed the way the politics of escapism relate to autonoesis in the previous chapter, however, I will largely set aside the topic here.[164] My assertion of "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" as an early, transportation-embracing poem, and the "Ode to a Nightingale" as a later critique of that work, certainly takes the appearance of the familiar biographical trajectory from naïve poetic escapism to its mature rejection. Keats's trajectory as a poet of imaginative self-projection is, of course, more complex than this; transportation and simple escapism are not always aligned in his work, and later poems continue to open profound dynamics of transport and engagement. Keats does refuse to provide his poetic speaker a full transportation to the nightingale's sensory world, and that refusal allows the poem's more remarkable cognitive work to occur in its sensory negative spaces, revealing an imaginative terrain where projection and presence, in their turn, refuse to be excluded. Starr, writing on Keats's unheard music in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," has proposed that "intense aesthetic experience happens at the limits of the senses,"[165] and

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[164] On Keats's escapism, see particularly Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), especially p.131; John Bayley, *Keats and Reality* (Folcroft, P.A.: Folcroft Press, 1962); David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1959); and Marjorie Levinson's *Keats's Life of Allegory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), which provides a helpful analysis of these escapes in the context of Keats's classed and gendered subject position.
[165] Starr, 112.

this is a claim that my reading will elaborate: by denying sense, the Nightingale ode discovers a kind of imaginative resistance to such confinement that is founded not on the metaphysical liberation which Young had adopted, but rather on the multisensory richness of the loco-descriptive tradition. I begin, however, not with Keats's nightingale, but with another distant bird – this one Hazlitt's – whose ability to evoke an experience of imaginative presence poses the very problem of intersensory autonoesis that Keats's later poem will stage.

1. Hazlitt's Thrush

Hazlitt's *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* is a remarkable document of Romantic autonoesis in its own right. Arguing against the principle of Hobbesian self-interest, Hazlitt attempts an alternative: a philosophical recentering of human action on the disinterested faculty of sympathy. Yet despite Hazlitt's controlling vocabulary of sympathy, the book's primary interest is in using the structure of sympathetic self-projection to help explain the psychology of future-prospection, which Hazlitt reads as central to moral action. "The imagination, by means of which alone I can anticipate future objects, or be interested in them," he writes, "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 future being, and interested in it. I could not love myself, if I were not capable of loving others."[166] The motivating faculty behind willed actions is thus unified with the moral faculty that we use to motivate sympathy and benevolence. That extension of

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[166] Hazlitt, *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* [1805]. (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1990.)

sympathy to one's relationship with oneself produces its own dynamics of self-alienation, as John Savarese notes in a recent article; and that self-alienation is produced for much the same reason, I would add, as it was for Young's self-projections into the future in *Night Thoughts*.[167] Even more than Young's robust and resonant figures of the essentially transported soul, however, Hazlitt's essay centers on the intuition that there is some common ground in the different ways the mind projects itself about. The *Principles* covers sympathy and future-prospection; in his later essay "On Gusto," Hazlitt would also portray the different senses in the mind as having a similar sort of interpersonal dynamic: Claude, for instance, is criticized for having an "eye" that "did not strongly sympathize with his other faculties," because it evoked no touch, or scent, or sound.[168] Hazlitt's self-projection thus encompasses sympathy, self-projection, and aesthetic imagination – three of the kinds of cognition connected in the psychological theory of autonoetic consciousness. And, indeed, Hazlitt has rather stretched the eighteenth century discourse of sympathy in order to produce this account of a synthesized imaginative self-projection. Adam Smith, for instance, would have little trouble finding empirical objections to the equation of sympathy for one's future self with sympathy for another person: the immediate moral judgments we make about our own actions do not always obey the same standards to which we hold others' actions.[169]

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[167] John Savarese, "Reading One's Own Mind: Hazlitt, Cognition, Fiction" (*European Romantic Review* 24:4 (2013): 437-452.)

[168] Hazlitt, "On Gusto." *The Round Table* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1817): 20-27, 25-26.

[169] E.g., "We sometimes feel for another, a passion of which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality. We blush for the impudence and rudeness of another, though he himself appears to have no sense of the impropriety of his behavior; because we cannot help feeling with what confusion we

Hazlitt's reported discovery of a broadly construed, fundamental cognitive role

for sympathetic imagination is a marker of more general Romantic trends toward

reflexive awareness of imaginative self-projection. For instance, the first-generation

Romantic synthesis of autobiographical memory, future-prospection, and sensory and

perambulatory motion, particularly in Wordsworth's poetics, expanded upon loco-

descriptive precedents for autonoetic imagination, bud added the new expansiveness, and

theoretical rationale, provided by the theory of "creative" imagination. Alan Richardson

has already written on the connections between the Romantic creative imagination and

the default mode network.[170] Keats's clearest reflexive writings on self-projection are

more narrowly centered on its specific poetic applications. The "camelion poet"'s ability

to imaginatively inhabit characters and places is one critically familiar example, and

numerous critics have also remarked on a quality of immersive self-loss, enabled by close

attention to the immediacy of sense, in his verse – Douglas Bush calls this the "escape

into the luxury of pure – if now sober – sensation," David Perkins, "passing into a vivid

and massive process of experience."[171] These experiences carry recognizable, traditional

poetic and psychological features of literary transportation, but Keats discusses and

indulges them to an extent that may well be unprecedented in the poetic canon.

Imaginative self-projection is not only accelerated as a poetic practice in the period, but

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ourselves should be covered, had we behaved in so absurd a manner." (Smith, I.i.I.10; p. 12).

[170] Richardson discusses the connection of Wordsworth's mental time-travel to neuroscience in "Defaulting to Fiction…," and also connects it to related trends in the work of Coleridge and Austen. See also Engell, *The Creative Imagination*, *passim*, on the shifting Romantic emphasis away from imagination as a faculty of receptivity, reflectingthe world, and towards imagination as a form of creativity.

[171] Douglas Bush, "Keats And His Ideas", in *English Romantic Poets*, ed. M.H. Abrams (New York: Oxford, 1960): 337; Perkins (1959), 210.

also becomes still more available than it had been, even to Kames or Young, as a subject of philosophy and poetic excursus in its own right.

The cultural attention that self-projection *qua* self-projection garners in the Romantic era permits an unprecedented reflexivity. In his *Remarks on the Systems of Hartley and Helvetius*, a highly technical discussion of associationist psychology appended to the *Principles*, for example, Hazlitt relies upon the familiarity and structural unity of the imaginative capacity for self-projection to help him stage a critique of the idea that all cognition might proceed along mechanical chains of association – part of his broader project, as established in the previous "Essay," of liberating imagination from the yoke of simple self-preservation. Hartley's argument, which Hazlitt contests, is that ideas are represented by local vibrations in the material substance of the brain, and communicate with other ideas through a spreading of that vibration along the nerves: as Hazlitt puts it, the vibrations may be "conveyed along very different nerves to different and very remote parts of the brain."[172] This combination of a mechanism for the local, material representation of ideas, and a mechanism for their communication and association – when two ideas are activated in succession, Hartley argues, their mutual vibration creates a physical change that allows them to trigger one another more easily in the future – remains a foundational principle of modern neuroscience, now known as connectivism.[173] Hazlitt's substantial argument against Hartley's connectivism is a theoretical one. In order for any two ideas to be able to vibrate in concord in the first

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[172] Hazlitt (1805), 84.

[173] Hartley, *Observations on Man* (London: S. Richardson, 1749):11-31. In the Hebbian connectivism taught currently in neuroscience, the mechanism is not vibration, but electrical responses that alter the ion channels by which nerves communicate: "neurons that wire together, fire together".

place, they must have a preexisting physical connection – and so Hartley argues that

ideas must necessarily diffuse themselves across the entire medullary substance. Hazlitt

rejects this out of hand: if any single input must spread activation across the entire frame

of thought, it is hard to imagine how this could ever reflect the conscious experience of

thought, because it is far too nonspecific and imprecise – he writes that it is "like

supposing that you might tread upon a nest of adders twined together, and provoke only

one of them to sting you."[174] But how, then, can the different ideas that enter through

vision, hearing, touch, and so forth, all represented materially in different localized areas

of the brain, communicate and resolve into the multisensory picture of the world?

To illustrate the kind of phenomenal experience he means in this objection,

Hazlitt waxes poetic for a few lines of what is otherwise a far more philosophical and

argumentative essay:

> If from the top of a long cold barren hill I hear the distant whistle of a thrush
> which seems to come up from some warm woody shelter beyond the edge of the
> hill, this sound coming faint over the rocks with a mingled feeling of strangeness
> and joy, the idea of the place about me, and the imaginary one beyond will all be
> blended together in such a manner in my mind as to become inseparable.[175]

Hazlitt's image does not directly evoke a projected self, but rather refers to the way the

senses seem to transcend the immediate utility of place and time, to synthesize

imaginative ideas with real ones. If the mind is supposed to create a material map of

space, then the distant "idea" of the thrush's "woody shelter" cannot possibly connect

with the proximate visual and tactile image of the "long cold barren hill" where the

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[174] Hazlitt (1805), 83.
[175] Hazlitt (1805), 84.

speaker stands. The image of the thrush dramatizes the idea that the spatial disconnect between the senses, in the physical brain, can nonetheless be transcended mentally; and, since imagination can perform it, the mind's structure must have something other than a "diffuse" spread of vibration to support that ability to bridge distance. Hartley's system, according to Hazlitt, is not able to account for the kind of spatially compound, multisensory imagery that poetry requires.[176]

The validity of Hazlitt's objection is somewhat questionable. Connectionism does not need to rely on a literal mapping of external positions in inside space, even if it does give thoughts material loci in the cortex. However, the point Hazlitt raises about communications between different sensory modes of representation does pose real difficulties for neural architecture – difficulties that have continued ramifications for the experience of ideas. The practical question of how the senses communicate to produce singular representations of the world, even leaving aside representations that have the spatiotemporal complexity Hazlitt's rather poetic example requires, is what neuroscience calls the "binding problem", and it has not been solved – often because, like autonoesis itself, the "binding problem" often dovetails with questions of attention and consciousness.[177] Hazlitt's critique of associationism, like modern neuroscientific work on the "binding problem," is an attempt to form a theory of how mental scene-creation

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[177] Kandel et al., for example, comment, "there must be a mechanism by which the brain momentarily associates the information being processed independently by different cell populations in different cortical regions. This mechanism, as yet unspecified, is called the *binding problem*." (*Principles of Neural Science*, 4th ed. [McGraw-Hill, 2000]): 502.

works. The theory of literary transportation also involves a critique of scene creation, but approaches the problem from the top down, from qualia to cause; Hazlitt is reaching upwards from the level of neural architecture in an attempt to understand how the physical brain might constrain this same mental work. Sensory interaction is a key to accounting for the full picture of what imagination must be able to do, and this is why Hazlitt selects the sound of distant birdsong for his illustration: with its aural register, it cuts into the casual visuocentrism of eighteenth-century associationist theory with a demand to account for multisensory, spatially transcendent qualities of imaginative life.

In choosing sound, moreover, Hazlitt selects a sensory modality that had historically been one of the poetry's favorite spurs toward imageries of transport. In part, this association is purely a practical one: sound, like vision, gives concrete information about events at a distance, and unlike vision it often does so intrusively, making the distant abruptly salient.[178] The physical continuity of voice – *vox* – with breath and with spirit in Renaissance pneumatology also made singing and speaking a form of literal, if not material, projection of the soul across space,[179] a resonant imagery for the ontological transportations of the religious sublime. The poetic speaker of Milton's "il Penseroso," for example, enters the "dimm religious light" of a church, and lets the "pealing Organ" and "full-voiced choir below…with sweetness, through mine ear / Dissolve me into

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[178] Steven Feld, "Waterfalls of Song," in *Senses of Place*, ed. Feld and Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996).

[179] Charles Burnett, "Sound and its Perception in the Middle Ages," in *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgement from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Michael Fend and Penelope Gouk (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1991): 43-70. Ficino's version of this is the most literal of all: both sound and soul, as *spiritus*, involve an animation of the air, making the exchange of voices into a literal communion of two spirits (68-9).

ecstasies, / And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes" (164-166).[180] The "extasies" of sound

sublimate the self, enabling a transported vision of heaven. Thomson's "Hymn" to *The*

Seasons replicates this aural sublimation, but expands its application to the prospect

poem's form: rather than an eye roving the landscape, the "Hymn" portrays a roving song

made up of natural noises, culminating in the same scene of church and choir that Milton

had established, but now one that also lets all creation "In one united ardour rise to

heaven" (88). Yet there is a note of intersensory doubt even within this tradition: when

Milton's speaker reaches heaven, he places it before his eyes, not before his ears; and

when Thomson shows us the song sailing upward, he does so by moving to an emotional

register. Sound provokes cognitions of distance and prompts psychological motion;

harmony creates powerful sensations of unity and purpose; birds are even icons of the

motile soul; but a closer attention to the sensory specificity of the kinds of transportation

occasioned by sound is warranted, much as Hazlitt had placed scrutiny on the sensory

elisions of the associationists. That intersensory scrutiny is what Keats's nightingale will,

in its turn, provide; but the reason he turns to such scrutiny lies in his broader poetic

engagement with the eighteenth-century legacy of autonoetic literary imagination.

2. The Autonoetic Emblem

Keats's interests in imaginative self-projection are varied, but they are always

situated most strongly in the kinds of cognition specific to fiction. The loco-descriptive

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[180] John Milton, "Il Penseroso." *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, Ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: Random House, 2007): 46-52, 52.

poetic tradition of sensory entrancement is a pronounced dynamic in both his early and

late poetry, one noted both by modern critics and by Keats's own contemporaries, not to

mention the poet himself. Woodhouse writes in a letter to a colleague, for example, that

Keats has the ability to "throw his own soul into any object he sees or imagines," and a

lengthy lineage of critics following Bate have acknowledged his propensity toward

"sympathetic absorption" in the objects he describes – an absorption whose features often

look, with the aid of a richer vocabulary for autonoetic encounters, less like sympathy

and more like imaginative self-projection and sublime recentering.[181] In addition to these

psychological interests in self-projection, Keats is also particularly interested in the figure

of literary transportation, and employs it extensively in his poetry, where it appears both

as a casually familiar trope for reading, and as a more extensive symbolic system for

figuring entrancements in the loco-descriptive tradition. "Lamia" is a work in the latter

vein. Imaginative entrancement appears, for instance, in the literally knotted "Gordian

shape" (47) of the serpent's body that sets the metaphor for her lover Lycius's obsession:

he later becomes "tangled in her mesh" (295), and, when he wakes from the stupor, he

wakes, somewhat punnishly, "into amaze" (322).[182] These mazes, tangles, entrancements,

as Perkins notes, are classic features of the Keatsean approach to natural imagination,

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[181] Letter from Richard Woodhouse to John Taylor, about 27 October 1818. Quotations from Keats's letters refer to *The Letters of John Keats*, 2 vols., ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Harvard UP, 1958). Bate, "Negative Capability," in *John Keats* (1963): 233-264. Li Ou provides a review, and critical reevaluation, of the work directly following the discussion opened by Bate in *Keats and Negative Capability* (London: Continuum, 2009). The dynamics of sympathy and absorption that Bate describes in Keats's work have been rearticulated in a wide body of more recent criticism on Keats. Bayley's *Keats And Reality* offers an important opposing view, critiquing the relevance and applicability of the concept of "negative capability" to Keats's poetic practice.

[182] Quotations from Keats's poetry refer to John Keats, *The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard (London: Penguin Books, 1988).

"enthralments" to attention.[183] Yet they are also, as I discuss in my first chapter, classic

Thomsonian figures for imaginative involvement and self-loss in landscapes, which

Keats serially iterates, rather derivatively, in the endlessly proliferating bowers and

mazes of a poem like *Endymion*, where he gives us "mazy world / Of silvery

enchantment" (I.460-1), a fancied journey "Through winding passages, where sameness

breeds / Vexing conceptions of some sudden change" (II.236-7) that is summed up in "a

thousand mazes overgone" (II.387), and a cage made of streams of water that "with

changèd magic interlace…like delicatest lattices" (II.613-14), among others.

In the former vein are works like the minor sonnet "Written on a Blank Space at

the End of Chaucer's Tale of *The Floure and the Leafe*," where Keats also recapitulates

his mazy dynamics as an imagery for attentive presence in the moment of reading:

> This pleasant tale is like a little copse:
> The honeyed lines do freshly interlace
> To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
> So that he here and there full-hearted stops;

The pleasurably entangling bower Keats imagines here (its lines not only "interlace," an

allusion to Thomson's maze, they are also honeyed – sticky and sweet all at once) ties the

way he experiences poetic composition to the way he thinks about reading. Bowers are

not just pastoral retreats, representations of secluded safety, although they certainly can

and do serve this function.[184] They are also engagements with a century of critical

thought on the relations between attention, presence, and self-projection through

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[183] Perkins (1959), 207.

[184] See e.g. Patricia Parker, "The Progress of Phaedra's Bower: Spencer to Coleridge," *ELH* 40:3 (1973): 372-397.

imaginative life. In another, yet more casual example, this from a letter, Keats plays

against both transported reading and its history in a more humorous vein:

> Buy a girdle – put a pebble in your Mouth – loosen your Braces – for I am going among Scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe – I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous sound you, and solitude you. Ill make a lodgment on your glacis by a row of Pines, and storm your covered way with bramble Bushes.[185]

The cheerful battery-by-means-of-landscape depicted here marks the casual familiarity of

the trope of reading – and perhaps particularly Gothic reading, given the mention of

Radcliffe – as a vehicle for transportation in Keats's work. The promise to transform

Reynolds into Keats's virtual companion on his walking tour of the north is given entirely

through circuitous metonyms: girdle and braces for the virtual body, pebble for virtual

thirst, stock scenery instrumentalized as verbs to demonstrate their power to effect such a

magical action-at-a-distance. Literary transportation is so commonplace for these

correspondents that it can be referenced with nothing more than clever wordplay and the

token of a famous name.

Keats writing on and through the tradition of literary transportation – whether on

its dynamics of entranced perceivership, or of immersed attention, or simply on the utility

of words as vehicles for virtual travel – is a poet at ease and in full command of his

figure; and, as Lionel Trilling reminds, pleasure and ease in poetry should not be

overlooked.[186] Yet he also often seems to be writing into a conversation that is,

essentially, finished – its poetics exhausted except in the form of its secondary social and

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[185] Letter to John Reynolds, 14 March 1818.
[186] Lionel Trilling, "The Fate of Pleasure," in *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965): 57-88.

artistic meanings, or as a symbolic register to play with. This is not to say that the poetics

of autonoetic experience was actually exhausted by the time of Keats; quite the contrary –

but the symbolic and repetitive mode in which Keats often treats the theme of

imaginative self-projection is another marker of its new status for Romanticism. Perkins

has observed, along similar lines, that Keats's early "escapist wanderings of the

imagination" have a certain "nostalgic, valedictory character" – an observation echoed in

a more political and biographical context by Levinson's claim that Keats creates a fetish

out of the idea of escape, because his version of escape "consists not in art, a

displacement toward the Imaginary, but in an Idea of art."[187] The attempt to access a

somewhat mythologized concept of what it is to be a poet, what it is to be someone who

imagines fully and richly, is a common and forthright feature of Keats's early ambitions;

he turns to literary escape itself, but also to escape and imaginative transportation through

art as an ideal, as part of this retrospective, nostalgic character. The very fact that Keats

can do so, however, and do so moreover with such a keen sense for the eighteenth-

century tradition of autonoetic poetics that imagination had accrued, is a signal that the

ideal of imaginative self-projection had become a more closed system of meaning, like a

dead metaphor. It is, for Keats, one more tool within the poetic canon, something that can

be apprehended and analyzed, and made to ring out its own symbols.

     Keats performs this ringing of the tradition of loco-descriptive self-projection in

his sonnet "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" – and he does so by building it a

universe of reflections and refractions that ground the figure in the tradition of visual

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[187] Perkins (1959), 210; Levinson, 5, 252.

exploration and projection that had given rise to some of its most potent poetics. The complete sonnet is quoted below:

> Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
> And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
> Round many western islands have I been
> Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
> Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
> That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
> Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
> Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific – and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise –
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Keats's poem builds upon a metaphor of virtual travel through reading that is older than the particular eighteenth-century tradition of imaginative self-projection. Its elaborations on the visual and emotional transportation that lies at the heart of such virtual experiences, however, make it a uniquely perceptive emblem for the autonoetic work of literary reading that eighteenth-century poetics had made so salient. The poem opens with a sweeping, powerful motion, reminiscent of the vaulting tour of summer lands in Thomson's "Summer," a travel that takes us "round many" islands, of "wide expanse." The equation that the poem's first rhyme makes – "seen," "been" – reinforces the familiar territory of virtual domain granted by sight, the picturesque ownership of Addison and Gilpin. This is the kind of transportation that lets the soul experience, in Longinus'

phrase, a "proud flight," exulting "as if it had itself produced what it had heard."[188] As the poem proceeds, however, the sense of transportation becomes even more distinctly visual, until the sound of the orating poet – an alternate sensory medium for experiencing literature – and the momentum of traveling are transmuted into a series of silent and increasingly still images of iconic explorers. The original, familiar scheme of entering a literary landscape is abandoned for a second-level, recursive treatment of the union of gazing and traveling that psychologically underpins such episodes of virtual travel, encoded in the far-flung gazes of the astronomer, the seafaring explorer, even the mentally-traveling sailors, whose exchanged glances carry a tacit "surmise," a communication across distance. If Keats does not actually show us the astronomer's telescope or the explorer's spyglass, the vehicles of ocular travel, he almost does not need to. The sense of the eye as an archetypical apparatus for traversing space resonates through the sestet, drawing a clear parallel to those other, literary mediations: the orator's voice, and the printed page. The poem's final gesture is fully emblematic: a stationary tableau of ocular voyagers, everyone looking at everyone else.

With "Chapman's Homer," Keats reveals himself as not only a reader in the tradition of imaginative self-projection, but also a canny reader *of* that tradition. As Levinson argues, the poem is, in part, a power play for its young poet – an attempt to stake personal poetic authority in his role as interpreter of prior works, highlighted by his foregrounding of the rather questionable use of an English translation of Homer rather than the original Greek: a "display of bad access and misappropriation – that emancipates

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[188] The connection between picturesque virtual property and the loco-descriptive tradition, including Thomson's tour of the "torrid zone" in "Summer," is discussed extensively in Gottlieb's "The Astonished Eye…". See also Longinus, 55.

Keats's words."[189] It is an appropriation of the already-appropriated, figuring the

snatching-away and habitation of authorial terrain that it also performs. Yet the poem's

autonoetic images work against this idea of appropriation as a kind of "bad access." For

one, Keats's choice of Homer for his depiction of virtual travel, instead of the rather more

openly questionable Gothic or romance-based wanderings he favors elsewhere, is

strategic. Transportation was always authorized and praised in relationship to classical

texts, particularly Homer; Pope, for example, had praised *The Iliad* specifically for the

way "the Reader is hurry'd out of himself by the Force of the Poet's Imagination," an

ecstatic flight authorized by the quality of the destination.[190] Yet even more than this,

Keats's effort to showcase his susceptibility to transportation also displays his access to a

mode of reading that had been described for a century as quintessentially imaginative and

creative, a kind of psychological participation that could raise a mere reader to the status

of co-poet.[191] Phrases like "breathe its pure serene," or the resonance of Homer's voice,

emphasize his ability to have an embodied experience of presence in the poem. Yet by

turning so quickly from this referential acknowledgement of the basic matter of virtual

presence, and towards the dynamics of the moment of transportation itself, Keats also

cleverly figures his awareness of the autonoetic tradition – and its historical

visuocentrism. A number of critics have wondered about the way the poem seems to twist

the endpoint of the promised transportation: Levinson asks "where we have travelled,"

while McGann claims that "the poem drops us to a place of actual magic."[192] These

adoptions of the poem's own metaphoric register of transported reading mark its

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[189] Levinson, 14-15.
[190] Preface to *The Iliad*, trans. Alexander Pope (London: W. Bowyer, 1715).
[191] See chapter 3, section 1.
[192] Levinson, 13; McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996): 123.

continued appeal as a commonplace schema for organizing experiences of reading. But

taking us somewhere, performing a simple act of virtual travel, is not Keats's final aim;

the sestet is a more recursive move. Rather than showing us the poetic speaker's

subjective experience of Homer's images, Keats has painted a historical character of

transport.[193] The poem is a symbolic display of Keats's mastery of his favorite poetic

trope.

The resonant autonoetic symbols of "Chapman's Homer" demonstrate Keats's

fluency in the domain of transportation's visual structures and meanings. Yet here, once

more, we come up against a problem with sound: the sestet's overwriting of the "loud and

bold" voice of Chapman covers the primarily and specific aural medium of Keats's

reading, and replaces it with a vague sense of that reading as a kind of "feeling," one

construed entirely in images and senses of visuospatial motion. Sound may trigger

transportation, but its poetic performance occurs almost entirely in the visual sphere. In

part, such effacement of the role of voice is part of Keats's perceptive historical account.

The eighteenth-century theory of imaginative self-projection, if not its poetry, had always

been centered in the senses of vision, and to a lesser extent touch, with strong rationale

from faculty psychology. Kames' "ideal presence" had conceived of imaginative

experiences as a kind of spectatorship, a sense of witnessing pictures pass before the eye,

combined with an odd, difficult to describe temporal displacement of selfhood; Reid

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[193] Sperry, for example, interprets the lack of a final target for the poem's wanderings as Keats choosing to dwell in the sublime moment; McGann, less charitably, finds that Keats has inadvertently written a poem "about getting lost" rather than about discovery; Levinson maintains the lack of real Homeric presence as part of his display of bad readership that works, ultimately, to deny influence, and thus "emancipates Keats' words." Of these, Sperry's reading is closest to my own: the poem does suspend in mid-flight, and it does so because the flight itself has been its target all along. (Stuart Sperry, *Keats The Poet* [Princeton UP, 1973]: 266-7; McGann [1996]: 122-3; Levinson 14-15).

defers largely to Kames on the matter of imagination; and the traditional privileging of visual imagery in enargic rhetoric, in loco-descriptive poetry, and even in Gothic elaboration is documented in my first three chapters.[194] The line connecting vision to presence may even be traced as far back as Aristotle's *Poetics*, which proposes that a poet, when composing, ought to "place the scene as far as possible, before his eyes… seeing everything with the utmost vividness, as if he were a spectator of the action," in order to avoid foolish inconsistencies of plot.[195] Moreover, in eighteenth-century writings the association of virtual spatial presence with sight is supported by the way faculty psychologists divided the labor of the senses. Hartley, for example, argues that visual ideas preserve spatial organization, whereas hearing is primarily temporal, preserving "the order of time"; Reid, that touch and sight are the only senses "by which the notion of space enters into the mind"; and Addison, that vision's capacity to provide detailed, near-tactile imagery across great distances makes it the most important of the senses.[196] Such division of sensory labor was openly acknowledged as uneven. Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind,* for example, devotes far more space to the discussion of vision than any other sense quite simply because that was where most empirical and philosophical research on the senses had occurred, principally in the treatises of Newton and Berkeley. Hartley gives a less practical and more theoretical rational for privileging vision. He adopts it as a model for all sensory activity, arguing that since visual ideas are "far more

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[194] Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* [1785]. Reid does not always describe autonoetic "trains of thought" in any sensory terms in his own work – he describes them at times as being "like beaten tracks which invite the traveler," simple habitual links (349); on the deferral to Kames and Gerard on the matter of imagination, see p. 349.

[195] *Poetics* XVII (87).

[196] Hartley, *Observations on Man*, I.ii.4; Reid (1803), 262; Addison, *The Spectator* no. 411. Addison's discussion of vision's haptic transcendence of space is analyzed in more depth in chapter one, section three, here.

vivid and definite" than those of the other senses, vision can act as a kind of introspective "microscope" upon the way ideas in other sensory modalities behave.[197] By contrast, sound had become "a virtually moribund research field," as Stephan Vogel puts it, during the eighteenth century, especially when the period is compared to the seventeenth, which had seen significant auditory and acoustical research.[198] Such privileging of vision is early empiricist psychology had an evident impact on the way writers construed imaginative transportation, too. Sound, for this reason, emerges from the eighteenth-century conversation on the senses not as one of many possible sensory modality for poetic imagination, but as an exciting terrain for alternative possibilities.

3. Hearing Place

Transportation does not come so easily as it had in "Chapman's Homer" in the "Ode to a Nightingale." The latter's display of expended effort, of imagination as work, leads Wasserman, and to a lesser extent Vendler, to read the poem as a processual document, as if we are being made to watch the poet craft art out of chaos; and yet, as Wasserman points out, the higher into the senses the poet seems to go, the more insensate, and less able to experience, he becomes. Despite the familiar impulse to escape that is occasioned by the interposition of the distant birdsong, he is drawn back to life, because "while man is mortal the projection of self cannot be complete… the spirit

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[197] Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind* [1764] (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000); Hartley, 70.

[198] Stephan Vogel, "Sensation of tone, perception of sound and empiricism", in David Cahan, *Hermann von Helmholtz and the Foundation of C19 Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 259-287, 261.

cannot wholly leave behind the sensory substance in which it is encased."[199] The denial of imagination's seeming ease is certainly part of what the poem stages, culminating in its strident declaration that "the fancy cannot cheat so well / As she is famed to do, vain elf!" – but fancy is not, I think, denied for the reason Wasserman gives. The decision to portray the failure of fancy through a modality of sound is an essential one. It gives Keats access to an unusual register of imaginative incompatibility: the genuine cognitive difficulty of hearing place. The desire for a kind of imagination that consists in a projection of the self through space had been the work of the prior century to construct; but much as Hazlitt had found a decade earlier, it takes Keats just one turn into aurality to find a hole in that frame.

The "Nightingale" ode contextualizes itself firmly within the tradition of self-projection, and more broadly, escapism. Sperry describes the poem as "the supreme expression… of the impulse to imaginative escape that flies in the face of the knowledge of human limitation," an impulse that is registered in the parade of vehicles and genres of escape and transport that Keats brings to bear in the poem's early stanzas. The first opens the possibility of a sympathetic "union with the nightingale" as David Perkins puts it, that formulates his initial wish to escape;[200] the second, a virtual pilgrimage to the blessed South, through the chemical vehicle of wine – the "chariot" of "Bacchus and his pards"; the third, a pastoral desire for retreat; and the fourth, casting off the earthly aid of the wine, a cosmic voyage to the moon on ethereal "viewless wings of poetry."

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[199] Earl Wasserman, *The Finer Tone* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1953): 178-9, 183; Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983). Vendler describes the poem's overarching schema as a complex "view of the aesthetic act" (77).
[200] Perkins (1959), 248-9.

Even the pivotal fifth stanza's sensorially intimate description, what Vendler terms his "greatest bower," is another staged retreat, this into sensation – or, in the context of loco-descriptive tradition, into a kind of Thomsonian intimate presence in nature.[201] Yet these images are only images, and Keats brings them in only at the cost of moving ever farther from the bird itself, and from the immediate sensory experience that has been the poem's occasion: that is, from sound. Keats is, as Vendler notes, oddly "unable to describe" the bird's song itself; instead, he "lavishes description on everything else," forestalling the engagement with aurality that the poem had first proposed.[202] Perhaps Keats does not refuse to describe the song, however, because he experiences it as "vacant." I would like to propose another possibility: he, and the poem, continue to move away from sound because the kind of transportation he is attempting to evoke with this litany of forms and vehicles is more typically a visuospatial phenomenon – and sound is simply not very good at "imagining" space.

Keats's poem acknowledges the struggles of fancy as a problem of the "dull brain" – and recent historicist criticism on Keats's medical career suggests that this is the kind of reference we ought to take seriously. As Alan Richardson writes, the ideological pressure that the idea of the material brain exerted against the supposed independence of mind and body was activated by images such as the opiate-like hemlock with which Keats opens his poem; and the tendency toward highly embodied portrayals of thought and feeling in his verse can be quite literally and medically grounded.[203] In short, Keats was attuned to the physical grounding and instantiation of thought; and in the "Ode to a

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[201] Sperry, 264; Vendler, 84.
[202] Vendler, 87-88.
[203] Richardson, "Keats and Romantic Science" (*The Cambridge Companion to Keats*, ed. Susan Wolfson [New York: Cambridge UP, 2001]:230-245), 239.

Nightingale," he employs the brain's resistance to aural place to defamiliarize the experience of imaginative self-projection. Keats's difficulty with auditory presence is not simply a side effect of the paucity of prior tradition. It is a poetic discovery of a cognitive resistance against certain kinds of sensory interaction, certain kinds of "fancy," that he levers as part of his rejection of escape.

That discovery, and the poetry enabled by it, places Keats at a sensory nexus that remains at the cusp of current research on immersive and transported states. Modern cognitive science remains an extremely visuocentric field, just as in Keats's time. The basic neural architecture of auditory perception is well known; but the properties of auditory imagery, auditory imagination, are far less well studied. The spatial quality of auditory imagery is studied even less. Margaret Jean Intons-Peterson lists the "components of auditory imagery" as "loudness, pitch, and timbre" – spatial qualities do not even make the list; and, to approach from the other side of that pairing, Vecchi and Bottini's 2006 compendium on *Imagery and Spatial Cognition* mentions auditory imagery only briefly, as a component of hemispheric neglect in stroke patients. Sound enters the discussion on spatial imagery, that is, only when its presence in space is missed.[204] A 1992 compilation of papers on auditory imagery was reissued in 2014 without any additions, leaving the editor's provocative questions still unanswered: "do the various claims about visual imagery generalize to other modalities? […] are different claims needed when we consider temporally defined auditory images, rather than

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[204] Tomaso Vecchi and Gabriella Bottini, *Imagery and Spatial Cognition* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006); Intons-Peterson, "Components of Auditory Imagery" (*Auditory Imagery*, ed. Daniel Reisberg [Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2014]:45-71), 47.

spatially defined visual ones?"[205] That these questions could as easily have been posed to Hartley in 1749 as to cognitive researchers in 1992 – or in 2014 – may simply reflect the continued research gap for sound; but the repetition of the centuries-old association between vision and space, audition and time, is not simply a sign of neglect.

Auditory imagery is not completely divorced from our sense of space, but its connections to that sense often run through multisensory areas of the brain. Just as the brain dedicates neural circuitry to determining the spatial co-ordinates of visual stimuli, a "where" pathway, it also has a "where" pathway dedicated auditory source localization. Since the late 1970's, studies of auditory spatial cognition in animal models – first the barn owl, then the guinea pig – have determined a great deal about the subcortical region where much of this auditory localization takes place. The region in question, called the visual tectum in birds and the superior colliculus in mammals, connects visual, tactile, and auditory "maps" of space and co-ordinates them with gaze reflexes; in animals with movable exterior ears ("pinna"), such as cats, the superior colliculus also co-ordinates motion of the ears to align with sound sources, much as it does eye movement. However, both the visual and somatosensory areas of the brain's cortex also have their own areas dedicated to mapping space, whereas the auditory cortex does not – or, at least, no-one has yet found this kind of neural map of the body's spatial environment in the part of the cortex specially devoted to hearing.[206] The picture that emerges from this neural

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[205] Reisberg, vii.

[206] Jan Schnupp, Israel Nelken, and Andrew King, *Auditory Neuroscience: Making Sense of Sound* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 177-223. See also Tian and Rauschecker, "Processing of Frequency-Modulated Sounds in the Later Auditory Belt Cortex of the Rhesus Monkey" (*Journal of Neurophysiology* 92:5 [2004]:2993-3013). The foundational studies of auditory spatial mapping in the brain of the barn owl are Catherine Carr and Masakazu Konishi's "Axonal Delay lines for Time Measurement in the Owl's

architecture is one of cooperation and compensation between the senses. Auditory images can be located in space, but the way that representation is encoded is in tactile, proprioceptive and visual terms.

The pressing poetic question, however, is not how audition works on a very basic level, but rather what the phenomenal result is: what experiencing auditory imagery is like. Neuroanatomical data can speak of potential fluencies and limitations of thought, but only suggestively, not conclusively. In the case above, what they seem to suggest is that while the mind is very good at locating sound stimuli around us, it may not have any particular way to represent that location that does not also involve visual and proprioceptive modalities. Sound does place, that is, only by borrowing from its neighbors. If I imagine the sound of a train passing by me – moving targets are one of the best ways to elicit an experience of presence using a purely auditory stimulus, according to Ozawa et al. – I get a sense of the sound itself moving through space in front of me, and my location in relationship to that motion; but when I think about what the space around me is like, I find that I proprioceptively sense the space that my body extends into, and I see a little image of a train moving by. If there is any representation of the space itself in purely auditory co-ordinates, I personally, at least, have very little experience of it at all.[207] When Keats tries to imagine being in the nightingale's bower, he, too, falls quickly away from music into sight:

Brainstem" (*Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences of the United States of America* 85:21 [1988]: 8311-5); and Knudsen and Konishi's "Space and Frequency are Represented Separately in Auditory Midbrain of the Owl" (*Journal of Neurophysiology* 41:4 [1978]: 870-84).

[207] Ozawa et al., "Effects of visual information on auditory presence" (*Acoustical Science and Technology* 24:2 [2003]: 97-99).

That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

The phrase "melodious plot" transfers the poem's schema from sound to space, granting a vaguely rendered glimpse of "beechen green" and "shadows numberless," as if the image is already falling away from its own auditory dimension. The only real knowledge that the speaker has of the nightingale's bower is her song, the "melodious" ambience of the place. This is the aural material that the speaker's imagination must work from – the space is, first and foremost, a "melodious" one – lending a slightly different, more substantive shade to both adjective and noun. And if "plot" is both a space and also a scheme, a device of entrapment, like the "freshly interlacing" bowers that Keats had constructed in his earlier verse, it is tempting to imagine that a "melodious plot" is a state of spatial being in which we are tangled entirely in snippets of song, a space-map made of melody. Yet even if the phrase does hold out, however briefly, the psychological possibility of a space constituted entirely of sound, it is immediately overpowered by the poet's own imagination, which supplies the associated setting in colors and forms. It is a vague, half-blind sort of vision, as if we are squinting at the bower through our eyelashes – a foreshadowing of the closure of light in the fuller description Keats will give in the fifth stanza.

If the attempt at imaginative presence with the bird brings a resurgence of imaginative vision, and with it imaginary light, the attempt to recenter that imaginative presence on its song more narrowly brings on a more complete closure of any present

experience altogether. Dwelling in the act of listening, that is, occasions a meditation on non-being and death:

> Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
> I have been half in love with easeful Death,
> Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
> To take into the air my quiet breath;
> Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
> While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
> In such an ecstasy!
> Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
> To thy high requiem become a sod.

The equation of listening and sightlessness – "Darkling I listen" – is processual, a description of the work of the previous stanza: the more vision is occluded, the more salient sound becomes. But it is equally available to a counterpoint meaning – as the speaker listens, the ambient darkness grows. The voiding of presence, the cold sense of ceasing, in this stanza return to Keats's interest in the Gothic, Radcliffean dynamics of transportation: it is as if sound allows him to make the excursus of self that he desires, but not to complete its movement in any kind of endpoint of place, leaving nothing but the vacated consciousness and dulled sense of the "sod." Here, too, Keats brings a profound sensitivity to the prior poetic tradition of transport. The Renaissance *vox* alchemy of song as exhaled soul echoes in the "soft names" that the speaker uses to "call" to Death, the nightingale's own soul-song, building a miniature cosmology of sound-animated air – a cosmology whose too-motile, too-communicable soul slides all too easily away into death. But this cosmology, beautiful though it is, only has the capacity to express external

metaphors of motility, not to describe subjective phenomenologies of presence. The dead

do not experience.

As Kim and Biocca's research on the dimensions of experiences of transportation

indicates, the felt quality of immersion of attention and loss of self-awareness does not

always precisely track experiences of sensory, spatial, or even emotional presence – or, in

their term, "telepresence" – in a fictional environment.[208] The latter experience,

"presence" or "telepresence," is what the eighteenth-century history of self-projection

had promised, and this is what his poetic speaker evidently desires. The first and sixth

stanzas, which, as McLuhan notes, perform many of the same themes in parallel, show

the voiding of the wish for presence that is occasioned by sound; and in each case, the

next stanza rushes into to fulfill that wish with new myths and modes.[209] The second

stanza, in particular, reads almost like a demonstration of exactly what a sensory

experience of transportation is supposed to be like: we are given the taste and the cool

touch of wine, green and purple colors, "Provençal song" for the ear and dance for the

body, all wrapped up in a schema of a warm southern promised land. It's transportation

in a beaker, a sensory recipe for fully embodied relocation. The stanza presents only the

speaker's wishful thinking, however – an advertisement for experience, rather than the

experience itself; an illustration of precisely what the speaker lacks.

The poem thus far seems to outline a dilemma of presence: imaginative self-

projection is everywhere available in promises, wishes, and poetic modes, but none of

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[208] Taeyong Kim and Frank Biocca, "Telepresence via Television: Two Dimensions of Telepresence may have Different Connections to Memory and Persuasion" (*Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 3:2 [1997]).
[209] McLuhan, "Aesthetic Pattern in Keats's Odes" (*University of Toronto Quarterly* 12:2 [1943]: 167-177).

these modes correctly fit the "darkling" subjective experience of hearing distant sound. Sound and sight are revealed as mutually exclusive in the attempt at imaginative excursus. Yet this kind of intersensory interaction, too, can lead into a kind of revelatory imaginative experience. A number of critics have read the silent music of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in just such a mode. Susan Wolfson connects it to a broader Romantic "poetics of silence" that offers the possibility of something more than heard, reaching "way beyond the material or any mere phenomenological instance"; Michael Clune, in a similar vein, provides a sensitive thought experiment on the way language's semantic openness can promise a species of music that would be unimaginable in purely auditory form. A visual music need not ever bore us, that is, because its conceptual, non-sensory permanence resists the "habituation that kills off the little phrase," and, at least in the hypothetical, might allow a tune to remain fresh and unexhausted.[210] Clune's hypothetical, in particular, recalls the sound of Hazlitt's thrush, whose intersensory bridge between sound and music gave the philosopher evidence of some higher and less mechanical principle of imagination. This capacity for psychological "Gestalt," as Starr calls it in her own reading of the Urn's forestalled music, gives Keats's poetry access to a "sensory competition… linked to pleasure": an aesthetic experience that reaches above any one sense.[211] These kinds of sensory overlaps and links are, as hinted by the hard questions about attention and consciousness contained in the "binding problem," indeed quite central to the way poets access holistic imaginative representation beyond the immediacy of any particular sense. And yet the kinds of sensory competition and

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[210] Susan Wolfson, "Sounding Romantic: The Sound Of Sound." *The Poetry & Poetics of Sound in the Romantic Ear and Era* (*Romantic Circles*, 2008), 2 (http://www.rc.umd.edu); Clune, 32, 43.
[211] Starr, 109-114, 114.

resistance Keats practices in the "Ode to a Nightingale," rather unlike those he traces in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," seem to be reaching not for a higher principle of representation, but rather for something more intricate, fragmented, and fundamental. He is not trying to summon the gestalt of Hazlitt's thrush this time, but rather to unravel her constituent imaginative workings.

The "sensory competition and valenced comparisons" that Keats reveals, as Starr notes, through the act of limiting sensation,[212] do grant his poem a kind of imaginative rush – but cognitive criticism can do more, and Keats does do more, to articulate the particularity of the contours and limitations contained in that moment. Vision, for instance, proves remarkably difficult to limit. The darkness that forecloses upon sight in the fourth stanza of the Nightingale ode takes the form of a kind of imaginative resistance: the speaker removes vision, at first, subtly, with the double entendre "viewless wings of Poesy" – a word that both signifies the invisibility and ethereal nature of the imagination, through its the literal meaning, and also conveys a sense of more subjective blindness falling. We are soaring, as it were, into a prospect poem that offers nothing to be seen. Yet thereafter, the banishments of light become increasingly prosaic: first "But here there is no light," an objective realization that interrupts the soaring voyage to "Queen-Moon" and her "starry fays," with their fanciful points of illumination, and then, at the opening of the fifth stanza, a flat denial of vision at its subjective source - "I cannot see." The poem takes great pains to occlude sight, almost as if Keats is instructing a recalcitrant child – or, better, his own recalcitrant "dull brain."

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[212] Starr, 102.

These strenuous efforts against vision also play a role in forestalling the fluent

experience of presence – an interruption of transportation that allows Keats to get closer

to its more difficult sensory dimensions, including audition. Although sound can enrich

and augment imaginative presence – Hendrix and Barfield have found, for example, that

spatialized sound cues help people feel more present in virtual scenes, and Larsson and

his colleagues confirm sound's role in somatosensory experiences of illusory motion –

auditory experience is always at risk of being overshadowed and, indeed, overwritten by

the more potent effect that visual information can have on one's sense of place.[213] This

effect, most familiar as the "ventriloquist's illusion," was known at least by the middle of

the eighteenth century, when Hartley had used it to completely exclude sound from the

cognition of space. "We judge of the Position of the Speaker, or sounding Body, by the

Eye, or by some other Method independent on the Ear," he argues; and thus, "we may see

how *Ventriloqui* […] impose upon the Audience. Their Voice is faint and indistinct, and

therefore appears to come from a more distant Quarter than the Speaker. The Hearers

look about therefore, and, being surprised, their Imagination fixes strongly upon that

Corner, or Cavity, which appears most plausible."[214] Hearing may prick our attention to

the spatial dimensions around us, but in an intersensory conflict, it easily surrenders to

sight; and this threat of audition being deluded by visuospatial information may help

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[213] Hendrix and Barfield, "The Sense of Presence in Virtual Environments" (*Presence Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 5:3 [1996)]: 290-301); Larsson et al, "When What You Hear is What You See: Presence and Auditory-Visual Integration in Virtual Environments," paper presented at the 10th annual international workshop on presence, Barcelona, Spain (http://www0.cs.ucl.ac.uk/research/vr/Projects/PRESENCCIA/Public/publications/LarssonAVintegration_Presence2007_proceedings.pdf).

[214] Hartley, 227-8. The ventriloquist's illusion is still discussed in the psychology of sound and sensory interaction; see e.g. Schnupp et al., 221.

account why its utter banishment is a necessary condition of the poetic speaker's attempt to imaginatively reach the unseeable nightingale.

And yet, despite these denials of vision, Keats ultimately cannot prevent it from leaking into the poetic speaker's attempt to imaginatively realize the bower, much as it had in the first stanza's "melodious plot":

> I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
> Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
> But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
> Wherewith the seasonable month endows
> The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
> White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
> Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
> And mid-May's eldest child,
> The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
> The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Sight does not immediately enter the description. It leaks in gradually, around olfactory experience and proprioceptive hints, until it erupts in a burst of objects and colors, as if Keats has been holding back a sensory flood tide. Its initial denial had thrown the poetic speaker into a spatial guessing game: without sight, he turns to olfactory images, but their "sweets" and "incense" are treated as clues to a riddle of missing vision, not as sufficient on their own merits. They cue him to the presence of flowers at his feet, draping the boughs, enacting a proprioceptive sense of the bower as a spatial schema that allows the verse to enact its transportation. Even so, when we as readers attempt to imaginatively realize the bower, we may find it difficult to do so without ourselves turning to vision: picturing the arc of the drooping boughs over the spreading bed of flowers, following our recalcitrant associations to memory-supplied pictures of violets

and hawthorn. And, indeed, vision – vision as lack, vision as the target of the guessing

game – has been the stanza's covert modality all along. As the description proceeds,

Keats makes no attempt to forestall such sight; rather, his language enables directly visual

imagery – the violets are "fast-fading," the hawthorn "white," all the more startlingly and

brilliantly so in their appearance against the preceding "darkness." Moreover, as the

poem opens to vision, it is also able to open into the broader, time-wandering kinds of

perception characteristic of the autonoetic "eye" of loco-descriptive poetry. The speaker

glimpses the olfactory future of his landscape in the scent of a "coming musk-rose," its

past in the leaves that have fallen to cover the violets. Finally, an ambient, atmospheric

sound – the bower's only auditory image – of a "murmurous haunt of flies" serves not so

much to complete the scene's sensory portrayal as to softly dissolve it, as we fade away

from its brilliant specificity into a generalized memory of "summer eves."

The game of sensory evidence suspends the mind's natural tendencies, an evident

example, as critics since McLuhan have noted, of what Keats describes as "negative

capability," the toleration for states of being "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without

any irritable reaching after fact & reason."[215] Yet the rich sense of presence achieved by

that suspension is achieved mostly through Keats's wrestling with his mind's limitations.

The slow progression of the verse, and its insistent denials of sight, places readers in an

unusual parallel to the poetic speaker's own situation: he, like us, is only imagining,

trying to see where there "is no light," and the poem's refusal to provide us with anything

but glimpses casts the poem deeply into our own imaginations. By describing a kind of

negative space around familiar visual mode of self-projection, Keats forces us to the

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[215] Letter to his brothers, 21 December 1817. See also Bate, "Negative Capability"
(1963); Herbert Marshall McLuhan, "Aesthetic Pattern in Keats's Odes."

expedient of imaginatively reconstructing the nightingale's bower ourselves. In so doing, he not only cues a sympathetic participation in the poem's own workings, but also reveals the particularity of the sensory roles involved in imaginative self-projection. Anne-Lise François, in her comments on negative capability and sensory gaps in "The Feel Of Not To Feel It," has described the imaginative rushing-in that such gaps can occasion as a Sartrean absence-as-presence, a "strangely inactive power to miss… whose familiar face is imagination's positive ability to supply the place of the missing, to fill the place of what is absent."[216] And yet in the Nightingale ode, it is the very activity of that "power to miss" that becomes so salient and estranged – and above all, so specific. The sensory imagery of the "bower" is a reminder that the imagination that smooths over the gap is not a sort of featureless putty, but rather a complex and structured entity in its own right.

Unlike the multisensory imagery that Keats had offered in the second stanza, an overbearing catalog of modes, in the fifth the imagery is forced to turn intersensory, gradually bringing in different senses to compensate for the limitations of others – olfaction to substitute for sight, proprioception creeping in to provide what olfaction is ill-suited to describe, then sight after all, and then, in a rush, nearly all at once, taste and sound and autonoetic temporality to boot. This intersensory progression is, moreover, far more specific than the communication and "sympathy" of the senses described in Hazlitt's essay "On Gusto," which had been aimed principally at the goal of providing a more illusorily real experience of art. For Hazlitt, the intersensory artist creates effects of interpreting "one sense by another" that spread activation across imagination, exciting one another "by affinity"; the movement is toward greater synthesis and overall activity.

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[216] Anne-Lise François, "The Feel of Not To Feel It" (*A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney [Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011]:445-466), 448.

Making the eye feel, or, in Keats's case, the nose see, is a mode of defamiliarizing sensation, creating immediacy by rejuvenating attention towards an object; and Hazlitt's suggestion is that such renewed immediacy and life-like multisensory activation will create greater realism, a claim that bears significant resemblance to Starr's points about multisensory imagery's role in aesthetic gestalt.[217] Keats, however, is not after a realist unity of sensation, and he moves beyond this holistic effect of sensory synthesis, offering instead a more specific intimation of what kinds of imagery different senses are good at, how they interact, what their order is as they bloom into the gaps left by closing off conventional habits of imagination. As vision gradually reasserts itself in resignation to the demands of spatial cognition, it sketches a contour of the limitations of the poetic speaker's imagination, and the intersensory map of sight and proprioceptive touch that lies at its core. The "Ode" shows cognition shaping where poetry can not go, and that very limitation, with the quiet yet insuppressible imaginative presence that it has in turn engendered, itself becomes a source of poetic power.

Although Keats moves most evidently and effortfully against vision, it is finally sound that the fifth stanza presents as a lack, absent in all but the ambient murmuring of the flies. And yet sound is never a sensory modality that can be entirely hushed a linguistic medium – and the poem reaches this realization, too. If, like Perkins, we read the poem's problem as, in part, a failure to achieve "further union with the nightingale," then Keats's difficulties with aural imagery are somewhat ironic: aurality is a natural medium of poetry, permitting a synthesis with sound so close that it can become nearly a

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[217] Hazlitt, "On Gusto," 25, 22. See also Bate's "Negative Capability" (1939) on the connections between Hazlitt's gusto and Keats's poetry, and Starr, *passim,* on multisensory imagery as a spur to aesthetic experience.

performance of identity. That poetry can do this is evident in the work of other poets, as for example in Hopkins' "The Woodlark," which concludes as follows:

> 'Through the velvety wind V-winged
> To the nest's nook I balance and buoy
> With a sweet joy of a sweet joy,
> Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy
> Of a sweet—a sweet—sweet—joy.'
> (39-43)[218]

The assonances and alliterations of Hopkins' description open a richly present aural dimension in the poem that lets the woodlark's call spill into the sprung rhythm of the lines, accelerating to a final merging of semantic language with onomatopoeia. The ecstatic synthesis of singing bird and poetic phrase even takes on the emotional and rhythmic character of a sexual climax. However, the union that Hopkins is able to stage still does not, I would note, take the form of an imaginative projection of the spatial co-ordinates of the self. It is constituted, perhaps, on sympathetic identification; and certainly on a performative mimicry of sound that takes place within the sensory medium of language itself; projections of psyche, but not of its spatial locus. In placing these two poems together, thus, I do not mean to say that Hopkins finds a route to success, where Keats had failed. For one, depicting a melancholy failure and imaginative dissolution had always been part of Keats's work of the "Ode to a Nightingale." But the history of imaginative transportation helped to set the terms by which he did so, and the cognitive structure of imagination, the poetic tools he found present at hand.

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[218] Hopkins, "The Woodlark." *Selected Poetry*, Ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996): 109-110.

When the "Ode" finally broaches poetry's aural medium, it is not with the voice of a bird, but rather the bell-like sound of the word "Forlorn" that interrupts the imaginative mood with the material presence of its signal, and "tolls" the speaker "back from thee to my sole self" – thus producing the final rupture in the poem's serial abortive attempts at imaginative flight. It is no coincidence that the word is both the closing rhyme in the stanza's scheme, and an alliteration with both the "faery lands" preceding it, and the "foam" of the previous line. Keats's rhyme scheme has given us many such echoes in previous stanzas, but here, it comes, at last, when the poet is listening – if not to the nightingale itself, then at least to its silent sympathetic echoes in the "heart of Ruth," or the ears of emperors. The speaker's attentiveness, and the medium's resonance, collide in an irruption of the sound of his own voice that creates an effect, as Cleanth Brooks notes, like "a man in a reverie suddenly stumbling, and being wrenched out of the reverie."[219] Here again is the same diegetic device that Radcliffe had employed in the "Provençal Tale": a sensory interference that cuts into the trance, and calls the reader – in this case, the poetic speaker – back across the gap, in Keats's case, seemingly for good.[220] As the poetic speaker sets aside the attempt at self-projection, he at last lets the bird's departing notes do what sound can do with space: he locates the nightingale at a distance, traces her passage, lets her song spark the kinds of echoes and associations that, in their turn, can grant access to imaginative flight.

Yet the intrusion of the sound, by the poem's end, leaves the speaker in much stranger state than where he had begun; it leaves him unsure not only if his imaginative

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[219] Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,1939): 31.
[220] See chapter three, section three.

attempt has been successful, but also whether his present, too, might not be a kind of visionary state: "do I wake or sleep?". His receptivity to the sounds of things has had the effect of drawing him back, as Wasserman claims, to the immediate mortal world of the senses, the physical vibrations of language in the ear; but this return, I would suggest, is only one more moment of projection into a state of sensory rapture, this time a projection that returns, like Hazlitt's self-sympathizing consciousness, to estrange the imaginative present. Where Wasserman reads the return to "mortal" sense as an inevitable failure of the spirit to "wholly leave behind the sensory substance in which it is encased," the psychology of transportation suggests that a flight into a state of present sensation and a flight into imagination might not be so different after all. The attentive rapture that characterizes Keats's sensory encounters, his propensity to "sympathetic absorption in the essential significance of an object," is not a quality that excludes the present, and his poem presents the return as a kind of autonoetic projection and sympathetic union with a "sole self," a phrase whose doubled solitude seems almost to constitute a communion.[221] The sensory tolling of the poem's own language returns Keats to himself, that is, but to a self whose conscious state is, no less when transported by a song, merely a function of the imaginative mobility of experiences of immediate sensation. He is imaginatively present within his own presence, rung home into the inevitability of fancy.

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[221] Wasserman 178-9, 183; Bate (1963), 18.

Conclusion: Worrying About Kivrin

Before the point where all consciousness is subsumed into the condition of autonoesis, I must, however, toll a waking bell of my own. Although having spatiotemporal coordinates for one's self, and perhaps also having emotional and conative coordinates, is certainly a feature that also inheres in presence in everyday existence, the sensory present and the imaginative excursus are neurologically quite different. Returns to eternal consciousness, even if it is consciousness in a strangely mobile form, do not gain us much critical purchase beyond revealing the theoretical definition of "autonoesis" itself, which has always been, since Tulving, a hypothesis about qualitative aspects of existence rather than a measurable quantity. The entity with a measurable pulse, assuming Buckner and Carroll were correct, is the pattern called the "default mode network," and this pattern tells a quite different story about consciousness and imaginative self-projection. When we are focused in the present moment, that is precisely when the characteristic patterns of the DMN does not appear.

Language's representative fluency may let poets tell stories about turning existence into a waking dream, but such a performance is far more difficult and unreliable in literature. Eliciting experiences of transportation from readers or hearers is, rather, famously difficult and treacherous, as any rhetorical treatise on the sublime can tell you. When it comes to transportation into imagination's realm, then, literature does not seem to be the tool for greater, more engrossing, and more vivid experience that

cognitive critics like Scarry or Clune may want it to be. The odd irony of all the excitement over the supposed neurology of creative imagination is that, ultimately, one of the most common and mundane of cognitive states, the daydream, proves analogous to an extremely fussy state of the reading mind: only the most intense experiences of art, as Starr tells us, can excite the same activity in the DMN.[222] But here Keats's bell sounds its greater reminder: a reminder that artistic mediums, too, have cognitive meanings, and that literature might well provoke quite different neurological behavior from paintings.

Although my larger purpose in this thesis has been to provide an accounting of literary self-projection's historical ecology of forms, meanings, and cognitive states in eighteenth-century Britain, I also confess a hope that such cognitive-historical inquiry might speak back to psychologists working on reading and on fiction. It is by answering questions that lie within our own discipline, like this one, that I believe we can best do so. The remarkable recent symbiosis between philosophers and psychologists on the subject of sympathy and intersubjectivity is evidence that such disciplinary exchanges across the two-culture divide do sometimes happen, although not, of course, without posing practical and institutional problems of their own. Experimental philosophers are not averse to designing their own experimental protocols, which I will not venture here; but I will venture a few questions for research that have been suggested by the inquiry I have undertaken, as is more typical in the conclusions of papers in psychology. I opened my first chapter with the idea that cognitive neuroscience offers literature its own, unfamiliar

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[222] Scarry proposes poetry as an aid augment the vividness and "vivacity" of imagination (3-9); Clune, to stopping the procession of daily time and its habituations (1-21). The finding that the DMN is only active for artworks that are most prefered by their viewers is reported in Vessel et al., and analyzed more extensively for its aesthetic implications by Starr (2012).

patterns of thought and topics of value as a form of inspiration; now I invert that equation to pose four questions for the ongoing development of a psychology of literary transportation, questions grounded in the perspective of eighteenth-century Britain's historical difference and its own poetic preoccupations.

1. The question posed by the nightingale's song – about the collisions and reinforcements of medium and message – is one that lies surprisingly central to the work of experimental psychology. Cognitive studies generally use either an experimental text, or some kind of sensory stimulus, to prompt the cognitive state the experimenter has in mind; and although visual studies in cognition tend to be extremely careful about interference of the physical properties of the stimulus – controlling for size, for angle, for time of presentation, even tracking the saccades that viewers' eyes make in real-time – studies that use experimental texts, to my knowledge, rarely impose such controls on the sensory properties of the written word, beyond normalizing sizes and colors and the like. I join the skeptical view that the aurality of language, particularly written language, is likely not always a significant dimension of readers' experiences of its semantic content, even in metrical poetry; nevertheless, Keats's "Ode" certainly demonstrates its potential for intrusion into the gestalt of reading, and, moreover, aurality is not the only sensory property of literary language often neglected by psychologists. As a study by Aziz-Zadeh at al. has shown, verbal literary imagery can activate surprising neurocircuitry; the phrase "biting the peach," for example, caused neurons involved directly in the process of the motor activity of biting to become active.[223] The sensory interactions proposed by many

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[223] Lisa Aziz-Zadeh, Stephen M. Wilson, Giacomo Rizzolatti, and Marco Iacobini, "Congruent Embodied Representations for Visually Presented Actions and Linguistic Phrases Describing Actions" (*Current Biology* 16 [2006]).

of the writers I have discussed in this project – including Starr, Hazlitt, and Keats, most

prominently here, but also extending to others such as Addison and Hartley – pose an

opportunity for further study of the work of sensory imagery in states of transportation

and absorption. Perhaps more relevantly for most psychologists, they may also pose a

challenge for research designs that use textual stimuli, particularly in neuroscience.

      2. The second question arises even more directly out of the discussions in my

second chapter: what are the respective roles and interactions of emotion and of vivid

imagery in provoking transportation, as well as its measurable correlate, persuasion? The

theory of enargia supposes that vivid imagery, and the sensory illusions of presence that

it can summon, plays the primary role in spurring deeper and more emotionally and

behaviorally significant states of engagement; and this theory has a great deal of purchase

in work like Green's that confirms a correlation between imagery and transportation.

Young, however, seems to pose an alternative possibility, that emotional motivation –

represented by his vectors of ambition and desire – is the primary force behind both

recentering and the illusions of telepresence that it entails; and, perhaps because of this,

Young seems rather uninterested in qualifying what that presence might be like at all,

beyond states of shock and rapt astonishment in the very moment of transition. The

psychology of transportation, as outlined in that chapter, currently permits both

possibilities; and it seems likely that emotion and imagery will prove mutually

reinforcing. However, this question seems, to me, a crucial one for describing the

structure and process of mental imagery, perhaps even in conjunction with its neurology.

It also opens into the possibilities posed by the more visuocentric, purely spatial presence

employed by Thomson, which, despite its emotional and sublime religious applications,

lies much closer to the interests of researchers in virtual reality and media presence than it does to researchers in literary transportation. Kim and Biocca's work differentiating two separate dimensions of transportation, one that tracks feelings of "being-there" and the other "being-not-here," has already begun to explore this question; and I have a hunch, based on the distinctions between Thomson's and Young's poetries of imaginative self-projection, that emotion and visual imagery might prove useful variables to manipulate in further exploring that split.[224]

3. The third question – really a serious of questions – addresses the open field of possible research in the wake of the mutual connections between depressive rumination, literary imagery and literary suspense, and the "default mode network." Marshall Brown, in *The Gothic Text*, has already posed a closely related, and provocatively put, question of his own – "what is the relationship between the feeling of existence and the feeling of terror?"[225] By a roundabout route running through autonoesis and attention, neuropsychological research on depression and the DMN might make a good stab at answering what Brown asks. Would states of transported readership show a similar pattern of activation to the "default mode network" – and if so, would states of suspense, in particular, activate it differently, as depressive ruminations seem to do? Might suspense-reading, or, alternatively, activities that engage extrapolation more directly and concretely, have any effects on ruminations for people experiencing a depressive episode? There are, of course, crucial research challenges to these kinds of questions: reading that takes place inside a noisy and confining MRI machine is not likely to be experienced in the same ways as reading in the comfort of one's own home, and the

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[224] Kim and Biocca (1997).
[225] Brown (2005), 117.

cognitive effects of depressive rumination also profoundly change one's ability to read and one's experiences of reading, sometimes forestalling its pleasure entirely. Yet despite these challenges, the reading deficits specific to depression pose a different set of behavioral and cognitive questions on their own – questions about whether these deficits are a problem of generalized cognitive load caused by rumination, as Sonuga-Barke and Castellanos hypothesize, or something more particular to the shared architecture of that rumination and of literary reading.

4. States of suspense in literary reading already constitute a special discussion in philosophy, the problem of "anomalous suspense," or our ability to experience a suspense-like state in literary and media contexts even when we know perfectly well what will happen.[226] Gerrig discusses this extensively in his analysis of fiction and false belief, which I briefly address in my second chapter. A less-often noted dynamic of anomalous suspense, and one relevant here, is the way it seems to increase, not simply to continue, when we have greater knowledge of what is going to happen, because we have already read the book: as if our ability to pull from the store of memory and into the extrapolation not only our own experiences, but also our prior experiences of this very narrative, has augmented the intensity of the rumination. And this leads me to the fourth question I believe essential for the psychology of transportation, one that I am reasonably certain can be answered fairly easily: what is the relationship between transportation and

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[226] See especially Noël Carroll, "The Paradox of Suspense" (in *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations,* ed. Peter Vorderer, Hans Jürgen Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen [New York: Routledge, 1996]: 71-92), as well as the collection as a whole. See also Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictions" (*The Journal of Philosophy* 75:1 [1978]: 5-27), and the debates following Walton, on the implications that suspenseful stories have on the cognitive-philosophical question of how real emotions relate to fictional contexts more generally.

rereading? Gothic novels and fantasies, in particular, are often read repeatedly.[227] Spacks

notes the comfort and promise of eternal return that the practice of rereading seems to

extend to us, as if we might simply open a door and go to an experiential home; and

modern myths of transportation both bolster and undermine that sentimental hope,

reifying the boundary into literary imagination as a portal that both continually goes to

the same place, and also opens into change. The wardrobe always opens into Narnia, but

never into quite the same time.

Connie Willis's award-winning science fiction novels set in what has come to be

known as the "Oxford Time Travel Universe" are an example of one such modern fable

of literary transportation. The mechanics of Willis' transporting vehicle – a time-travel

machine called the "Net" – lie unusually close to the ontology of reading. The machine

can only transport the "historian" backwards in time, and only to a place where it is

impossible that she will have any impact whatsoever on the past. Like a reader, or indeed

like a real historian, the traveler can only experience, not effect any change. Her role is to

witness, and, like Young's Lorenzo, perhaps to be spiritually shifted in the act of

reframing himself. In the first story Willis set in this universe, "Fire Watch," a graduate

student in history undertakes his practicum by visiting the St. Paul's cathedral during the

London blitz, a harrowing experience in which he witnesses the death of a friend,

Langby. On his return, his faculty advisor, Dunworthy, hands him an exam that asks him

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[227] The conversation between Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe about "Laurentina's skeleton," for example, shows Austen playing with the pleasures and varied dynamics of different kinds of Gothic re-experiencing: rereading, vicarious pleasure through imagining and conversing about others' reading of a book one has read, serial reading of similar novels, and so on. (Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, Ed. James Kinsley and John Davie. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003: 24-25). Patricia Meyers Spacks, *On Rereading* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2011): 5-6.

for nothing but raw facts and figures. The student refuses to take the exam, protesting

angrily, but he is rewarded, to his surprise, with top marks. The moral is straightforward:

history – or, rather, reading, if we accept that Willis' greater metaphoric tenor in the story

is reading, especially reading about the past – is not about objective facts, but rather

about subjective experience and personal growth. Willis leaves us, however, in a slightly

different place:

> I have fought with memory my whole practicum only to find that it is not the
> enemy at all, and being an historian is not some saintly burden after all. Because
> Dunworthy is not blinking against the fatal sunlight of the last morning, but into
> the bloom of that first afternoon, looking at the great west doors of St Paul's at
> what is, like Langby, like all of it, every moment, in us, saved forever.[228]

Willis ends with a sentimental emblem of what the mythology of literary transportation

promises to the twentieth-century reader – a myth that tells us not only that our

experiences matter, but also that these other places might somehow gain a kind of life

through our inhabitation of them, a life that permits endless serial return. Their permanent

iterability supplies a sort of extreme version of nostalgia that memory's fallibility does

not allow in everyday life. The cathedral is always destroyed, but then, it is also always

new again, there for us to visit, no more difficult than opening a book's cover, stepping

through a vestibule.

The experience of reading Willis's books, however, produces quite the opposite

lesson. In the Hugo and Nebula award-winning *Doomsday Book*, another historian-cum-

virtual-traveler, Kivrin, is accidentally sent back to the time of the Black Death – but Mr.

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[228] Connie Willis, *Fire Watch* [1982]. Infinity Plus
(http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/firewatch.htm), 2003.

Dunworthy, this time, has taken sick himself, and is unable to retrieve her.[229] Willis follows the practices of the most unapologetic sentimental novelists in portraying the plight of having been bodily and affectively immersed in history. Kivrin becomes a part of a family, suffers alongside their petty joys and struggles, and then, immune herself, slowly watches them all die of plague, down to the last child. On first reading this narrative, its outcome is all too predictable, prefigured in every predictable step of the apparatus of the sentimental set-up, every moment of suspense that is not truly suspense: why befriend the difficult child if she will not become a tragic death? Why send the historian ten years past the Black Death, if not to accidentally push her into the heart of the matter? The overt manipulations of the narrator, like Dunworthy's manipulations in sending his previous "historian" into the Blitz, are transparently contrived. Yet on each successive reread, I find myself, paradoxically, worrying about Kivrin progressively more: will she make it out this time? Will the child die again? Will Kivrin? Willis' resolution to her earlier "Fire Watch," that literature matters because it changes us, begins to appear less preachy, and more literalist, as this process continues – as the material mind, open to the vagaries of fiction, is shaped and shaped again, its instincts and behaviors quite literally remolded, every time we step over into imagination's ostensible escape.

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[229] *Doomsday Book* (New York: Bantam, 1992).

Appendix I

Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale"

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
    My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
    One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
    But being too happy in thine happiness –
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
    In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
    Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
    Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
    Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
    Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
    And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
    And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
    What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
    Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
    Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and
    dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
    And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
    Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
    Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
    Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
    And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
    But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
    Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
    ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
    Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
    Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
    White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
    And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
    The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
    I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
    To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
    To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
    In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
    To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
    No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
    In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
    Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for
    home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
    The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
    Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
    To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
    As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
    Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
    In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
    Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

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