

The Promise of Art and the Problem of Difference
Aesthetic Universalism in Romantic-Era Britain

By

Manu Samriti Chander

B.A. Wesleyan University, 1999

M.F.A. University of Michigan, 2001

M.A. Brown University, 2003

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of English at Brown University

Providence, Rhode Island

May 2009

This dissertation by Manu Samriti Chander is accepted in its present form
by the Department of English as satisfying the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date _____
William Keach, Advisor

Recommended to the Graduate Council

Date _____
Timothy Bewes, Reader

Date _____
Rey Chow, Reader

Date _____
Olakunle George, Reader

Approved by the Graduate Council

Date _____
Sheila Bonde, Dean of the Graduate School

MANU SAMRITI CHANDER, was born on June 11, 1976 in Jamestown, New York. He received his B.A. in English from Wesleyan University in 1999, his M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Michigan in 2001, and his M.A. in English from Brown University in 2003. He was awarded a Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr., Research Grant by the Keats-Shelley Association of America and a Jean Starr Untermeyer Fellowship in 2006; he has also been the recipient of the Academy of American Poets Prize and Rackham Merit Fellowship, both from the University of Michigan. He currently teaches in the History and Literature Program at Harvard University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, Madhu and Mahesh Chander, who are an endless source of love and faith; to my sisters, Nivedita Chander and Geetanjali Chander, whom I admire beyond words; to Manorma Palta and Satinder Palta, and to all the other family members and friends who have lent their encouragement—thank you.

I am grateful to my director, William Keach, and my readers, Timothy Bewes, Rey Chow, and Olakunle George, for their insight into (and patience with) this project. Thank you also to Jon Klancher for reading and re-reading Chapter 1. My research on David Roberts was made possible by a Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr., Research Grant from the Keats-Shelley Association of America; I sincerely thank the Association for its support.

Finally, my love and gratitude to Patricia Akhimie, my wife and editor, idea-sharer and breakfast-companion, without whom nothing, and for whom everything.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter One: The Aesthetics of Controversy: Kant, Bourdieu, Coleridge and the Romantic Culture of Contention	17
Chapter Two: The Nation Universal: De Quincey's Symptomatic Englishness	47
Chapter Three: Framing Romanticism: Roberts, Shelley, and the Sublimity of the Other	70
Chapter Four: Keats's Radical Cosmopolitanism and the Aesthetics of Alterity	104
Works Cited	122

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Jean Léon Gérôme, <i>The Carpet Merchant</i> (c. 1887)	16
Figure 1. Broadside, <i>Fall of Algiers</i> (1825)	97
Figure 2. Broadside, <i>Abon Hassan</i> (1825)	97
Figure 3. David Roberts, <i>Departure of the Israelites from Egypt</i> (1827-1829)	98
Figure 4. Robert Scott Lauder, <i>David Roberts, 1796 - 1864. Artist (In Arab dress)</i> (1840)	99
Figure 5. David Roberts, <i>Interior, Mosque of El Ghoree</i> (1842)	100
Figure 6. David Roberts, <i>View under the Portico, Dendera</i>	101
Figure 7. David Roberts, <i>Pyramids of Geezah, from the Nile</i>	102
Figure 8. David Roberts, <i>Pyramids of Geezah</i>	102
Figure 9. Untitled Sketch from MS. (no date)	103

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation considers British Romantic literature and discourses of the aesthetic, with a critical emphasis on the slippery concept of “culture,” a term I find useful precisely because of its diverse connotations. Not just the organization of individuals who share traditions or rituals, nor merely the artistic or moral achievement of such an organization, “culture,” as Rey Chow has suggested, “is an unfinished process, a constellation—never in pristine form—of social relations that are to be continually unworked and reworked” (xiv). Thus, when I investigate the question of Romantic “aesthetic culture,” I mean to pursue the manner by which art at once performs a mediating function within society, establishing and reestablishing social relations, and elaborates potential alternatives to these relations, alternatives that “unwork” and “rework” the material relations between subjects. These alternatives, moreover, are offered not only in the work’s “statement” about or “vision” of the social world, but also in its promise of aesthetic judgment, the way the work imaginatively reorganizes subjects based on shared aesthetic experience.

In my discussion of the social aspect of the aesthetic in Romantic-era England, I call especially upon Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.¹ As Hannah Arendt has discussed, the

¹ Describing her critical methodology in the introduction to *The Supplement of Reading*, Tilottama Rajan writes, “The decision to focus on English Romantic texts but to develop a historically grounded framework for their analysis from German theory of the period is probably something that no longer needs to be defended” (4). Whether or not it is true that this decision is generally unchallenged, I follow Rajan in

third *Critique* is the site of Kant's most important engagement with the political: "The topics of the *Critique of Judgment*—the particular, whether a fact of nature or an event in history; the faculty of judgment as the faculty of man's mind to deal with it; sociability of men as the condition of the functioning of this faculty...—these topics...[are] of eminent political significance—that is important for the political" (*Lectures* 14). Here Arendt calls attention to the crucial and often overlooked fact of Kant's aesthetics, namely that the subject of judgment cannot exist in a vacuum; it depends upon the "sociability of men." That is, when Kant insists in the *Critique of Judgment* that we must presuppose the faculties of imagination and understanding—the very faculties that concern aesthetic judgment—to be universal, he establishes the subject as fundamentally social. Indeed, it is precisely aesthetic experience that generates sociability, a point that Wlad Godzich raises in his reading of Kant:

In other words, what takes place in the aesthetic judgment is not a singular event...but the demarcating of a field within which subjects are constituted as entities inhabiting a given set of spatiotemporal conditions, in such a way that that these conditions define their commonality.... It is in a concretely delimited field that both community and society are elaborated, the first by establishing a relation between all who are constituted as subjects within a field, and the second by means of the relations that are established with respect to the givenness that gave rise to the field. (283)

Godzich's argument not only sheds light on the place of the social within Kant's writing on aesthetic subjectivity, but also raises crucial questions that lie at the center of this

foregrounding German aesthetics—Kant's particularly—over the empiricist aesthetic philosophies native to Britain.

project: What are the limits of the “concretely delimited field” in which “community and society are elaborated”? Who all “are constituted as subjects within a field”? If poets, as Shelley would have it, are “the unacknowledged legislators of the world,” how, I ask, was this world of reading subjects conceived? Where did citizenship begin and end?

One of the ways I address these questions is by posing them in the negative: Who is *excluded* from the subjective field? As I show, the Romantic period witnessed the birth of modern Orientalism (Said 22) and the birth of modern aesthetics. This is not, I suggest, mere coincidence; rather, the transformations in Orientalist and aesthetic discourse in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries derive from a more general crisis of subjectivity, which is articulated in philosophical discourse (specifically in Kant’s dual critique of empiricist and rationalist theories of the subject) and experienced by diverse, historical subjects. In short, a changing social order within England (marked by the rise of the middle class, heightened political oppositions resulting from the revolutions in France and America, and the emergence of various institutions, political and social) and shifting relations between England and its others effected a redefinition of Enlightenment notions of universalism, specifically a shift in emphasis from a “human nature [that] consists of stable and predictable passions and dispositions, instincts and emotions” to the human “capacity to formulate and to live by universalizable... principles” (Benhabib 26).² Romantic aesthetics describes this “universalizability” or potential universality as a matter of taste, the universal capacity for aesthetic judgment.

² That this turn from the universal to the universalizable marks a significant rupture in what Benhabib calls the “cognitive legacy of Western philosophy since the Enlightenment” is generally overlooked in recent critical reconsiderations of universalism in cultural studies. Indeed, in several such projects “universalism” and “enlightenment” are used interchangeably, suggesting what Linda Zerilli has called “a homecoming to Enlightenment ideals” (3). Examples of this “homecoming” can be found especially in *differences* 7.1 (1995 Spring), where Naomi Schor and, in a separate piece, Neil Lazarus, Steven Evans, Anthony Arnone, and Anne Menke outline projects for mobilizing universalism against the political quietude of postmodern criticism.

Yet as Slavoj Žižek argues, “every ideological Universal...includes a specific case which breaks its unity, lays open its falsity” (21). With this in mind I show how Romantic Orientalism, as an aesthetic, makes visible how the *process* of universalization (indeed we might say that the distinction between Enlightenment universalism and Romantic universalism is that, in the case of the latter, the assumptions of the former are revealed *as a process*) is an essentially ideological one, whereby the other is systematically excluded from the field of potential subjects.

An example of this operation that was foundational to this project—though it lies outside the geographical range and historical period with which my work is concerned—is Jean León Gérôme’s *The Carpet Merchant* (fig. 1). The painting depicts a market scene in Cairo: rugs heaped in the foreground; a little farther back, some turbaned men—six or seven of them, each of a slightly different shade of skin—engaged in discussion; at the right margin, men of a distinctly darker complexion, servants most likely. And, situated above the others in the upper left corner of the painting, three more men stand displaying an intricately designed carpet. One of them, presumably, is the merchant for whom the painting is named.

How are we to read this work? Discussing French orientalist painting, Lisa Lowe suggests that the Orient constructed was “alternately a powerfully consuming unknown, a forbidden erotic figure, a grotesquely uncivilized world, and a site of incomprehensible difference...a place where French culture could inscribe its various myths and preoccupations by invoking imaginary, and culturally different, Others” (78n.3). While Lowe’s insight picks up on an important aspect of Romantic Orientalism—the construction of the Orient as an imagined space, the Oriental as an imaginary Other—it

does not go far enough toward drawing out the importance of Orientalism as a set of aesthetic practices, practices that both are informed by and contribute to the discourse surrounding the aesthetic. As an aesthetic object, *The Carpet Merchant* not only offers an imagined vision of the Orient, but also participates in the construction of the universal subject of aesthetic judgment. In order for this universal subject to emerge, I would argue, there must necessarily be a category of subjects (sublime objects/foreclosed subjects) whose perspective, whose position as judging subject, is excluded. This, then, is the function of the Orientals in the scene: they are not just a repository for French “myths and preoccupations,” but also the means by which the universality of judgment is guaranteed.

By focusing on aesthetic universalism, I thus hope to further the discussion of Romantic Orientalism that has shown how the construction of the Orient in the nineteenth century was part of a larger process of cultural exchange, or “colonial transaction” (Trivedi); bound up with a broader politics of resistance toward modernization (Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*) and despotism (Sharafuddin); and symptomatic of a particular anxiety regarding the imperial project (Leask, *British Romantic Writers*). Looking beyond this kind of discourse analysis, I read Orientalism as implying a kind of philosophy of the subject, a reflection upon the conditions and limitations of the human cast in terms of self and (Eastern) other. For such an approach, I would locate a more useful predecessor than Said in Gayatri Spivak, whose critical work, and whose reading of Kant specifically, has deeply influenced this project. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak reads the figures of the *Neuholländer* and *Feurländer* in the third *Critique* as evidence that “[t]he subject as such in Kant is geopolitically differentiated”

(26-7)—that the universal finds its limits in the other—and shows how this differentiation is figured in a number of literary texts through the trope of the “native informant.”

Throughout my project, I utilize Spivak’s approach, which strategically “work[s] with an...opposition between philosophy and literature...[in which] the first concatenates arguments and the second figures the impossible” (112), showing how Romantic Orientalists represent the impossible position suggested by Kant of an other that is at once included and excluded from the universal category of the subject.

My work is indebted to Spivak in at least one other way. Spivak demonstrates how we might both critique and “love” Kant (the way, perhaps, Kant himself both wrote against Hume and credited the empiricist for bringing him out of his “dogmatic slumber”). For at the same time that Spivak points to the ideology of Kant’s aesthetics (though, importantly, she does not use the word “ideology” to describe the process of subject-foreclosure she identifies), she also extends his critical project, as is suggested by her title’s allusion to Kant’s critical writings—as Stephen Morton notes in his introduction to her work, “Spivak’s critique of postcolonial reason in the twentieth century parallels Kant’s critique of skepticism and empiricism in eighteenth-century Germany” (140).³ By working within the Kantian tradition even as she questions it,

³ However, Morton does not pause over the parallel to consider fully the homology between Spivak and Kant. Spivak, I would argue, shares in particular Kant’s “transcritical” method. “Transcritique,” a term I discuss in chapter one, is Kojin Karatani’s neologistic descriptor for Kant’s critical “double turn,” his simultaneous and continuous rejection of empiricist and rationalist assumptions. Spivak’s work demonstrates a similar strategy: by seriously confronting at every stage of her career the materialism of Marxism and the, say, “theory” of deconstruction, Spivak has pushed the field of postcolonial studies in directions that other fields—Romanticism included—have yet to investigate fully. Spivak’s reading of the subaltern, for example, as both a theoretical placeholder for that which cannot “speak” and as a material subject excluded from “the circuits of citizenship” (*Critique* 310) critiques the privileged abstractions of Foucault and Deleuze without, however, claiming the primacy of material conditions over epistemological constructions. Indeed, for Spivak, Derrida leads to practice while Marx offers “the most powerful way of understanding what’s going on in the world” (*The Post-Colonial Critic* 137)—in transcritical fashion, the aims of each approach are strategically redirected toward those of the other. For a useful account of Spivak’s ongoing relationship to Marx and Derrida, see Philip Leonard, “Spivak after Marx after Derrida.”

Spivak reflects the possibility of moving past the now-familiar opposition between defenses and critiques of the aesthetic in which Kant's name is frequently invoked.⁴

In this spirit, I begin my first chapter with a reading of Kant's aesthetics *qua* social theory next to the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu, perhaps Kant's most vocal opponent. As Bourdieu reminds us, sociability in the cultural field is never without struggle, a contest for relative privilege or cultural capital. By my reading, it is precisely this struggle that produces and reinforces a collective belief in aesthetic universalism, or the potential for the work of art to guarantee universal assent, for each participant within the struggle exhibits by the very fact of his or her participation a subjective belief in the potential objectivity of taste. Put simply, in order for one to dispute another's attitude toward the work of art, one must already acknowledge, if only in the act of articulating one's position toward the work, the non-relativity of aesthetic judgment. And, as for readers, so too for authors: to take a position as a producer within the cultural field of Romantic-era England is to present an object that is, by its very nature, "right" (its truth *is* its beauty), an object that demands validation of its "rightness," which, of course, it will not find. The object not only, as Godzich has it, *constitutes* the field, but also *divides* the field against itself, creates dissent and disagreement. Taken together, the insights of Kant and Bourdieu help explain why the competition for cultural capital and the belief in the unifying function of art continually reinforced one another in Romantic-era England—I discuss this at length below.

⁴ Summarizing the anti-aesthetic position in his essay "Everybody Hates Kant," Robert Kaufman writes: "At a foundational moment for modern-bourgeois, desocialized... ideologies of aesthetics, ethics, and politics, Kant's third Critique and the art contemporaneous with it establish an essentialist or transcendentalist theory of cultural value...based in literary or aesthetic form. This theory's other, from Romanticism through the twentieth century, is the material, the social, and the historical, all of which are erased by or made subservient to artistic-philosophical form" (131-2). Of course, not everybody "hates Kant," but "hate" is perhaps not too strong a verb to capture the tenor of the ongoing debates between proponents and opponents of the aesthetic over the past few decades.

This relationship between Kant and Bourdieu not only informs my understanding of the cultural field, but also shapes my practice of reading throughout this project. My interest lies in how the Romantic text defines the cultural field, the strategies by which it creates the conditions of culture—its universalizing vision. Such an approach demands analysis of both text and context, consideration of the extant relations between cultural producers and consumers and the formal means by which these are reorganized. Toward this end I have chosen to focus on texts whose strategies represent a range of responses to reader relations and the reading habits of the nation. The challenge to such an approach is avoiding slipping into what William St. Clair has recently called the “parade” approach to Romantic-era texts: “According to the conventions of...[the “parade”] approach, those texts of an age which have later been judged to be ‘canonical’ in a wide sense, are believed to catch the essence, or some of the essence, of the historical situation from which they emanated” (2). St. Clair usefully identifies the drawbacks to this kind of reading, namely that it allows the critic to rather conveniently forget his own role in determining the conditions of analysis, i.e. which texts to read. St. Clair’s solution is to consider “the print which was actually read” rather than “some modern selection” (3) by detailing with admirable thoroughness the cost of various books, their print runs, and numerous other factors that shaped the “reading nation” of “men, women, and children in Great Britain, and to a lesser extent, other English-speaking communities...who regularly read English-language books” (13).

Of course, St. Clair’s understanding of community is an essentially empirical one—men, women, children, etc.—which seems to me to put too much faith in the possibility for empiricism to “advance...from explanations which are textual, local, and

time-specific to a fuller and more theoretical understanding” (8) of Romantic readerships. Put differently, St. Clair assumes the existence of “English-speaking communities” of readers without attending to the conditions of the reading community itself, conditions that cannot be derived from empirical analysis alone.

I believe we can begin to discover these conditions through textual analysis, with special attention given to such aesthetic strategies as the rhetorical figuration of the reader, for example, and the reflexivity of the enunciating voice. I thus examine how texts imagine, beyond the intent of the author, the field of possible positions available to readers. That is, the significance of representative texts lies in their function as what Bourdieu calls “position-takings,” which I discuss in fuller detail in chapter one. As I show there, position-takings aim toward universal truth: when an author puts forth an essay, say, or a poem or an *ars poetica*, that author claims “truth,” if not objective truth, then the kind of subjective truth—the authenticity of feeling, for example—for which the Romantics are famous. We do not need to take the truth-content of the position-taking at face value in order to see the trajectory of the position-taking toward truth, its purposiveness. Indeed, we should not privilege truth-content over this purposiveness, for it is that latter, ultimately, that gives “shape” to the cultural field. By pointing toward the center of the field, what Bourdieu calls the *illusio*, or the interest shared by all cultural producers, position-takings reveal the structure of the field—they show us where to look and what to look for. Of course, we sacrifice the breadth of scope that St. Clair demonstrates when we choose to read in this way, but I would argue that we gain the capacity to synthesize “data” into a more meaningful—if less detailed—image of Romantic-era England.

The texts I read in this project are admittedly a “modern selection,” pulled from the canon of Romantic literature. It is not by chance that I have chosen relatively canonical texts, not just major poems but also often-read works such as Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry*, and Keats’s letters.⁵ These works have, thanks to the “romantic ideology” that Jerome McGann famously criticizes, attained a secure place in the canon by being taken at their word, so to speak: their claims to universality have been institutionally solidified as universals, expressive of the kind of essence that St. Clair identifies.⁶ And yet, because of their canonical status, these works beg consideration of what exactly those claims entail. Romantic universalism, as I argue at the conclusion of my project, offers a dynamic understanding of art and culture that is reified within the logic of canonicity. That is, by mistaking the texts’ efforts at acquiring value—their truth-claims as position-takings—for innate aesthetic value, we risk stabilizing the rather unstable universalisms of the texts I consider. My aim here is neither to glorify nor devalue Romantic literature, but to show how part of its value lies in what it reveals—thematically, formally, and rhetorically—about the struggle for privilege within the field of cultural production.

Each of the works I look at aims toward aesthetic universalism in a different way and thus reveals a different kind of insight into Romantic-era culture. In chapter one, I read Coleridge’s “Fears in Solitude,” the generic uncertainty of which reflects multiple strategies for guaranteeing assent across political and cultural divides within Romantic-

⁵ The least canonical author I consider is De Quincey, whose work nevertheless continues to receive increasing critical attention. I am excluding from the present list the paintings of David Roberts because, as will become clear, I primarily use Roberts in order to establish a methodological approach to Shelley’s *Alastor*; still, it might be noted that Roberts’s work has received more critical attention in recent years than in the past, due in large part to the renewed interest in Orientalism in the field of art history.

⁶ “[T]he scholarship and criticism of Romanticism and its works are dominated,” McGann writes, “by a Romantic ideology, by an uncritical absorption in Romanticism’s own self-representations” (*Romantic* 1).

era England. One of the purposes of this reading is to challenge the reductive model of the “ideal reader” that has persisted in Coleridge studies. Far from imagining a readership that “gets” him, Coleridge reflects upon the difficulty of getting his readers to get him. This is visible in the poem’s central dialectic, which moves from a lyrical presumption of universal communicability to an oratorical effort at constituting universality—organizing disparate readerships into a harmonious whole—to, finally, an understanding, at once resigned and hopeful, of the merely potential status of universality. In a sense, then, Coleridge’s poem is a position-taking about position-taking, a strategy about strategizing, and suggests the necessity of continually reestablishing one’s place within the cultural field.

If “Fears in Solitude” seems to struggle with its own mode of representation—oscillating between lyric and oratory—De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* is, by my reading in chapter two, more playful in its sense of genre. Working within the confessional mode and the autobiographical tradition, De Quincey questions the belief in language to create sympathetic bonds between citizens. As an alternative, De Quincey suggests that community is held together by antagonism, what Kant calls man’s “unsocial sociability.” The promise of art lies in its ability to reinforce this antagonism, solidifying differences into a stable cultural totality—the nation. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s argument in *Imagined Communities* and John Barrell’s analysis in *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey*, I thus show how De Quincey defines Englishness both as the product of shared reading and shared opposition to an imagined other, that which is displaced from the space-time of the nation. That “other” is culturally-coded, but it is not reducible, I suggest against prevalent readings, to the figure

of the Oriental. Rather, it is De Quincey himself who, by resisting the categories of both East and West, consolidates both within the universal time-space of aesthetic judgment.

Where De Quincey aims to organize his readers into a unified nation, Shelley, whose *Alastor* I consider in chapter three, expands the imagined community beyond the borders of England. I begin by deriving a way of reading Shelley's aesthetics from the field of the visual arts, looking specifically at the orientalist images of David Roberts and showing how the seemingly universal category of observation is grounded in an ineradicable cultural particularism. I argue that, by consistently presenting Eastern figures within his topographically accurate depictions of Egyptian architecture, Roberts excludes the "Oriental" from the seemingly universal position of the observer. This position is visible also in Shelley's orientalist works. For example, in "Ozymandias," Shelley employs glaringly objective verbs that narrate rather than lyricize the scene: the speaker "met" (1) a traveler who "said" (2) the statue's legs "stand" (3) a pedestal upon which words "appear" (9). The last of these is particularly revealing, as "appear" suggests an unspoken indirect object to whom the words are presented—the traveler, the speaker, and, finally, the reader. The implied reader is the last in a series of observers whose experience is mediated by a series of frames: the speaker frames the narrative voiced by the traveler, who tells of a sculptor and, finally, a pedestal that frames the words of Ozymandias.

This strategy of framing, I demonstrate, is cast in ethical terms in *Alastor*. Through the Visionary-protagonist's fatal failure to frame the vision of the "veiled maid," I suggest, Shelley presents a cautionary "picture" of what happens when the sublime Other penetrates the subject and permeates the field of observation. This moral is at odds

with the poem's cosmopolitan vision and the professed ethics of universal sympathy expressed in Shelley's preface.

Indeed, *Alastor* productively illuminates the troubled relationship between aesthetics and ethics. According to Geoffrey Galt Harpham's useful summary, there are two fundamental models of this relationship: either ethics and aesthetics are separate or they are one (158). Within each of these general positions, there are, of course, a range of possible arguments. Thus, according to Harpham, "Enlightenment rationality, utilitarianism, phenomenology, and formalism" present different angles and approaches while nevertheless maintaining the essential difference between aesthetics and ethics. Romanticists such as Laurence Lockridge (*The Ethics of Romanticism*), Debbie Lee (*Slavery and the Romantic Imagination*), and David Haney (*The Challenge of Coleridge*) tend to emphasize the latter relationship, demonstrating in different ways how "ethical issues and the processes of imaginative understanding are deeply intertwined" (Haney 116). In the case of *Alastor*, such a reading is seemingly well-founded. As the poem points toward a universal ethics of sympathy, it appeals to a universal aesthetic subject, an imagined audience that stretches across all of humanity. In turn, this audience is presumed capable of translating aesthetic experience into ethical action—beauty into truth.

And yet, according to my reading of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in chapter four, this Shellyan faith in cosmopolitan sympathy is one that troubles Keats, who offers an alternative cosmopolitan vision that revises that of Shelley, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and others. For Keats, cosmopolitanism is a mode of attention, a way of "reading" difference. In contrast to the moral of *Alastor*, the lesson of Keats's ode is that art is the condition for

understanding the coexistence of multiple cultures, the very possibility of cosmopolitanism established by an urn, or a poem on an urn.

The relationship between the “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and *Alastor* is relatively underexamined, especially compared to the more common pairing of *Alastor* and Keats’s *Endymion*. What I find particularly useful about the ode, however, is what James O’Rourke calls the poem’s “hypercanonicity,” which allows us particular insight into the possibilities for rethinking the canon. My concluding discussion concerns the practice of “cosmopolitan reading” in the field of Romanticism. Listening to the ode, I suggest that, even as we diversify the Romantic canon by reading historically overlooked texts, we might think about the cosmopolitics of rereading canonical texts against the grain of received narratives about the universal truths of great literature. As I see it, cosmopolitanism demands a non-narrative approach to textuality, one that foregrounds reflective, non-determinative, and disinterested judgment over moral lessons about cultural differences. Indeed, if there is a cosmopolitan ethics of reading, I argue, its imperative might be that we read not for “understanding” but for “truth,” i.e. for that beauty that Keats favors to what he calls in the famous “Negative Capability” letter “irritable reaching after fact and reason,” against which the responsible reader must necessarily labor.

Of course the challenge to understanding this readerly responsibility lies in the fact that literary criticism and cultural studies are always “reaching after fact and reason” in one way or another, and in pursuing this project, I have continually found myself struggling between the desire for certainty and the aesthetic imperative I find so compelling in Keats. I suspect that at times this struggle has led me toward lyrical

conclusions where I might have found fact, and rational explanations for those aspects of art and culture that cannot be explained through reason. It is my hope that, despite these flaws, there might nevertheless be something useful here, a moment or two in which my inevitably subjective investigations might yield up some communicable insight into the category of the aesthetic, its problems and its promises.



fig. 1: Jean Léon Gérôme, *The Carpet Merchant* (c. 1887)

CHAPTER ONE: THE AESTHETICS OF CONTROVERSY:
KANT, BOURDIEU, COLERIDGE, AND THE ROMANTIC CULTURE OF
CONTENTION

The history of Western aesthetics, at least since the Enlightenment, might well be mapped in terms of shifting attitudes toward the universal: from the empiricists' investigations into the universal applicability of standards of taste in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the analyses of the ontological status of art in the last century, to more recent pluralist, Marxist, and deconstructionist critiques of aesthetic ideology, the modern philosophical discourse surrounding art has never strayed far from its central concerns about the particular and the universal as they relate to the aesthetic object and (especially in the case of Kant) the forms of judgment it occasions.

These transformations in aesthetic universalism, which we often attribute to those philosophers who revolutionized the field of aesthetics, form not only an intellectual history—from Hume and Burke to Kant, to Hegel, and so on—but also a cultural history, as the universality or non-universality of art and judgment is as much a culturally held belief as it is a matter of philosophical inquiry. Not that we can speak of any culture as simply universalist or anti-universalist. Rather, we might say that the tension between the universal and the particular is a crucial part—perhaps the defining part—of any culture that brings into relation with one another the voices of assent and dissent that

surround “art,” which is by necessity multiply and inconsistently defined.

This conception of “aesthetic culture” I derive from Bourdieu and Kant, with whose works the first part of this chapter is concerned. By placing Bourdieu’s materialist sociology of culture into dialogue with Kant’s transcendental critique of aesthetic judgment, I wish to demonstrate the ways in which aesthetic culture arises dialectically out of conditions of dispute: it is the material struggle for symbolic capital that continually reinforces belief in the potential for the work of art to guarantee universal assent; it is the failure of the promise of assent to be realized that continually fuels this material struggle. What I thus refer to as a “dialectic of aesthetic belief,” which is the *sine qua non* of aesthetic culture, is at once a top-down and a bottom-up process, whereby the material moves toward the ideal as the ideal moves toward the material.

Building on this argument, I turn in the second part of this chapter to the usefulness of Kant’s aesthetics and Bourdieu’s cultural sociology to the study of Romantic literature, focusing on the relationship between aesthetic subjectivity and material reading audiences in Coleridge’s “Fears in Solitude.” As a poet both invested in understanding the contours of transcendental subjectivity and concerned about existing reader relations in the Romantic period, Coleridge serves as a particularly useful example of how the complexity of aesthetic culture shapes the work of literature and how the work of literature reorganizes the landscape of aesthetic culture. “Fears in Solitude,” a poem deeply troubled by its own mass readership and by the promise of an ideal reader, offers an interesting and illuminating case study that reveals the challenges of literary production and consumption in an England comprised of rapidly expanding and continually shifting readerships.

I. Disputandum Est: Aesthetics and the Sociology of Culture

Kant performed a critical oscillation: He continually confronted the dominant rationalism with empiricism, and the dominant empiricism with rationalism. The Kantian critique exists within this movement itself. The transcendental critique is not some kind of stable third position. It cannot exist without a transversal and transpositional movement. (Karatani 4)

When Kant identifies in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the limits of Lockean/Humean empiricism and Cartesian rationalism (as developed by the Wolff-Leibniz school), namely the failure of each to theorize a subject representable to itself, he effectively empties the subject of all positive content, introducing, as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy put it, a “hiatus...at the heart of the subject” (32). The reconstitution of the subject, which Kant never fully achieves, drives the critical project, propelling Kant’s thought from pure to practical reason, aesthetic to teleological judgment.

Kojin Karatani has dubbed this critical impulse in Kant “transcritique,” where the prefix *trans* refers not only to the *transcendentalism* we generally associate with Kant, but also to the *transversal* nature of Kant’s critique. For Karatani, Kant’s double turn from the empiricists and the rationalists is not merely a strategy or critical approach. Rather, it structures the whole of Kant’s thought. As Karatani writes, “For Kant, empiricism and rationalism were not simply two scholastic doctrines. Between them he encountered the paradox between being in the world and being the subject who constitutes the world.... Taken together, empiricism and rationalism struck Kant [as] a ‘pronounced parallax’ (95).

I would suggest that we might begin to understand the relationship between Kant and Bourdieu by considering how a similar “parallax” underlies Bourdieu’s thought, how a critical structure homologous to that of Kant operates throughout Bourdieu’s writings on art and culture. Further, the manner in which Bourdieu’s transcritical method shapes his understanding of social conflict allows us to see how Kant’s own system demands a theory of intersubjective contention, to which Kant alludes in the *Critique of Judgment*. In other words, by performing our own “critical oscillation” we might gain insight into the relationship between aesthetics and the sociology of culture, and into the relevance of each to literary studies.

If the Kantian parallax arises out of the paradox of subjectivity—the subject’s at once being in and constituting the world—the Bourdieuvian parallax, we might say, arises out of the paradox of agency, in which the agent is caught between forging the societal relations that make up a cultural totality and being forged *as an agent* by these very relations. This paradox is revealed in Bourdieu’s double turn from what he calls the “substantialist mode of thought” and structuralist understandings of culture, represented respectively by Kant and Foucault. On the one hand, Kant’s aesthetics, according to Bourdieu, develops a principle of “pure taste” which systematically ignores the relationship between social class and aesthetic judgment:

Totally ahistorical, like all philosophical thought that is worthy of the name (*every philosophia worth its salt is perennis*)—perfectly ethnocentric, since it takes for its sole datum the lived experience of a *homo aestheticus* who is none other than the subject of aesthetic discourse constituted as the universal subject of aesthetic experience—Kant’s

analysis of the judgement of taste finds its real basis in a set of aesthetic principles which are the universalization of the dispositions associated with a particular social and economic condition. (*Distinction* 493)

Against this universalist aesthetics, Bourdieu argues that judgment is contextual and contingent rather than “pure.” For Bourdieu, the claims of a work of art, a cultural producer (writer, painter, etc.), or a critic exist in relation to all other claims—or “positions-takings” (e.g. poems, novels, essays, paintings, reviews, manifestos...)—in the cultural field. Such claims are derived neither from genius nor from transcendental *a priori* faculties of judgment.¹ Rather, they are grounded within an objective field of relations, a “space of possibles,” wherein each position-taking “receives its distinctive *value* from its negative relationship with the coexisting position-takings corresponding to the different positions” (*Field* 30). That is to say, Bourdieu’s response to Kant’s aesthetics is to emphasize how the agent’s ability to voice cultural claims is defined not by the conditions of subjectivity but by those claims of other agents that constitute the cultural field.

On this point, Bourdieu is quite close to Foucault, who similarly emphasizes the relative position of a “statement” within what he terms the “field of strategic possibilities”: “Neither the permanence of opinions through time,” Foucault writes, “nor the dialectic of their conflicts is sufficient to individualize a set of statements [i.e. a

¹ I am, for the sake of brevity, eliding two separate points of analysis in Bourdieu’s work when I suggest that the theory of position-takings critiques the substantialist presumptions of aesthetic genius and of aesthetic judgment (or taste). The critique of genius is primarily concerned with cultural production, while the critique of the theory of aesthetic judgment is primarily concerned with cultural consumption (the former critique is the project of *The Field of Cultural Production*, while the latter is the project of *Distinction*). In both cases, Bourdieu emphasizes positionality over substance, relationality over autonomy. See especially *Distinction* 230-232, where Bourdieu discusses the homology between the production and consumption of cultural goods.

discourse]. To do that, one must be able to register the distribution of points of choice and define, behind every option, a *field of strategic possibilities*” (320). As Bourdieu readily admits, Foucault’s “field of...possibilities,” like his own “space of possibles,” insists that “no cultural product exists by itself, i.e. outside the relations of interdependence which link it to other products” (*Field* 32-3).

And yet Bourdieu charges Foucault with the same essentialism that he sees in Kant: “Like so many others, Foucault succumbs to that form of essentialism...that is manifested so clearly in other domains” (*Field* 179). The difference between Bourdieu’s conception of “field” and that of Foucault lies in Bourdieu’s distinction between “position-taking” and “position,” which he sees elided in Foucault’s thought. For Bourdieu, a position within the cultural field is a role, (ful)filled by a person, a text, etc., and each role is invested with a particular capital. A position-taking, on the other hand, is a manifestation of position that functions as a defense of position. It can take any number of forms (the manifesto being, perhaps, the most obvious) and aims at acquiring cultural capital for the position; the position-taking is what tries to adjust the balance of power. “Strategies,” for Bourdieu, “depend for their force and form on the position each agent occupies in...power relations” (*Field* 30); they are manifested objectively in the form of a position-taking but are not reducible to position-takings. In other words, a possibility is not “strategic” merely because it exists in relation to other possibilities, but rather because it has, we might say, an agenda, namely the acquisition of cultural capital. Thus, where Kant essentializes the subject of aesthetic judgment by extracting it from the social world, Foucault essentializes discourse, “transfer[ring] into the ‘paradise of ideas’...the relations between the producers and consumers of cultural works” (*Field* 179) forged in

the sociological rather than the discursive realm.

To some degree, Bourdieu seems to exaggerate the subjectivism of Kant and the objectivism of Foucault. Kant, as I have mentioned already (and as I develop below), continually rejected what he saw as the subjectivism of the rationalists, while Foucault, who was never comfortable with the label “structuralist,” was less invested in the primacy of discourse than Bourdieu suggests.² Yet it is worth noting Bourdieu’s position in relation to each of these “essentialists,” whether or not Kant and Foucault deserve such a characterization. For what we see when we bracket the truth-value of Bourdieu’s claim is precisely the structure of transcritique, where turning from one essentialism risks always finding oneself in another. Against both of these essentialisms, against both Kant and Foucault, Bourdieu offers a sociology of culture that emphasizes the agent’s interested, strategic position within the field of cultural production and consumption—within, that is, the “field of struggle”:

When we speak of a *field* of position-takings, we are insisting that what can be constituted as a *system* for the sake of analysis is...the product and prize of a permanent conflict; or, to put it another way, that the generative, unifying principle of this system is the struggle, with all the contradictions in engenders. (*Field* 34)

The totality of the cultural field—the field of (social) positions plus the field of (discursive) position-takings—is constituted by a double movement, whereby the agent is positioned by the system (of positions), which is ordered by various antagonisms (class, race, political affiliation, etc.), and thus positions himself or herself within the system (of

² See, for example, Foucault, *Technologies* 9; or, for a more unequivocal remark about the label, see *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* 437, where Foucault states, “I have never been a Freudian, I have never been a Marxist, and I have never been a structuralist.”

position-takings) in such a way as to attain maximum privilege, or “cultural capital”; and, the one movement continually necessitates the other. That is to say, in the effort to introduce agency into Foucault and social structure into Kant, Bourdieu develops a theory of culture in which the agent is continually pressed up against the system, the system continually pressed against the agent. Or, put differently, the theory of “permanent conflict” within Bourdieu’s conception of the cultural field is derived from the “permanent conflict” between Kantian aesthetics and Foucauldian discourse-analysis that structures Bourdieu’s work.

It is with this in mind that I wish to turn to Kant’s transcritique. In the “Antinomy of Taste,” Kant writes:

1. *Thesis*. The judgement of taste is not based on concepts; for, if it were, it would be open to dispute (decision made by proofs).
2. *Antithesis*. The judgement of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, despite diversity of judgement, there could be no room even for contention in the matter (a claim to the necessary agreement of others with this judgement). (338)

The thesis of the antinomy suggests that aesthetic judgment is merely *a posteriori*, derived from experience, that is to say empirical; the antithesis reads the same form of judgment as valid *a priori*, with reference to determinate concepts that condition our experience. The resolution, according to Kant, is that aesthetic judgment is indeed based on concepts, but that these concepts are indeterminate: “All contradiction disappears,” Kant writes, “if I say: the judgement of taste does depend upon a concept..., but one from which nothing can be cognized in respect of the Object, and nothing proved, because it is

in itself indeterminable and useless for knowledge” (340).

What is significant about the Antinomy of Taste in the context of the present discussion is that, in the course of introducing what could not be theorized from a purely empiricist or purely rationalist perspective (namely a concept that can prove nothing), Kant raises a subtle but crucial opposition between “dispute” [*Disputieren*] and “contention” [*Streiten*], the first of which refers to “decisions made by proofs,” the second to “a claim to the necessary agreement of others.” Now, it is commonly understood that Kant, in Hannah Arendt’s words, “was disturbed by the alleged arbitrariness and subjectivity of *de gustibus non disputandum est*” (*Between Past and Future* 222); however, this is not precisely the case. For Kant distinguishes this commonplace from another, “Every man has his own taste” [*Ein jeder hat seinen eignen Geschmack*], which more closely suggests the “arbitrariness and subjectivity” by which he is “disturbed.”³ Indeed, Kant accepts the claim, *de gustibus non disputandum est* [*über den Geschmack läßt sich nicht disputieren*], with the qualification that “there may be contention about taste” [*über den Geschmack läßt sich streiten*], and the further qualification that “there must be a hope of coming to terms” (338).

The grounds for this hope lie within the *a priori* faculty or principle of *sensus communis*. Unlike the “common sense” or “common understanding” of such eighteenth-century empiricists as Berkeley and Reid, which refers to what is commonly held by a community, Kant’s *sensus communis* is precisely what enables community. It is a “community sense,” as Arendt notes, with which “earthbound creatures, living in communities...[are] endowed” (*Lectures* 27).

It is on this point that Bourdieu and Kant seem irreconcilably at odds: whereas

³ On the distinction between these two adages, see Ferry 48-53.

Kant conceives of a plurality of subjects on equal footing, as it were, Bourdieu emphasizes the unevenness of the terrain and therefore denies the possibility of coming to terms. In Bourdieu's field of position-takings, "antagonistic classifications or judgments...are formulated in the name of a claim to universality—to absolute judgment" (*Field* 263). For Bourdieu, "absolute judgement" is the *illusio*, "the interest, the investment" (*Field* 159) that compels each agent to continually take up a position within the cultural field: to judge absolutely, without contestation, is not to come to terms with other agents but to dominate, as the antagonisms forged in the field of positions (by class struggle, for example) are reproduced in the field of position-takings. As the *illusio*, as illusion, absolute judgment is ultimately unattainable, elusive, and thus struggle is perpetuated: "If there is a truth," Bourdieu writes, "it is that truth is a stake in the struggle" (*Field* 263).

But perhaps it is precisely where Bourdieu and Kant are most markedly opposed that we might locate a point of contact. More specifically, what Bourdieu's cultural sociology and Kant's aesthetics share is a theory of perpetual antagonism, perpetual contention, which figures as a structural necessity within the critical system of each, and which arises out of the merely potential status of objective, "absolute judgement."

We have already seen how the theory of struggle emerges as a structural necessity out of Bourdieu's transcritique of Kant and Foucault. The notion that contention figures as a necessity within Kant's aesthetics demands, I suspect, further attention, since, as it has thus far been discussed, contention [*Streiten*] has been raised only as a possibility: "there may be contention about taste." Yet, just as the periphrastic construction of *de gustibus non disputandum est* suggests both in Latin and in Kant's German the idea of

necessity (Meredith gives us “*there is no disputing about taste*”), so the parallel “*läßt sich*” plus infinitive construction of *über den Geschmack läßt sich streiten* might suggest not simply that there may be contention, but that contention is required—“in matters of taste there must be contention.”⁴

Read in this way, Kant’s proposition about contention reflects his continual critique of the empiricist “standard of taste.” Paul Guyer writes, “In all of the empiricist theories [of taste]...it was held that nature imposed an essential similarity on all members of the species, by means of an identical ‘sound state’ or ‘common standard’ for the sense of beauty, and allowed merely accidental or apparent divergences from that norm” (5). The empiricist standard of taste, derived from the observation of the contingent fact of agreement, cannot demonstrate its own *a priori* necessity, and any claims to the validity of such a standard are therefore suspect. When Kant suggests that there must be contention, then, he foregrounds the falseness of empiricist assumptions about taste: “divergences” from the common standard are not merely anomalous; they cannot simply be disregarded. Instead, within the fact of divergence we see universal assent as a potentiality—as the stakes of each singular judgment—yet as a potentiality only: a determinate concept to which the judgment of taste might refer continually eludes the subject; indeed, it eludes the entire field of subjects, the aesthetic community.

Aesthetic judgment, we might conclude, is for both Kant and Bourdieu teleological in its structure, “purposive,” but the *telos*, objective universality, is absent. Bourdieu’s *illusio* is not positively determined; it is merely an illusion, a placeholder at the very center of the cultural field. As an illusion, it stands in for any “real”

⁴ This sense of necessity more closely reflects Kant’s earlier claim in the “Analytic of the Beautiful” that “there *must* be coupled with [the judgment of taste] a claim to subjective universality” [*es muß damit ein Anspruch auf subjektive Allgemeinheit verbunden sein*] (212, my emphases).

universality: the subjective claim *qua* position-taking looks like absolute judgment even though it is not, just as for Kant the judgment of taste, “although it is only aesthetic, . . . bears this *resemblance* [*Ähnlichkeit*] to the logical judgement, that it may be presupposed to be valid for all men” (211, my italics). The resemblance between the aesthetic judgment and the logical judgment thus opens up a gap that the subject aims (purposively, that is, formally, if not intentionally) to bridge. For Bourdieu and Kant, then, the subjective judgment gives the appearance—though only the appearance—of absolute, objectively universal judgment.

This point of contact between Bourdieu and Kant is really only that—a point, the beginning and end of any relationship of identity between the two projects. Nevertheless, we might take the coincidence of purposive antagonism, antagonism that aims toward an unrealized aesthetic objectivity, as a point of departure for a transcritical project situated in the unsteady ground between aesthetics and the sociology of culture.

We might call this point—of contact between Kant and Bourdieu, and of departure for our own transcritique—“belief”; we might call the structural relationship between the two systems a “dialectic of belief.” By employing the term “belief” I mean to suggest both the ideological illusion of aesthetic universalism that Bourdieu describes (the agent believes in “absolute judgement” although it *is not* realized) and the “hope of coming to terms” that Kant identifies as a necessity within the fact of contention (the subject believes in universality because it *might be* realized). By reading the relationship between the two critical systems in question as a “dialectic,” I mean to suggest that the dual implications of “belief” are continually at odds, each reinforcing the other. That is, even as material conditions of struggle (within the field of positions) give rise to an

ideological illusion, whereby agents believe it possible to “win” the game of culture by means of “absolute judgement,” they also create the possibility of “coming to terms,” the “hope” that assent will be attained within a field of equals, which is also the hope that material relations will be reorganized in such a way that allows for equality. The persistent failure of this hope to be fulfilled, however, continually exacerbates the antagonisms within the field of position-takings, which suggests that the aesthetic community, not just for Bourdieu but also for Kant, is fundamentally dynamic.

The relationship between Bourdieu and Kant might thus reveal why the field of aesthetics, as Samuel Weber puts it, “has never been able to stop ‘foundering’” (61), for it is precisely the fact of antagonism that lies at the center of aesthetic culture. With respect to the specific case of Romantic-era England, this antagonism was manifest in the numerous and persistent aesthetic controversies of the period, from the “picturesque controversy” in the field of visual arts to the “Pope controversy” to what Coleridge referred to as “the whole, long-continued controversy” over the *Lyrical Ballads* (*Biographia* II.7).

One such controversy is worth mentioning in advance of the more detailed discussion of cultural field of Romantic-era England that I offer below. What Marilyn Butler has called “the Revolution controversy” refers specifically to the pamphlet war of the 1790s, the most famous participants being Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Paine’s *The Rights of Man*, and Godwin’s *Political Justice*. While this debate can be dated “from the first English rejoicings at France’s new dawn in 1789, to December 1795, when Pitt’s government introduced measures to stop the spread of radicalism by the printed and spoken word” (Butler 1), we should note (as Butler herself

does) that the controversy surrounding the French Revolution would influence the public sphere of Romantic-era England for years to come, particularly during the years of the Napoleonic Wars. And, while the texts that constitute this debate are generally essayistic, poetry in particular played an important role in the Revolution controversy; as Simon Bainbridge notes, “poetry on the war was widely circulated throughout the years of the conflict with France, distributed as broadsides, printed in newspapers and magazines, recited in theatres, as well as published in pamphlets and individual volumes” (9).

The wide and diverse distribution of political poetry contributed to the making of wide and diverse reading audiences, audiences divided not only by how they read texts, but also, according to Jon Klancher, how they read one another: “Audiences will come [in the Romantic period] to define themselves according to the interpretive modes they possess and the interpretive strategies through which that mode somehow allows them to ‘read’ other audiences whose pressure, in the early nineteenth century, cannot be escaped” (*Making* 46). For these audiences, which were comprised of authors and readers alike—as Lucy Newlyn reminds us “[a]ll writers are also readers, and many readers also write” (vii)—taste was a political category, and “absolute judgment” a political stake. That is, far from leading to aesthetic relativism—*Ein jeder hat seinen eignen Geschmack*—the diversity of politically invested reading audiences and the multiplicity of tastes reinforced aesthetic belief, for to cede the relativity of taste meant precisely to cede the relativity of politics. Yet, as I will demonstrate below, the Romantic reader and writer’s claim to “truth” was by no means certain of its own truth-content; rather, the constitutive antagonism of the cultural field often materialized in the uncertainty of a position-taking. Thus, a poem such as “Fears in Solitude,” which was

written “during the alarm of an invasion,” finds itself tripping over its understandings of judgment and politics, even as it tumbles toward a truth that is perpetually elusive.

II. Solitude in Context: Romantic Readerships and Aesthetic Potentiality

Suddenly, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the number of men, women, and children who read printed texts began to grow rapidly. The more highly educated members of society read more books, journals, and newspapers than ever before and on a wider range of subjects. Lower-income groups, whose reading had long been the English-language Bible, short chapbooks, and ballads, now had access to other print including book-length literary texts.... The rapid expansion in reading occurred across all strata of society, whether categorised by income, by occupation, by educational attainment, by geographical location, by age, or by gender. (St. Clair 11)

That the fact of multiple readers, of multiple readerships with multiple “interpretive strategies,” was a source of anxiety for the Romantic author, and especially for Coleridge, has been the subject of much critical work. For example, reading the famous reference to the “multitudinous PUBLIC” in the *Biographia Literaria*—“all men being supposed to read, and all readers able to judge, the multitudinous PUBLIC, shaped into personal unity by the magic of abstraction, sits nominal despot on the throne of criticism” (I.42)—John Whale and Lucy Newlyn both emphasize the way the public thus conceived undermines

Coleridge's deepest beliefs; the public emerges, they argue, as a "false form of subjectivity...[whose] 'personal unity' is a mockery of the integrated, moral self" (Whale, *Imagination* 174), a "parodic version of the multeity-in-unity which was his personal creed" (Newlyn 55). Andrew Bennett pushes this reading further, describing the passage as a "paranoid caricature of the reading public" (*Romantic Poets* 44).

To these claims I would add that Coleridge's anxiety regarding the reading public is symptomatic of his concern over the possibility of universal communication, communication, that is, across societal divisions. A suggestion along these lines is offered by Kathryn Sutherland, who writes: "Faced with Coleridge's 'multitudinous PUBLIC', the author (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley) withdraws from the threatened instability of his discourse to the security of the ideal, the text-created reader" (40). According to such a reading, it is precisely the attraction of unimpeded communication that draws to Romantic author toward the "text-created reader." "Fears in Solitude" in particular has been discussed in terms of such a retreat toward the ideal, a reading which is seductive, perhaps, given the structure of the poem, which Mark Jones describes as "not a lyric disrupted by a political harangue in its middle but a harangue contained within lyric bookends" (98).⁵

I would argue, however, that the structure of the poem suggests something a good deal more complex than a simple retreat into nature and domesticity, into the security of a

⁵ By describing the opening and closing sections as "bookends," Jones suggests an agreement with Richard Cronin's claim that "'Fears in Solitude' ...[exhibits] an impulse to retreat into an isolated rural society and into domesticity" (Cronin, *Politics* 72). See also Laurence Lockridge's claim that "Even [as] 'Fears in Solitude' ...discusses the larger scene of warfare between England and France...[it] opens and closes in a country cottage suitable for 'solitary musings' and domestic affections (*Ethics* 105). That such a reading is normative is suggested by Simon Bainbridge: "The final verse paragraph [of 'Fears in Solitude'] is usually seen as a retreat to the private after the public strains of the poem's middle section" (76). Mark Canuel discusses more generally how "critics find Coleridge's poetry endorsing a retreat from politics" (106), listing by way of example several critics who have made this claim with specific reference to "Fears in Solitude."

“reader” who cannot or will not contest the speaker’s claims. In a manuscript note to “Fears in Solitude” Coleridge writes: “‘N.B. The above is perhaps not Poetry,—but rather a sort of middle thing between Poetry and Oratory—sermoni propria.’” Michael Simpson suggests, rightly I think, that “the text is not in fact able to become a middle thing and that it oscillates instead between the alleged extremes of poetry and oratory” (“Morning” 72). Such an oscillation is tied to Coleridge’s dialectic of belief, his (failed) belief in the possibility of “absolute judgement” pressing against his (unrealized) hope for universal accord.⁶ Read in this way, the structure of “Fears in Solitude” suggests both a “lyric disrupted by a political harangue” and “a harangue contained within lyric,” as the irreconcilability of the dialectic renders specious any argument about beginning and end.

The opening lines establish as a conceit of the poem the notion that within the articulations of the bodiless subject, of the pure voice, lies the capacity for unimpeded, universal communication:

A green and silent spot, amid the hills,
 A small and silent dell! O’er stiller place
 No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
 The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
 Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
 All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
 Which now blooms most profusely....

(1-7)

⁶ Michael John Kooy provides an impressive analysis of the poet’s historical awareness, arguing that “Coleridge, more than most contemporaries, reflected for many years upon the difficulties that arose in his own attempts to interpret historical knowledge (which appeared as a subjective aesthetic construct) in systematic terms (as the reflection of natural order)” (718).

The self-consciousness implied by the exclamation point at the end of the first sentence—the awareness, that is, that the view of the dell rouses emotion within the speaker himself—quickly gives way to objective description, as if within this mode of articulation lay an objectively universal perspective, a perspective accessible to all subjects. The position of the reader is thus precisely that of the speaker, a position from which it is possible to take in the entirety of the dell “amid the hills”: the reader, like the speaker, is bodiless and floating, transcendental.

The certainty of this conceit, and the position of speaker and reader alike, founder throughout the opening section. For example, the conceit is complicated by the turn at the end of line 7—“but the dell”—only to be restored in line 12:

but the dell,

Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate

As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,

When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,

The level sunshine glimmers with green light.

(7-11)

Peter Larkin has described these lines as suggesting “a perspective at the same level, or even a little below, the stalks themselves. It might be called a dell’s-eye view” (12). In this sense, there is an earthward trajectory, a purposive movement from the transcendental perspective to that of Arendt’s “earthbound creatures.” Coleridge staves off the conclusion of this movement, however, and returns us—speaker and reader alike—to a place above and outside the dell:

Oh! ‘tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!

Which all, methinks, would love....

(12-13)

By emphatically returning to the self-conscious voice, Coleridge brings us back to the conceit of the poem, back to the disembodied voice of universal communication. The conceit seems to solidify in the lines that follow, as the speaker becomes visible in the third-person, severing the bodied subject of the speaker as a “humble man...in his youthful years” from the bodiless voice of the poem:

Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
 The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
 Knew just so much of folly, as had made
 His early manhood more securely wise!
 Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
 While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
 The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
 And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
 Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame....

(13-21)

What follows, however, is the first explosion of the conceit, the moment when the limits of the subjective yet universal voice are exposed. As the speaker-object—the young Coleridge lying in the dell—“dreams of better worlds” (26), the speaker-subject begins to contrast his youthful dreams with his current concerns about England:

My God! It is a melancholy thing
 For such a man, who would in full fain preserve

His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
 For all his human brethren—O my God!
 It weighs upon the heart that he must think
 What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
 This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
 Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
 And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
 And undetermined conflict—even now,
 Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
 Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!

(29-40)

As the past and the present are pressed together—“even now,/Even now”—the speaker-subject becomes entangled with the speaker-object, until at last, the subject comes down to earth, entering the frame of the poem:

We have offended, Oh! my countrymen!
 We have offended very grievously,
 And been most tyrannous....

(41-43)

It is at this moment that the persistent wavering between the bodied and the bodiless, the material and the ideal, is resolved. That is, if throughout the first 40 lines the poem continually confronts the limits of its presumptions about universality, this confrontation finally culminates in the shift from “Poetry” to “Oratory.” The “thunder and the shout,” “fear and rage,” “Carnage and groans”—these demand a mode of address

that appeals to, rather than presupposes, a universal audience. This appeal is most visible in the anaphoric repetition of the first-person pronoun, “We” (59, 93, 103, 116), which labors to constitute out of the multiple voices of readers the nation as a whole, or, more precisely, to reconstitute the false unity of the nation—“this whole people...clamorous/ For war and bloodshed” (93-94)—as a true unity, that of universal brotherhood:

From east to west

A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
 The wretched plead against us; multitudes,
 Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
 Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
 Steamed up from Cairo’s swamps of pestilence,
 Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
 And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
 And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
 With slow perdition murders the whole man,
 His body and soul!

(43-53)

The syntactical doubling of Coleridge’s language (wherein the syntax of the line is brought into tension with the syntax of the sentence) suggests that the “multitudes” of line 45 are not simply multitudes of “The wretched” but also multitudes of “us,” a divided nation in the guise of a unified one. The “vices” of this nation of multitudes, moreover, threaten the unity of all “the sons of God,” dividing not only the “whole man” but also the whole *of* man into “body and soul.”

Though the poem's immediate concern is the sins of Coleridge's countrymen, for which they are about to be punished in the form of French invasion, this concern cannot be divorced from the ills brought on by mass readership:

We send our mandates for the certain death
 Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
 And women, that would groan to see a child
 Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
 The best amusement for our morning meal!

(103-7)

According to Simpson's deft reading of this scene, "in which women and children begin their day by reading about the end of someone else's" ("Morning" 71), "Boys and girls,/And women" sits in apposition to the "thousands and ten thousands" until the syntactic tension is relieved, that is until "Boys and girls,/And women" is revealed to be the subject of the verb "read." Building on this insight, which leads Simpson to conclude that the death of "thousands and ten thousands" suggests also the death of "Boys and girls,/And Women," we might note again Coleridge's syntactic doubling, which reveals a commentary upon the sheer number of readers and the problems caused by the "multitudinous PUBLIC."

Further, this anxiety about readerly diversity signals an uncertainty about the very status of language, which, debased, seems to have lost the potential to appeal to readers across antagonistic divides:

Oh! blasphemous! the book of life is made
 A superstitious instrument, on which

We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
 For all must swear—all and in every place,
 College and wharf, council and justice-court;
 All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
 Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
 The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
 All, all make up one scheme of perjury....

(70-78)

It is precisely the relationship between these subjects and the “book” (which replaced “Word” in an early draft and survived all later revisions) that constitutes their speech-acts as perjuries, indeed that brings the diversity of subjects—“the briber and the bribed,” “Merchant and lawyer,” etc. —into a “scheme” of perjurers (the literary connotations of “scheme”—which appear, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to have been stronger in the late-eighteenth century than perhaps they are now—further suggest a strong association between the sins of reading and the sins of the nation).

The obstacle to reconstituting the nation through address thus arises out of the problematic status of language that Coleridge identifies: to identify the English as “one scheme of perjury” is also to identify English as a language of perjury.

The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
 From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
 To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
 Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
 And technical in victories and defeats,

And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
 Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
 Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
 We join no feeling and attach no form!

(108-116)

The echoes between this passage and the “multitudinous PUBLIC” of the *Biographia Literaria* are striking: the “phraseman” is both “absolute” and absolutist, a “nominal despot”; the “mere abstractions” of a language debased are “shaped” like the public itself “by the magic of abstraction.” Just as there should be a unity of “body and soul” in man, just as there should be a genuine unity of the nation, so too should there be a unity of “feeling and . . . form” in language.

This uncertainty about language—which is also an uncertainty about the “multitudinous PUBLIC” who employs the language—thus complicates Coleridge’s appeal to the nation as a whole, which we see as the poem moves away from the imperatives that recur throughout the “political harangue” toward the softer jussive—

And oh! may we return
 Not with drunken triumph but with fear,
 Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
 So fierce a foe to frenzy!

(150-153)

—and, as Coleridge reintroduces, immediately thereafter, the “I”:

I have told,
 O Britons! O my brethren! I have told

Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.

Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed....

(153-156)

The self-reference here marks an awareness of the merely subjective universality of the speaker's articulations, and sheds light on the transition from the second section of the poem to the final "bookend." That is, just as the first section concludes by exposing the simple assumption of universalism, the second section concludes by exposing the impossibility of guaranteeing actual assent by means of position-taking within the cultural field.

As Paul Magnuson writes, by 1798 "Coleridge's name was infamous enough in Tory circles for him to become a major target of their satire" (205). With this in mind, Magnuson reads "Fears in Solitude" as "one of a number of public defenses...shaped by the charges that had been leveled against [Coleridge]" (206). Thus, when Coleridge addresses the construction of Britain's enemies within, "enemies/Even of their own country" (174-175), he readily acknowledges that he is perceived as just such an enemy:

Such have I been deemed—

But, O dear Britain! O mother Isle!

Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy

To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,

A husband, and a father!

(175-179)

That Coleridge has been singled out by his countrymen as an enemy—a suggestion that is heightened by the stanza break in the middle of line 175, which visually separates

“country” from “I”—is of importance not only because it casts the poem as a defense of the poet’s patriotism, but also because it casts doubt upon the universalizability of the poem as a position-taking. Coleridge finds himself in a double-bind: on the one hand, in order to justify his universal appeal to his countrymen, he must legitimize his position as an Englishman, a patriot, a Christian; on the other hand, by defending himself against the charges of being an enemy to his country, he must abandon the illusion of objectivity. To claim “absolute judgement,” the guarantee of universal agreement, is to risk taking on the absolutism of the “fluent phraseman,” to become, that is, the very thing that Coleridge criticizes throughout the poem’s second section. Put differently, the closing of the second section reveals that Coleridge’s “bitter truth” is, as Bourdieu would put it, “a stake in the struggle”; as such, it depends upon the fact of its contestability, its merely potentially universal status.

What is left for Coleridge, then, if he can find universal communicability neither outside the cultural field (in the solitude of the dell), nor within the public sphere, is a position located at the interstice between the public and the private. In the final strophe, the speaker is again situated alone in the dell:

Now farewell,
 Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!
 Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recalled,
 from bodings that have well nigh wearied me,
 I find myself upon the brow, and pause
 Startled! And after sojourning
 In such a quiet and surrounded nook,

This burst of prospect, here in the shadowy main,
 Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty
 Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
 And elmy fields seems like society....

(207-218)

In contrast to the speaker's position in the first strophe, however, here the speaker appears within the frame as the subject of articulation. The opening conceit, wherein universal communication is assumed, is no longer possible. Rather, the process of articulation is revealed as a process, a means of constituting universality. Yet this process is merely purposive, universal in form only; following on the second section, Coleridge is all too aware that a claim to universality cannot guarantee universal assent. Thus, far from retreating into a form of address, here to the dell—"O soft and silent spot!" (208), "O green and silent!" (228)—and to "beloved Stowey!" (221), that presumes an ideal "society" of "elmy fields," Stowey's "church-tower" and "four huge elms" (222), Coleridge sees only the possibility of society, the "burst of prospect" (both senses of "prospect," as an actual or a merely mental view of the future, were, the *OED* suggests, in common usage at the time of the poem's writing). Just as the first section ends with the collapse of present and past, so the poem closes with the collapse of present and future, as Coleridge looks forward and, in the poem's final words, "yearns for human kind" (232).

Yet the last lines of the poem are not the poem's final say: four years after the "Alarm of...Invasion," parts of "Fears in Solitude" appeared in the *Morning Post*. This republication is surprising, perhaps, given the fact that the poem is not only troubled by

its own readership, but also overtly critical of newspapers as well. For Simpson, the reappearance of the poem in 1802 attests to the fact that “the poem was at the outset so constitutively uncomfortable with itself that it could late accommodate itself to the Peace of Amiens and the historical diffusing of the poem’s topical anxiety” (“Morning” 71-72). I would add that the 1802 publication also marks a second attempt at claiming “absolute judgement”: returning to the cultural field of position-takings, “Fears in Solitude” renews its effort to guarantee assent by means of public address, perpetuating the dialectic between strategy and hope, yearning for a position of relative privilege.

It is this yearning, which might be characterized alternately by the hope of coming to terms or by the desire for “absolute judgement,” that constitutes the cultural field of Romantic-era England, as an aesthetic community in which contention exists not merely as a fact but as a necessity. The rise of the “multitudinous PUBLIC” is the condition of this yearning. Readerly contention, the context to which the Romantic author was inevitably bound and from which he could not retreat, meant that the presumption of universality was continually exposed as false. Yet the unmasking of universalist assumptions did not give way to aesthetic relativism, for to submit to relativism—“Every man has his own taste”—would mean to concede the arbitrariness not only of taste, but of readerly identity. Instead, the cultural assumption of “common taste” gave way to a belief in—and simultaneously a doubt about—the universalizability of art and judgment, the belief that everyone might agree with the claims of a specific individual or aggregate of readers.

But why was readerly identity so important? What was so crucial about one’s “interpretive strategies” that they must be defended as legitimate, accurate,

authoritative—worthy of universalization if not immediately universal? The answer, I want to suggest, is that readerly identity meant, for the Romantic reader, national identity, such that cultural membership signaled national membership. In this sense, Coleridge is but an extreme example of what was the case for all citizens of the reading nation, for, already deemed in some circles an enemy of the country, his stake in absolute judgment was precisely a stake in Englishness, his universalism a sign of his patriotism.

The nature of this “nationalistic universalism” is the topic of the next chapter. As a preliminary step toward understanding this somewhat paradoxical formulation I want to return briefly to the beginning of Coleridge’s “harangue.” In lines 43-53, Coleridge lists among the sins of the nation the bearing of “slavery” and “pangs” and England’s own “vices” to “distant tribes.” To repent fully, the nation must, according to Coleridge, join in the pleading of the wretched, groan with the multitudes against the very injustices the English have collectively committed. We have seen how the Britons’ inability to join with one another already represents an obstacle to this universal union, and how the status of this universality must therefore be merely potential. But there is yet another impediment, one which Coleridge does not point out directly:

Like a cloud that travels on,
 Steamed up from Cairo’s swamps of pestilence,
 Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth....

(47-49)

By the very act of naming “Cairo,” Coleridge seems to bracket it, single it out, exclude it from—even as it includes it within—the nameless, faceless “brotherhood” of humankind. Why? At the same time that Romantic universalism labors to include all of humanity and

to represent a “hope of coming to terms” across national boundaries, it must stave off the indeterminacy of national identity that absolute universality threatens. It is in this way that aesthetic universalism and orientalism form a unified project within the cultural field of Romantic-era England, as I hope will become clear.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NATION UNIVERSAL:
DE QUINCEY'S SYMPTOMATIC ENGLISHNESS

Our foreign report for this month is almost a blank. (*London Magazine*,
September 1821)

It seems the editors of *London Magazine* never knew quite what to do with the recurring column “Abstract of Foreign and Domestic Occurrences.” For some time it was included in the “Monthly Register,” alongside the agricultural report and commercial report, the list of births and the list of deaths. When in January 1822 the “Monthly Register” was moved to the back of the journal and paginated separately, the “Abstract” remained in the main section; and, in January 1823 it was included under the heading “The Miscellany.” Two issues later, it was omitted altogether “for want of room” (244), and the following month, April 1823, it was renamed the “View of Public Affairs.”

In some ways, “View” is a more appropriate description of the column, which never really achieved the kind of objectivity suggested by “Abstract.” Hence the first-person possessive “Our” in the passage quoted above, which reveals the subjectivity, or at least the subjective interests, of the report. Indeed, the “Abstract of Foreign and Domestic Occurrences” was always more of a dialogue between the international and national concerns of the editors—and of their readers (also implicated in the “Our”)—staged within the space of a few pages (usually 3 to 6). This dialogue reflected both an

effort to stabilize the opposition between these two categories, as if the foreign and domestic could be neatly distinguished from one another, and the inevitable relationship between the two. Thus, following the “almost...blank” foreign report of September 1821, the editors write, “If our foreign report is meagre, our chronicle of domestic occurrences presents a different character” (327). Whether it was a particularly newsy time in England or whether the brevity of the foreign report demanded a lengthier domestic report, it is clear that the foreign and the domestic are intimately bound.

That same month the *London Magazine* published the first installment of De Quincey's “Confessions of an English Opium-Eater,” a text that, I argue below, narrates this relationship via its concerns over national identity.¹ In offering his narrative, De Quincey brings together two aspects of the rise of English nationalism in the nineteenth century, (1) the way print culture makes possible a sense of shared identity among English readers, and (2) how England defines itself against its others, particularly France and the Orient.² As I suggest, De Quincey thus reveals the necessity of a particular other, who is situated within the nation yet beyond the time-space of the reader, to the “imagined community” of the reading nation. This other is De Quincey himself, the author/protagonist of the “Confessions” whose Englishness and opium-eating mark him as a cultural hybrid of East and West.

¹ The first installment of the essay was so strongly received that the second installment appeared at the front of the next issue, prefaced by a note from the editors “calling the attention of our readers to the deep, eloquent, and masterly paper which stands first in our present Number” (351).

² For an account of English identity prior to this moment, see Newman 1-48; for a more general account of the cultural precursors to nationalism, see Anderson 36.

I. Agony and antagonism

The word *literature*...is sometimes employed as a collective designation for all that communicates with the Public by means of the Press: and in this sense the literature of a nation is no more than the total amount of its' [sic] books. But in the philosophic use of the word, literature denotes one (and the most important) of the Fine Arts. (De Quincey, "On the *London Magazine*")³

According to Benedict Anderson's argument in *Imagined Communities*, print-capitalism enabled subjects to conceive of other citizens as existing in simultaneity, reading the same newspapers and, more relevant to a study of De Quincey, magazines. As a regular contributor not only to *London Magazine*, but also to *Blackwood's*, *Tait's*, and others, De Quincey participated in this process of imaginative nation-building, situating his readers within the unified time-space of the nation. At a glance, he seems to reject his own role as a popular writer, suspicious of what "communicates with the Public." Yet the two senses of "literature" articulated in "On the *London Magazine*" are not merely opposed for De Quincey, and indeed their being bound together by the word "literature" itself is revealing. That is, De Quincey seems to suggest that the potential for literature to create an imagined community lies in both its being collectively read and in its aesthetic value, its appeal to the imagination.⁴

The relationship between De Quincey and the reading public—like that between

³ Published in Chilcott, 13-14. "On the *London Magazine*" was written to commemorate the anniversary of the titular magazine, though never published.

⁴ On the importance of a Romantic understanding of the imagination to Anderson's "imagined communities," see Redfield, who goes as far to suggest that "Anderson writes as a late Romantic" (61).

Coleridge and the public—is usually seen as a troubled one. Josephine McDonagh, for example, shows how “De Quincey repeatedly worried about the massive expansion of printing and the extended circulation of...printed material that took place in the first half of the nineteenth century” (67), and Cian Duffy argues that the perceived threat of this expansion is not merely a matter of readership but also of authorship. Discussing De Quincey’s distinction between “Literature of Knowledge” and “Literature of Power” (also first presented in the pages of the *London*), Duffy writes: “De Quincey...recognizes that the threat to the ‘Literature of Power’ does not stem solely from a middle-class revolution in *reading*. Rather, the revolution is being facilitated by...*authors*... complicit—whether by choice or from necessity—with the ‘obtrusive’ commercialism of the marketplace” (17).

Yet, perhaps De Quincey might be seen as a willing participant in the literature industry, complicit at least insofar as complicity serves his nationalist ends. For while De Quincey is often read with an eye for his anti-popular Toryism and an attitude toward the middle-class that is at best anxious and at worst antipathetic (Duffy 8), this attitude was itself disseminated publicly in the pages of such conservative publications as *Blackwood’s*, in opposition to which the Whiggish *London Magazine* was founded.⁵ Further, that he published widely in both liberal and conservative magazines might suggest not simply financial necessity, but also, as Robert Morrison has noted, political ambivalence: “Though De Quincey often portrayed himself as a true-born Englishman, he spent much of his time among people disenfranchised by the political system he was often bent on affirming, while his life and ideas were permeated by defiance and

⁵ For discussions of De Quincey, Toryism, and the working-class, see for example, McDonagh, Barrell, and Plotz (76-96). On the politics of the *London Magazine*, see Bauer’s study, *The London Magazine, 1820-29*, especially Chapter 1.

subversion” (132).

Morrison’s argument is useful because it calls attention to De Quincey’s understanding of the nation, which revises somewhat Anderson’s model. Where Anderson emphasizes notions of “political love” (143) and kinship—employing what Marc Redfield describes as a “rhetoric of pathos” (69)—De Quincey sees the imagined community is a space of antagonism, which transcends the particularity of context and defines all cultural totalities. In “On the Political Parties of Modern England,” he thus writes: “The two parties have acted as any other confederations of men in ancient history, or in modern continental history; that is, they have opposed each other as *Ins* and *Outs*, as men having power against men in quest of power,—parties which would have existed no less had Whig and Tory never been heard of” (*Works* IX.362); and, he continues, “Even the Regency question...was debated on grounds aloof from Whiggism or Toryism” (*Works* IX.363). More important than party affiliation, it seems, is party opposition.

That he wrote for both Tories and Whigs affirms De Quincey’s status as both an *agonist*, a player within the field of cultural production, and an *antagonist*, one who brings into tension the “Ins” and “Outs” by means of writing (both of these positions exist also in relation to his role as the *protagonist* of the “Confessions,” as I discuss below). De Quincey is a kind of legislator, reminiscent of Shelley’s famous description of the poet, but with a crucial difference: the “law” he proposes and carries forth is what he calls the “law of antagonism”: “For it may be observed, generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other” (“Confessions” 75).

By describing De Quincey as an antagonist, I mean to recall a moment from

“Kant’s Idea of a Universal History on a Cosmopolitical Plan,” which De Quincey translated and published in the *London* in October 1824. The fourth proposition of Kant’s plan reads: “*The means which Nature employs to bring about the development of all the tendencies she has laid in Man is the antagonism of these tendencies in the social state—no farther, however, than to the point at which this antagonism becomes the cause of social arrangements founded in law*” (*Works* IX.432). De Quincey seems to have subscribed to Kant’s teleological model, perpetually confronting each readership with the other, creating opposition for a higher end, i.e. for the good of the nation. Exhibiting what Kant calls “the *unsocial sociability* of man,—that is, a tendency to enter the social state, combined with a perpetual resistance to that tendency which is continually threatening to dissolve it” (*ibid*), De Quincey continually enters the public sphere as a cultural conversant and resists that very sphere in a manner that at once disrupts and constitutes its cohesion.

Further, while the audience for the *London* was primarily upper- and middle-class—as Jon Klancher notes, “[e]ven if workingmen had joined together to buy a copy [of journals such as *London Magazine*]...such reading matter would have cost a member of the ‘lower orders’ an unthinkable full day’s pay” (*Making* 50)—De Quincey includes the working-class in his nation as participants in the social antagonism that forms the basis of the imagined community. That is, De Quincey includes under the category of the “reader” even those who are not the audience of the *London*. In his autobiography, De Quincey addresses the status of the reading public, railing against the exclusivity of the public library. The narrative begins with a different complaint: visiting St. Paul’s, De Quincey is pestered by various “showmen,” who would, for a price, grant access to

different parts of the cathedral. Their solicitations, according to De Quincey, trouble “the silence and sanctity of the place” (*Works* I.187). On the one hand, he scorns the “molestation of *showmen*, with their imperfect knowledge and their vulgar sentiment” (187-8); on the other hand, he admits:

Certainly I nor any man can have a right to expect that the poor men who attended us should give up their time for nothing, or even to be angry with them for a sort of persecution, on the degree of which possibly might depend the comfort of their own families. Thoughts of famishing children at home leave little room for nice regards of delicacies abroad. The individuals, therefore, might or might not be blameable. But in any case the system is palpably wrong. The nation is entitled to a free enjoyment of its own public monuments.... (187)

His “persecution” by the showmen, it seems, is justified by the “persecution” of the showmen by the system. Put differently, the nation “entitled to a free enjoyment of its...monuments” includes, apparently the workers and their “famishing children at home.”

De Quincey goes on to discuss another “public monument,” from which free access is denied, the public library: “[T]he whole funds for supporting the proper offices attached to a library...presume a *public* in the daily use of books, else they are superfluous, [yet] have been applied to the creation of lazy sinecures in behalf of persons expressly charged with the care of shutting out the public” (*Works* I.188). Ultimately the problem of inclusion and exclusion is a class problem, where the “public” is excluded by overpaid “sinecures.” Again, while the workers are not named as part of the reading

public, just as the showmen are not named as part of the nation but only implied as such by their common relationship to the “system”—they are silently included. And, importantly, the public monument in question is not simply the library, but also, metonymically, the “Books and MSS.” (*Works* I.188) it collects.

Thus, when, throughout the “Confessions,” De Quincey invokes the reader, he invokes not an ideal audience, but a diverse and divided nation, a nation, which he actively diversifies and divides. De Quincey begins, “I here present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period of my life” (1). The reader is seemingly constituted as a gentleman-subject.⁶ Yet, De Quincey’s persistent deferential gestures are undermined by subtle recurring criticisms of the upper classes. For example, by way of introducing the narrative of his experience with one landlady, “a lady’s maid, or a nurse, in the family of the Bishop of——” (12), De Quincey comments: “I know not whether my reader may have remarked, but *I* have often remarked, that the proudest class of people in England (or at any rate, the class whose pride is most apparent) are the families of bishops” (12). As opposed to those nobles whose names—“Sackville, Manners, Fitzroy, Paulet, Cavendish” (12), *etc.*—are sign enough of their status, bishops’ families carry themselves in a manner of pretension: “[P]ride, if not of deeper root in such families, appears, at least, more on the surface of their manners. This spirit of manners naturally communicates itself to their domestics, and other dependants”(12). From one perspective De Quincey offers a distinctly Tory criticism of the pretensions of an aspiring middle-class (a criticism at which Whig readers might guiltily chuckle), which trickle down to the ranks of the laborers. At the same time, he parenthetically adds that these pretensions may only be “the most apparent” in their manners, as if to suggest that excess

⁶ On this point see John Whale’s “In a Stranger’s Ear.”

of pride is merely less visible among the nobility (a suggestion at which Whig readers might guiltlessly nod). In this sense De Quincey's imagined community of readers consists of both those to whom the narrative is politely addressed and those who will see the irony in his politeness.

Similarly, early in the narrative De Quincey, apologizing for the indelicacy of his subject matter, writes, "Nothing...is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars, and tearing away that 'decent drapery', which time, or indulgence to human frailty, may have drawn over them" (1). That the moral corruption offensive to English feelings is class-coded is clear from De Quincey's conclusion that those who are unpossessed of such feelings—those who freely display their "moral ulcers" and "scars" in confessional narrative—are "demireps, adventurers, and swindlers" (1). Yet the difference between the genteel reader and the demirep, *et al*, is far from essential; it is simply a matter of "decent drapery," which itself arises from practiced self-censorship, "indulgence to human [i.e. English] frailty."

That De Quincey alludes to Burke in his ironic appeal to decency may thus seem, as Alina Clej puts it, "disingenuous" (167). In his "Reflections on the Revolution in France," Burke famously writes:

All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to

be rudely torn off. All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion. (67)

De Quincey agrees with Burke that decency is merely a cover for our “naked, shivering nature,” but he mobilizes the image toward a different end. More precisely, he exposes the irony of Burke’s appeal to a universal human condition as a means of formulating an anti-republican argument. In doing so, De Quincey foregrounds the function of “decent drapery” as “fashionable apparel” (Clej 167), a luxury of the upper classes.

From the outset, then, De Quincey dismantles the Englishness of the upper classes. He identifies the willful ignorance that accompanies “English feelings,” which ultimately look more like English manners, a drapery of decency—or as he calls it elsewhere in the “Confessions,” a “thick...curtain of manners” (28)—that protects the illusion of distance between the “*Ins*” and “*Outs*.” In contrast to the cosmetic nobility of manners (and here we might note that one of the names that reveals “high birth” is, in fact, “Manners”) is the nobility of compassion and charity, which De Quincey locates within the working class, specifically within one of “those female peripatetics... technically called Street walkers” (20-1), Ann:

[Y]et no! let me not class thee, Oh noble minded Ann——, with that order of women; let me find, if possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion, ministering to my necessities when all the world had forsaken me, I owe it that I am at this

time alive. (21)

Unlike that of the Bishop of——, the Sackvilles, and the Manners, Ann's nobility is essential, innate, revealed in action rather than attitude. The compassion of "noble minded Ann" demands that she be given a gentler name, that she belong, "if possible," to a more genteel order. Yet this is impossible. He has no other name than Ann for her, no surname to reflect her rank: "She had either never told me, or...I had forgotten, her surname" (27). She is beyond "English justice [that] would...avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property" (21). She does not receive the compassion she offers the narrator, for "the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground; not obvious or readily accessible to poor houseless wanderers; and...the outside air and frame-work of London society is harsh, cruel, and repulsive" (21).

In "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," De Quincey distinguishes between "a sympathy of comprehension, by which we enter into [another's] feelings, and are made to understand them" and "a sympathy of pity or approbation," or "sympathy *with* another" and "sympathy *for* another" (83). The latter use of "sympathy" as "a mere synonyme of the word *pity*" he considers an abuse of the word, a "monstrous barbarism" (83n.1), which is tantamount to saying it is un-English.⁷ The former use, which Ann's kindness exhibits, is, unfortunately, also un-English, though for a different reason. That is, De Quincey suggests in the "Confessions" that the sympathy of comprehension is ultimately incommunicable to a reading nation. Describing his suffering in poverty, and again exploiting the conceit of politeness, he writes:

And now began the latter and fiercer stages of my long-sufferings; without

⁷ On this passage in the Macbeth essay, see Krishnan 66.

using a disproportionate expression, my agony. [...] I would not needlessly harass my reader's feelings, by a detail of all that I endured: for extremities such as these, under any circumstances heaviest misconduct or guilt, cannot be contemplated, even in description, without a rueful pity that is painful to the natural goodness of the human heart. (16)

De Quincey glosses over his "agony" out of regard for the reader's "feelings," shielding the reader from his ulcers and scars and avoiding the inevitable dissolution of the sympathy of comprehension into mere pity.

If the promise of reading is its potential to imagine a national community, the problem with reading, the challenge it must overcome, is the relative anonymity of the national subject, who is, in the end, a stranger among strangers, incapable, in the absence of intimacy, of entering into another's feelings. The subject, as Anderson puts it, "will never know most of [his] fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them" (6). For De Quincey, this anonymity translates into isolation—to be part of the masses is to be deeply alienated. The "harsh, cruel, and repulsive" framework of London is also the framework of collective reading, the framework of the nation. It is thus revealing that De Quincey titles a section of his autobiography, "The Nation of London." Just as, in "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," De Quincey associates the failures of "London charity" with those of "English justice," he suggests in his later piece a synecdochic relationship between city and nation.

"The Nation of London" begins pleasantly enough: "It was a most heavenly day in May of the year (1800) when I first beheld and first entered this mighty wilderness, the city—no, not the city, but the nation—of London" (*Works* I.178); quickly, however, the

young De Quincey finds himself alone:

No man ever was left to himself for the first time in the streets, as yet unknown, of London, but he must have been saddened and mortified, perhaps terrified, by the sense of desertion and utter loneliness which belong to his situation. No loneliness can be like that which weighs upon the heart in the centre of faces never ending, without voice or utterance for him; eyes innumerable, that have "no speculation" in their orbs which *he* can understand; and hurrying figures of men and women weaving to and fro, with no apparent purposes intelligible to a stranger, seeming like a mask of maniacs, or, oftentimes, like a pageant of phantoms. (*Works* I.182)

Importantly, it is not that De Quincey imagines no community here, but the community he imagines is a fellowship of strangers, a "pageant of phantoms"; indeed it is a pageant with whom he marches: confronted with the abstractness of "hurrying figures," the subject himself is negated, becoming "No man," an anonymous third-person subtracted even as he is identified. When, long after this event from De Quincey's childhood takes place, he publishes the "Confessions" under the name "XYZ," perhaps he is not simply following the conventions of the literary magazine, but also identifying his status as member of the faceless nation, a familiar stranger, as it were, anonymously English.

If sympathy of comprehension is, under such conditions, unavailable to author and audience alike, a different kind of English "feeling," divorced from both the impossible ideal of this sympathy and the barbarity of genteel pity, emerges in De Quincey's "Confessions" as a means of unifying the nation. As I show below, De

Quincey moves from *pathos* to *aesthesis*, from emotion to sense, and in this shift he organizes the nation into an aesthetic community.

II. The other at home.

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them...has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. (Anderson 7)

A few pages before the first installment of the “Confessions,” there appeared an essay titled “English Eating,” a whimsical look at the history of the monarchs' diets—needless to say, opium was never on the menu. In the absence of a lengthy foreign report in the “Abstract of Foreign and Domestic Occurrences,” then, readers were treated to the exoticness of an Englishman who had consumed the East and lived to tell. They are allowed to indulge as readers, as De Quincey puns, without indulging in opium: “Courteous, and, I hope, indulgent reader (for all *my* readers must be indulgent ones, or else, I fear, I shall shock them too much to count on their courtesy), having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards” (50). The general fascination with De Quincey as other is revealed in contemporary reviews of the “Confessions,” which included the descriptions “‘singular,’ ‘curious,’ and ‘strange’” (North 7).

Anderson’s thesis on the limits of the nation is much in line with accounts of the rise of English national identity that attend to the opposition between England and its others. As critics have shown, the wars with France in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries helped define the unity of Great Britain (Colley) and contributed to

the rise of nationalist sentiment (Newman); each of these provided the English a sense of self, both as a nation and as part of Britain. Eva-Lynn Alicia Jagoe has read the opposition to France as particularly important to De Quincey's sense of the nation: "This European other—more specifically, the French against whom England waged wars from 1793-1815—is definitionally opposed, and thus foundational, to De Quincey's sense of Englishness" (23-4).

Reading De Quincey's generic claims about English autobiography, Rajani Sudan draws a connection between the French other and the Orient, noting that, "opium conjures up an image of the 'Orient' that De *Quincey* commandeers to make his own, not unlike the way in which his putative claims to mastery of the confessional genre mark, for him, the cultural eminence of England over France" (379). Indeed the importance of the East to England's sense of self has been a critical commonplace since before, but especially after, Said's *Orientalism*. A more complicated model of the function of the Orient in defining De Quincey's English identity is Barrell's "this/that/the Other," in which "what at first seems 'other' can be made over to the side of the self—to a subordinate position on that side—only so long as a new... 'other' is constituted to fill the discursive space that has thus been evacuated" (10). Employing Derridean terminology, and nodding to Spivak's use of Derrida specifically, Barrell thus describes the other as "a continually reinvented third term which acknowledges that whenever two things have been 'put together' something else has been pushed aside" (10).

Barrell employs this model to discuss different aspects of De Quincey and his work. "This" is the upper class, "that" the lower class, and "the other" the East; "this" is England, "that" the Near East, which is represented by the opium De Quincey ingests in

order to “inoculate” himself against the horrors of “the other”—the Far East. In the latter case, that the inoculation never works—“[i]t never *immunises* against...the East” (16)—is evident from De Quincey’s recurring nightmares of the Orient and suggests that the system of uniting “this” and “that” is always incomplete. We might thus say—though Barrell never extrapolates in this manner—that the union of the classes, or of English readers more generally, is also an unfinished project, as the East continually fails to consolidate the English into a national community. Hence the use of the qualifier “it seems” in the passage in which De Quincey differentiates the English opium-eater from the Turk: “Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on logs of wood as stupid as themselves” (*Confessions* 44), De Quincey writes, also qualifying their torpor as “supposed” (43) and “ascribed” (44). For Filiz Turhan, such qualifiers “distance the image from De Quincey’s immediate experience to such a degree as to make them seem...beyond contempt” (188). As I see it, they also reflect the necessary failure of the orientalist to fully reify the alterity of the East, the failure, that is, to objectively realize within the cultural imaginary the subjective claims to essential difference.

How, then, is the nation imagined as anything but a fragmented structure, and what keeps this structure relatively autonomous, that is, distinct from other cultural formations? For De Quincey, the solution lies in a “this/that/the other” framework that defies somewhat the geopolitics of England/Near East/Far East that Barrell identifies: “This”—or, more precisely, “these”—refers to the English reading public, which is plural in nature, its internal antagonisms never fully reconciled, and “that” is that which lies beyond the borders of the imagined community. What they share is the *illusion* of

cultural purity, essential “this-ness” and “that-ness,” against which De Quincey positions his own hybrid identity. While Barrell recognizes De Quincey’s hybridity (18), he does not conceive of it as radically differentiated from both Englishness and Easternness. By my reading, the difference between England and the East is a matter of “seeming,” a perpetually qualified distinction between self and other that aspires to essential difference; the difference between both of these and De Quincey is a matter of “feeling”: neither the English reader nor the statue-like Turk *feels* like De Quincey.

“Feeling” in this sense is aesthetic rather than pathetic (for in their shared antipathy toward the torpid Turks, the reader and author are perhaps more alike than unlike); it is, in Adorno’s (Kantian) sense of the word, “taste”:

Taste is not defined in Aristotelian fashion by sympathy and fear, the affects produced in the viewer. [...] Aesthetic feeling is not the feeling that is aroused. It is astonishment vis-à-vis what is beheld rather than vis-à-vis what it is about; it is being overwhelmed by what is aconceptual yet determinate, not the subjective affect released...and not a reflex of the observer. (164)

As is typical with Adorno, we learn more from the negative formulation than from the positive one; what “aesthetic feeling” *is not* is “sympathy,” “affect,” or “reflex.” It is the feeling of difference, the experience of something that cannot quite be conceptualized. For De Quincey, the aesthetic feeling of the imagined community emerges not simply out of the simultaneous act of reading, but also from the difference between the space-time of aesthetic experience—reading—and De Quincey’s own subjective space-time, which is dramatized in his opium dreams:

The sense of space, and in the end, the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c. were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time; I sometimes seemed to have lived for 70 or 100 years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium passed in that time, or...of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience. (68)

The distortions of space and time reinforce the normal “proportions” of the reader’s space-time. And yet, they cannot establish sympathy of comprehension: “proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive” are also unfit for cognitive understanding, as is “duration...beyond the limits of any human experience”; they are “unutterable.” Here De Quincey reflects his indebtedness to the Kantian sublime, suggesting that the subjective experience of the vast and powerful is overwhelming beyond words. At the same time, for De Quincey as for Kant, articulation is possible when mediated by reason, which allows the subject to frame that which exceeds the imagination. Thus, when De Quincey interjects into the description his own distanced reflection, “This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time,” when he qualifies his subjective experience as one that “seemed” infinitely long, he communicates what cannot be uttered, representing what cannot be re-presented.

“The Sublime occurs,” according to Charles Rzepka’s reading of De Quincey, “at that moment when textual immersion and alienated self-dilation and projection are intensified to an absolute degree. [...] The Sublime, in short, is the reader’s catastrophic

experience of the *sublimation* of his own temporal and material act of reading, his own historicity” (52). Along these lines we might note that, by continually interjecting, De Quincey delays the sublimation of the reader’s self-conscious present. Put differently, in the gap between reason and imagination lies the reader’s experience of De Quincey’s otherness.

De Quincey thus exploits the autobiographical genre, playing on his dual role as narrator and protagonist. He moves the distortions of the opium-eating protagonist into the narrative structure, where they can be experienced aesthetically, resulting in a text that Nicoletta Pireddu describes as “polyphonic.” Referring to De Quincey’s apostrophic address, “eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath” (49), Pireddu writes, “[T]he rhetoric of opium speaking in unison with the logic of rationality calls attention to the multiple voices that dramatize madness in the text” (271).⁸ Importantly, these different voices suggest different temporalities, the rational voice bound to the public “empty time” of the nation, the readerly present, and “the rhetoric of opium” opening up a less stable temporal order that disrupts the other: “Sometimes I speak in the present,” De Quincey notes in a moment of self-reflection, “sometimes in the past tense. [...] Much has been omitted. I could not, without effort, constrain myself to the task of either recalling, or constructing into a regular narrative, the whole burthen of horrors which lies upon my brain” (62).

Discussing the distinction between the subject of a proposition and the subject of enunciation, Homi Bhabha argues, “[T]he disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces

⁸ On the relationship between the effect of opium on the protagonist and its effect on the narrative, see also Perry: “What do we make of narrative structure in a text which consistently undermines the validity of interpretative ordering? The reader of De Quincey’s autobiographical writings is always faced with some version of this question” (809).

the narrative of the Western nation which Benedict Anderson...describes as being written in homogeneous, serial time” (37). Yet it is precisely this displacement that organizes the nation into a totality. Faced with a temporal order that is representable only in the gaps of rational discourse, the reading public “senses” itself as an aesthetic community, becoming aware of a past that haunts the present—“there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind” (69) writes De Quincey—and a future prophetically introduced yet unrealized in the text: “I place myself at a distance of fifteen or twenty years ahead of this time, and suppose myself writing to those who will be interested about me hereafter...” (62).

This sense of difference is represented spatially in De Quincey’s narrative as well. Invoking the reader’s imaginative powers, he writes:

Paint me, then, a room of seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. [...] Make it populous with books: and furthermore, paint me a good fire.... And, near the fire, paint me a tea-table...and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*; for I usually drink tea from eight o’clock at night to four o’clock in the morning. (60)

The proportions distorted in the dreams of the opium-eater are here given with detailed precision, suggesting that author and reader alike are in the realm of reason and universal communication. Yet the difference between the reader and the narrator is foregrounded by the basic conceit of the passage, namely that the reader’s imagination is contingent upon that of the narrator. The space outside the scene is thus divided rather than

universal. A sort of *mise en abyme*, the space is constructed as a series of frames, the author figuring the reader figuring the scene. That the reader must stop and consider just what it would mean to paint an “eternal tea-pot” only emphasizes the disjunction between his sphere and that of the narrator, creating a tension that is playfully relieved when the narrative shifts back to the familiar and imaginable realm of clock-time.

In this sense De Quincey’s model of the nation is constituted by a fundamental paradox, namely that the particularity of English identity depends up the universality of the aesthetic. This nationalized universality is constituted by the text, popularly disseminated, but also contingent upon a fundamental exclusion. By positioning himself both inside and outside the time-space of the nation, De Quincey sacrifices himself for the good of the reader, for the good of England. That is, he perpetually splits from himself, enabling the unity of English audience.

By raising this argument I mean to rethink the more obvious conclusion that Englishness is simply opposed to Easternness, which is embodied by the Malay-visitor: “One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains, I cannot conjecture” (55). The Malay enters *ab nihilo* as a strange contrast, a lone figure against a backdrop of “English mountains”—indeed, continuing the rhetoric of visibility, De Quincey suggests that he introduces the Malay not only because he returns in the later dream-narrative but also because the figure “assisted to frame” the “picturesque exhibition” of the scene (57).

Despite his cultural difference, however, the Malay comes to share more in common with the English than is at first revealed. The initial moment of contact occurs between De Quincey’s servant, a “young girl born and bred amongst the mountains,”

those mountains already established as English ones, and the Malay: “as it turned out, that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent of hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulph fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any” (56). The “gulph” between cultures—again we might note the use of the qualifiers “seemed”—is “bridged” by ignorance, by the shared lack of knowledge between the servant and the Malay. Against these two, De Quincey positions himself, a rather ineffective translator—“I addressed him in some lines from the Iliad; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one” (57)—who nevertheless is not left dumb. That he communicates by recalling the Iliad is suggestive not only because of the geographical implications of Greece to which De Quincey alludes, but also because of its temporal implications: where the Malay and the servant inhabit the same time-space, De Quincey travels back, as it were, to recall an ancient epic.

Something else is made visible by reconfiguring, as I have tried to do, the “this/that/the other” structure of the narrative to suggest that England and its “that” are opposed the otherness of De Quincey. For if the nation is constituted aesthetically by its difference from De Quincey, what happens to those others—the Malay, the “torpid Turk,” etc.—who, when brought together with the “this” of the English audience, inhabit the same time-space of the reader? That is, how does the universality of judgment negotiate the presence of other subjects? Conveniently, these others disappear: “I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the paradise of opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But indeed, I honour the Barbarian too much by supposing them capable of any pleasure approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman”

(45). Here De Quincey introduces a strategy of foreclosure, a means of displacing the other from the subjective field. As I show in the chapter that follows, this strategy lies at the heart of the orientalist representation in the Romantic era. For what De Quincey encounters in constructing the nation as a community of readers bound together by shared space and shared time, namely the ideological necessity of foreclosing the other from this time-space of aesthetic subjectivity, Shelley encounters in his cosmopolitan vision.

CHAPTER THREE: FRAMING ROMANTICISM:
ROBERTS, SHELLEY, AND THE SUBLIMITY OF THE OTHER

I use the notion of strategy simply to identify the problem every writer of the Orient has faced: how to get hold of it, how to approach it, how not to be defeated or overwhelmed by its *sublimity*, its scope, its awful dimensions. (Said 20, my italics)

There is a distinctly modern sensibility to Edward Said's understanding of the sublime. For, unless he means that the Orient is of sublime and "awful dimensions" *per se*— a reading incompatible with his emphasis on Orientalism as discourse, as knowledge-production—Said seems to suggest that the site of sublimity is not the object itself, but the subject. More specifically, sublimity is represented as the subjective experience of awe, of being defeated or overwhelmed. This, of course, was Kant's contribution to the discourse of the sublime. Moving from his untheorized, pre-critical "observations" on beauty and sublimity in his 1764 *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* toward a systematic investigation of the conditions of their experience in the third *Critique*, Kant reconceived aesthetic philosophy's object of analysis, unbracketing the subjective processes of judgment, the discussion of which he sets aside in his earlier work.

Indeed, the rise of modern Orientalism coincides with the rise of modern aesthetics in the late eighteenth century, and if it is true that "every writer of the Orient"

has confronted the sublimity of the East, it is also true that the modern Orientalist, unlike his or her predecessors, did so with a particular vocabulary and conceptual framework derived from aesthetic discourse. The vocabulary is that of the sublime, which takes on a radical new meaning in the Romantic era; the framework, I want to suggest, is precisely that of “frame-work,” wherein the sublime, amorphous limitlessness of the East is rationalized, brought into the realm of the knowable.

Put differently, “framing,” which Gilles Deleuze’s describes as “*the determination of a closed system, a relatively closed system which includes everything which is present in the image—sets, characters, and props*” (12), is a means of containment, a strategic response to the presumed sublimity of the East. In this sense, the aesthetics of framing is akin to the subject’s response to the sublime in nature, as described by Kant: “we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar commonplace, and discover within us a power of resistance” (*CJ* 111).¹ Kant’s spatial image, in which transcendence means literally rising “above the height of vulgar commonplace,” is echoed in Said’s description of “*positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (Said 7, italics in original). The sublime Other, we might thus say, is positioned at an unthreatening distance from the Western subject.

Or, more precisely, at a distance from a universal position of observation that is

¹ Deleuze writes that the frame “can be conceived in two ways, mathematically or dynamically: either as preliminary to the existence of the bodies whose essence they fix, or going as far as the power of the existing bodies go” (13). While he does not refer explicitly to Kant in his theory of framing, there can be no mistaking the tacit invocation. Further, by distinguishing two kinds of frame using the same terminology—“mathematical” and “dynamic”—that Kant uses to categorize the modes of the sublime, Deleuze draws a relationship between the frame and sublimity that also unites philosophical aesthetics with practical aesthetics, theory with art.

nevertheless culturally coded, a position that is once universal and Western. At once a position of seeing and constructing the other, the status of this observer is captured in perhaps the most famous Romantic “frame”:

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(“The Tyger” 23-4)

Earlier manuscript drafts of Blake’s lines asked “What immortal hand & eye/Dare frame...,” which suggests not two different modes of framing—i.e. the manual and the visual—but rather two parts of the creator working in conjunction to “frame” the beast. When Blake separates the two, he suggests two distinct creative functions. As Steven Shaviro notes: “To frame/make usually refers to the process of bringing something into being; whereas to frame/delimit is to define, confine, or appropriate that which already exists. In ‘The Tyger,’ the act of the creator is [thus] deeply equivocal” (238). Indeed, this equivocation—almost literally a “simultaneous vocation”—calls into question the category of the “creator” altogether. For the subject here exists between creator and spectator, both prior to and after the fact of creation. This subject position, I would suggest, is that of the Romantic observer.

In what follows I attend to the figure of the observer as it is developed in the work of David Roberts, where the distance between the observer and the observed is radically divided—and here I speak metaphorically as well as literally—by the “frame,” which establishes the other not only “over there” but also “within.” Indeed, the Orient in

Roberts's works is multiply framed, narratively, visually, and imaginatively. As I hope to show, what is consistent across each of these frames is their strategy of containment, their way of constructing the other by means of spatial delimitation. Bearing in mind the multivalence of "framing" in Roberts's work, I then turn to Percy Shelley's *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude*, which casts the aesthetics of framing in ethical terms, and suggest by way of conclusion that Shelley's poem reveals the ideological function of the frame, namely its simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Eastern subjects from the universal field of judging subjects, that is from the very category of the universal.

I. "Introducing... 'the Egyptian'": Roberts, Kant, and the Romantic Observer

When there was no dinner, [Roberts's] father gave him a penny for bread, but the coin was spent instead on getting a book from the village library, 'The Arabian Nights' and 'Robinson Crusoe' being special favourites.

(Quigley 5)

For most nineteenth-century audiences, the Orient came in the form of narrative. That is to say, the Orient came framed, mediated just as the stories of *The Arabian Nights* that delighted Roberts are mediated by Scheherazade. To represent the East in the arts, as Roberts would do, thus meant to reproduce inherited frames and frameworks.

Indeed, well before he traveled to the Middle East in 1839, Roberts made a career out of framing the Orient for British audiences. As "one of the dominant scene-painters of the Romantic theater" (Baumgarten 130), he painted Oriental backdrops for, among

others, C.E. Roberts's opera *The Fall of Algiers* and William Dimond's *Abon Hassan*.² And in 1829 the most famous of Roberts's early paintings debuted at the Suffolk Street Gallery: *The Departure of the Israelites from Egypt* (fig. 3) shows countless figures dwarfed by the buildings that frame the scene and lead to a background of, as Katherine Sim puts it, "rather a lot of pyramids, grouped behind some building that looks not unlike the Colosseum...[which] seem to have a steeper, sharper angle than they should" (48).

The Departure of the Israelites is an instructive piece for a number of reasons. In the first place, it reveals the vision of the East that Roberts had received prior to his travels, a vision of awe and majesty, vastness—sublimity. As the painting moves the eye from the architectural frames in the foreground toward the background of too-steep pyramids whose frames disappear into infinity, the scene suggests only the *departure* of the Israelites, their movement from a particular, named place toward an uncertain future. There is a sense of religious reverence in this scene of Biblical unfolding, a sense that Roberts would take with him to Cairo years later and describe in his journal:

At mid-day or noon prayers, all the camels, as well as the worshippers, faced the east, and on a signal from a gun the whole mass of human beings, which stretched as far as the eye could reach, began to move...recalling vividly the children of Israel bearing the ark through the wilderness. (Ballantine 109)

It was not, however, the sublimity of his subject, nor even its Biblical theme, that most interested Roberts about *The Departure of the Israelites*. According to Roberts, he chose

² According to the broadsides for these productions (figures 1 and 2), housed at the Getty Research Institute, the scenes Roberts painted included landscapes, palaces, and "an illuminated view of Baghdad." The same year he painted these backdrops, 1825, he also painted with Clarkson Stanfield "a series of scenes for a moving panorama, illustrating the bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth" (Ballantine 25).

his subject “more as a Vehicle for introducing that grand, although simple style of architecture, ‘the Egyptian,’ than for any other reason” (Sim 47). That Roberts saw his project as an opportunity to present Egyptian architecture speaks to his awareness of the social function of art as a means of instruction and, more particularly, of the importance of the audience, the spectator. This awareness had as much to do with the climate of the art world in Romantic-era Britain as it did with Roberts’s own interests and concerns.

Michael Pidgley writes:

[A]s the audience for art increased rapidly during the 1830s, artists responded by actively seeking new subjects, styles and methods.

Exhibition reviews became more general, and dealers and publishers were quick to see the opportunities in the purchasing power of the growing middle classes. Roberts’s work and approach were ideally suited to this new climate of enterprise, enabling him to join the ranks of “talents of the highest class” in Britain. (65)

As a scenery painter, Roberts developed a sense early in his career of the public nature of art, its production for the sake of consumption. Further, the “climate of enterprise” to which Pidgley refers was one in which the Oriental tropes and themes that Roberts had discovered as a young man were extremely profitable. Thus Briony Llewellyn writes, “[Roberts] was...well aware of the potential commercial value of images of Egyptian temples, Islamic mosques, and the ruins and landscape of the Holy Land: together his sketches of them would make ‘one of the richest folios that ever left the East’” (73).

In addition to these factors, Roberts’s sense of audience was shaped by the technology of his time, particularly following the invention of lithography in 1796, by

means of which, as Walter Benjamin writes, “the technique of reproduction reached an essentially new stage” (219). This “new stage” of reproduction was naturally a new stage of the market as well and coincided with the rise of the middle-class audience for art: “Lithographic reproductions, whether in books or in single prints, became increasingly common and attracted the rising bourgeoisie market” (Renié 42). Roberts’s work, beginning with the engravings of his Spanish sketches that first earned him “true recognition in the 1830s” (Pidgley 61), reached a broad audience through lithographic reproduction, an audience which, given the general fascination with Roberts’s Eastern subjects, eagerly consumed the images he offered.

The technological changes, an increasing audience for art, and widespread interest in the Orient created the potential for wealth and fame for an artist such as Roberts, and thus led him to consider his audience back home while he was sketching his way across the Middle East. By providing a proper frame-work for viewing and admiring, for laying hold of the East, Roberts seems to have fulfilled his early goal of “introducing” to Great Britain an Orient it had not yet seen: not the Orient of fantasy and mystery, but the Orient “as it really was.” In so doing, Roberts appealed to an audience of shifting sensibilities, for, as Llewellyn notes, “By the end of the 1830s tastes were changing, and when they visited Egypt in 1838-9 both Roberts and [Bristol artist, William James] Müller deliberately...attempted a more realistic interpretation of the country’s ruins” (76-7).³

To read Roberts’s work as merely concerned with its spectatorship is, however, to ignore another aspect of its historical context, one that coincides with the emergence of a new market for art—namely the emergence of the “observer,” a category to be

³ In a letter from 1845, Roberts noted, “So convinced am I of the necessity of painting carefully on the spot, that I am hard at work from early morn to dewy eve” (Ballantine 161).

distinguished from that of the “spectator,” according to Jonathon Crary’s formulation:

Unlike *spectare*, the Latin root for “spectator,” the root for observe does not literally mean “to look at.” Spectator... carries specific connotations, especially in the context of nineteenth-century culture... namely of one who is a passive onlooker at a spectacle, as at an art gallery or theater.... [O]bservare means “to conform one’s action, to comply with,” as in observing rules, codes, regulations, and practices. Though obviously one who sees, an observer is more importantly one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded within a *system* of conventions and limitations. (5-6, my italics)

If we understand the frame as, to recall Deleuze’s phrase, “*the determination of a...relatively closed system*,” Crary’s understanding of the category of the observer takes on a useful nuance, for, insofar as the observer is “embedded within a system,” the aesthetic frame becomes a means of determining that embedding, a condition of the observer: framing frames the observer by delimiting the possibilities of observation. This observer is thus distinct from the spectator, which is presumed to be prior to and exterior to the work, outside the frame. Unlike the spectator, the observer, we might say, is posited by the work of art as precisely that which frames.

In offering his distinction between spectator and observer, Crary does not mean to suggest that the category of the observer had not existed prior to the nineteenth century, but that, by the nineteenth century, “the major terms and elements of a previous organization of the observer were no longer in operation” (7). This reorganization is visible, for example, in Kant’s shifting sense of “observation” between his *Observations*

on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime and the critical writings. In the former, Kant writes, “For the present I shall cast my gaze...more with the eye of an observer than of a philosopher” (*Observations* 45). By the time of the first *Critique*, however, it would no longer suffice for Kant to present his “observations” unqualified; rather, the entire critical project would demand a systematic subordination of observation itself to the operations of reason. As Kant writes in Preface to the Second Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, “Accidental observation can never be made to yield a necessary law, which alone reason is concerned to discover” (20). To proceed, as Kant proceeds in the first *Critique*, with “the...eye of a philosopher,” is thus to seek out “a necessary law,” a law that is universal *a priori*: “Necessity and strict universality are...sure criteria of *a priori* knowledge, and are inseparable from one another” (*CPR* 44).

In subordinating observation to reason, however, Kant does not abandon the notion of observation altogether. Rather, observation itself becomes a matter for philosophical reflection.⁴ This is visible, for example, in the “Analytic of the Sublime,” where, at a crucial moment, the discourse of aesthetics intersects with the discourse of Orientalism:

This explains Savary’s observations in his account of Egypt, that in order to get the full emotional effect of the size of the Pyramids we must avoid coming too near just as much as remaining too far away. For in the latter case, the representation of the apprehended parts (the tiers of stones) is but obscure.... In the former case, however, it takes the eye some time to complete the apprehension from the base to the summit; but in this interval

⁴ “In the aftermath of Kant’s work,” writes Crary, “there is an irreversible clouding over of the transparency of subject-as-observer. Vision, rather than a privileged form of knowing, becomes itself an object of knowledge, of observation” (70).

the first tiers always in part disappear before the imagination has taken in the last, and so the comprehension is never complete. (*CJ* 99-100)

Kant had addressed the matter of the pyramids' sublimity in his earlier aesthetic treatise as well—"The sight of an Egyptian pyramid, as Hasselquist reports, moves one far more than one can imagine from all the descriptions" (*Observations* 49)—but there his observation (of Hasselquist's observation) is left unexamined.⁵ The question of how one takes in the pyramids is left aside—it is the "sight" [*der Anblick*] of the pyramid rather than the process of seeing the pyramid that moves the subject. When he addresses the status of observation in the third *Critique*, Kant shifts his attention from the contingent particularity of the observer to the universal conditions of observation represented by the faculty of the imagination.

Yet it is not, according to the text, the *imagination* that "discovers that it needs time" but the *eye* [*das Auge*]. In this metonymic substitution lies the suggestion that the subject here is not simply the transcendental subject developed in Kant's work from the first *Critique* on, but a bodied subject, a material subject of observation and experience. This subject is not positioned (*transcendentally*) "above" the material world, but at a certain distance from the sublime object. This subject is a subject in the world.

The Romantic observer, I thus want to suggest, is precariously situated between the universal and the particular; more precisely, this observer represents a universal subject position that is shaped by the climate of cultural particularism. The return of the pyramids in the third *Critique*, with its accompanying return of the observer, reveals the pressure that Orientalism, as a discourse concerned with geopolitical particularity

⁵ There is of course a certain irony in Kant's reliance upon Hasselquist's—and later Savary's—description of the pyramids, according to which the sublimity of these structures defies description. On this point, see Derrida 142.

(however vague the category of “the Orient” might be), places on Kant’s Romantic universalism. It hints at the difficulty of bracketing the *a posteriori* observations of the Orientalist—Hasselquist, Savary, or Kant himself—in the search for *a priori* truths. Such is the persistence of Orientalism as a central, structuring paradigm in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Put differently, the impact of Orientalism upon aesthetics is that it introduces into the universal subject a paradoxical cultural specificity that, I would argue, lies at the heart of the Romantic observer. This paradoxical position is central to David Roberts’ aesthetic, as reflected in his famous architectural depictions of the Middle East. Roberts went to great lengths to achieve accuracy in these representations. Indeed, Llewellyn tells us, “Roberts...obtained permission to sketch inside the mosques [in Cairo] provided he wore Turkish dress and did not use hog’s-hair brushes” (73)—a look he would revive for his portrait by Robert Scott Lauder in 1840 (fig. 4). This access led to a series of detailed images, such as *Interior, Mosque of El Ghoree* (fig. 5), which records with objectivity and precision a scene from which Roberts’s audience was forbidden.

Yet, as Llewellyn observes, “[Roberts’s] pictures of oriental ruins are certainly not merely topographical views as [William Henry] Bartlett’s are; nor, on the other hand, though impressive, are they the imaginative masterpieces that Turner might have made them” (84); rather, their suggestion of (objective) universality is nevertheless punctured by the subjectivity, or particularity, of the Western observer, whether this observer be his audience in Britain or indeed Roberts himself:

Dendera, 19th.—By daybreak I was astir, and went to the ruins with my friend Captain Nellie, who assisted me in taking the dimensions. The city

stands in the middle of an immense plain, about two miles from the river. On entering the portico of the temple, I was struck with amazement at the perfect preservation of every part of the structure, except where it had been purposefully defaced, and at the endless labour bestowed on the carving.... Figures here are fifteen feet in height, others so small they require to be examined by a glass; and the whole is so varied, so perfect, and so vast, that it must have been the work of ages. (Ballantine 88)

A painting such as *View under the Portico, Dendera* (fig. 6) reveals the impulse for accurate and objective representation, the impulse for “taking the dimensions” of the ruins, does not obliterate Roberts’ “amazement.” The vastness of the portico is not merely “contained” by Roberts’ measured line, but also left to amaze the viewer: the low-angle perspective of the piece creates a sense of immensity different from that enabled by the elevated perspective of *The Departure of the Israelites* (wherein the eye is led toward infinity), yet, I would suggest, similarly impressive—that is, meant to impress.⁶

The position of the observer in *View under the Portico* is thus enabled by Roberts’ sense of perspective, distance, and scale: the frame of the portico frames the observer in such a way as to maximize the sense of magnitude. But there is another “frame” at work in *View under the Portico*, indeed throughout Roberts’ paintings of the Middle East. With few exceptions, Roberts’ works feature the bodies of natives, “frames,” whose employment offers a sense of relative size. In the two pictures of *Pyramids at Geezah* (figs. 7 and 8), for example, the situation of the figures at a middle-distance between observer and object creates the sense of relative position. In other

⁶ Along these lines Llewellyn notes that “[t]he demands of pictorial effect sometimes conflicted with those of topographical accuracy. Roberts often used artistic license to achieve greater impact and to re-create the mood that the subject itself evoked” (77).

works—such as the aforementioned *View under the Portico*—the juxtaposition of the native and the architecture is such that the approximate measure of the one frame demonstrates the measure of the other. Indeed there seems to be a kind of visual pun, as the pillars of the portico suggest trunks that support the enormous heads of the Egyptian goddess Hathos (and the trunks themselves feature larger-than-life bodies, frames within frames).

In some ways, this manner of objectifying the Other, of framing the foreign body, is a familiar response to the sublimity of the Orient and the mystery of the Oriental: to give shape and structure to the Eastern figure is to contain him or her within the boundaries of reason. And yet there is a noticeable difference between the figures in Roberts' travel-paintings and those of *The Departure of the Israelites*, for, where in his earlier painting the figures are framed within a narrative—acting out their prescribed role the way the actors at Drury Lane had done, in front of the scenes that the younger Roberts had painted—here they function more as props, parts of the set. (I thus find it suggestive that, in an undated sketch from Roberts's notebook (fig. 9), we see the turbaned head conceived alongside the pillars, each echoing the other.)

This shifting function of the bodily frame in Roberts's work might be illuminated by turning again to Kant. As I have begun to discuss, the particularity of Orientalism troubles Kant's examination of universal subjectivity; this "trouble" enables the emergence of a unique kind of observer, at once universal and culturally coded. Because of this pressure, the figure of the Oriental is increasingly complicated: on one hand, the Oriental is conceived, as he always has been, as an object of knowledge; on the other

hand, he is subsumed under the universal category of the subject.⁷ This dual role is not altogether new: in the fourth section of the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, Kant writes that—though “The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling” (110)—the Orientals, from Arabia and Persia to India and Japan, exhibit some sense, however distorted by tradition and religion, of the beautiful and the sublime, some capacity, that is, for aesthetic judgment. In the *Observations*, however, there is no conflict between Kant’s understanding of the other *qua* judging subject and the other *qua* object of knowledge, for the “eye of the observer” with which he proceeds is an unreflective one, unconcerned with the nature of observation: there is no universalist pressure upon Kant’s pre-critical, pre-Romantic orientalist “observations.”

As observation begins to unfold as a process in the Analytic of the Sublime, universally conditioned by the *a priori* faculties of the imagination and reason, Kant is forced to negotiate the problematic status of the Other. He does so in his suggestion that the Other merely lacks “preparatory culture,” without which “[what] we call sublime, merely strikes the untutored man [*dem rohen Menschen*] as terrifying” (*CJ* 115). Gayatri Spivak identifies the status of the “untutored” or “raw” man here as that of the “not-yet-subject”: “This gap between the subject as such and the not-yet-subject can be bridged under propitious circumstances by culture” (14). By reworking what had in the *Observations* been presented as an essential difference in degree—a quantifiable capacity for taste and feeling for sublimity which varies across cultures—into a difference in kind, by introducing, that is, a “gap between subject and not-yet-subject,”

⁷ Something along these lines is suggested by W.J.T. Mitchell in his reading of Gilfillan’s representation of the Maori in *A Native Council of War* (1853): “[Maori] figures are inserted on the threshold of the painting, the transition space between observer and observed. They ‘sit in’ for the European observer, reassuring us that the Maori see things as we do, while maintaining their difference” (*Landscape* 23-4).

Kant neatly skirts the problem of the subjectivity of the Other: while possessed of the *a priori* faculties that condition subjectivity, the Other, because of its lack of culture, can be expelled from the category of the universal. What looks like a form of humanist inclusiveness—the Other is essentially the same, but for its lack of culture—is in fact a form of exclusion. The conflict between the particular and the universal is resolved as the Other is *foreclosed* from the field of subjectivity.

“Foreclosed,” but not omitted. As Spivak notes, the “raw” man of the *Analytic of the Sublime* returns in the *Analytic of Teleological Judgment*, where Kant writes, “[W]e do not see why after all it should be necessary that men should in fact exist (a question that might not be so easy to answer if the specimens of humanity that we had in mind were, say, the New Hollanders or Fuegians)” (27). “Here,” Spivak tells us, “the raw man...is named” (26), and yet named parenthetically, presented and crossed out: the foreclosure of the Other, geopolitically differentiated from the European, is made visible by the use of brackets; indeed the subjectivity of the Other must be bracketed in order for the universal subject to remain consistent. By means of this bracketing, we are spared from confronting the conflict between Other as subject and Other as object.

It is in this sense that I understand Roberts’s use of the bodily frame in his Middle Eastern works. In these pieces the Other is not simply the observed but precisely *that which is not observing*, that which is foreclosed from the field of judging subjects, or from the universal position of observation posited by the frame. (The process of foreclosure is thus akin to hiding the Oriental in plain sight.) This particular framing device is an alternative response to the sublimity of the East, one that differs sharply from, for example, *The Departure of the Israelites*, in which the Orient is framed by

narrative. For by the time of *View under the Portico* and the other works of that period, the sublime becomes the occasion for a kind of reflection on subjectivity, the capacity for knowing the object. This capacity is universal, open, *unframed*, that is, not bound by the materiality of the spectator; yet its very universality demands the limitation of the Other, its placement within the frame, beyond the field of subjectivity.

In this sense, the logic of framing as akin to that of the Lacanian “symptom.” In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek answers the question “How did Marx invent the symptom?” with the following: “Marx ‘invented the symptom’...by means of detecting a fissure, an asymmetry, a ‘pathological’ imbalance which belies the universalism of bourgeois rights and duties” (21). The capitalist ideal of fair and equivalent exchange, for example, relies upon the presence of one particular commodity, namely labor, which undermines the very notion of fair and equivalent exchange. That is, if capital, as Marx shows in *Capital, Volume One*, “has one single life impulse, the tendency to create value and surplus-value” (360), and if this creation of surplus-value relies upon the capitalist selling (commodified) labor power at a higher rate than that rate at which he bought it—and at which the laborer sold it—then exchange becomes neither fair nor equivalent.

For Roberts, as for Kant, the other emerges as the symptom, as that which “belies the universalism” of observation. Importantly, this symptom cannot be “cured”: though the goal of psychoanalysis is for the patient to “verbalize the meaning of his symptom” so that, “through this verbalization, the symptom is automatically dissolved” (Žižek 73), Lacan discovered that the symptom would nevertheless persist beyond analysis. For Žižek, this persistence correlates to the fact that, though we can “understand” ideology,

understanding it is not “curing” us of it, and it is on this point that the concept of the symptom is useful to the present discussion. For unlike Roberts, who seems to have had little interest in the political implications of his art, Shelley, to whom I turn next, was deeply committed to cosmopolitan ideals of equality across cultural divides. Yet in his *Alastor*, we see Shelley’s ethical universalism bound up with a seemingly inevitable Orientalism, as the symptom takes the form of a “veiled maid,” who represents the limits of Shelley’s professed cosmopolitanism.

II. *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude*: Shelley’s “Veiled Maid” and Nature’s Vast Frame

A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw:
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.

(Coleridge, “Kubla Khan” 37-41)

There are some obvious similarities between Coleridge’s famous poem and *Alastor*. Each features an introductory gesture—Coleridge’s note, Shelley’s Preface—which serves to frame the body of the poem. Each contains an exotic “maid” who is also an artist-figure, a musician as in the case of Coleridge’s poem or a poet in the case of Shelley’s. And in each case this maid is doubly framed, situated not just in the poem but in “a vision” in the poem: like Coleridge’s “Abyssinian maid,” Shelley’s “veiled maid”

comes to the poet “in a vision on his sleep/... a dream of hopes that never yet/Had flushed his cheek” (149-51).⁸

About these two poems, Nigel Leask writes: “Like Coleridge in ‘Kubla Khan,’ [Shelley] seeks to suppress the cultural specificity of his sources in order to create vivid ‘dreamscapes’ consistent with his ideological goal of cultural universalism” (“Wandering” 182). Unlike the common, Orientalist “costume poem,” which was dressed up with historical particularities, often in the form of lengthy explanatory notes, “Kubla Khan” and *Alastor*, according to Leask, opt for (universalist) fantasy over (particularist) “authentic” representation. Of course, in the case of Shelley’s poem, there *is* a costume, the use of which situates the maid within a particularist framework. The veil she wears, while reminiscent of the more metaphorical veil of Shelley’s famous sonnet “Lift not the painted veil,” identifies the maid as an exotic figure, the counterpoint, as many have argued, to the “Arab maiden” whom the poet-protagonist, or “Visionary,” rejects.⁹ If Leask is correct in noting that Shelley’s lack of costume-poem conventions implies a universalist rather than particularist investment, it might also be said that this investment is betrayed by the trope of the veil in *Alastor*, just as Roberts’s seemingly objective, universal perspective is complicated by the suggestion of awe in *View under the Portico*.

The “cultural universalism” that Leask identifies in Coleridge and Shelley is thus enabled by the poets’ systematically excluding the maid-figure from the subjective field,

⁸ Stephen Behrendt similarly identifies a relationship between the prefatory note to “Kubla Khan” and the preface to *Alastor*, noting particularly that the two featured the shared strategy of third-person introduction (101).

⁹ On the relationship between *Alastor* and “Lift not the painted veil,” see Wasserman’s *Shelley: A Critical Reading* 45-6. Following Wasserman, I refer in this essay to the poet-protagonist of the poem as “the Visionary,” to distinguish him from the other writer-character (apart from, as I have mentioned, the maid *qua* poet), “the Narrator.”

by their bracketing her within a vision that does not just objectify her, but radically de-subjectifies her. (It is especially noteworthy, then, that the two maids are both artists, framers bound within other artists' visions.) In Shelley's poem, moreover, this process of foreclosure takes on an ethical dimension: as a "picture," in the words of the Preface, "not barren of instruction to actual men" (69), *Alastor* posits a subject of observation constituted not just by its capacity for aesthetic reflection, but also by its ability to act. What I hope to show here is that these two aspects of the poem, the aesthetic and the ethical, exist in dramatic tension, each suggesting a system that cannot be reconciled with the other. At the center of this opposition is the doubly-framed "veiled maid," whose ideological function within the poem's vision is at odds with her function within the poem as a whole.

Shelley's reference to the poem as a "picture" is no casual metaphor. In *A Defence of Poetry*, he writes of Milton:

He mingled as it were the elements of human nature, as colours upon a single pallet, and arranged them into the composition of his great picture according to the laws of epic truth; that is, according to the laws of that principle by which a series of actions of the external universe and of intelligent and ethical beings is calculated to excite the sympathy of succeeding generations of mankind. (498-9)

The boundaries between aesthetics and ethics blur, it seems, in Milton, whose arrangement of "colours" blends the elements of choice—the "actions of...ethical beings"—and fate—the "actions of the external universe"—into a cohesive moral order. Poetry, according to Shelley, creates this moral order in a manner qualitatively different than that of "[e]thical science," which "propounds schemes and proposes examples of

civil and domestic life” (*Defence* 487) by expanding the imagination, “the great instrument for moral good” (488). For Shelley, the imagination allows man to sympathize, to “put himself in the place of another and of many others” and to make “the pains and pleasures of his species...his own” (*ibid*). It is for this reason that Shelley’s metaphor of the poem as “picture” is important: the multivalence of the term “picture,” which refers at once to a visual, artistic representation, and, as the *OED* puts it, “a description emblematic or illustrative of a particular concept, quality, or character,” allows Shelley to present the poem as a medium relatively autonomous *vis a vis* “ethical science,” yet nevertheless capable of offering “schemes and...examples of civil and domestic life.” Put differently, Shelley’s metaphor enables the establishment of two simultaneous ethical systems. As an ethical “picture,” *Alastor* does not simply appeal to an audience of “actual men.” It also universalizes the reader into an abstract whole, establishing a position of observation from which to take in the scene of the poem and reflect upon the ethical.

The preface to *Alastor* professes an ethics of universal sympathy, holding the visionary up as an example (picture) of what happens when we “keep aloof from sympathies”: “They who...keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead” (69). Within this ethical framework the figure who represents the Visionary’s failure to sympathize is the “Arab maiden,” from whom the Visionary remains “aloof”:

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,

Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
 And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
 From duties and repose to tend his steps:--
 Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
 To speak her love:--and watched his nightly sleep,
 Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
 Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
 Of innocent dreams arose:

(129-37)

Importantly, the maiden's sympathetic capacity is figured in her "gaze," which is not returned by the Visionary, who, at Dendera (unnamed but suggested by Shelley's reference to "The Zodiac's brazen mystery" in line 119),

Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
 Suspended he the task, but ever gazed
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.¹⁰

(123-128)

Alastor thus figures the ethical subject as an observing subject, a subject reaching out with his or her eyes *toward* the Other; the Visionary's moral failure lies in his looking

¹⁰ As an editorial note remarks, "In the temple of Dendera in Upper Egypt, the gods were arranged within the pattern of the Zodiac" (*Alastor* 73, n.2). The Visionary's journey backward through history toward "the birth of time" is the subject of much recent criticism. See especially Makdisi, "Shelley's *Alastor*," Lo, and Birns.

away from the Other. Or, as the poem proceeds, his failure lies in his looking instead toward “the same,” as Leask puts it: “Shelley’s ‘veiled maid’ represents a narcissistic discovery of the *same*” (“Wandering” 127). That is, by pursuing the dream-figure instead of returning the sympathetic gaze of the Arab maiden, the Visionary delves deeper in the self, even as he chases the vision across the globe.

This, at least, is the opposition suggested by the Preface, one that fits the poem’s ethical vision: the Visionary’s demise is the result of his lack of sympathy, his aloofness. From another perspective, however, a different model of self and Other comes into focus. Even as the poem as moral picture presents the veiled maid as the “same,” the poem as an aesthetic system presents her as a radical Other, a sublime Other, an Other who represents the limits of the imagination. The imagination enables, as the *Defence* tells us, “a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not our own” (487). In the poem’s very failure to imagine the veiled maid as a subject-figure, then, we find an exception to the ethics of universal sympathy. In this framework, the Arab maiden, as a gazing subject, a subject capable of sympathizing, becomes the mirror of the Visionary, the manifestation of his failed potential for ethical action—becomes, that is, the “same.” The dream-maid, by contrast, is figured not as a gazing subject, but as a “vision,” merely seen. Whatever capacity for artistry, whatever creative agency she possesses, she is ultimately blinded by the “sinuous veil/Of woven wind” (176-7). (Indeed, the one reference to her “beamy bending eyes” in 179 suggests that they are blinding and distorting, a perversion, perhaps, of the Arab maiden’s sympathetic gaze.)

Underneath the caution outlined in the Preface, then, lies another caution, tacit

yet visible in the poem's construction of the veiled maid, a caution that reads also as an ethical imperative: "Lift not the...veil." I show this below by mapping the trope of the "frame" in the poem.

The Preface tells us of the young Visionary that "The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions" (69). Throughout the opening of the poem, the Visionary remains capable of taking in the external world, of framing it conceptually as well as visually:

By solemn *vision*, and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every *sight*
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.

(67-70, my italics)

Yet this normative framing capacity is subverted in his dream of the veiled maid, whose "frame" (162) cannot be contained by the Visionary's gaze. And, it is the failure of the Visionary to frame the maid that ultimately leads to his own unframing:

she drew back a while,
Then, yielding to irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision;

(184-9)

As William Keach writes, "The maiden's arms are 'dissolving' in a double sense that

condenses the reflexive relationship of dream-image to dreamer: they momentarily dissolve the figure of the dreamer even as they themselves are ‘dissolving’” (126). Along these lines we might note that when “night/Involved and swallowed up the vision” of the veiled maid—when the veil is transferred from the maid onto his “dizzy eyes”—the Visionary’s capacity for framing, his sense of “vision,” also disappears.

What follows is the Visionary’s gradual demise, over the course of which his physical frame begins to disintegrate. Addressing the “swan” of line 275, the hero laments:

And what am I that I should linger here,
 With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
 Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
 To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
 In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
 That echoes not my thoughts?”

(285-90)

There is a telling medial caesura in line 287 that divides the Visionary’s “Spirit” from his “frame,” a process of dematerialization that continues as his body becomes but a “shadowy frame” (416) and—by way of simile—a “*vapour* fed with golden beams/That ministered on sunlight, ere the west/Eclipses it” (663-665, my italics).

At the same time that the Visionary becomes unframed and begins to dissipate, consumed by the titular “*Spirit* of Solitude,” nature takes on a frame. As Benjamin Colbert notes, “The landscape not only embodies the fruits of desire that elude the Poet, but reconstitutes the fundamental structures of oriental architecture that he seeks out in

his early journey: ‘The *pyramids*/Of the tall cedar *overarching*, frame/Most solemn *domes* within’” (77, Colbert’s italics). This orientalizing of Nature, I want to suggest, reaches its conclusion in the poem’s final “frame”:

It is a woe “too deep for tears,” when all
 Is left at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
 But pale despair and cold tranquility,
 Nature’s vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

Here, in the poem’s final moments, Nature’s “vast frame” is not only named, but named by apposition as a “web,” echoing the veiled maid’s “web/Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.” The return of the web suggests something ominous, the othering of nature and the perversion of nature’s orders, which are no longer “as they were.” Here, the veiled maid seeps into nature itself. Unframed, unleashed from the Visionary’s subconscious, she becomes the frame, enclosing the poem’s world system in her “web of human things.”

Shelley’s ethical vision is grounded in a notion of beauty, specifically in the “identification of ourselves with the *beautiful* which exists in thought, action, or person not our own” (my italics). And yet what *Alastor* reveals is that, beneath this vision, there is an alternative ethics at work. According to this system, the sympathetic identification

with others must be checked: we ought to impose a limit upon the imaginative faculty, which has the potential to undo the very social framework to which it gives rise. “We,” in this formulation, refers specifically to poets, those “legislators of the world” that Shelley famously identifies; for if poetry can expand the circumference of the imagination, it can also define this circumference and identify a horizon, a *limen* for the expansive, sympathetic faculty.

As can painting: if we return to the case of Roberts’ “pictures,” which seem to suggest nothing of the ethical, offering merely an observational aesthetic—an aesthetic, that is, that reflects upon observation itself—perhaps we might now identify the position of the observer as one from which choice and action is possible. Perhaps there is a cautionary message, an appeal to “actual men” implied by these non-narrative images of pyramids and columns and natives. To maintain a certain distance, to keep the Orient within the frame yet outside the circumference of the imagination, might thus emerge as an ethical imperative from Roberts’s seemingly neutral, objective sketches and paintings.

However we take Roberts’s realism, there are certain parallels between all of the texts considered to this point that are worth reflecting upon. For what we see in Roberts and Shelley, Coleridge and De Quincey are strategies for overcoming difference as an obstacle to aesthetic universality, agreement within and across cultures in matters of judgment. Whether through poetry, painting, or autobiography, each figure aims toward this agreement; as a group they suggest the range of positions available within Romantic-era England and offer a sense of the period’s cultural landscape. It is against this landscape that I want to locate in the following chapter Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” which I take to suggest a rather different position. For Keats, I will argue, difference is

not a challenge to the aesthetic universalism but the condition of that universalism; in this way, the ode suggests a model of cross-cultural judgment that might unwork the kinds of ideological investments visible across Romantic literature.

New Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.
This Evening, WEDNESDAY, January 26, 1825.
 His Majesty's Servants will, (for the FOURTH TIME) perform a NEW GRAND OPERA, called The

Fall of Algiers.

With New SCENERY, DRESSES, DECORATIONS, &c. &c.
 The whole of the Music (with the exception of an OVERTURE, by Cherubini) composed by
 Mr. H. R. BISHOP,
 Who, on this occasion, will preside at the PIANO FORTE.
 The ORCHESTRA will be enlarged, and the number of Musicians and Choristers increased as at the
 performance of *Der Freischutz*.

Orasmin, (a Boy of Algiers) Mr. S. A. F. I. O.
 Admiral Rockwardine, Mr. TERRY, Algernon Rockwardine, Mr. HORN.
 Timothy Tourist, Mr. HARLEY, Cogi Baba, Mr. GATTIE, Mahmoud, Mr. BROWNE.
 Lieutenant Hartley, Mr. MERCER, Ben Brown, Mr. O. SMITH.
 Omar, Mr. COMBER, Selim, Mr. HOWELL, First Slave, Mr. WEBSTER.
 Amanda, Miss GRADDON, Lauretta, Miss STEPHENS.
 Zaida, Miss NICOL, Almada, Miss CARR.
 Slaves, Sailors, Attendants, &c. &c.
 Mr. FOSTER, Mr. G. SMITH, Mr. YARNOLD, Master EDMONDS.
 Messrs. Gibbon, Goodson, Goodson, jun. Honnor, Henry, Jones, Keuch, Nicell, Povey, Pimsted, Reed, D. Smith,
 Seacombe, Vaughan, &c. &c. &c.
 Messrs. Hope, Brown, Gussio, Gregory, Asbury, Parr.
 Mrs. TENNANT, Miss POOLE,
 Mesdames. Brown, Beardmore, Crowther, Gibbon, Munro, Munroe, Margerum, M. Nicol, Willmott, J. Willmott,
 L. Willmott, Webster, Wells.
 Dancers... Mrs. MCCORR, Miss BARNETT.
 Mesdames Best, Valancy, Curtis, Carty, Grinsdale, Willmott, &c.

SYNOPSIS OF THE NEW SCENERY.
 The GARDENS of the BEY,....(Roberts)
 GRAND SALOON in the PALACE. (Marinari)
 Moresco Landscape....[Roberts]
 SERAGLIO GROUNDS & KIOSK....(Marinari)
 DISTANT VIEW OF ALGIERS....(Stanfield)
 Hall in Palace, and View of the Harbour....(Roberts)
 Algiers after the Bombardment.
 [Stanfield]

1. Broadside, *Fall of Algiers* (1825)

Abon Hassan

With New SCENERY, DRESSES and DECORATIONS.
 The Overture and MUSIC composed by K. Von WEBER;
 Adapted to the English Stage by Mr. T. COCKE
 Produced under the Direction of Mr. WALLACK.
 The Caliph Mr. BEDFORD, Abon Hassan, Mr. CORN,
 Zebouc Mr. HARLEY, Mesour, Mr. BROWN,
 Omar Mr. GATTIE, Soyman, (a Butcher) Mr. YARNOLD,
 Mastapha, (a Baker) Mr. COMER, Said (a Taylor) Mr. HUGHES,
 Aley Achbat, Mr. FENTON, Ah Bensalla Mr. POY-Y.
 Zulima, Miss GRADDON, Zobeide, Mrs. ORGER, Nourameul, Mrs. HARLOWE.
 ATTENDANTS ON THE CALIPH.
 Mr. FOSTER, Mr. FITZWILLIAMS, Master EDMONDS.
 Mrs. POOLE, Mrs. TENNANT
 Messrs. Gibbon, Honnor, Keuch, Pimsted, Reed, D. Smith, Vining,
 Messrs. Crowther, Carr, Gaskill, Munro, Munroe, M. Nicoll, Willmott, L. Willmott, Webster.

In Act I. A GRAND BALLET.

By Mr. NOBLE and Mrs. NOBLE.
 Mrs. BARNETT, Miss RYALLS, Miss COLLISON, Miss ZEBBINI, Miss MACDONALD, Miss CHERRY,
 Mesd. Best, Valancy, Carty, Curtis, Grinsdale, Percy. Messrs. Brown, Hope, Gussio, Gregory, Asbury, Parr.

In the course of the Piece, the following New Scenery will be introduced:
 The Royal Baths of Bagdad.....*Marinari* The Imperial Garden.....*Marinari*
 Chamber in Abon Hassan's House.....*Marinari* The Pavilion attached to Abon Hassan's House.....*Roberts*
 Mountain Fort, from the Terrace of the Palace.....*Roberts*
 Illuminated View of Bagdad, by Moonlight.....*Roberts*
 [Stanfield]

The new Drama of ABON HASSAN, is published, may be had in the Theatre, and of Mr. KIRBY, Warwick Lane.

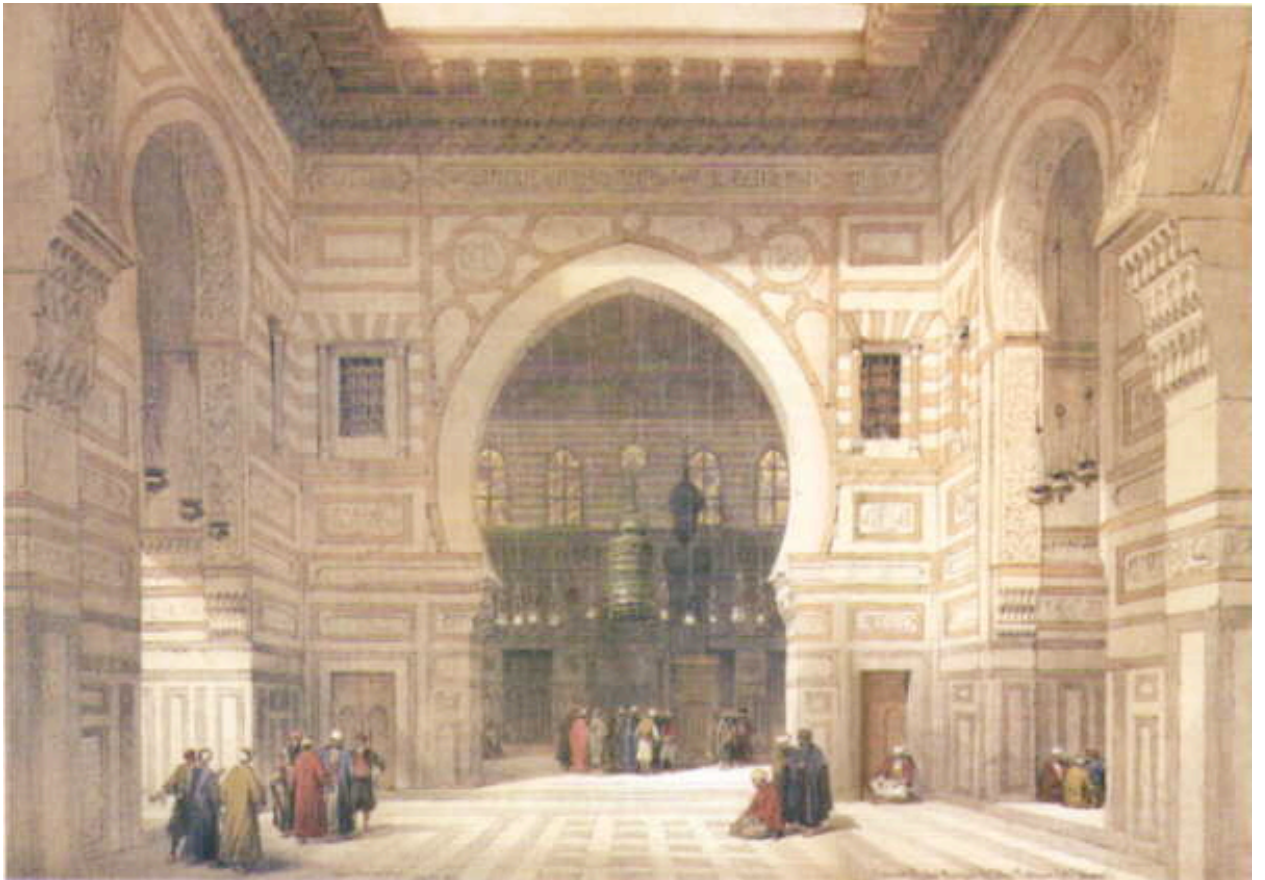
2. Broadside, *Abon Hassan* (1825)



3. Departure of the Israelites from Egypt (1827-1829)



4. Robert Scott Lauder, *David Roberts, 1796 - 1864. Artist (In Arab dress)* (1840)



5. Interior, Mosque of El Ghoree (1842)



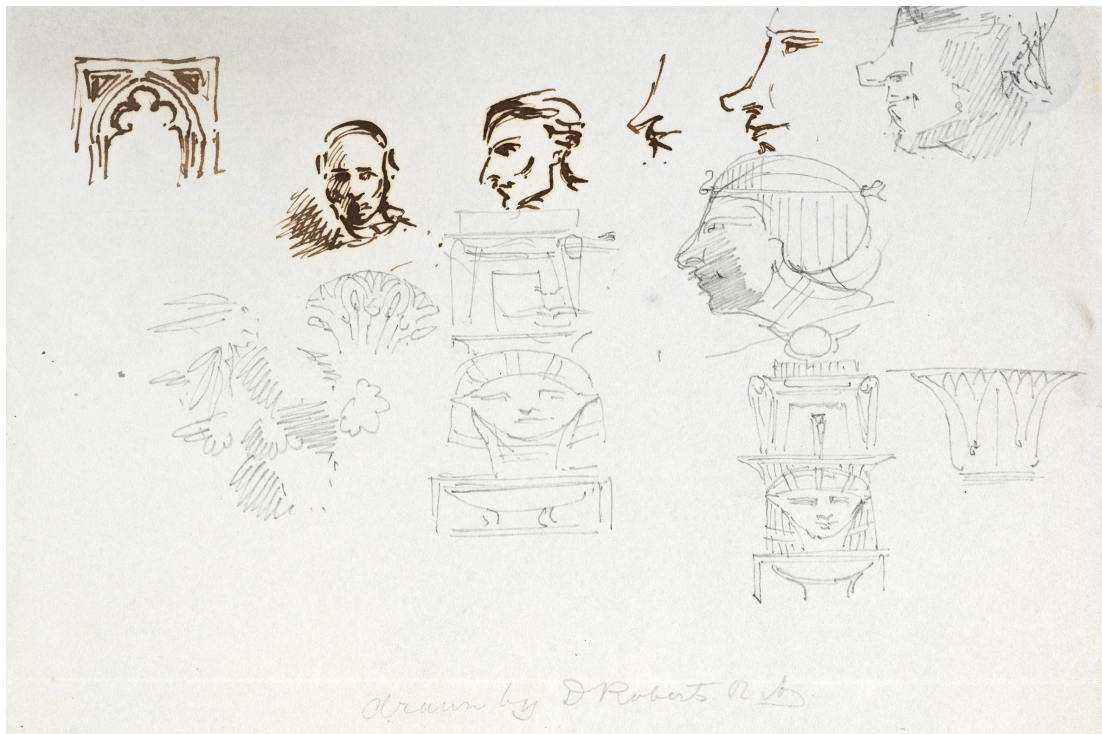
6. *View under the Portico, Dendera* (1842)



7. Pyramids of Geezah, from the Nile (1842)



8. Pyramids of Geezah (1842)



9. Untitled Sketch from MS. (no date)

CHAPTER FOUR: KEATS'S RADICAL COSMOPOLITANISM
AND THE AESTHETICS OF ALTERITY

Keats possessed from nature some “fine powers,” and that was the very expression we used in the first critique that ever mentioned his name.... [But the] Cockneys claimed him for their own...flattering him into bad citizenship, and wheedling him out of his Christian faith. In truth, they themselves broke the boy's heart, and blasted all his prospects.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, January 1826)

Five years after his death, Keats was still involved in what Jeffrey Cox calls “the culture wars of [his] day” (“Keats in the Cockney School” 28). Shelley had already blamed the scathing criticism of Keats in the conservative *Quarterly Review* for “the agitation...[that] ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in [Keats's] lungs” (Preface to “Adonais”); by the time the editors of *Blackwood's* identified Leigh Hunt's “Cockneys”—Shelley included—as the source of the young poet's destruction, Keats had become something of an ideological weapon that either side could use against the other.

How could Keats's name could be invoked by conservatives and liberals to exemplify the corrupting influence of the opposing ideology? One explanation is that Keats was never much of a culture-warrior, which certainly fits the image of Keats as that of a private and passive figure rather than a politically conscious poet of the social

imagination.¹ But this rather conventional image would seem to suggest that Keats was somehow capable of extracting himself from the social conditions of Romantic-era England; this, as critics such as Cox as well as Marjorie Levinson and Nicholas Roe have suggested, is unlikely. Perhaps in order to understand Keats's uneasy relationship to the political scene of nineteenth-century England, we might recast Cox's "culture wars" as "cultural struggle," employing Bourdieu's terminology to emphasize the poet's role as position-taker rather than foot-soldier, not simply a defender of political ideology but an agent within the field of cultural production.

In this chapter I wish to illuminate Keats's position within the field of struggle by considering his relationship to the contested idea of cosmopolitanism, a context in which Keats is not usually read. When, for example, David Simpson writes, "The traditional Romantic canon has been very much an assembly of localists—Wordsworth, Austen, Blake, and now Clare and Scott, perhaps Crabbe—sitting alongside more consciously cosmopolitan spirits like Shelley and Byron" (145), adding Coleridge to the list in the next sentence, he rather glaringly omits Keats. When Keats's name does come up in examinations of cosmopolitanism, it is almost always in passing, usually because of his affiliation with Hunt's circle.

It would be overstating the case to suggest that Keats exemplifies the cosmopolitan lifestyle and perspective the way that Shelley or Byron does; he certainly wasn't the world-traveler that either of those figures was. Financial hardship and failing health kept Keats relatively close to home until the trip to Italy at the end of his life. Not that travel is a necessary prerequisite for cosmopolitanism, which is, at any rate, a difficult "ism" to define, as Jon Klancher notes:

¹ On the persistence of this characterization of Keats, see Roe 3-5.

As defined within the early-modern Republic of Letters...the ethos and practice of Enlightened cosmopolitanism created an indelible impression: city-centered and globe-traveling, yet intimately sociable and skilled in the arts of conversation; universalizing and often philosophically skeptical; tolerant of cultural or religious differences, yet finely discriminating in matters of taste; oriented to particular markets of publication but writing in broad unspecialized prose.... (“Discriminations” 66)

And the term would become even more complicated after the French Revolution, when, Klancher goes on to argue, “cosmopolitan ideals and attitudes became identified...with sects, systems, and factions” (ibid); in addition to its earlier connotations, “cosmopolitanism” now also suggested radicalism, Jacobinism, and anti-patriotism.

The increasing complexity of “cosmopolitanism” made it not only possible, but perhaps inevitable for one to feel, as Keats seems to have felt, ambivalently cosmopolitan. As I argue below, with “Ode on a Grecian Urn” Keats takes a position against the Tory localism of his critics and the liberal cosmopolitanism of Leigh Hunt’s circle. From this position Keats voices an alternative cosmopolitanism, one rooted in the experience of difference rather than—as Hazlitt, Shelley, and others would have it—the feeling of sympathy. The cosmopolitan subject that Keats posits exists as such not because of his ability to identify with others, but because of his capacity for aesthetic judgment. “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” I thus conclude, suggests a model of “cosmopolitan reading” particularly relevant to current debates over the canon, what to read and how.

I. Contested Cosmopolitanism

As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself - it has no self - it is every thing and nothing.... (Keats, Letter to Woodhouse, Oct. 27, 1818)

The “poetical Character” is not just a quality or characteristic, but a kind of club, an organization to which Keats, as a self-proclaimed “Member,” belonged or wanted to belong. Against the solipsism of Wordsworth, Keats advocates in his famous letter to Woodhouse sociability, a “sense that an urban and cosmopolitan outlook is preferable to the egotistical provincialism of the Lake Poets” (Cox, *Poetry and Politics* 29). What separates the “poetical Character” from the Lakers might be summed up in a word central to the political, moral, and aesthetics sensibilities of Leigh Hunt’s circle, “sympathy.” “For the ‘Keatsian’ Hazlitt,” writes Deborah Elise White, “sympathy with someone or something other than oneself is...the wellspring of communication and the community that communication makes possible” (75).² And, from the “cosmopolitan outlook,” communication and community transcended national boundaries; as Anne Mellor notes, for the Romantics “cross-national sympathy functions to establish imagined communities...[and] affirm a heterogeneous population” (293).³

² However, this “Keatsian” Hazlitt, White shows, does not attend to the full complexity of Hazlitt’s “disinterest.”

³ See also April Alliston’s claim that “Sympathy frequently marks a crossing between imperial nation-states, particularly the British and the French, as well as within them—between the metropolitan centers and the resistant margins of each” (137); and, for another reading of sympathetic cosmopolitanism that endorses and expands Alliston’s formulation, see Craciun.

Even as Keats opposed his “poetical Character” to the Wordsworthian poet-figure, however, he seems to express an uncertainty about the threat that the poetical character’s *lack of character* poses to the self, writing “not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature?” (*Letters* 228). As John Whale notes: “For Keats’s society, to have a character is to be in possession of an achieved ethical selfhood. So, to remove oneself so emphatically from such a notion is to risk being considered immoral” (*John Keats* 117). Similarly, Laurence Lockridge identifies Keats’s “anxiety that his own capacity for *moral* disinterestedness is limited by the same *aesthetic* disinterestedness... describe[d] as the poetical character” (“Keats” 168-9), a point which is echoed in Jacques Khalip’s argument that “Keats's exaggerated vulnerability confronts the difficulties of discriminating between aesthetically becoming another and being suffocated by one's absorption of the perceived values of others” (899).

According to Khalip, Hazlitt’s notion of “sympathy” “had become oversaturated and burdensome for Keats.... How can poetic sympathy be accomplished, Keats seems to ask, when persons no longer exist?” (886-7). Equally “burdensome,” I would add, was the cosmopolitan vision tied to this sympathy. In an 1819 letter to Mariana Jeffrey concerning her advice that Keats turn down a post as a medic aboard an East Indiaman, Keats writes:

Your advice about the Indiaman is a very wise advice, because it just suits me, though you are a little in the wrong concerning its destroying the energies of Mind: on the contrary it would be the finest thing in the world to strengthen them—To be thrown among people who care not for you,

with whom you have no sympathies forces the Mind upon its own resources, and leaves it free to make its speculations of the differences of human character and to class them with the calmness of a Botanist. An Indiaman is a little world. (*Letters* 346)

The absence of sympathetic identification that Keats anticipates is a marker of failed cosmopolitanism, not least because the company aboard the Indiaman, with whom Keats would have had “no sympathies,” would have been a diverse “little world,” including numerous Scots, Indians, and Chinese, and, increasingly, men of different social classes (Bowen 269-72).⁴ But if the figure of the “Botanist” arises from a sense of alienation, standing alone like some William Wordsworth, it nevertheless speculates on “the differences of human character,” exhibiting a disinterest characteristic of the cosmopolite rather than the self-interested egotist. It is an ambivalent figure, one that represents the difficulty of taking a position within the nineteenth-century discourse of cosmopolitanism.

The same year he wrote the “Indiaman” letter, Keats wrote his five great odes, including the “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” which, I want to suggest, similarly confronts the embattled concept of cosmopolitanism. According to James Chandler, Keats’s turn to Ancient Greece reflects his “would-be cosmopolitan[ism],” his effort to keep up with the “fashionable appetite for antiquity” (275). However, Keats’s poetic position-taking aims beyond the divisive political ideologies that surrounded cosmopolitan discourse, toward

⁴ It is worth noting that the cosmopolitics of sympathy is, to some extent, already a troubled idea for Hazlitt. In a revealing passage in *Table Talk*, he writes: “There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off” (81). In “deserts of Arabia” or contemplating the Egyptian pyramids, Hazlitt tells us, “one seems a species by one’s-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support” (82). This “fellowship and support” must come not from the native Egyptian or Arab but from “friends and countrymen”: sympathy—and we saw this in *Alastor* as well—finds its limits in the other, who elicits “an involuntary antipathy.”

absolute universality. This position is established in the poem's opening apostrophe, a device which, as J. Douglas Kneale writes, "always depends on a pre-text" (144). As an apostrophe, the invocation—"Thou still unravished bride..." (1)—entails a turning (*strophe*) away from that which precedes the text, in this case the prevalent debates over aesthetic and ethical value.⁵ Refusing to engage in these debates—or rather, engaging by not engaging—"Ode on a Grecian Urn" claims a transcendent truth, the substance of which is articulated in the famous last lines: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." Here, Keats imaginatively reorganizes the cultural field into a cosmopolitan community of aesthetic subjects, i.e. a community whose cosmopolitanism is grounded in its shared capacity for aesthetic appreciation.

This mode of appreciation is essentially disinterested, though "disinterest" here is thus less the kind of "burdensome" negation of the self that Keats derives from Hazlitt than the "Kantian flavor, [which] had become successfully incorporated into much late eighteenth-century philosophical thought, gesturing to diverse aesthetic, social, and political structures of critical detachment" (Khalip 885). That which occasions this kind of disinterested judgment is the beautiful, which Kant distinguishes from the "the good" and "the agreeable," both of which are always "coupled with interest." The difference between the two is that they represent different kinds of interest, which correspond to two different modes of non-aesthetic, i.e. non-disinterested, judgment, namely the judgment of the agreeable and the judgment of the good. Kant exemplifies the distinction in his

⁵ Kneale calls attention to the persistently overlooked function of apostrophe *qua aversio*, arguing that "[t]he current problem with apostrophe stems from associating it with voice rather than with a movement of voice" (142). Taking issue with Jonathan Culler's suggestion that apostrophe serves as a source of critical embarrassment, Kneale goes to great lengths to reclaim the rhetorical figure as a sort of kinetic force, active, dynamic. See also Culler's original essay, "Apostrophe," especially 61, as well as his later essay "Reading Lyric."

hypothetical response to the question of “whether I consider that palace I see before me [to be] beautiful”:

I may reply in the same strain as that Iroquois *sachem* who said that nothing in Paris pleased him better than the eating-houses. [...] Or...I may quite easily persuade myself that if I found myself on an uninhabited island, without hope of ever coming among men, and could conjure such a palace into existence by a mere wish, I should still not trouble to do so, so long as I had a hut there that was comfortable enough for me. All this may be admitted and approved; only it is not the point now at issue. All one wants to know is whether the mere representation of the object is to my liking, no matter how indifferent I may be to the real existence of the object of this representation. (CJ 43)

Interest in the good is interest in the fidelity of the object to its concept. Thus in the second example above judgment is fundamentally based on whether the palace is good with respect to a given concept, specifically the concept of shelter: the indifference of the subject in this instance is based upon the assumption that the palace serves a specific function as (comfortable) shelter, which, given that the palace is faithful enough to the this function, means nevertheless that it is indistinguishable from any other object that might serve the same purpose, a hut for example. In this sense judgment of the good is based upon a notion of instrumentality.⁶ To judge the palace as less pleasing than the eating-houses of Paris, by contrast, is to delight in the gratification of the senses—the

⁶ It should be said that Kant does distinguish between that which is good for us, or useful, and that which is good in itself, that which is seemingly purposeless. With both the good-for-us and the good-in-itself, however, delight in the good is motivated by interest: “In both cases the concept of an end is implied, and consequently the relation of reason to (at least possible) willing, and thus a delight in the *existence* of an Object or action, i.e. some interest or other” (CJ 46).

agreeable. Such delight is not derived from reflection but is based purely upon the sensation of the object, the way this sensation either pleases or displeases the subject. It is purely subjective: the objective qualities of the palace, or of the eating-houses for that matter, are ignored in favor of those qualities that serve the immediate interests of the subject.

To judge with disinterest is to reproduce neither the indifference of the island recluse, who mistakes his lack of concern about the “real existence” of the object for aesthetic disinterest, nor the in-difference of the Iroquois, i.e. the sachem’s comical failure to distinguish between the eating-houses and the food. Kant’s disinterest is, in this sense, a radical negation of indifference. Tobin Siebers, along these lines, argues that “objects of beauty present us with the experience of ‘otherness’” (“Kant and...Politics” 35); aware of the perverseness of this argument, he continues, “It will be countered, I suppose, that the aesthetic experience of otherness defines not the beautiful but the sublime, which is apparently a more radical vision of difference. And yet...[t]he feeling of otherness provided by the sublime belongs exclusively to the realm of thought; it has no physical manifestation. Which is the more radical conception of otherness, one may legitimately ask, the imagined otherness of the sublime or the embodied difference of beauty?” (36). For Keats, as for Kant, disinterested judgment preserves the alterity of the beautiful.

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” opposes to the ideal of disinterested judgment, which it arrives at by the end of the poem, the subjective interest of the lyric voice, which yearns for understanding. What is crucial about the ode in this respect is, to put it simply, that it is an ode, i.e. that it is “constructed,” in the words of Russian-formalist Yuri Tynianov,

“as if it were an act of oratory” (Shukman 567).⁷ From the outset, the poem foregrounds its voice-based aesthetic—Andrew Bennett describes it as “extradiagetic,” suggesting that “the poet is standing outside the story in order to make general comments” (*Keats* 138)—which situates the ode within lyrical consciousness of the speaker: poetic voice is indistinguishable from subjectivity.

The possibilities and limitations of this voice are considered in the opposition between the poem and the urn, which is lyricized at the beginning:

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

(1-4)

The opening line privilege the urn's expressive silence over the lyrical voice, yet they do so less definitively, perhaps, than does the second part of the stanza. That is, where the poem's opening suggests a difference in degree between the urn's expression and that of the poem—it expresses “more sweetly”—lines 6-10 suggest through the use of interrogatives a more radical difference:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

⁷ For a more historically-attuned discussion of the ode as genre, see Teich, especially 107, where he notes that “[a]s a genre, *ode* was gradually subsumed by the rising modern tide of *poem*, conceived as lyric self-expression.” Importantly, this conception was still largely bound to the genre in the early-nineteenth century.

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

In its silence, the urn contains a knowledge that lyric poetry can only express as lack of certainty, as that which exists just beyond the reach of language. Here the poetic voice is presented as, in the words of the “Negative Capability” letter, “reaching after fact and reason,” while the urn is “capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts” (*Letters* 72). Or, in Kantian terms, the urn’s purposiveness [*Zweckmäßigkeit*] is opposed to the lyric’s search for purpose [*Zweck*].

The urn’s purposiveness is thematized in the tale it narrates, which is not just “flowery,” but also *flowering*, nascent, potential. The “Fair youth” who “canst not leave” in line 15 (the intransitivity of “leave” is suggested by the line break here, which suspends the transitive function of the verb until the direct object, “Thy song,” is introduced in the following line) is not ultimately limited by the stillness of the scene, frozen for eternity by the urn; rather, “canst” suggests that the success of the urn is its enabling the “Fair youth” to remain. In other words, that the youth “canst not leave” means not simply that he is stuck, but that he able to not leave—it is, unlike the generations that “shall...waste” in line 46, eternal.

The relative failures of the lyric voice compared to the urn’s silence are suggested at the end of stanza 3:

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy’d,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

(28-30)

Generally read as introducing a contrast between the pains of human love and the ideal of a love untouched by time, these lines seem to me to reflect also the speaker's poetic pursuit of truth, his effort to give voice to the purposiveness of beauty.⁸ The "parching tongue" is not merely, as the *OED* entry for "parching" suggests, "parched" (Keats's ode is one of the five examples of this meaning of the word), but also actively parching, scorching the scene before the speaker's eyes. It is the speaker's "tongue"—the desire to make present the other in language—that in representing the object, dries up the eternal life of the urn.

The alternative to this mode of attention is introduced in the final stanza, where the lyric voice is disrupted:

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

(46-50)

The interruption in the monologic quality of the poem here is not simply a matter of the urn speaking, a matter which is by no means certain anyhow.⁹ For even if we agree with Helen Vendler that "the whole last sentence of the poem is the sentence of the speaker who, in his prophecy, recounts what the urn will say to succeeding generations" (134),

⁸ For "standard" approaches to these lines, see for example Stillinger 255 and De Almeida 130.

⁹ Between the publication of the ode in the *Annals of Fine Arts* and its eventual appearance in *Lamia* (the publication of which was likely not overseen by the then-ill Keats), quotation marks were added from "Beauty" to "beauty," suggesting that the epigram is spoken by the urn, the rest by the poet. Stillinger's edition (used here) reveals the editor's implicit argument that the entirety of the last two lines belong to the urn, but arguments against this approach have been voiced for decades. For a useful summary of the controversy surrounding these lines, see Garber 671-6.

the last stanza establishes the situation of the reader outside the text. That is, at the end the speaker and the urn may become confused, but only in relation to a third, a presumed reader. Along these lines, W.J.T. Mitchell writes:

The ekphrastic poet typically stands in a middle position between the object described or addressed and a listening subject who...will be made to “see” the object through the medium of the poet's voice. Ekphrasis is stationed between two “othernesses”.... (*Picture Theory* 164)

Whether the voice at the end is that of the speaker or the urn, it establishes the position of the reader outside the text. The reader is identified by his alterity, his “otherness” in relation to the speaker, the poet, and the poem.

Or rather *we*, Keats's imagined community of readers, are identified as such: the “all” that ends the penultimate line suggests not only “all/Ye know,” but also *what ye all know*, across all geography (what all *on earth* know) and time (whereas this generation shall waste, the urn “shalt remain”). What binds one generation to the next is not sympathetic identification, but a universal alienation: it is the shared encounter with the limits of knowledge, the shared capacity for aesthetic experience, the ability to meet the alterity of the beautiful with disinterest that forges from individual subjects a community. When we feel other we take our place within the cosmopolitical order of man. In this sense, the final lines read like something of an ethical imperative, one echoed in Keats's letter to Benjamin Bailey, in which he writes, “Beauty *must be* truth” (*Letters* 67, my italics): the disinterested, aesthetic experience of difference must be universal, must connect one man to another, one culture to another, one generation to the next.

As a reflection on aesthetic encounter, then, the “Ode on a Grecian Urn” revises

the models put forth in earlier ekphrastic pieces such as “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles” and “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer,” both published in 1817. Both of those meditations on the art of Ancient Greece (mediated, in the case of the latter, by a translator) remain in the subjective, lyrical mode that we see complicated at the end of the “Grecian Urn” poem. In both poems the reader’s alterity is a private one, the act of reading a solitary one. The reader is not asked to enter the world of readers, only to consume the text “like stout Cortez...with eagle eyes” (“Chapman’s Homer, l. 11) or be consumed by it, overwhelmed “Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky” (“Elgin Marbles” l. 5). Just as the speaker establishes through simile a sympathetic relationship with the other, to see “with eagle eyes” or with the eyes of an “Eagle,” so the reader is tied through sympathetic bonds to the speaker.

It is this kind of approach to the text that underlies current models of “cosmopolitan reading,” which, as I will discuss below, might be reexamined as Keats seems to have reexamined the ethics of reading in the “Ode on a Grecian Urn.”

II. Cosmopolitan Reading and the Romantic Canon

In recent years critics such as Martha Nussbaum and Richard Rorty have discussed the role of reading as part of what Rorty calls “sentimental education...[that] gets people of different kinds sufficiently well acquainted with one another that they are less tempted to think of those different from themselves as only quasi-human” (176). As Joseph Slaughter has shown, both Rorty and Nussbaum recuperate in their approaches the eighteenth-century vision of sympathetic, imaginative identification articulated by Adam

Smith and others, encouraging us to imagine the suffering of other peoples (Slaughter 93). The problem with such approaches, I would suggest, might be thought of as one of interested judgment: we *desire* from the text insight into other cultures. However well-intentioned this desire may be, it nevertheless compels us to place our subjective interest before the other—we define the terms by which we engage with our others according to our own interests.¹⁰

As an alternative, Appiah has promoted a “dialogic universalism,” arguing that “[c]osmopolitan reading is *worthwhile* because there can be common conversations about...shared objects...[and] *possible* because those conversations are possible” (224). Dialogue here takes the place of the essentially monologic nature of sentimental education; no longer do we speak for the other, determining the grounds of reading, but rather we speak with others. Without invoking Kant, Appiah argues that what unites us is our capacity for aesthetic judgment, though he describes this as “the capacity to follow a narrative and conjure a world” (ibid). On the one hand, then, Appiah usefully moves us away from a sentimentalism that seems inevitably tied to subjective interest, toward a disinterested form of judgment as the basis of an aesthetic community.

On the other hand, Appiah’s universalism does not attend to the fact that the “conversations” he envisions rarely occur on equal terms: there are, of course, privileged responses to “shared objects,” and many if not most conversations are one-sided. For even as cosmopolitan dialogues sustain Kant’s “hope of coming to terms,” they also sustain struggle within and across cultures. Along similar lines, Appiah suggests that

¹⁰ About the relationship between desire and interest (we will recall that both delight in the good and in the agreeable are bound up with desire) Kant writes, “[interested] delight...always involves a reference to the faculty of desire, either as its determining ground, or else as necessarily implicated with its determining ground” (CJ 42).

source of these objects is less important than the conversations that they foster: literature, he tells us, “is always a message in a bottle from some other position, even if it was published last week in your hometown” (223). Art seems to alienate us all equally, and its cultural roots are therefore arbitrary to its reception. This is in keeping with Appiah’s critique of “cultural roots” as a critical concept more generally: “If we are going to do cultural studies,” he implores, “let us at least do it without cultures” (ibid).

Much of the problem here goes away, if we simply move Appiah’s observations, the non-imploing ones, into the imperative voice: read as if the aesthetic object were radically other, “a message...from some other position.” As something to strive for, “dialogical universalism” and its egalitarian ideals seem to me absolutely worth pursuing. And yet, perhaps we can only pursue these ends by first acknowledging the fact of cultural struggle as that which constitutes the aesthetic community, local, national, or international. Perhaps we need to identify the various forms of dominance within such communities, even when these forms of dominance are grounded in a discourse about something as arbitrary as “culture.” And, perhaps for this reason there is something to be said for attending particularly to historically marginalized literatures, what Wlad Godzich calls “emergent literatures...[which] cannot be readily comprehended within the hegemonic view of literature that has been dominant in our discipline” (35). These literatures, Godzich continues, “will include writings by racial and ethnic minorities in countries such as the United States; literature by women in, let us say, Italy, France, or Australia; as well as much of the new writing from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including the Caribbean” (ibid).

But this also means we must look at those works that have been culturally

dominant, works which reflect the “winning” side of cultural/cross-cultural struggle. We must examine those works that have been privileged in order to understand the structures of privilege that stand between us and truly universal dialogue. For when we look at canonical texts, we see works through the lens of received narratives, problematic narratives of cultural ownership, nationalist commitments, ideologies of belonging that frustrate long-term cosmopolitan ideals. No narrative, perhaps, is more powerful, more hegemonic than that which is suggested by the last lines of Keats’s ode. That art provides access to universal truths, truths that tell us who we are as citizens and men, is the very essence of the “Romantic ideology” that McGann has identified.

But if the ode is instructive because it reminds us of the power of literature to establish and reinforce sometimes ideologically fraught cultural narratives, it also shows us how to resist these narratives. Indeed, one of lessons of Keats’s ode is that narratives get lost in translation: about the “little town” depicted on the ode, Keats writes: “thy streets for evermore/Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell/Why thou art desolate, can e’er return” (38-40). What earlier was idealized about the urn, its expressive silence, is now lamented, as sweet and unheard melodies give way to desolation. The scene loses its sense of potentiality; “canst not leave,” with its purposive stillness, becomes “not a soul.../...can e’er return.” And so it is the lyric voice rather than the narrative that ultimately restores the reading community; it is the voice of the urn or the speaker turned toward the audience that calls to us to engage with the text and with other readers.

And, in a self-reflexive way, the canonical—or as James O’Rourke calls it “hypercanonical”—ode shows us how the canon can unwork the logic of canonicity that

shapes our practices of reading.¹¹ For, precisely because of their inclusion within the literary canon, what we call “great works” continually reorganize the cultural field, establish new relations between subjects, even if these relationships often tend to look familiar. What looks like a stagnant tradition in which individual works are passed down through generations of readers is in fact a dynamic process, one in which readers actively participate. For this reason, a new take on an old work—an urn, say, or an ode upon an urn—is, or might be, a new way of imagining the social world, a new way of piecing together “culture” from materials that remain sound—“true”—despite years of use. Changing reading practices are, of course, symptomatic of changing historical conditions—as I have tried to suggest throughout this project, the search for truth in art arises from cultural struggles particular to the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. At the same time, however, reading changes the conditions of history; it makes things happen. I think Keats was counting on this when he penned his ode, claiming truth by producing beauty and imagining whole new readerships yet to be born.

¹¹ On the ode and “hypercanonicity,” see not only O’Rourke’s piece, but also the other essays included in his issue of *The Romantic Circles Praxis Series* (October 2003).

WORKS CITED

- Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Ed. Gretel Adorno, and Rolf Tiedeman
Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Alliston, April. "Transnational Sympathies, Imaginary Communities." *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel*. Eds. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002. 133-48.
- Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Cosmopolitan Reading." *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*. Ed. Vinay Dharwadker. New York: Routledge, 2001. 197-227.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Ed. Ronald Beiner. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982.
- . *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin, 1993.
- Bainbridge, Simon. *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Ballantine, James. *The Life of David Roberts, R. A.* Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1866.
- Barrell, John. *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1991.

- Bauer, Josephine. *The London Magazine, 1820-29*. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1953.
- Baumgarten, Murray. "Staging the Ruins: David Roberts's Paintings of the Holy Land and Charles Dickens' London Theatre of Homelessness." *Homes and Homelessness in the Victorian Imagination*. Eds. Murray Baumgarten and H. M. Daleski. New York: AMS P, 1998. 127-66.
- Behrendt, Stephen C. *Shelley and His Audiences*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989.
- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.
- Bennett, Andrew. *Keats, Narrative, and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- . *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Birns, Nicholas. "Secrets of the Birth of Time: The Rhetoric of Cultural Origins in Alastor and 'Mont Blanc'." *Studies in Romanticism* 32.3 (1993): 339-65.
- Blake, William. "The Tyger." *Selected Poems*. London: Penguin, 2005. 121.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.
- . *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Trans. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Bowen, H. V. *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.

- Burke, Edmund, and J. G. A. Pocock. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987.
- Butler, Marilyn. *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Canuel, Mark. *Religion, Toleration, and British Writing, 1790-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Chandler, James K. *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998.
- Chilcott, Tim. "De Quincey and the London Magazine." *Charles Lamb Bulletin N.S.* 1 (1973): 9-19.
- Chow, Rey. *Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998.
- Clej, Alina. *A Genealogy of the Modern Self: Thomas De Quincey and the Intoxication of Writing*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995.
- Colbert, Benjamin. *Shelley's Eye: Travel Writing and Aesthetic Vision*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. John Shawcross. Oxford: The Clarendon P, 1907.
- . "Kubla Khan: Or, a Vision in a Dream." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*. Ed. William Keach. London: Penguin, 1997. 249-52.
- . "Fears in Solitude." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*. Ed. William Keach. London: Penguin, 1997. 239-44.
- Colley, Linda. *Britons Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Pimlico, 2003.

- Cox, Jeffrey N. "Keats in the Cockney School." *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism* 2.1 (1996): 27-39.
- . *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt, and Their Circle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Craciun, Adriana. "Citizens of the World: Émigrés, Romantic Cosmopolitanism, and Charlotte Smith." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 29.2: 169-85.
- Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge.: MIT P, 1990.
- Cronin, Richard. *The Politics of Romantic Poetry: In Search of the Pure Commonwealth*. Houndmills and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 2000.
- Culler, Jonathan. "Apostrophe." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 7.4 (1977): 59-69.
- . "Reading Lyric." *Yale French Studies* 69 (1985): 98-106.
- De Almeida, Hermione. *Romantic Medicine and John Keats*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.
- De Quincey, Thomas. *De Quincey's Works*. Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1897.
- . *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater and Other Writings*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- . "On Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth." *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater and Other Writings*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 81-5.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema I*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1986.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Truth in Painting*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.
- Duffy, Cian. "'His Canaille of an Audience': Thomas De Quincey and the Revolution in

Reading." *Studies in Romanticism* 44.1 (2005): 7-22.

Ferry, Luc. *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. Ed. James D. Faubion. New York: New Press, 1998.

---, et al. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1988.

Garber, Marjorie. "' ' (Quotation Marks)." *Critical Inquiry* 25.4 (1999): 653-79.

Godzich, Wlad. *The Culture of Literacy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1994.

Guyer, Paul. *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Haney, David P. *The Challenge of Coleridge: Ethics and Interpretation in Romanticism and Modern Philosophy*. U Park: Penn State UP, 2001.

Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. *Getting It Right: Language, Literature, and Ethics*. Chicago: U Of Chicago P, 1992.

Hazlitt, William. *Selected Essays of William Hazlitt, 1778 to 1830*. Ed. Geoffrey Keynes. Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004.

Jago, Eva-Lynn Alicia. "Degrading Forms of Pantomime: Englishness and Shame in De Quincey." *Studies in Romanticism* 44.1 (2005): 23-40.

Jones, Mark. "Alarmism, Public-Sphere Performatives, and the Lyric Turn; or, What Is 'Fears in Solitude' Afraid Of?" *boundary* 2.30.3 (2003): 67-105.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's P, 1965.

---. *The Critique of Judgement*. Trans. James Creed Meredith. Oxford: Clarendon P,

1973.

---. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. Trans. John T. Goldthwait.

Berkeley: U of California P, 1981.

Karatani, Kojin. *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 2003.

Kaufman, Robert. "Everybody Hates Kant: Blakean Formalism and the Symmetries of

Laura Moriarty." *MLQ* 61.1 (March 2000). 131-55.

Keach, William. *Shelley's Style*. New York: Methuen, 1984.

Keats, John. *The Letters of John Keats*. Ed. Maurice Buxton Forman. London: Oxford

UP, 1948.

---. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Jack Stillinger. Cambridge:

Belknap, 1978. 372-3.

---. "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Jack

Stillinger. Cambridge: Belknap, 1978. 64.

---. "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles." *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Jack Stillinger.

Cambridge: Belknap, 1978. 93.

Khalip, Jacques. "Virtual Conduct: Disinterested Agency in Hazlitt and Keats." *ELH* 73.4

(2006): 885-912.

Klancher, Jon. "Discriminations, or Romantic Cosmopolitanisms." *Romantic Metropolis:*

The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840. Eds. James Chandler and Kevin

Gilmartin. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 65-82.

Klancher, Jon P. *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832*. Madison: U of

Wisconsin P, 1987.

Kneale, J. Douglas. "Romantic Aversions: Apostrophe Reconsidered." *ELH* 58.1 (1991):

141-65.

- Kooy, Michael John. "Romanticism and Coleridge's Idea of History." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60.4 (1999): 717-35.
- Krishnan, Sanjay. *Reading the Global: Troubling Perspectives on Britain's Empire in Asia*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, and Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1988.
- Larkin, Peter. "'Fears in Solitude': Reading (from) the Dell." *The Wordsworth Circle* 22.1 (1991): 11-14.
- Lazarus, Neil, et al. "The Necessity of Universalism." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 7.1 (1995): 75-145.
- Leask, Nigel. *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- . "'Wandering through Eblis': Absorption and Containment in Romantic Exoticism." *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780- 1830*. Ed. Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 164-88.
- Lee, Debbie. *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002.
- Leonard, Philip. "Spivak after Derrida after Marx." *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 5.1 (2005): 21.
- Levinson, Marjorie. *Keats's Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.
- Llewellyn, Briony. "Roberts's Pictures of the near East." *David Roberts*. Ed. Helen

- Guiterman and Briony Llewellyn. London: Phaedon, 1986. 69-87.
- Lo, Francis. "Southey, Shelley and the Orientalist Quest: Geography and Genre." *European Journal of English Studies* 6.2 (2002): 143-58.
- Lockridge, Laurence S. *The Ethics of Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- . "Keats: The Ethics of Imagination." *Coleridge, Keats, and the Imagination: Romanticism and Adam's Dream*. Eds. J. Robert S. J. Barth and John L. Mahoney. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1990. 143-73.
- Lowe, Lisa. *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.
- Magnuson, Paul. "The Shaping of 'Fears of Solitude'." *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination Today*. Ed. Christine Gallant. New York: AMS, 1989. 197-210.
- Makdisi, Saree. *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Makdisi, Saree Samir. "Shelley's Alastor: Travel Beyond the Limit." *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844*. Ed. Amanda Gilroy. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. 240-57.
- Marx, Karl and. Friedrich Engels. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker New York: Norton, 1978.
- McDonagh, Josephine. *De Quincey's Disciplines*. Oxford: Clarendon P 1994.
- McGann, Jerome J. *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983.
- Mellor, Anne K. "Embodied Cosmopolitanism and the British Romantic Woman Writer." *European Romantic Review* 17.3 (2006): 289-300.

- Mitchell, W. J. Thomas. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- . *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- Morrison, Robert. "Red De Quincey." *Wordsworth Circle* 29.2 (1998): 131-36.
- Newlyn, Lucy. *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Newman, Gerald. *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1720-1830*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1987.
- North, Julian. *De Quincey Reviewed: Thomas De Quincey's Critical Reception, 1821-1994*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996.
- O'Rourke, James, ed. *'Ode on a Grecian Urn': Hypercanonicity & Pedagogy*. College Park: U of Maryland, 2003.
- Perry, Curtis. "Piranesi's Prison: Thomas De Quincey and the Failure of Autobiography." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33.4 (1993): 809-24.
- Pidgley, Michael. "Travel, Topography and Prints." *David Roberts*. Ed. Helen Guiterman and Briony Llewellyn. London: Phaedon, 1986. 47-67.
- Pireddu, Nicoletta. "'Portable Ecstasies': The Rhetoric of Opium in De Quincey's Autobiography." *Etudes Anglaises: Grande-Bretagne, Etats-Unis* 48.3 (1995): 268-75.
- Plotz, John. *The Crowd: British Literature and Public Politics*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 2000.
- Quigley, Jane. *David Roberts, R.A.: As a Water-Colour Painter* London: Walker's Galleries, 1923.

- Rajan, Tilottama. *The Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Redfield, Marc. "Imagi-Nation: The Imagined Community and the Aesthetics of Mourning." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 29.4 (1999): 58-83.
- Renié, Pierre-lin. "The Battle for a Market: Art Reproductions in Print and Photography from 1850-1880." *Intersections: Lithography, Photography, and the Traditions of Printmaking*. Ed. Kathleen Stewart Howe. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1998. 41-54.
- Roe, Nicholas. *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997.
- Rorty, Richard. *Truth and Progress*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Rzepka, Charles J. *Sacramental Commodities: Gift, Text, and the Sublime in De Quincey*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1995.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" And Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Schor, Naomi. "French Feminism Is a Universalism." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 7.1 (1995): 15-47.
- Sharafuddin, Mohammed. *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient*. London New York: Tauris, 1994.
- Shaviro, Steven. "'Striving with Systems': Blake and the Politics of Difference." *Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 10.3 (1982): 229-50.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "Adonais." *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman

- and Sharon B. Powers. New York: Norton, 1977. 388.
- . "Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude." *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers. New York: Norton, 1977. 69-87.
- . "A Defence of Poetry." *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers. New York: Norton, 1977. 478-508.
- Shukman, Ann. "The Ode as an Oratorical Genre." *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 34.3 (2003): 565-96.
- Siebers, Tobin. "Kant and the Politics of Beauty." *Philosophy and Literature* 22.1 (1998): 31-50.
- Sim, Katharine. *David Roberts R.A., 1796-1864: A Biography*. London: Quartet Books, 1984.
- Simpson, David. "The Limits of Cosmopolitanism and the Case for Translation." *European Romantic Review* 16.2 (2005): 141-52.
- Simpson, Michael. "The Morning (Post) After: Apocalypse and Bathos in Coleridge's 'Fears in Solitude'." *Romanticism and Millenarianism*. Ed. Tim Fulford. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 71-86.
- Slaughter, Joseph. "Humanitarian Reading." *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*. Eds. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. 88-107.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.
- . *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. New York: Routledge, 1990.

- St. Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Stillinger, Jack. "The 'Story' of Keats." *The Cambridge Companion to Keats*. Ed. Susan J. Wolfson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 246-60.
- Sudan, Rajani. "Englishness 'A'muck': De Quincey's Confessions." *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 27.4 (1994): 377-94.
- Sutherland, Kathryn. "Events...Have Made Us a World of Readers: Reader Relations 1780-1830." *The Penguin History of Literature: The Romantic Period*. Ed. David B. Pirie. London: Penguin, 1994. 1-48.
- Teich, Nathaniel. "The Ode in English Literary History: Transformations from the Mid-Eighteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century." *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 21.1 (1985): 88-108.
- Trivedi, Harish. *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India*. New ed. Manchester ; New York: Manchester UP, 1995.
- Turhan, Filiz. "'Unlettered Tartars' and 'Torpid Barbarians': Teaching the Figure of the Turk in Shelley and De Quincey." *Interrogating Orientalism: Contextual Approaches and Pedagogical Practices*. Eds. Diane Long Hoeveler and Jeffrey Cass. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2006. 182-97.
- Vendler, Helen Hennessy. *The Odes of John Keats*. Cambridge: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1983.
- Wasserman, Earl R. *Shelley: A Critical Reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1971.
- Weber, Samuel. "The Foundering of Aesthetics: Thoughts on the Current State of

Comparative Literature." *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice*. Eds. Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes.

Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988. 57-72.

Whale, John C. "'In a Stranger's Ear': De Quincey's Polite Magazine Context." *Thomas De Quincey: Bicentenary Studies*. Ed. Robert Lance Snyder. U of Oklahoma P, Norman, 1985. 35-53.

---. *Imagination under Pressure, 1789-1832: Aesthetics, Politics, and Utility*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000.

---. *John Keats*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005.

White, Deborah Elise. *Romantic Returns: Superstition, Imagination, History*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000.

Zerilli, Linda. "This Universalism Which Is Not One." *Diacritics* 28.2 (Summer 1998): 3-20.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989.