

Spring 1-1-2004

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From Virtue to Sympathy: Perspectives in Eighteenth and Nineteenth
Century British Literature on the Disintegration of the Social Bond

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty

of the

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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March 5, 2004

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Dissertation Title From Virtue to Sympathy: Perspectives in Eighteenth and
Nineteenth Century British Literature on the Disintegration
of the Social Bond

Degree Doctor of Philosophy in English

Date March 5, 2004

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Acknowledgments

This dissertation is more than the product of the last several years of research and thought. It represents the coming together of many influences over quite a few years and the encouragement of fine friends, family, colleagues, and teachers past and present. Its development has been influenced by the work of four scholars, in particular, whose critical methods and historical understanding have had a significant impact on my thinking and on my own approach to literature. I am indebted to Gertrude Himmelfarb, David Marshall, John K. Chandler, and Marion Montgomery for their scholarship and intellectual brilliance. Having just recently discovered John E. Crowley's wonderful *The Invention of Comfort*, I anticipate expanding this group to five.

I would like to thank John Murphy and Kathryn Douglass, once of Merimack College in Andover, Massachusetts – John for teaching his students how to read a text, and Kathryn, through her appreciation of the Romantic poets, for preparing me – as well as any one could – for the force that was Frances Chivers. I would like to thank the late Dr. Chivers not only for her insights into Wordsworth and Coleridge, but also for a seemingly insignificant comment she made. Ten years after I had taken her graduate Romantic Poetry course, when she, my husband, and I were talking about Book VI of *The Prelude*, she was shocked to be reminded that she had given me a B+ instead of an A. I still relish her reappraisal. More recently, while I was preparing for my oral examinations, Susan Howard made a very brief comment, one for which I am indebted. While I was very doubtful about being able to say something meaningful about Wordsworth, she encouraged me to select the dissertation topic that I was truly interested in, rather than one that might be more expeditious.

I would like to thank Jay Keenan for reading *The Essay on Man* with me and proving that Alexander Pope can still be relevant, as well as Sam Tindall for his grace and tender attention to all students. A more perfect Mr. Harding could not be found. To the readers of this dissertation, Anne Brannen and Albert Labriola, I am indebted for their willingness to take on a project somewhat distant from their own fields. Finally, I truly appreciate the constant encouragement that Daniel Watkins, director for this dissertation, has given me. Had he not prodded me into “just sitting in” on his drama course more than ten years ago, I very well might not have reached this point. I am also most grateful for his openness to and respect for critical approaches that are different from his own.

I would like to thank my colleagues Gary Smith and Lynda Barner West for creating some time and space for me to work during the last six months, and Edith Benzinger for her wit and her unfailing ability to rise above all the chaos and commotion of academic life and to occasionally take me with her.

Finally, I give my greatest thanks to my two brilliant daughters, Christa and Saskia, who, through their own graduate programs, understand the kind of task this has been and who, through their generous good will, not only allowed but encouraged me to finish first. And to my husband, counselor, and friend, Bernard, whose merry heart and whose daily acts of kindness and love have had no slight influence. They restore and sustain me.

Introduction

Sympathy is a term widely used and assumed in the study of British literature and philosophy, particularly that of the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century. The nature of sympathy itself, the source of the sympathetic impulse, the effects of the experience of sympathy on both the observer and the sufferer -- that is the one who first experiences sympathy and the object of that sympathy -- as well as the effects of that sympathy on the larger social community vary subtly but significantly across the period and among its authors. While the word is the same, what is meant by the word, or by actions or feelings that are indications of a "sympathetic" response, can be quite different and suggest varying assumptions about the nature of man, the nature of society or community, or the nature of the universe. For example, one user of the word would refer to sympathy as an ideal to be sought, a virtuous, but externally motivated response based on a set of principles about good and proper action. Another would imply that sympathy is a natural social affection springing out of mankind's active propensity toward benevolent behavior. And a third would see sympathy as an inward psychological experience or imaginative recreation of another person's feelings that may or may not prompt any inward or outward response. These three different understandings of the word, along with others, have widely varying implications that affect how a work of literature can be read and understood. To assume one kind of sympathy while the author has another in mind can result in problems of overall interpretation.

However, work of this kind must come with a certain guardedness or reservations about its conclusions. Philosophers before Kant were often not systematic thinkers. Their approaches to the questions at hand were non-linear discussions, rationales,

interweavings, and, on occasion, contradictions of earlier positions. Adam Smith's work, itself, went through several revisions, and the details of his economic theory, while providing alternatives for the working man who would experience its negative impact and assuming a benevolent overarching hand in the universe, in reality had a significantly negative impact on the formation or continuation of the sympathetic social bond. None of philosophers were empirical, with statistics and quantifiable proof that a modern would want. In addition, the philosophers, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith, particularly the latter three of the Scottish Enlightenment, were writing from a moral "sense" school which allowed for and encouraged discussion, debate, individual freedom to state positions and develop positions outside of normal structures. On the other hand, some of the writers themselves, particularly Bannerman and Yearsley, were not writing from defined and scrutinized philosophical backgrounds rooted in examined and demonstrable evidence, but from experience and observation which would certainly fluctuate given shifts in the political and social environment. And they were writing to make livings, to earn income, which to some extent meant writing constructed to please the reader, to sell. All of this is not to say, however, that no conclusions can be drawn or that this dissertation is a completely speculative exercise. One practical conclusion is that some simple, unexamined assumptions cannot be made about sympathy before closely reading the literature and understanding the larger social and political dynamics. A less practical but nonetheless significant value lies in the knowledge that for an extended period, people believed in the real lived existence of sympathetic interaction, even though they debated its nature, causes, and effects. A third lies in the fact that a whole society respected and affirmed the existence not only of sympathy but also a whole assembly of

“social affections” and “moral virtues” as necessary underpinnings for the social and cultural fabric. Such an affirmation existed as a counterbalance to social and political disorder, the dissolution of individual as well as national identity.

This dissertation does not set out to explore all the varying implications or uses of the concept of sympathy in philosophy or literature during a particular time frame.

Rather, it examines how sympathy works in selected pieces of literature from Pope to Wordsworth in order to suggest: first, that the term is not uniformly used and, in fact, has widely diverging implications about the nature of mankind and individual identity, the possibility for solid social connectedness and likelihood of isolated existence; second, that shifts in the meaning associated with sympathy are intertwined with broader historical upheavals and confidence, or lack thereof, in a universe assumed to have order; third, by implication, that the general shift in the conception of sympathy is another way to illuminate the transition in perception from classic to romantic; and finally, that the movement toward sympathy as an internalized awareness parallels and is concurrent with the development of self history.

This dissertation, then, does not close a door on a particular subject or provide conclusive data on all the literature during one time frame, but opens that door wider for further examination. “Sympathy” has such widely varying implications about world view, individuality and community, and even moral and ethical responsiveness, that knowing what it means precisely makes an absolute difference in the reader’s ability to come closer to evaluating/understanding a work of literature in the context within which it was written. However, an examination of sympathy might also point us toward some better solutions for our own dissolving social structures.

Overview and Statement of the Problem

In general, developments in the literature of the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century tend to place increasing attention on individual experience and greater variety in characters' aims, motives, and desires. Along with this tendency, the literature reflects alterations in the conceptual understanding of benevolence and sympathy that coincide with other significant changes in perspective, particularly a shift in the general understanding of the construction of the world and society. That is, works of the earlier period reflect perspectives and values of a society motivated by similar goals and desires, while those later works tend to portray characters at odds, in limited or more extreme fashion, with the social structures or larger social, political, and economic forces. The literature also reflects a changing awareness of the relationship between the self and history. Characters or the authors' personas first know themselves within a grand design of history with a universal ordering principle; later, they perceive themselves outside of history and submerging themselves in reenvisioned history or in self history. The effect of the shifts in these larger perspectives is to undermine the essential understanding of sympathy as a shared, bonding, and redemptive experience that underlies all possibility for community. For Pope, chief spokesperson of the mid-eighteenth century, benevolence and sympathy represent the primary social affections of a common humanity; however, by the start of the nineteenth century, the operation of sympathy, undermined by revolution, is often hoped for more than experienced and individualized rather than shared. It no longer serves as an underpinning to moral virtue or social bonding or universal harmony. An examination of the varying notions of sympathy in works by Alexander Pope, Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth, Ann

Yearsley, Joanna Baillie, Ann Bannerman, Dorothy Wordsworth, and William Wordsworth from 1730 to 1816 reveals a variety of ways in which an understanding of sympathy changes: from a fully integrated and immediate response within a functioning social structure -- that is, sympathy as idealism -- to a more self defining reaction within the chaotic realities of individual experience.

Understanding the appearance and early development of the concept of sympathy requires an examination of the principal works on moral theory or moral sentiment of four philosophers -- Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith. The similarities among them are quite significant. All of the writers use very similar words throughout their treatises, such as sentiment, moral affection, nature, benevolence, social bond. All of them base their arguments in feeling or sentiment as opposed to reason or religious faith. All of them share a similar motive: they were defining the source and nature and effects of that human response to another person's pain or joy (referred to hereafter primarily in terms of pain or suffering) in principally non-self-interested or egotistical terms as the natural basis for positive social interaction. All believed that the social affections and sympathy could be known through observation and the senses. Finally, all of them were set in opposition to the Hobbes-Mandeville argument that man by nature is motivated solely by egotism and self-interest. This difference could be simplistically set in these terms: the moral sense philosophers claimed that man acted principally out of good will for the other; such a good will was communal and the foundation of society. Hobbes and Mandeville argued that social structures could not exist without the imposition of the absolute control of a monarch to keep self-interested action in check; otherwise, life would be vicious and chaotic.

However, the difference in the “moral sense” writers is a subtle but significant shift of emphasis in the language from the first to the last – from the predominant language of virtue to the language of sympathy, or, in other words, from emphasis on the language of objective moral response to the language of subjective imaginative and internal experience. So this subtle shift becomes a pivotal point in the analysis of human motivation to act in behalf of another. However, it also has ironic implications as to the basis for social structure. While Smith argues that sympathy is the foundation for the formation of social bond and community, his analysis of the nature of sympathy as a separate, distinct, and imaginative individual response undermines that possibility of unifying as one community capable of shared experience. It anticipates the more internalized and distinct “projected” response in which the sympathizer experiences his own feelings rather than the sufferer’s. This shift also has ironic implications for the possibility of some shared agreement on virtuous action, what might be “good” or “bad” action. Once sympathy rests in feeling and feeling becomes personalized response, it no longer acts in support of a system of moral approval or disapproval of actions. In addition, subjectivized sympathy loses its potential for corrective action. Finally, this shift has ironic implications for the sympathizer. Rather than experiencing pleasure from bonding with another or for purely selfless good action, the sympathizer experiences pleasure from the sufferer’s gratitude and his own imaginative process. The expression of sympathy, in fact, becomes an egocentric act that can be potentially without ethical merit.

Later philosophers, psychologists and sociologists, though not the focus of this project, extend the analysis of sympathy to the point where it is defined as that brief

contact between two people which occurs in an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable universe or that completely internalized individual response with no social dimension.

Specific works of literature of the mid eighteenth to early nineteenth century reflect these various aspects of and tensions in the shifting perspective from moral virtue to sympathy. Pope and Edgeworth refer to acts of sympathy as virtuous actions, similar to compassion and benevolence, stemming from an external/internal impulse to right action that does not necessarily include an imaginative recreation of the sufferer's experience. The charitable act is done because that is the right action based both on moral sentiment, the appropriate response to need, and social training. Pope's *Essay on Man and Moral Essays* as well as Maria Edgeworth's essay "On Sympathy and Sensibility" examine virtuous action in terms of how it meshes with a larger scheme of universal or social order. For Jane Austen's *Emma*, the experience of sympathy – an imagined recreation of another's circumstances – is a pastime, entertainment that inverts the proper function of sympathy and strengthening of the social bond. Emma self indulgently plays with Harriet's future until she learns what true benevolence and virtue are.

With revolution, the decline in religious faith, the rise of industrialism, the emergence of science, and expansion of the city -- that is, with the overall dissolution of long stable institutions and perspectives -- later writers employ sympathy as a "mechanism through which sentiments and viewpoints were communicated and shared" (Leever 2). However, a widely shared social connectedness is, in varying degrees, more hoped for than realized. Ann Yearsley's *The Rural Lyre* appeals to the reader for greater social affection and explains how through sympathy and benevolence "it is possible for individuals to have a genuine understanding and concern for others" (Leever 2). Through

these expressions of concern, both the social and national fabric are strengthened. However, with little confidence in sympathy's ability to effect any broad social bond, Baillie's drama *DeMonfort* presents one isolated act of sympathy, Jane's faithful appeal to her brother. It does effect a conversion in the title character, reduce his isolation, and create a bond between two persons, but these come too late for a reuniting with the entire community. Jane's fidelity is but a brief relief or a cultural veneer to what actually appears to be Hobbesian environment, influenced by excessive passion. The world of Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition*, has a pervasive moral ambiguity; sympathy is nonexistent. Not only are there no displays of sympathetic action or interpersonal bonding, but also the characters in the poems are paralyzed, incapable of sympathy or any effective emotional, social, or moral action. In addition, the world of the *Tales* is set outside of any specific historical moment or larger moral order; its overarching motif is Bannerman's reinvention of Arthurian legends in ballad form.

This project does not discuss Wordsworth and sympathy in terms of the much larger scope of imagination, nature, and the creative impulse. That is a thesis in itself. Wordsworth is included because no examination of sympathy can avoid acknowledging his influence on the topic in some way. The distinction between the classic and romantic understanding of sympathy as it is considered here, and connected with Wordsworth, rests in the extent to which sympathy is experienced as an inward sensation and, thus, a progression in the overall development of this project's virtue to sympathy topic. As an inward sensation, Wordsworth's examination of sympathy is more an examination of his own experience rather than the formation of a connecting bond with someone else. Thus, sympathy becomes self history. That is, sympathy goes from its connection with the

concept of virtue -- an observation, identification with, instruction, and social bonding process -- in the earlier works, through the breakdown of that process with the deterioration of social and historical structures, to its identification with self experience -- an observation, identification with, self absorption and self analysis process very evident in Dorothy Wordsworth's "Floating Island" and William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." Sympathy is very different from benevolent virtue and operates in different ways when the sympathizer allows himself to "color the world as a body which is in some sort of war with him" (Montgomery 120). In addition, by concluding with Wordsworth, it is also possible to bring to a conclusion how the varying perceptions of sympathy intersect with the progression from the eighteenth century perspective of man living within a universal order, to living within an historical moment in crisis, to reinventing history, and finally to creating and validating self history.

Wordsworth's emphasis in much of his poetry is on his own self-analysis, so that even in moments where true sympathetic union can be achieved, it is actually skirted. His appeal to Dorothy, a person actually present, in "Tintern Abbey" is short lived, and he turns away from her to an abstraction, but no real action, of "universal love." In this poem, Wordsworth, as he does particularly in *The Prelude* and *Excursion* creates self history. On the other hand, leaving behind self analysis in the conclusion to the final *Salisbury Plain*, Wordsworth reverts to a much more idealistic portrayal of complete and absolute sympathetic action. His townspeople forgive, accept, and reintegrate the criminal back into the community, a response involving not only identification with the sufferer but also virtuous charity and compassion.

This project examines shifting conceptions of sympathy from its association with virtue and the social affections to its inward turning recreation of another's experience to its absorption with self experience. As such, it becomes another way to observe and evaluate the transition from the eighteenth century foundation of belief and conviction to a more isolating analysis of self experience in an age of historical anxiety and of moral ambiguity. This examination of shifts in sympathy reflects the movement toward the modern interior self -- when the desire for individualism and individual experience assumes not merely greater importance than the desire for either virtue or community but becomes the sole value.

Chapter 1 Philosophical Background: Virtue and Sympathy

This chapter provides an overview of four primary philosophers working with virtue and sympathy between 1711 and 1759 -- Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith. The overview creates an historical and intellectual context for the later chapters; points out the shifts from one writer to the next as the theory changes from its basis in virtue and grows in complexity to sympathy as a psychological theory and finally to sympathy as a sociological theory; and suggests various concerns which have implications in reading British literature of the mid and later eighteenth century. The greatest of these concerns is the tension between sympathy theory's primary thrust to create community and its underlying tendency to actually promote greater individualization. On one hand, sympathy theory describes how individuals have genuine concern for others; on the other hand, as it develops particularly with Smith, one key element in sympathy theory focuses more on the separateness between the sufferer and the sympathizer. The second concern is the impact that the shift from objective virtue to a

subjective sympathy as a basis for action has on the individual character, his motives for action, and the whole social fabric.

Each subsequent chapter looks at some different aspect of the virtue-sympathy relationship. The term sympathy as Shaftesbury, Pope, and Edgeworth use it is not what it comes to be in Baillie and Wordsworth. For the former, sympathy is “used to refer to a kind of passion akin to compassion or pity.” Later for Hume and Smith, Baillie and Wordsworth, it would “function[ed] as a mechanism through which sentiments and viewpoints were communicated and shared” (Leever 2). Throughout, the chapters build the distinction between virtue, an operation of reason and will, and the later definition of sympathy, an internalized response. Later chapters examine various aspects of sympathy and virtue as social and national unity

Chapter 2 Alexander Pope and the Ideal: Sympathy and Universal Order

The conceptual understanding of sympathy for a certain period reflects the writers’ perceptions of the nature of the world. For writers of the earlier and mid eighteenth century, benevolence, charity, and sympathy were often idealized virtues that coincided with their assumptions about relationships within society and their world view. Alasdair MacIntyre describes the assumptions about benevolence and social relationships as thoroughly integrated and inseparable. A representative of the eighteenth century would operate in this way:

In most of my dealings with others of a cooperative kind, questions of benevolence or altruism simply do not arise, any more than questions of self interest do. In my social life I cannot but be involved in reciprocal relationships, in which it may certainly be conceded that the price I have to pay

for self seeking behavior is a loss of certain kinds of relationships. But if I want to lead a certain kind of life, with a life of trust, friendship, and cooperation with others, then my wanting their good and my wanting my good are not two independent, discriminable desires. It is not even that I have two separate motives, self interest and benevolence, for doing the same action. I have one motive, a desire to live in a certain way, which cannot be characterized as a desire for my good rather than that of others. For the good that I recognize and pursue is not mine particularly, except in the sense that I recognize and pursue it. (MacIntyre, I, 466)

Chapter 2 examines Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733-1734) and the *Moral Essays* (1731 – 1735) as they define virtue and create images of “nature methodized” -- the ideal state of mankind -- and then mankind “particularized.” Pope describes man as comprised of sense and reason, much as Shaftesbury did, particularly reacting against the analytical abstractionism of the Scholastics. In addition, he continues: man by nature is a social creature operating for the good of the self and society because self love and social love are as one. Both are regulated by virtue, particularly benevolence, which springs from reflection and reason, habit, experience, will, and choice.

Chapter 3 Jane Austen and the English Idyll: Virtue Solidified

Like other guides to the education and proper training of women, Maria Edgeworth's essay, “On Sympathy and Sensibility” (1798) argues that training in virtue is necessary before a person can appropriately respond with sympathy. Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816) provides an example of the value of training based in virtue and the social affections as a prerequisite for the proper sympathetic response. The novel can be read as

Emma's training program in more than just manners -- in the real business of the social affections -- where she moves from a false and superficial sympathy to a more proper one based in virtue. The self indulgent, undertrained and inexperienced Emma misapplies her sense of sympathy as she attempts to guide Harriet to suitable matches. She dallies with the "feeling" of being sympathetic rather than creating a genuine social bond with Harriet. In addition, she fails to act with virtue and sympathy when she properly should, particularly with Miss Bates. As a result of Knightly's promptings and scoldings, Emma's experiences with Frank Church's ill manners, her reflection on and analysis of her own unkindnesses, Emma, at the conclusion of the novel, is less self indulgent and chooses proper virtuous action. *Emma* is Jane Austen's attempt to shore up threatened cultural values.

Additionally, Austen's *Emma* reflects important responses to the whole tradition of the moral sense philosophers who work from the assumption of a universal similarity among all men, and then to Smith's emphasis on the sympathetic response's dependence upon the recognition of "likeness" in the other. The particular question rises in light of the clash within the time period between the desire to see universals and rely on "sympathy as honest feeling" and a growing skepticism about the ability to know and trust with any certainty. So, truly, the novel reflects the epistemological question of how it is someone can come to reliable knowledge.

Chapter 4 Ann Yearsley: Sympathy and the Social Affections, an Agenda for Social Reform

Ann Yearsley's poems in *The Rural Lyre* (1796) reflect several aspects of sympathy -- sympathy as compassion and learned virtue and sympathy as shared bonding

experience. In addition, these poems reflect real anxiety in the face of social unrest, riots, war, and the dissolution of the “social affections.” Calling for a return to sympathetic and virtuous action, they describe how the social bond is best formed, who best influences it, what its importance is. Then, as a whole, the poems appeal to a sense of national identity and shared social love as the basis for national strength.

Chapter 5 Joanna Baillie at the Pivot Point: Certainty and Doubt in the Process of Imagining

Joanna Baillie develops sympathy in two different ways: a traditional sense of virtuous compassion and sympathetic curiosity which appear in her poem of Lady Griselda Baillie in *Metrical Legends* as charitable responses of the reason and will. Sympathy as discussed in this chapter, a second kind of sympathy, has opposing impulses -- a concern for the sufferer’s mental state but disapproval of the sufferer’s actions. Baillie’s *Introductory Discourse to the Plays on the Passions* and her play *DeMonfort* (1798) define sympathy in this different way and, in effect, complicate the expression of sympathy by both separating it from virtue or moral approval and appealing to divine mercy.

Baillie’s *Introductory Discourse* draws from sympathy theory to define sympathetic curiosity as an occasion where the audience of a play may internally experience the agonies of the sufferer and learn from them in a “safe” way, unthreatened by the actual experience. Baillie would say that the audience experiences the “growth of a passion”; however, the experience is in reality more than that. It disregards the cause and the extremity of the emotion; the nature of the emotion, whether it is vicious or virtuous; and the potential effects of identification with evil action, albeit temporary. The play

DeMonfort gives a real portrait of sympathy in action with all of its components -- that is, Jane's sympathetic response to her brother. Through her expression of sympathy, she experiences his anguish; she is able to modulate her brother's expressions of anger and grief; she is able to effect his conversion; and she is able to restore him to some form of community, albeit briefly. However, the play also reflects a real moral ambiguity by attaching Jane's sympathy to the perpetrator of so horrendous and violent a crime. It is even more ironic because Jane's sympathetic identification with DeMonfort is the only social affection that appears in the play at all. What happens in this kind of situation -- that is, where a strongly defined principle character, such as DeMonfort, is presented as worthy of sympathy and receiving it -- is that the sympathetic bond assumes much greater importance than any code of virtuous conduct.

Baillie introduces, then, a moral relativism in her form of sympathy, not unlike that in other similar plays, such as *Manfred* and *Cenci*.

Chapter 6 Ann Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition*: In the Absence of All Sympathy Ultimate Gloom

Written in the aftermath of the French Revolution, Bannerman's poems in *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* (1802) respond to a social and historical moment of crisis during which there is no positive social interaction because sympathy does not function at all. These poems, essentially about "aloneness" and depersonalization of experience, trace an individual's progression from personal and physical isolation to fear, loss of ethical sense, and eventually a complete loss of community. In fact, Bannerman's characters exist outside of any time frame and hence divorce themselves from history. Here lies what T.S. Eliot would call "the disassociation of sensibility." Though Eliot was

not referring to these specific poems, he could just as well have because they trace “for us a decay of mind in a sweep of literary history. It is a descent of mind (1) from the mind’s seeing its own workings in nature in a perspective that does not confuse mind with nature, (2) to the mind’s coloring all nature with its private awareness of emotion, (3) to the final decay of both mind and emotion. . . .For the final end of the unchecked turning inward upon the self is to lose awareness of any possible Other. This is also finally to lose awareness of Self; it is the inevitable negation since there is no Other to make the Self a particular existence” (Montgomery 115- 116).

Chapter 7 Dorothy Wordsworth and William Wordsworth: The Romantic Mind, Sympathy, and Self History

This chapter considers two approaches to self history, both of which reveal in their own ways the failure of sympathy. It then concludes with a brief consideration of how the resolution of the third Salisbury Plain poem suggests a significant shift in William Wordsworth’s perspective on sympathy. It first looks at Dorothy Wordsworth’s poem “Floating Island at Hawkshead” (unknown date, published 1842) as an example of feminine self history, the recording of “individualized and internalized” experiences, and the ways in which it reveals a one sided sympathy. Here an expression of sympathy is inner “imagining,” that neither receives a sympathetic response in return nor creates a social bond. Such absorption in the inner life carries with it dangers of self annihilation.

The chapter then considers William Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” (1798) as an example of another kind of self history -- an abstraction and isolating form which “talks about but fails to experience true sympathy.” Marion Montgomery defines the nature of the romantic mind as found in Wordsworth’s Preface to *The Borderers* (1795-1796) and

“Tintern Abbey” as one which is “unable to come to terms with history except through the process of divorcing the self from time and making self history their concern” (123). By turning inward on itself, the mind is unable to experience sympathy as a response to another’s distress, express that sympathy, or respond to another person’s expression of sympathy. Sympathy as Hume and Smith would define it progresses from observation of the other, identification with the other’s experience (Hume) or imaginative recreation of that experience (Smith), instruction and community building. What actually happens with the romantic mind is a different process; the observation and the imaginative recreation of the experience occur, but what follows are self-absorption with the experience and then self analysis.

Wordsworth’s focus in his poetry is principally turned to his own self awareness, his interest in his own mind, its activities and processes. This can be seen in *The Prelude* (1805 and 1850), the *Excursion* (1814), and even in many of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). When Wordsworth describes a scene, he is concerned with how the mind processes that description. When Wordsworth turns to Dorothy in “Tintern Abbey,” he looks to her for her sympathy. Montgomery writes that, “The turning to Dorothy suggests itself a movement to escape the terror of the old self as an illusion.” (202-205, 154-155).

Wordsworth describes extreme isolation and absence of sympathy in “A Poet’s Epitaph”(1799):

Himself his world, and his own God
 One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
 Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
 A reasoning, self sufficient thing,

An intellectual All-in-all! (113)

However, in the concluding lines of the last version of the Salisbury Plain poems, *Guilt and Sorrow; or Incidents Upon Salisbury Plain* (1841), Wordsworth, in what is frequently seen as a retreat into faith or what Chandler calls his “second nature,” is able to reunite sympathy, the experience and sharing of another’s pain, with sympathy, the virtuous expression of compassion. Self absorption leads to yielding up “all moral questions in despair”; sympathy with compassion leads to the restoration of community and social love.

Chapter 1 Philosophical Background: Virtue and Sympathy

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) saw mankind in purely material terms, as mechanistic and atomistic egotistical bodies moved by self interest, desire and aversion. Hobbes' position in the *Leviathan* was that "all human acts are motivated directly or indirectly by the desire to survive. Put in other terms, we are motivated by self-love or self-interest and by nothing else" (Broadie 117). Society, given this self interest, needs to be a tightly regulated civil structure without individual liberties so as to bring functioning order to what would otherwise be a vicious and chaotic state of nature. Similar to Hobbes, Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) defined all human behavior in terms of egotism and self interest. In *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Public Benefits*, he writes that, "It is impossible that man ... should act with any other view but to please himself" (56). What might appear to be disinterested or benevolent action, is not. Even if it is intended to be benevolent or generous, it is not because man often is truly unaware of his real motives. He is by nature self interested (Leever 26-27, Mandeville 78).

In reaction to Hobbes and Mandeville's materialistic egotism, there came a series of "common sense" moralists -- Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), David Hume (1711-1776), and Adam Smith (1723-1790) -- who believed that people are capable of acting out of genuine good will and that

benevolent action is not based on self interested motives but on a natural desire for the well being of another. However, while what these common sense moralists share in common is broader than their differences, there are implications within their different positions with significant relevance to the study of British literature of the mid and late eighteenth centuries.

Shaftesbury, the first philosopher to articulate and define the term “moral sense,” is seen as the “initiator of the moral sense school” in Britain (*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* VII: 428). His *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* is a compendium of diverse essays, “letters,” “advice,” “inquiries,” and “miscellaneous reflections” -- some literary, some casual, some formal. Aaron Garrett, in his comparison of Hutcheson, Mandeville, and Shaftesbury, suggests that he (Shaftesbury) was “a naively optimistic aristocrat with little understanding of the realities of human nature,” someone who promoted the social virtues and affections while downplaying the realities of self interested behavior (Garrett xv). However, Shaftesbury’s *Characteristicks*, first appearing in 1711, was one of the “most influential books of the eighteenth century” in England and throughout Europe, as well as one of the most frequently reprinted. It reflected his forward thinking, enlightened attitudes toward freedom of thought and the separateness of religion and morality or natural virtue (Sprague 428-429). Douglas Den Uyl, in his forward to the 2001 edition of *Characteristics*, summarizes the essential points about Shaftesbury’s work and contributions to British ethical theory -- that, while currently overlooked or disregarded, as the first to speak of the moral sense he was the first to claim sentiment as an essential component of moral experience by making so thorough an argument for the social affections (Uyl vii-viii). His arguments directly

challenge that absolute assumption which Mandeville would make - that “it is impossible that man ... should act with any other view but to please himself” (Leever 37, Mandeville 348). In addition, Shaftesbury paired intellectual reflection with aesthetic experience, acts of the intellect with powers of the imagination. By pairing intellect and imagination, Shaftesbury, according to Uhl, was “one of the first to understand that the modern world would be moved primarily by imagination, however much he might have preferred the guidance of reason. Indeed, it is here that the link to sentiment ... is to be found, for sentiment and imagination are themselves integrally connected” and that the aesthetic dimension was, therefore, the link between intellect and imagination, sentiment and judgment.” (Uhl x).

The most frequently referred to essay in *Characteristicks* is “An Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit,” a formal deductive argument describing the moral sense, the nature of man, the nature of the passions, and the relationship of man within his society or social structure. It is important to trace the line of Shaftesbury’s argument to understand Shaftesbury’s fundamental assumptions about the nature of man, since it is in the variations from these assumptions that later definitions of sympathy, while appearing the same, really become quite different. Shaftesbury begins with the assertion that an “Order” exists within the universe, that every creature has a private good or interest, that “there is in reality a right and wrong State of every Creature; and that his right-one is by Nature forwarded, and by himself affectionately sought” (II: 9). If he seeks the wrong state, through his Appetites, Passions, or Affections, this creature is “ill with respect to himself” as well as “with respect to others of his kind” because he lives within and contributes to a society and has natural, as well as necessary, social affections (II: 9, II:

63, III: 135-136). Therefore, private interest or private “Good” which is inconsistent with the public well being are “vicious” and “cannot really be good and natural in respect of his Society or Publick” (II: 13). This is what Shaftesbury calls “Selfishness” (II: 13). If selfish affection is what prompts man to action, whether the action is good or not, that man is “in himself still vitious” (II: 14).

Shaftesbury continues in the “Inquiry”: all men, in addition to reason, have a moral sense and capability of distinguishing good from evil regardless of whether or not they themselves are good. He writes that mankind has moral and intellectual capabilities to respond to “Forms and Images of Things” which are not present but active in the mind, just as they have the physical senses to respond to material objects. In addition, the “Heart,” even if it is corrupt or false, is able to make distinctions between the beautiful and ugly, true and false, and, “in all disinterested Cases, must approve in some measure of what is natural and honest, and disapprove what is dishonest and corrupt” (II: 17).

Because man has this moral sense and ability to make distinctions, he has an obligation to not only engage in worthy action, but also to reflect on the worthiness of his own behavior, to take notice of the worthy behavior of others, and to “make that Notice or Conception of *Worth* and *Honesty* to be and Object of his Affection” (II: 18).

So it follows that Shaftesbury’s understanding of virtuous behavior would be that behavior in the public interest (rather than self interest) which is morally good or admirable, which springs from a knowledge of right and wrong, which promotes natural affection, and which can be presented as an object or action of esteem (II 22). He writes: the nature of virtue “consist[s] in a certain just Disposition, or proportional Affection of a rational Creature towards the moral Objects of Right and Wrong” (II: 23-24). Later in the

essay he returns to his initial propositions about the value of social and moral order and he connects them to his concept of virtue. Virtue is “it-self no other than the Love of Order and Beauty in Society,” which includes harmony and proportion of any kind. Both virtue and order are “advantageous to social Affection” particularly if the order of the world appears “just” (II: 43).

Shaftesbury does not provide a straightforward definition of sympathy, nor does he focus on sympathy as an independent operating sensibility. Once he has established his understanding of order, virtue, and then social love, Shaftesbury does refer to sympathy along with a number of other social affections. Connected with a “virtuous ... Exercise of Benignity and Goodness,” sympathy is one of the social pleasures and “Natural Affections” which produces a mental enjoyment and carries a “Contentment,” and “Satisfaction” superior to sensual pleasures (II: 57-61). It engages the “passions in behalf of merit and worth,” and, since it is a natural affection, is one of the ways to gain “certain and solid Happiness.” The expression of human sympathy produces enjoyment in thought and sentiment and contributes to community (II: 57-64). At the conclusion to the section on the natural affections in “The Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit,” Shaftesbury sums up:

From all this we may easily conclude, how much our Happiness depends on *natural and good Affection*. For if the chief Happiness be from the MENTAL PLEASURES; and the chief *mental Pleasures* ... are founded in *natural Affection*; it follows, “That *to have the natural Affections, is to have the chief Means and Power of Self-enjoyment, the highest Possession and Happiness of Life.*” (II: 73)

The strength of the social structure lies in collective virtuous action, and everything which leads to the “Establishment of right Affection and Integrity, is an Advancement of Interest” leading toward the greatest individual and collective happiness (II: 100).

In tracing an understanding of sympathy through mid eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this definition based on virtue, natural and social affection becomes important to keep in mind for several reasons: first, as a vision of an ideal which operates in direct contrast to Hobbes and Mandeville’s perspectives based on self interest; second, as a basis from which Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith developed and then diverged in their more psychological explorations of sympathy; and third, as a lost, but longed for ideal far different than the actual experience of the romantics. As the concept of sympathy develops into psychological theory, the door is opened for later fundamental assumptions of order, moral apprehension, innate natural affection for virtuous behavior, as well as its opposite disinclination from vicious behavior, and community building to change in significant ways. This change is reflected in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Frances Hutcheson continued Shaftesbury’s essential arguments about the non egotistic and social nature of man and the nature of virtuous action. The first of three significant philosophers to discuss issues associated with the moral sense in the Scottish Enlightenment,¹ Hutcheson argues that “it is simply a matter of empirical fact that human beings possess ‘an ultimate desire of the happiness of others ... implanted in the human breast,’ that is to say, a ‘determination to be pleased with the happiness of others and to be uneasy at their misery’” (Leever 31). Hutcheson used the specific term “moral sense” and claimed that man has this innate “moral sense,” empirically evident, which exists

independently of his own interests or affairs and which enables him to approve or disapprove of others' actions whether or not they are related to his own interests (Leever 31). Broadie argues that "it is plain to Hutcheson" that Hobbes' description of self interest is not right. He continues:

We only need to consider the difference in our reaction to two people of whom one has helped us from the motive of benevolence and the other from the motive of self interest. We have a distinct 'perception of moral excellence' in the presence of the benevolent (and therefore virtuous) act If, then, we are able to perceive moral qualities, we must have a moral sense." (Broadie 117-118)

Hutcheson's primary documents on the subject, *Inquiry on Virtue* (1725) and *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations of the Moral Sense* (1728), and *Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil* make clear the essential differences between Hutcheson's position and that of both Mandeville and Locke. In these documents he counters Mandeville's controversial *Fable of the Bees* (1723) and states that the basis of all virtue is benevolence (Raphael, *British Moralists 1650 – 1800*, 328). As such, benevolent action is not prompted by self interest but by a moral sense, and, in fact, the two, benevolence and self interest, are completely independent of each other. Man is "capable of having benevolent sentiments toward those in whom we have no interest" (Garrett xii) -- that is, he is capable of acting for the good when he does not have his own interests in mind. Aaron Garrett's Introduction to the *Essay with Illustrations* explains that Hutcheson's understanding of the moral sense also stands in opposition to Locke's position that the basis for morality lies in sanctions -- a

reward or punishment training. Instead, the “moral sense,” is “like the perceptions of other [external] senses, independent of the will.” Therefore, “the *content* of a moral perception, the quality perceived, cannot be forced upon us.” The key word here is “perception”; the implication is that there can be varying perceptions of the same action. Even if an action is malicious in itself, but the perception of it is benevolent, the moral sense responds to what it perceives (Garrett xii). So the moral sense for Hutcheson is not made up of spontaneous insights into an abstract and absolute “universal moral system.” Leever summarizes it as an “idea which arises in the mind” and delivers “a sentiment in reaction to benevolence or the want of it. What it perceives, in act, is moral goodness” (Leever 32-33).

However, while it may not tap into an abstract universal system, the moral sense is “universal” as is the ability to know natural law and the civil laws drawn from it “as certain, invariable, or eternal Truths” (Hutcheson 173-174; Garrett xviii). Knowledge of the universality and the uniformity of the moral sense, for Hutcheson, is “reasonable” and provable” by observing how people across all nations have responded with approval or disapproval to certain actions (Hutcheson 173-174). The identification of the specific actions that receive approval or disapproval come from asking two questions which, he states, require little reasoning. They are: “What actions do really *evidence kind Affections*, or do really *tend to the greatest publick Good?*” (Hutcheson 174). The moral sense responds with approval to both the virtuous intent (as opposed to self interest) or motive of the person performing the action and the positive effect that the person’s actions have on the larger society. Hutcheson explains:

No Man would *approve* as virtuous an Action *publickly useful*, to which the Agent was excited only by *Self-Love*, without any *kind Affection*: 'Tis also probable that no view of *Interest* can raise that *kind Affection*, which we *approve* as virtuous; nor can any *Reasoning* do it, except that which shews some *moral Goodness*, or *kind Affections* in the Object. (Hutcheson 174)

Both the quality of affection or goodness and the resulting public usefulness are necessary for the action to receive approval or be identified as virtuous. Again, Hutcheson emphasizes, as does Shaftesbury (and also Aristotle), that man is essentially a social being; that virtuous action which promotes the good of another or the public good evokes approbation; that virtuous action underpins the well being of community; and that virtue, or benevolence, springs from personal disinterestedness. Neither denies that self interestedness exists; both maintain without doubts, however, that genuine benevolent action springing out of natural affections for the other, equally exists (Leever 38).

Bishop Joseph Butler, like Hutcheson, focuses on the individual's benevolent intentions behind their actions to counter Hobbes' emphasis on all action as self interested. For both, "one does not act benevolently in order to derive some kind of pleasure for oneself" (Leever 36). This idea did not die with Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson or the eighteenth century. Connecting intent with the virtue or meritoriousness of an action has continued to appear. One example occurs in T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* where the language of disinterested action occurs at the conclusion of Part I. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, the protagonist, is confronted by The Four Tempters, the Priests, and the Chorus. The Lords of Hell curl round him and lie at his feet, and the

Chorus begs him to save himself that they too may be saved. However, he refuses to act to accomplish something that would have positive benefits because he would be acting for the wrong reason:

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason. (Eliot 196)

After Hutcheson, David Hume moved the discussion of non egotistic action into another direction. In *A Treatise Of Human Nature* (1739) he replaced the concept of “moral sense,” which was the foundation for Hutcheson’s *Essay*, with “sympathy,” a psychological system. For Hume, sympathy is that “human capacity to experience the affections of another” (Leever 44). Peters and Mace describe Hume’s sympathy this way: “The idea of another person’s feeling is said to be associated with the idea of oneself, and the required liveliness is thus imparted to the otherwise neutral conception of another person’s joy or sorrow” (*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* VII: 13).

One way to explain Hume's understanding of sympathy is in terms of the broader scientific influences of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; that is, to see sympathy as a component of the affections which operates along the same principles as the physical/material universe. Leever's study of sympathy, *Sympathy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, begins with a considerable interconnectedness between the developments in scientific thought and developments of varying philosophical and psychological definitions of sympathy. While referring briefly to the influences of Copernicus, Gallileo, and Boyle, Leever focuses on Newton, in particular, because he most thoroughly promoted an understanding of the universe as mechanistic and atomistic; Newton "synthesized the work of his predecessors and generated a set of laws that shaped

the course of science and philosophy for the entire century (Leever 20). Those Newtonian laws most significant to the study of sympathy, as he understands them, include the theory of "universal gravitation" and the rule of simplicity. Briefly, "universal gravitation" or "attraction" "is that principle which explains the "movements of bodies in terms of varying degrees of attraction between them" (Leever 20). The fact that this one rule applies to both celestial and terrestrial bodies, and that there are not separate or varying explanations for them, is Newton's law of simplicity (Leever 19-20). What comes out of these scientific thrusts are two quite opposing explanations for the basis of human society and for the nature of man. These have already appeared in the Hobbes and Shaftesbury/Hutcheson discussions about self interest versus social affections.

In applying scientific theory in his *Treatise*, Hume formulated his description of human nature and its cognitive and affective components, which include sympathy, based on the theory of universal gravitation (Leever 20-21). For Hume, ideas and impressions are explained in terms like those for actual physical bodies which exert force on each other and which gain or lose some of that force as it is transferred to or taken from the other. So, as impressions become ideas, impressions lose their force as ideas gain it. Ideas can be influenced by subsequent impressions with the result that the forces from these additional impressions are added to the idea. Having sympathy for an individual "involves having an idea of another's affective state. This idea is "enlivened back[ed] into the very affection (i.e., and impression) itself" (Leever 21). Similar to Newton's theory that "a body will remain at rest or in motion with a constant velocity unless acted on by an outside force," Hume suggests that an idea will remain a 'calm' perception

unless it is acted upon by something with sufficient force to move the idea to such a level of vivacity that it becomes an impression” (Leever 21).

Hume also draws from Newtonian physics to describe his associationist theory – that is, the gravitation or attraction that the mind’s perceptions, impressions, ideas, and affections have. “In the imagination,” Hume explains, these “ supply the place of the inseparable connection, by which they are united in our memory. ... which in the mental world will be found to ... shew itself in as many and as various forms” (*Treatise* 12-13). What is important about this associationism of perception or affection is that it then becomes the basis for sympathy in two ways. First, sympathy springs from some observation of the other’s actions and expressions, then an apprehension or evaluation of the other’s state of emotions, and finally an association of the two based on prior experience. Second, sympathy as a moral sentiment “arises out of a feeling with which the moral evaluator sympathizes” (Leever 23).

While Hume based his principle of sympathy on some scientific influences, he also formed it to offset the implications of another, specifically atomization. The principle of atomization defined the universe as made up of separate, discrete particles. Following Newton’s principle of simplicity, that all processes are essentially the same, atomization implied that humans were all individual and discrete bodies. Hume’s response to the question of what it is, then, that forms the basis for human society and for benevolent action is sympathy (Leever 23- 28).²

Lauren Wispe’s study, *The Psychology of Sympathy*, details the development of Hume’s theory of sympathy from its psychological perspective. Wispe makes clear that Hume used an approach similar to Hutcheson and Shaftesbury; that is, Hume relied on

“experience and observation,” which provided “the only solid foundation we can give” to the scientific examination of the mind (Wispe 2). In the original version of Book II, “Of the Passions” in the *Treatise*, Hume first set forward his understanding of the nature of sympathy – that “quality of human nature [which] is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences” than any other (Wispe 5; *Treatise* 316). Later he refers to sympathy as “an original instinct planted in our nature,” an “innate human propensity,” but not an emotion, to which everyone is susceptible (Wispe 8; *Treatise* 417). However, Hume must have adjusted some of his understanding about the distinctness of sympathy from other aspects of human nature because, in a later revision, he referred to sympathy but did not incorporate his discussion of it in a systematic way. In its place, he referred to the “sentiment of humanity” or “benevolence” as that quality which exhibited concern for others. He did, however, continue to be concerned with the “sympathetic communication of feeling” as it was part of a system of moral evaluation (Wispe 5).

A further obstacle to understanding Hume’s sense of sympathy besides this revision, according to his editors, is that Hume “says so many different things in so many different ways ... and with so much indifference to what he has said before” (Wispe 5; Nidditch vii-x). After examining all the texts’ references to sympathy, Wispe concludes that “he seemed to regard sympathy as the propensity that one has to receive emotional communications from others ‘however different they may be from our own’” or as an “explanatory vehicle for the transmission of emotions.” Sympathy is essentially a three stage process; it operates by first observing the facial appearance or expressions and the conversation of the other person and receiving the “lively idea” of that person’s emotion. It then changes that “lively idea” into an impression of that emotion that it

represents. Finally, this transformation occurs to the extent that it “acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal emotion” (Wispé 6; *Treatise* 317-319). That is, the idea becomes an impression that transforms into the emotion itself. This is the process through which “opinions and sentiments” can be communicated (Wispé 5-6; *Treatise* 316).

From this description, there are several properties of sympathy or of the mind that are very important and need to be detailed in order to understand Hume’s specific contributions to the idea of sympathy and in order to see how it exists for him as a psychological process. The first of these properties is that sympathy is aware that the emotions which it transforms into ideas and impressions are separate and external emotions. Wispé explains this by saying that sympathy is “not rooted in any willing self-deception or exercise in role playing” (6). Secondly, the emotions that are created through sympathy are as strong as the originals. However, Hume’s clarification of these properties also qualifies how it is the mind works. Hume writes that our emotions “depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind” (Hume 319, Wispé 6-7). The observer of the facial expression or conversation sees only the causes or effects of an emotion on the other person -- such as the changed expressions, the nature of the expression, the altered tone of voice. These expressions, gestures, or conversation prompt the sympathetic response. It is from them that the observer “infers” the emotion or passion in the other person (Wispé 7). Hume describes the process of the mind in the *Treatise* in this way:

When I see the effects of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms

such a lively idea of the passion as is presently converted into that passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the causes of any emotion, my mind is convey'd to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion.”

(Wispé 7; *Treatise* 576)

Wispé concludes from this statement that the mind for Hume works automatically from cause to effect or effect to cause (7).

The third property of sympathy is the resemblance of mind. Hume believed that there was a great similarity or “resemblance” in the “structure and composition” of all people’s minds, just like the similarity in their bodies. It is this resemblance that makes it possible for the reception of the idea and inference of the emotion to occur (Wispé 7; *Treatise* 318). The fourth property, also of the mind, which is necessary for the operation of sympathy is contiguity, closeness in time or space or reduction of separation (Wispé 7). And the last property of significance is the mind’s awareness of the self or, in Hume’s words, “The idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us” (Wispé 7, *Treatise* 317).

Hume’s discussions of sympathy shifted or expanded through the several books of the *Treatise*. Books I and II present his discussion of sympathy, what it was and how it occurred. This explanation of sympathy as a natural inner response to another’s state of emotion, though, does not include a discussion about an external response -- that is, what could, should, or might be done for someone for whom there is sympathy or why the person who experiences the sympathy should act in some assistive way. However, later, in Book III of the *Treatise*, “On Morals,” Hume connects sympathy with benevolence and love, both active human characteristics that seek the happiness of the sufferer. There

Hume describes sympathy as “the chief source of moral distinctions” and that quality upon which “our sentiments of virtue depend” (Wispe 9; *Treatise* 367, 382, 586, 618). While modern commentators have criticized Hume for being “limited” and technical, “capricious” or “too completely psychological, or “untestable,” others have validated his concept of resemblance, contiguity, similarity between an emotion and the sympathetic response to that emotion and shared human experience (Wispe 8-9).

The most immediate and concise evaluation of Hume’s thinking about sympathy appears in Jostein Gaarder’s novel *Sophie’s World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*. By being so concise in her analysis, Gaarder pinpoints the exact contributions Hume made:

More than any other philosopher, he took the everyday world as his starting point....As an empiricist, Hume took it upon himself to clean up all the wooly concepts and thought constructions that these male philosophers had invented. ... [and] proposed the return to our spontaneous experience of the world. No philosopher ‘will ever be able to take us behind the daily experiences or give us rules of conduct that are different from those we get through reflections on everyday life,’ he said.”

(Gaarder 268)

The effect of Hume’s open mindedness to daily experience and knowledge through the senses, impressions and ideas was to create the final separation between faith and knowledge (Gaarder 274). Thus, sympathy and benevolence are not products of Christian training, religious faith, or even of reason, but a matter of our sentiments or feelings. According to Hume, Gaarder’s philosopher states, “Everybody has a feeling for other

people's welfare. So we all have a capacity for compassion. But it has nothing to do with reason" (Gaarder 279).

Adam Smith's (1723-1790) work on sympathy takes a different thrust than Hume's. Principally a social theorist rather than psychologist, he based his understanding of sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) on the benefits to a harmonious social fabric that sympathy, or fellow feeling, would have. Smith explains that for a society to prosper, it needs to have an orderly structure, with justice, proper punishment for criminals, beneficence, and sympathy. Smith's position is also different from Hume's in the nature and extent of what the sympathizer feels. For Hume, the experience created in the sympathizer through the operation of sympathy is the same as -- that is, identical to -- what the other is feeling in strength and character. For Smith, there is no "immediate experience of what other men feel" (Smith 9). In fact, he writes: "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (Smith 9). A second difference between Hume and Smith's conceptions of sympathy is the level of immediacy. For Hume, there is no self-deception in the act of sympathy; because of the properties of resemblance and contiguity, there is no difference or barriers between the minds of observer and sufferer. On the other hand, Smith writes that not only is there always a difference between what the sympathizer experiences and what the other feels, in the strength and or in the nature of the experience, but also the sympathizer's "secret consciousness" is aware that a difference between the two exists. Because of this awareness, the sympathizer knows that his experience is "an illusion of the imagination and that this influences his feelings" (Wispe 14). In a third way Smith's

approach is different. Hume refers to sympathy as an operation of the mind. Smith clearly places great emphasis on the role of the imagination in actively creating, not just experiencing, the feeling of the other person. By doing this, he both defines sympathy and explains the way in which it occurs, and describes the imaginative recreation of the feeling, its impact on the sympathizer and other, and the social bond that is created.

Smith opens *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* with an explanation of sympathy, in part because everything else in the text – the passions, prosperity and adversity, justice, utility, virtue, moral philosophy, and virtue - is drawn from its basic principles. He writes:

Of Sympathy

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it; for this sentiment, like all the other original passions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility. The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it. (Smith 9)

Following this definition, Smith clearly parts from Hume's understanding of the replication of the exact experience in sympathy. He gives an example: "Though our

brother is on the rack... our sense will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. ... It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy” (Smith 9). The imagination operates to put the viewer into another’s situation and imagine what it would be like to be in that same situation. The viewer creates what he believes is an idea of the other’s sensations and experience. The result is that the viewer becomes in some way identified with the other and forms some idea of his experience. He can “even feel something” which is similar, though not a duplication of the experience. All together, sympathy is an imaginative recreation that has the effect of producing trembling “at the thought of what he [the other] feels” and sorrow. Smith calls this “changing places in fancy with the sufferer” (Smith 9-10).³ Smith continues to explain that fellow feeling arises not only while observing painful situations, but also whenever any passion springs up, such as joy, gratitude, happiness, and resentment. “In every passion of which the mind of man is susceptible, the emotions of the by-stander always correspond to what, by bringing the case home to himself, he imagines *should be* [my emphasis] the sentiments of the sufferer” (Smith 10).

However, for the viewer to recreate the other’s situation, and thus for sympathy to operate at all, the viewer needs to know some of the circumstances of the other – what brought the situation on and what has happened. And it is here that Smith creates another distinction in his understanding of sympathy. It is not the passion or emotion that the sufferer displays which causes the sympathetic response, but the situation in which the sufferer is placed. So it is possible for the viewer to have an imaginative experience of an

emotion or passion in sympathetic response to a sufferer's situation even when that sufferer himself does not in reality have any emotion or passion (Smith 12).

With these statements, Smith separates himself from his predecessors and anticipates the romantic writers. Certainly, he advances one creative aspect of the imagination that will later become more broadly developed in the romantics. Joanna Baillie, in particular, assumes his notion of sympathy into her definition of sympathetic curiosity in her *Introductory Discourse on the Plays of the Passions* and into the dynamics of her plays themselves, both tragedy and comedy. In addition, by also clearly distinguishing between the experience of two individuals, Smith provides a foundation for what will become a growing sense of individuality and, later, isolation. The two -- the sufferer and the observer -- can no longer be one through an identical impression or experience of an emotion. Social affections, the moral sense, or sympathy which is the exact duplication of a sentiment begin to lose their identity when they become subjectified as individualized impressions.

A third characteristic of Smith's sympathy is the pleasure derived from observing shared feelings or mutuality of response, what Smith terms "correspondence of the sentiments of others with our own" (Smith 13-14). The pleasure occurs for both persons: the one who is sympathizing and the one who receives the sympathy. For the person who is the recipient, sympathy best produces this pleasure not because of self interest but because it "enlivens joy and alleviates grief. It enlivens joy by presenting another source of satisfaction; and it alleviates grief by insinuating into the heart almost the only agreeable sensation which it is at that time capable of receiving" (Smith 14). A sympathetic response reduces the amount of sorrow which the sufferer bears and raises

his sense of pleasure by allowing him first to express the grief further; second, to feel the “sweetness” of the sympathy; and third, to become “enlivened and renewed” (Smith 15). It becomes obvious that the sympathetic response to someone who is suffering is a crucial component of Smith’s whole understanding of the importance of social connectedness because he concludes this portion of his discussion with this comment: “Not to wear a serious countenance when they [our companions] tell us their afflictions, is real and gross inhumanity” (Smith 15). For the person who is sympathizing, pleasure occurs as the result of being able to do it, a natural desire to share a person’s pain or joy (Smith 16).

However, Smith next qualifies his explanation of the properties of sympathy. A sympathetic response does not occur on all occasions of another’s pain or joy. It is not identical in all people or unjudging but requires an element of “correspondence.” This fourth characteristic of correspondence is a significant qualifier in Smith’s system; without it, feelings of sympathy would be indiscriminant, would not carry an element of approval or disapproval, or would not expect some level of immediacy or alertness on the sympathizer’s part. Greater sympathy occurs when there is some similarity between the sympathizer and recipient, such as when they share the same passions or approve of the same values or have a common understanding about the cause or reasonableness of the pain or joy or simply in the same mood (Smith 16-18). The expression of sympathy, then, is dependent upon the circumstances and the situation, its potential cause and the effects it might produce. If these circumstances or effects are out of proportion or unsuitable—that is, they “do not have a correspondent affection in ourselves” or come home to our own breast” or “coincide and tally” with our own sentiments -- then sympathy is withheld (Smith 18-19). Smith concludes that:

Every faculty in one man is the measure by which he judges of the like faculty in another. I judge of your sight by my sight, of your ear by my ear, of your reason by my reason, of your resentment by my resentment, of your love by my love. I neither have, nor can have, any other way of judging about them. (Smith 19)

The implications here in terms of social theory and community building are considerable. A strong social foundation built upon a well functioning sympathy would assume shared values and perspectives. With considerable diversity or diverging values, the social foundations and community building become considerably more tenuous.

It is easy to misinterpret Smith unless his broad emphasis on issues of social connectedness and benevolent action are also included as an extension of the discussion of sympathy. Part of the large debate over Smith's true position in *The Wealth of Nations* rests in the inclusion or exclusion of a couple of his underlying assumptions -- his understanding of an overarching benevolence and the invisible hand. Without them, labor is a tool in the industrialist's rise to power and wealth. Later sections of the *Theory*, "Of the Character of Virtue" and, more specifically Chapters III and IV titled "Of Universal Benevolence" and "Of Self Command" examine how individual character, and subsequently the character of a people, affects individual and collective happiness and well being. Smith points out that that the desire to hold the respect of our peers is the "strongest of all our desires" in part because it provides rank, esteem, good will, happiness, and other "advantages of fortune" (Smith 213). Holding such respect is an aspect of prudence, a sincere and cautious maintenance of public regard. However, a greater and more virtuous prudence consists of "wise and judicious conduct, when

directed to greater and nobler purposes” than the care of private wealth or station (Smith 216). In addition, wise and judicious conduct consists of respecting the happiness of others as well as engaging in benevolent action. Smith raises this regard to the level of the holy: proper action involves “ a sacred and religious regard not hurt or disturb in any respect to the happiness of our neighbor” (Smith 218). The only reason Smith might accept disrupting the happiness of another lies in a “proper resentment for injustice” (Smith 218). Smith emphasizes that this regard:

constitutes the character of the perfectly innocent and just man; a character which, when carried to a certain delicacy of attention, is always highly respectable and even venerable for its own sake, and can scarce ever fail to be accompanied with many other virtues, with great feeling for other people, with great humanity and with great benevolence. It is a character sufficiently understood, and requires no further explanation. (Smith 218)

Wispe’s analysis of Smith’s *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* indicates that the work represents an advancement of the possibilities for “prudence, justice, and benevolence” within social interactions which all stem from his underlying concept of sympathy (10). “Nature,” Smith argues, “formed men for that mutual kindness, so necessary for their happiness” (Smith, *Theory* 225). By his nature, then, man is disposed to take care of himself, and then, as sympathy and self command direct him outward, his family, children, relations, friends, those who have demonstrated kindnesses to him, attachments based on the love of virtue, and then ultimately his community through “natural affection” and “mutual accommodation” (Smith 222-223). One of the greatest goods “is the peace and order of society,” and a world citizenship (Smith 226). For this order and

for the sake of universal benevolence, man should be willing to sacrifice his private, inferior interests to the greater interest of the universe (Smith 235-237).

A Theory of Moral Sentiments was prepared from a series of lectures on moral philosophy which Smith delivered at Glasgow University. Raphael and Macfie believe that Smith's theories represent his response to the two contemporary philosophers who had the greatest impact on him -- Hutcheson his teacher and Hume his friend -- as well as to classical Stoicism and Christian virtues (4-6). Transcripts in the Glasgow University Library indicate that Hutcheson scholars were not pleased with Smith's lectures on sympathy (Raphael and Macfie 2-3). However, *A Theory of Moral Sentiments*, when it appeared in 1759, was widely praised and well received by the British and French, by philosophers and common readers alike, with six editions appearing during Smith's lifetime. Hume and Smith corresponded, debating the differences in their positions, but Hume himself reported the sales and successful reception to Smith. Burke, after carefully reviewing it, wrote that he "was convinced of its solidity and Truth" (Raphael and Macfie 28-31). In 1771 Kant wrote with praise of the *Theory* and of "the man who goes to the root of things" (Raphael and Macfie 28-31). However, Smith's economic theory in *The Wealth of Nations* and the impact of its ideas on Britain's industrial development have received much more considerable discussion than his moral theory in contemporary political, economic, and historical discussions.⁴

Raphael and Macfie conclude that Smith's moral theory responds much more to Hume, Smith's friend, than Hutcheson, his teacher, whom he would have considered a less complex theorist. Smith certainly diverges from Hutcheson's position on self interest and self love. While Hutcheson saw self love as "morally neutral" and attacked

Mandeville's egotism, Smith argued that self love -- in the form of self preservation, self care, and bettering his condition -- is properly everyone's first concern (8-10). Smith acknowledged that Mandeville's position could not have caused so much reaction as it did "had it not in some respects bordered on the truth" (Raphael and Macfie 12). This egotism, however, is balanced against Smith's overarching belief that nature is a "cosmic harmony" in which "universal benevolence" spreads through "one immense and connected system" (Raphael and Macfie 7). Like Hume, Smith believes that the moral sense is based in feeling rather than reason (Raphael and Macfie 12).

But Smith's account of sympathy is more complex than Hume's involving issues of motive and merit. One of the more notable differences is in the nature of the experience of pleasure that the sympathizer feels. For Hume the pleasure in sympathizing lies in the benefits that come from sympathy -- that is, the pleasure that comes from doing a virtuous action. On the other hand, for Smith the pleasure comes from the gratitude the sympathizer experiences from the person receiving the sympathy (Raphael and Macfie 13-17). Smith's explanation does suggest a closer relationship with self interested action than Hume's, but it also suggests a closer kinship or bond between the two persons. The sympathizer is aware of the "correspondence" between himself and the other person; he wants to see the sufferer happy (Wispe 12). A further distinction is that Smith's understanding of sympathy involves the imagination and "changing places in fancy" with the sufferer, almost a "merging of the egos" (Wispe 14), while Hume's and Hutcheson's do not. The mental process for Smith's sympathizer is this: "I consider what I should suffer if I was really you; and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons and character. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not the least

upon my own” (Wispe 12, Smith 317). The final distinction between Hume and Hutcheson’s approach and Smith’s lies in the sympathizer’s level of involvement. Both Hutcheson and Hume see the spectator as “disinterested” and “judicious,” implying impartiality and no personal involvement. Smith, on the other hand, sees the spectator as part of an interactive social relationship and in terms of conscience. Moral sentiments, duty, and conscience develop as people interact, observe, judge each other, and work to balance the pitch of the emotions (Raphael and Macfie 15). Wispe sums up the changes in the concept of sympathy that come with Smith; she writes:

It is clear that the concept of sympathy as elaborated by Adam Smith was no longer a primitive awareness of the suffering of another person. In Smith’s thinking it had become a complex capacity to be affected for better or worse by the emotions of others, sometimes instantaneously and at other times more deliberately, but never with the relentless urgency of the direct emotional experience itself, and never without some awareness of the situational context within which the emotions were being expressed. And it is altruistic... a social psychological conception It provides the basis for human socialization. ... He offered a theory of the social self in which self- awareness and self-control were systematically transformed into social awareness and societal control.

(Wispe 15-18)

Leever sees Smith’s position as more significant because he makes it abundantly clear that by “simple observation ... people desire to sympathize with one another.” Sympathy is “foundational” (Leever 280).

Leever concludes his analysis of the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers with a brief description of sympathy's fate after Smith's *Treatise*. He states that despite its benefits for social bonding, the moral concept of sympathy became less important after Smith for a couple reasons. A number of philosophers, among them Richard Price (1723-1791) and Thomas Reid (1710- 1796), questioned sentiment as a legitimate and objective enough basis for morality and emphasized reason in its place. Since sympathy could be seen as a kind of sentiment, in a rational system it had no place. Second, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill could find no place for sympathy in their utilitarian systems. And, as utilitarianism developed further, it had no use for feeling or imaginative mental experiences. Sympathy mattered only so far as it, or the consequences of sympathetic action, were useful (Leever 271 – 274). Another reason for the decline of sympathy is Immanuel Kant's moral rationalism which made the sentiment of sympathy "at best irrelevant.... The impartial points of view posited by Hume and Smith seemed to pale in comparison to the 'universality' of Kant's *a priori* moral law" (Leever 274-275). Leever concludes his summary of sympathy as a moral sentiment with this:

In the eighteenth-century world of growing "social distance," a world which seemed to require a more far reaching moral point of view, a moral philosophy which appeared to guarantee a *universal* point of view, was naturally very attractive. (Leever 275)

One of the important features to come out of the Scottish Enlightenment, was the emphasis on individual authority -- the person's ability to rely on his own rational insight and senses rather than the authority of particular texts or broadly acknowledged principles. Such an emphasis fostered intellectual liveliness, relied upon debate,

encouraged a strong sense of freedom, required toleration, and expected progress (Broadie 3-19). However, one of the ironic effects of extreme reliance on individual authority, especially when it is paired with revolution, economic upheaval, and loss of faith, is that all questions may be yielded up to despair.⁵

The philosophers who considered sympathy after Smith conceptualized it in significantly different ways. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) is the most significant of these.⁶ In *On the Basis of Morality* (1841), in contrast to Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith, Schopenhauer is convinced that the world is inhospitable; life is filled with frustration and pain; and existence is absurd. Only a will to live might transcend this absurdity and pain (Wispe 25-26). Despite this nature of the world or perhaps because of it, sympathy became the attitude of “help everyone as much as you can.” Sympathy is an entirely selfless action of any kind that springs from compassion. It is much different in its relationship between the sufferer and the sympathizer. The pain is the sufferer’s experience only and not imaginatively shared or actually experienced; it is “in *his* person, not in ours. ..we feel his pain *as his*, and do not imagine that it is ours. ... I feel it with him” (Wispe 20-21). Wispe explains this further; he states, “Whatever our relationship, I never forget that it is *his* pain and *my* sympathy” (Wispe 21). In such a world as Schopenhauer’s, where all human action is uncertain and unpredictable, sympathy represents the only human bonding which interrupts the tendency toward to isolation and death (Wispe 177).

All of these philosophers -- Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith, as well as Hobbes and Mandeville in a different way -- included discussions of virtues or moral sentiments in their works and laid great importance on the exercise of virtue for the

individual and for the larger group. None of their arguments were based on religious faith. Whether the virtues functioned as tools for the state to keep an egotistical and selfish lot under control or were positive, natural, and social affections part of human nature, they had a distinctive place in the language and culture. In *The Demoralization of Society*, her analysis of the decline of virtue from Victorian to present times, Gertrude Himmelfarb writes that while

secular philosophers, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, subverted the classical virtues [wisdom, justice, temperance, courage, prudence, magnanimity, munificence, liberality, and gentleness] more subtly, and the Christian ones [faith, hope, and charity] more radically All of them insisted upon the importance of virtues not only for the good life of individuals but for the well-being of society and the state. And all of them believed in the intimate relation between the character of the people and the health of the polity. Even those philosophers like Montesquieu who assigned different virtues to different regimes, and different *moeurs* to different societies, did not denigrate or deny the idea of virtue itself. (Himmelfarb 9)

She continues:

So long as morality was couched in the language of “virtue,” it had a firm, resolute character. The older philosophers might argue about the source of virtues, the kinds and relative importance of virtues, the relation between moral and intellectual virtue or classical and religious ones, or the bearing of private virtues upon public ones. They might even “relativize” and

historicize” virtues by recognizing that different virtues characterized different peoples at different times and places. But for a particular people at a particular time, the word “virtue” carried with it a sense of gravity and authority. (Himmelfarb 11)

Himmelfarb continues through the rest of her book to examine the shift from the language of virtues to the language of values from the Victorian era through the modern day and its impact on the moral character and well being of society.

The contention in this present paper is threefold. First, the concept of sympathy and its role in creating social bonds, as reflected by the philosophers of the moral sense school and as prompted by increased interest in individual and psychological experience, shifted in significant ways. During a relatively brief time, approximately 50 years from Shaftesbury’s *Characteristicks* (1711) to Smith’s *Treatise* (1759), a subtle but significant shift in language occurred to reinterpret the nature of and motivation toward human bonding. The pivotal shift in thinking about the nature of the individual moral sense and the social bond is reflected in this way: for Shaftesbury and Hutcheson good action is prompted by the social affections and the appeal to a universal ideal of good action -- that is, virtue. With Hume and Smith, good action primarily stems out of an identification process with another person’s experience – that is, sympathy. Second, this shift in language from virtue to sympathy is mirrored in British literature of the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries especially as it coincides with increasing political and social disruption. In addition, it very clearly reflects the movement away from confidence in a universal world order toward a loss of faith and social structures. Ironically, what was intended to be unifying becomes fragmenting. In the literature, Pope’s language of

universal and harmonious order gives way to Bannerman's portraits of isolation and foreboding. Finally, as the notion of universal order and benevolence dissolve, writers become more conscious of the historical moment. These later writers, with the romantic impulse, tend to reinvent history and ultimately, as social institutions appear to give way, write self history.

Chapter 2: Pope and the Ideal: Sympathy and Universal Order

Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*, an extended philosophical poem with religious undercurrents, is essentially a handbook of the collective thought on the nature of man, man's position in the universe, and the relationship between God and man for the eighteenth century. In it Pope attempts to make essential Christian thinking about the nature of the world rational thinking -- that is, he moves from a faith based approach to a "natural religion" in order to "justify the ways of God to man." This extended essay/poem can be seen as reflecting many of the concepts in Shaftesbury, particularly *The Moralists*, and Archbishop William King's *De Origine Mali*. King's work, appearing in 1701 and translated in 1731, was "probably the most influential of eighteenth-century theodicies" and attempts to present a rational argument for the existence of evil in a universe created by an all good Maker, the principle of plenitude, and the location of all creatures in a chain or hierarchy of being (Mack, "Introduction" to *Essay on Man* xxvi-xxix; hereafter cited as "Introduction"). As for Shaftesbury's influence, according to Maynard Mack, Pope's most comprehensive modern editor and critic, many of the early commentators on Pope and Shaftesbury, including Voltaire, emphasized Pope's direct and enormous reliance on Shaftesbury and claim that "without Shaftesbury Pope could

hardly have written the best verses in his poem” (“Introduction” xxvii-xxviii). However, Mack, tempers the claims for Pope’s direct indebtedness to both of these predecessors; he writes that “the significant ideas [in the *Essay on Man*] are traditional” (“Introduction” xxix). He continues, particularly focusing on the claims for Shaftesbury: “Some of the larger concepts of the poem, like the idea of universal harmony, the duty of the individual to accord with the whole, the serenity of virtue as pictured in Epistle IV, may be owing to Shaftesbury. But they may be equally owing to the Stoic and Platonic writers – Cicero, Seneca, Aurelius, Epictetus, Simplicius, etc. – whom every educated neo classicist knew” (“Introduction” xxviii). Mack also considers Bolingbroke’s influence on Pope, but again concludes that “everything Pope incorporated in the poem was available to him from other sources: his reading, the talk of the town, above all, the traditional patterns of theodicy and ethics on which Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury, King, and Leibnitz drew” (“Introduction” xxxi). Samuel Johnson said of the *Essay on Man*, that in it Pope wrote what everyone knew; in it common knowledge with all the implicit concepts of man, nature, and the universe were made explicit. As such, the document became a significant reference for Pope’s successors, as well as a significant document for modern literary critics and historians for coming to know the mind set and assumptions of an age. Mack concludes that Pope’s greatness and the significant achievement of the *Essay on Man*, the reflection and integration of the many concepts that were ‘in the air,’ were all Pope’s own (“Introduction” xxxi).¹

An Essay on Man was published in 1734, though written over an extended time probably from 1729 and forward. Bolingbroke referred to its conception in November of 1729 as “an original” (“Introduction” xiii). In correspondences with Swift in 1729 and

1730, Pope referred to it as “a system of ethics”; “a book, to make mankind look upon this life with comfort and pleasure, and put morality in good humour”; and a book containing “nothing but the truest divinity and morality. What it will want in spirit, it will make up in truth” (“Introduction” xiii). Wishing to get unbiased responses and protect the *Essay* from purely malicious criticism by one or some of the victims of the *Dunciad*, Pope published it anonymously with a different bookseller than his usual one.² Mack reports that the “results were all that could be desired”; it was received with great acclaim even from Pope’s most contentious enemies. In Britain, the *Essay* was considered to be “equally beautiful and noble” poetry as well as “calculated on the noblest basis of philosophy and divinity” (“Introduction” xv).³ Despite some decline in Pope’s popularity mid century, it is known that his home became something of a shrine by century’s end and was visited by Ann Yearsley, a great admirer. And despite some considerable differences in poetics and perspective, Wordsworth and Byron, particularly among the Romantics, could not deny the weight of his influence.

The whole of the *Essay on Man* is permeated with concepts of order, system, universal principle, and natural law, and the work does not proceed to examine individual man and circumstances without these larger ordering principles constantly in mind. Bolingbroke’s description of the overall schema of the *Essay* in a letter to Swift in 1731 reveals the extent to which this ordering permeates the work:

The first epistle, which considers man, and the habitation of man relative to the whole system of universal being; the second, which considers him in his own habitation, in himself, and relatively to his particular system; and the third, which shows how

‘A universal cause

Works to one end, but works by various laws.’ ...

The fourth ... is a noble subject. He pleads the cause of God

[Providence]. (As quoted in Mack, “Introduction” xii-xiv)

Pope -- Bolingbroke in this letter -- feels confident that broad universal statements can be made. In part, their confidence stems from the long held traditions which they reflect.

For, as Donald Greene in the classic *Age of Exuberance* writes,

It is evident, as one makes one’s way through the writings of the standard authors of Enlightened England, that their view of man and his place in the universe and his destiny is essentially that of such earlier Christian writers as Spenser and Milton, Donne and Herbert, rather than that of Voltaire and Diderot. They are still writing for an audience thoroughly indoctrinated, from childhood onward, with the King James Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Articles, Creeds, and Catechism” (93).

The concept of order, then, becomes important in a discussion of sympathy, specifically these elements: there exists an order within the universe; man’s happiness comes from a proper position within society, a relationship with others, but most importantly from an inward happiness and ordering that best occurs when men exhibit virtuous rather than vicious behavior; man’s benevolence and sympathy are reflections of God’s benevolence and providential care. Obviously, Pope operates from a position of philosophical optimism, but not a naive optimism that blithely dismisses the reality of evil or the negative effects of overwhelming ruling passions.⁴ Such a position E.M.W.

Tillyard describes in *The Elizabethan World Picture* as one which “in spite of original sin and the corruption it imparted to the natural world, God’s great plan still stood out conspicuous in his works” (36). Pope’s confidence in this metaphysical order stands in direct contrast to the fragmentation and chaos which permeate Wordsworth’s *The Borderers* or Bannerman’s *Tales of Superstition*.

The *Essay on Man*, essentially a neo-classical work,⁵ relies significantly on themes stemming from the Renaissance. Pope draws especially upon four traditional bases of order and weaves them together in the *Essay* -- Renaissance concepts of law, Platonic love, the *concoro discordia*, and corresponding macrocosm and microcosm. First, Renaissance thought envisioned the universe as an ordered one that was both a hierarchical structuring of all the components in the universe and a union of all the hierarchical parts. This order stemmed from laws that governed the various parts, natural law, celestial laws, laws of reason – laws that operated together in order to create a harmonious and integrated whole universe. Next, the Platonic tradition saw the unity within the universe stemming from love rather than laws -- relationships between friends, man and woman, among members in a society, but principally the spiritualized love of God and man as shown through benevolence. The principle of *concoro discordia* emphasizes order through “the unification in ‘comely agreement’ of warring opposites: contrary motions of the Ptolemaic spheres, the poise of the planets against each other’s influence, the clashing elements, the mixtures of hostile humours in the body, the strife of reason and passion in the soul ... a variety of ‘concording enmities’” that bring chaos or conflict into harmony. Within each of these principles, there is an element of layering or “stratification,” placing elements in their appropriate places in a hierarchy. Such an

arrangement creates an interdependence among all of the parts or creatures and necessitates cooperation rather than conflict (“Introduction” xlvii-xlix). Finally, the concept of macrocosm -- the ordering principles within the universe at large -- and the corresponding microcosm -- the ordering principle within man -- relies on a “sense of intimacy” or connectedness between the two. Post fallen man needs to come to self knowledge, understand his place in and relationship to the chain of being or the other elements in the universe, and understand that he is neither animal which is lower on the chain, nor angel, which is higher and closer to God (Mack, “Introduction” l-liv; Tillyard 91- 94).^{6,7} Swift’s Gulliver never fully arrives at this self knowledge, torn between bestial Yahoo and cerebral Houyhnhnm. Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner only comes to that self knowledge after reestablishing his relationship with the world of nature by blessing the water snakes. Pope sums up the means to self knowledge by stating that the “proper study of mankind is man”; his *Essay on Man* is the “general Map of Man,” “Man in the abstract, his *Nature* and his *State*” (*Essay on Man*, “The Design” 7-8). Pope’s *Moral Epistles* examine man in the particular.

However, a broader understanding of the background to the concept of order and its relationship to virtue and God’s benevolence as the early eighteenth century saw it is important for understanding the roots from which sympathy in this context springs. Desire for and understanding of order on many levels permeated the Reformation and early eighteenth century. Certainly specific kinds of external or “material” order were necessary. Social order, on one level, required fewer great plagues and fires. Political order, in the same sense, required stability in the restoration of the monarchy, line of succession, and military prowess. Religious order, too, required restoration of the

Anglican Church and the authority of the bishop. As a result of puritan influences regarding the right to personal interpretation of religious matters, Anglican churchmen argued for complete obedience to church and state. Fearful of complete organizational, and perhaps also spiritual, chaos with the rise of enthusiasm,⁸ the Anglican Church commonly held that, “Let a man but persuade himself that the Spirit dwells personally in him, and speaks upon all occasions to him; how easily and readily may he plead that the spirit tells him he may kill his enemy, plunder his neighbor, cast off all obedience to his governors” (Sutherland 297-299).⁹

Concern for order and balance, however, extended beyond materialistic concerns for political, military, or church management and was mirrored in concern for order of the other sort. This was a broadly shared intellectual, moral, and spiritual value, the one which Pope describes in the *Essay on Man* was a common assumption of the early to mid eighteenth century. This kind of order proceeds from rational and virtuous action and reflects God’s providential presence in the universe. Widespread discussions about its nature appeared in essays, epistles, satires, plays, philosophical and moral tracts, poems and the burgeoning novel, and appealed to an ever growing readership. Works by three of Pope’s near contemporaries -- Defoe, Addison, and Steele in particular -- represent commonly held positions on Providential order, clarifying its varying aspects: its persistence in the life of the virtuous, or potentially virtuous, person; its abiding and integrating capability through the chain of being; and its fundamental basis in Christianity.¹⁰

In *Robinson Crusoe* providence is God’s persistent care, “an infinitely Good... Government of Mankind” (Defoe 196), reflected through a “secularized Puritan

consciousness” (Skilton 15). Defoe details this care despite Crusoe’s long string of poor choices, his disobedience to his father, his vicious involvement in the slave trade, and his ambitious pursuit of profit.¹¹ Crusoe alone survives the storm; he is able to retrieve tools that he needs; he is industrious and able to build shelter; he finds food and companionship when he is in the greatest need; he learns to pray and escapes the isolation of the island. As soon as Crusoe begins to weigh Christian values against self interest, sees the unknown footprint in the sand, and reevaluates his position in relation to God and man, his fortunes on the island improve. As he becomes increasingly aware of the function of providence in his life, he moves, though ever so slowly, toward gradual reinvolved with another human until he is restored to the larger society.¹²

Addison describes Providence at great length in various *Spectator Papers*, particularly numbers 181, 225, 381, 477, 483, 543, 571, and 635, and connects it with natural affection -- similar to Shaftesbury’s -- and benevolent action. These *Spectator Papers* reflect all of the Renaissance themes of order – the hierarchy of position, the macrocosm, *concoro discordia*, and a Platonic love. In number 181 Addison indicates that the “Great Design” of providence is “Mercy towards all his Works,” “a spontaneous Benevolence and Compassion towards those” in God’s “Care and protection” (II, 213-214). Providence is, in other words, a paternalistic love like a perfect love of father for a child, Creator for Creature, which forgives all errors. Addison continues and parallels God’s love for man with man’s affection for others; he explains that even though man does not have the same strength of love as God, God has given him instinct, a “Natural affection,” plus reason and duty to care for those dependent upon him. Man, however, often frustrates this natural affection and sinks into brutality (II, 214). In *Spectator*

number 225 Addison extends the definition of Providence further. He begins the essay by defining discretion, an “underagent” of Providence, a guide and directing force in the normal circumstances of life. Opposed to cunning, discretion is like a “well formed Eye” that takes in the broader view of the circumstances, resists selfish ends, and secures the “proper Happiness of his Nature.” But Addison adds to number 118’s definition of Providence by ultimately describing discretion as virtue, wisdom, and the “perfection of Reason” – the equivalent of what Providence is for God. In later essays Addison describes Providence as including what may appear to man as both “Calamities” and “Blessings,” not unlike Crusoe’s experience, but man’s shortsightedness is often unable to distinguish one from the other (IV, 214). In number 543 Providence, the order of God or the macrocosm - includes what Pope would refer to as the principle of plenitude – “the magnificent Harmony of the Universe” (IV, 441-444). Providence becomes synonymous with the creative force – the producer of many species, their goodness, richness, and multiplicity, their beauty and harmony of parts. In one of the final *Spectator Papers*, number 635, Addison, taking a Deistic stance, describes the world as a theater and as “this vast Machine, operating with general laws.” Man in this world is a spectator of the “long chain of events in the natural and moral worlds,” a visitor in the “several apartments of the Creation,” an observer of the “Dependence of the Parts of each of the several systems ... from whence results the Harmony of the Universe” (V, 170-172).

Richard Steele, often Addison’s compatriot in the *Spectator Papers*, made the concept of order, providence and virtue and their necessary interrelationship the topics of his moral tracts, letters, essays, and comedies over an extended period, from 1701 to

1728. Providence or providential order, as it appears explicitly in Steele's *Christian Hero* and implicitly in *The Theatre* and his sentimental comedies, *The Funeral*, *The Lying Lovers*, and *The Conscious Lovers*, is based on a rational, optimistic deism. Instead of the more modern notion of providence as God's personal day to day intervention, it implies an "ordering in the course of the world" with an "emphasis on God's redeeming love" and "Judicial righteousness" (Hastings 417). In all of the genres in which he writes, Steele relies on the interplay between character and situation to accomplish these purposes: first, to create a microcosm, a small picture of the larger world, and second, to demonstrate the effects that virtuous behavior in one person has on ordering the whole of the society.

The Christian Hero, written in 1701, is related in form, purpose, and content to "the moral essay, the manual or piety, and the reforming tract" of the early eighteenth century and, though overtly based in strong religious conviction, is rather like Steele's own essay on man. In Steele's *Apology* (1714), it was written "with a design to principally fix upon his own Mind a strong Impression of Virtue and Religion" (Blanchard 1). Steele particularly selects St. Paul as a "Christian Hero" and assumes a Pauline understanding of Providence which is both "personal" and "tender," as reflected in the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer and which comes from a transcendent being set over the created world (Hastings 416-417). Within the universe, the actions of the meek and virtuous man are reflections or recreations of God's Providence. As such, meekness and virtuous action are not submissive weaknesses but "Sublime and Heroic," "the very Characteristic ... [that] arises from a great, not a groveling Idea of things" (Chapter 36). Steele's great virtue of meekness becomes even more important when seen

as operating within the hierarchy of being. Meekness, the antithesis of pride, reflects the idea of order, man in his proper place; it is “founded on the extended Contemplation of the Place we bear in the Universe” and awakens man “to a just sense of things, teaches us that we are as well akin to Worms as to Angels” (Chapters 36, 37). Man is at once body and soul, “engine” and “engineer” with affinity to the “meanest” and “highest” beings (Chapter 25).

Steele’s understanding of a good, meek, virtuous man implies that man has the potential to be a microcosm or image of God. While virtuous, man draws “on the power of its creator”; when vicious, he draws from “an independent model of life” (29) and disrupts the order of being. Again, Steele repeats the same concept during his description of St. Paul, the ideal model or microcosm. Steele writes that “a good Man is not only the Friend of God, but the very Image, the Disciple, the Imitator of him. . . . He is true to himself, and Acts with Constancy and Resolution” (44). Looking at the concept of universal order in another way, Steele explains that a good man’s greatest ambition would be to “consider it self actually Employ’d in the Service of, and in a manner in Conjunction with, the Mind of the Universe” (52). By living a virtuous life, man repeats or recreates God’s order already existent in the universe. The microcosm mirrors or corresponds with the macrocosm.

Steele’s characters in his sentimental comedies, particularly in *The Conscious Lovers* (1728), were widely popular. It is through these plays that Steele was most successfully able to create a microcosm in which essentially virtuous characters exhibit the working out of Providence. Here, the stage is a replication of the world, in which the chief male character is a model of the meek and virtuous, wise and discrete man --

though for the modern appetite somewhat overdone. Sir John Bevil, an embodiment of the working out of Providence, personifies a paternalistic love and caring which oversees the working out of family recovery and harmonious marriages. While the plays themselves make few, if any, direct references to Providence, they implicitly affirm it: virtuous action -- action prompted by wisdom, prudence/discretion, fortitude, and justice, the virtues of the Sermon on the Mount -- results in familial and social order.

On the other hand, vicious action, like the hypocrisy and intemperance of Widow Brumpton who arranges her still living husband's funeral and appropriates her son's inheritance in *The Funeral* (1701), is the disruptive force in the world of the play. As the play concludes, the quite alive Lord Brumpton restores order and recommends virtuous behavior:

... thou ... must learn

A supererogatory Morality.

As he is to be Just, be Generous thou. (V. iv. ll.226-234)

He concludes urging those around him to allow no "Passion" or untoward "Ambition, Love or Rage" move them from the proper actions for their "Stage of Life" (V. iv. ll. 293-305). In these closing lines, the "stage" becomes the world. The Epilogue more explicitly sums up Steele's didactic concerns about the relationship of the stage and the world. Equating them, Lord Hardy proclaims that here "Love, Hope and Fear ... Are drawn in Miniature of Life the Stage./ Here you can View your Selves" (ll. 1- 4).

Implicit throughout the arguments of the *Essay on Man* and *Moral Epistles* is what a modern would call "community" or Adam Smith would refer to as the effects of sympathetic bonding -- the creation and maintenance of a social community. Pope builds

his positions in the *Essay on Man*, with particularized examples in his *Moral Epistles*, in a methodical sequence, describing self love and individual happiness, moving to social love and virtue where the reader is called to those social affections which result in a virtuous, active, and sympathetic engagement in the lives of others. Pope writes, “Act well your part” because “there all the honour lies” (Pope, *Essay on Man* IV. l. 194). The sequence culminates in the “Order of Providence” (Pope, *Essay on Man* IV. ll. 127). Thus, “Self love” is “push’d to social, to divine,” and, in union with others, “Gives thee to make thy neighbour’s blessing thine” (Pope, *Essay on Man* IV. ll. 353-354). The result is “one close system of Benevolence:/Happier as kinder, in whate’re degree,/ And height of Bliss but height of Charity” (Pope, *Essay on Man* IV. ll. 358-360). Throughout the works, Pope also moves from a simple to more complex definition of happiness, from the material to immaterial sources of happiness. In these ways, the passages demonstrate the poet's conscious creation of a hierarchy. The following examinations of details within the texts, specifically, and demonstrate how Pope works out each of these arguments. The first section, “Epistle II: To a Lady,” considers a particular example of self love and virtue; the second, the Indian passages in the *Essay on Man*, considers the growth from self love to social love; and the third, specific sections of parts I and III in the *Essay on Man*, looks at divine love or Providence.

“Epistle II: Epistle to a Lady” might at first reading appear to be more a harsh criticism of women than an example of proper self love and virtue. Pope’s portraits of greasy faced and licentious ladies, his apparent demeaning reference to women as “softer man,” and his reduction of their personalities to only two passions, the love of pleasure and the love of “sway,” really do appear to reflect a strong anti-feminism that even goes

beyond the norm for the eighteenth century. As a result, a modern reader might find justification for the poem only in the biographic insights it provides. Or the reader might be inclined to disregard the poem altogether, believing that Pope had been so wounded in his private affairs that he was incapable of creating a rational and fair poem about women.

Such responses, however, would be short sighted. They would deny to Pope what Pope himself had argued for in the *Essay on Criticism*. In lines 167 and following, he writes that fault often lies in the reader/critic, not necessarily in the work itself, for undervaluing a work. Often the reader's critical judgment fails by proceeding "without Remorse" and putting its own "Laws in force," rather than discovering what principles already lie within the poem. So the modern reader needs to approach "To a Lady" with some renewed vigor, praying as Pope did, that "some spark of your Coelestial Fire" might "teach vain Wits a Science little known,/ T' admire Superior Sense, and doubt their own!" (ll. 195-200).

In his biography of Pope, Maynard Mack comments that Pope employs a classic genre of satire against women, changes its hostility, and expresses first "amusement," then "awe, wonder and commiseration," and finally "understanding and involvement" (627). He is not alone in giving the poem a positive reading. F. W. Bateson writes that the "Epistle" "is much the most attractive of the four poems [the *Moral Epistles*]." He continues by indicating that Pope himself thought this a "prettier" poem than the "Epistle to Bathurst." Upon reading "Epistle to a Lady," Bolingbroke considered it "Pope's chef d'oeuvre at that time" (xxxv-xxxvii). The modern reader, though, need not rely on these endorsements of the poem to have a change of heart about it. A close examination of

certain structural elements, particularly contrast and satire, in the text reveals Pope's great esteem for Martha Blount as well as the role this portrait of her plays within Pope's broader scheme of proper self love and virtue.

The first clue to reading the "Epistle" comes in its closing line reference to Martha Blount's "good humor" (l. 292). This good humour takes on a double meaning: Martha's generous good will and her own balance of humours. Both meanings of the word are contrasted with the ill humors and unbalanced humours of the other women in the poem. This reference to a theory of the humours underlies the whole satiric structure of the poem. These humours are not necessarily the four temperaments of Elizabethan drama, but are more like Jonson's "stupidities" or propensities which begin as minor vices and then gradually become obsessions or consuming passions (Enck 47-49).¹³

In the "Epistle to a Lady" we can see these passions as vicious behavior in Pope's catalogue of women. At first glance this catalogue appears to be a random display of Pope's own spleen; however, a careful reading shows it to be contrasts between appearance and reality, a hierarchy of vices, and finally a contrast of false happiness with a proper happiness through virtue and self knowledge. He first describes the external appearances of a group of women as idealized portraits in a gallery. These are one line references only, to a nymph, or Arcadia's Countess, Pastora, Leda, or Fannia (ll. 4 – 14); no judgments are made about them. Pope then contrasts these poses with the reality -- self indulgence, vanity, caprice -- in other words, self interested passions in pursuit of pleasure. These descriptions of the reality begin with brief references and grow longer as the vice grows. The first two women, Rufa (three lines ll. 21-23) and Sappho (five lines ll. 24-28) represent falseness: Rufa, lacking intelligence, and Sappho, lacking beauty,

attempt to disguise themselves or alter their appearances. The next group of five women receives increasingly more attention and more analysis, but they too are false and moved by “contrarities.” Like “variegated tulips” Silia (eight lines ll. 29-36) and Papillia (four lines ll. 37-40) are capricious. Silia is first fearful to offend and then storms; Papillia first longs for trees and then despises them. Narcissa (sixteen lines ll. 53-68), like Silia and Papillia, shifts back and forth; however, unlike them, she makes these shifts so as to not “offend.” She moves from atheism to religion; in her, hedonism in body and Christianity in heart “take turns.”

The next four portraits represent two pairs of contrasting women who no longer shift back and forth in their opinions but who have become dominated by their vices. Philomede (seventeen lines ll. 69-86) is consumed by her physical passion: “blame her blood and body.” She is without all thought, lecturing “all mankind” about “madness and lust.” Flavia (fourteen lines ll. 87-100), on the other hand, is a false intellectual, one who though “impotent of mind” does “too much thinking.” This thinking, however, has no “common” or shared basis; it seeks not to discover truths which lie within but to create abstractions. The second pair of women represents an excess of emotion (an absence of reason) and a complete absence of feeling (absence of self love). Receiving Pope’s most detailed dissection, they appear to be almost caricatures of their vices. Atossa is consumed by her “Rage” and Fury,” “Violence” and “Hate” (ll. 128-132); all her life is “one warfare upon earth” (l. 118) in which her “Fury . . . outran the Wit” (l. 127). Cloe, on the other hand, lacks a heart; “Nature in her . . . forgot” (ll. 158-160). She has no virtues, no thoughts, no feelings. While “her Lover pants upon her breast,” she observes her furniture; while her friend comes to her “in deep despair,” she compares fabrics (ll. 167-

170). Atossa and Cloe are representatives of general principles enunciated in Book II of the *Essay on Man*. Atossa is that person who becomes “familiar with” the “face” of Vice, one who “first endure[s], then pity[ies], then embrace[s] the monster” (*Essay on Man* II: ll. 217-220). Cloe represents that person for whom “Vice or Virtue there is none at all” (*Essay on Man* II: l. 212). Pope’s rising intensity and involvement with these portraits, from superficial to more thorough dissection of extremes, create an increasing tension against which he presents Martha, his model of balance, of true wit, virtue and self knowledge as it leads to happiness. And through this kind of accumulation of contrasts, Pope creates even greater praise for her virtues.

Besides the final line reference to good humour and this structural climaxing, there is a second clue to the meaning of the “Epistle” which appears in the closing lines and which defines more precisely the types of women being contrasted. It appears in Pope’s reference to “Ascendant Phoebus” (l. 235) and is clarified in Bateson’s notes. Bateson explains that Phoebus has dual attributes: “refined wit as god of poetry, gold, and as the god of the sun” (73). Pope sees in this duality the eighteenth century conflict between wit, poetry, and balance on one hand, and money, material goods, and dissatisfaction on the other. While the first group of portraits, those glossed over very quickly, might be seen as “romantic” shepherdesses, the later more closely studied ones reveal greater levels of dissatisfaction, of lost or artificial wit, and of extreme desire for wealth, power, or control. They are excessively monied “Duchesses” (l. 291). Martha Blount, however, “watch’d with care,” was “deny’d the Pelf/Which buys your sex a Tyrant o’er itself” (ll. 285-288). As a result, she received a ripened spirit, one with “Sense, Good-Humour, and a Poet” (ll. 290-292). In essence, the poem weighs the value

of the immaterial against the material, the life of the mind and spirit versus the life of power and money, the value of self knowledge against pride, artifice, and ambition. In this epistle Pope singles out for criticism those women who identify with the values of power and acquisition, like those men in the epistles to Cobham, Bathurst, and Burlington, to contrast with his ideal of virtue.

Pope's reference to Martha Blount as "a softer Man" (l. 272) requires some particular attention. This reference, rather than demeaning her, is one of great praise, one in which Martha is elevated above men, if read within the context of the remaining lines and the structural devices of the poem. With line 274, Pope begins a series of contrasts between women and men, "Your love of Pleasure, our desire of Rest,/ ... Your Taste of follies, with our Scorn of Fools." But Pope then indicates that these contrasts become blended, a balanced set of characteristics rather than any one single dominating force. Because of this blending, reserve joins with frankness, art allies with truth, courage joins with softness, "Modesty with Pride,/ Fix'd Principles, with Fancy ever new" (ll. 274-279). These oppositions, blended together, are contained within Martha, the epitome of virtue, the balance of self love and reason. This blending and balancing of opposites is "a Woman's Fame" (l. 281). Rather than being a term of insult or a word equated with lesser, Pope's "softer Man" implies "better Man." So when he calls her "Friend," Pope is not patronizing Martha; he is recognizing her inestimable value. Woman is Heaven's last, its best work, rather than the last of its several best works. Rather than writing a diatribe against women, Pope has crafted a poem in praise of this best of all women, one which is an exemplar of that self love which leads to social and divine love.

Two passages which can be examined, again using contrasting elements, to illustrate Pope's understanding of the proper relationship between man and society, social and divine love are those brief references to the Indian in the *Essay on Man*, first in Epistle I, lines 99-112 and then in Epistle IV, lines 177 and 178. Like all of Pope's poetic details, these references are not idly placed or haphazardly introduced, nor are they merely contemporary "noble savage" references which reflect an historical bias. Because of the contexts in which these two references appear, the structural placement, associated images, and contrasts, the two Indian passages also amplify the concept of true happiness within the context of its relationship to society and the divine.

In the lines preceding both the Epistle I and Epistle IV Indian references, Pope describes how we might experience some happiness. It is well, he writes, that "Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate" (l. 77); Butt's notes to the line explain Pope's position that in fact man's "happiness depends on his Ignorance to a certain degree" (23). If man or animals knew what God knew about the future, there would be no hope: they would not "skip and play" (l. 82). Happiness comes then through our blindly and humbly hoping, through that hope "which springs eternal in the human breast" (l. 91-95). Pope gives two examples of the happiness which comes from not knowing the future. The lamb is able to lick the hand which will eventually slaughter him (l. 84) and the Indian, content with "his natural desire," is happy "To Be" (l. 109). In this context, both the lamb and the Indian are associated with the "simple" natural world (l. 103): the lamb is "pleas'd to the last" by cropping "the flow'ry food" (l. 83), while the Indian finds God in the clouds and wind, heaven in the woods or some happier island (ll. 100-106).

The lamb and Indian are associated in another way; both are sympathetic victims of bloody aggression. Pope creates an almost sentimental description of the lamb's innocence and -- trust before its death; the textual notes comment that man, in the lamb-man-God hierarchy, is inferior to the lamb in his "trustfulness" (23). Likewise, Pope describes the "poor Indian" as a noble, unassuming victim of Christian greed and bloodthirstiness who "asks for no Angel's wing" (l. 110). Happiness for him is that his dog shall be his companion in heaven. There is an additional element contributing to the Indian's happiness that is not part of the lamb's. He has a soul that is untouched by "proud Science" (l. 101).

In the following section, Pope sets up a series of contrasts to the hope, lamb and Indian passages. Shifting his tone to become strongly satiric, he opens with a sharp rebuke to a proud and destructive mankind. The sympathetic portrayal of the lamb and Indian are contrasted with the bitter sarcasm of "Go, wiser thou" (l. 113). The lamb and Indian's acceptance of their lives within the natural world are contrasted with man's destruction of that natural world for "sport or gust" (l. 117). And, replacing hope is man's "reas'ning Pride," his inversion of the laws of order and attempt not to "wait the great teacher Death" (l. 92), but to aspire to be God (II. 122-123). Man's excessive reason, pride, and misuse of nature, rather than creating a better world, are sins against hope. As such, they are the source of his error and lie in the way of happiness.

For Pope, the happiness of Epistle I, the happiness based on hope alone or a life in nature, however, is not a stopping point. His return to the Indian image in Epistle IV, while brief, should sound an alarm for the observant reader. It is a definite tactic which alerts the reader to the fact that the arguments of Epistles II and III, man's progression

from the natural state through Adam's sin to the rise of states and laws, now requires a reevaluation of whether happiness based only on hope is adequate. This redefinition of happiness, I believe, accounts for Pope's apparent strange shift in tone in the Epistle IV Indian lines. He dismisses the Indian as though he and his dog are no longer worthy of sympathy (ll. 177-178). He repeats the sharply critical dismissal of "Go, wiser thou!" (I: l. 113) to apply it as before to man but now also to the Indian; he writes, "Weak foolish man ...Go, like the Indian" (IV: l. 173-177).

This criticism underscores the fact that because man is not living in the natural state, nor is he living as Adam in a pre-fallen world, there now have to be new standards for defining happiness. The nature of true happiness is more than the absence of pride and has three important qualities. First, happiness is no longer defined in terms of the material – that is, the Indian's dog. Pope, arguing from Aristotle's ethics, writes that happiness rests in "What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy. It is "The soul's calm sun-shine" not the "same trash mad mortals wish for here" (ll. 167-174; n. 143). Referring to a similarity between J. Hales and Pope, Butt's textual note for lines 57-62 explains Pope's thrust - that happiness, available to all, "is nothing else but ...a leading of our life according to virtue" (134). Material items such as "toys and empires" merely destroy virtue. Developing this theme through the rest of Epistle IV, Pope explicitly states in line 310 that "Virtue alone is Happiness below."

Second, true happiness is not a passive acceptance as the lamb's or Indian's, but a deliberate choice. Because fortune and chance randomly bestow material goods, man must "seek," an active pursuit, happiness elsewhere. Pope writes:

Honour and shame from no Condition rise;

Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

(II: ll. 193-194)

Acting "well" rather than fortune, since fortune is not within man's domain, fame, beauty or heredity, "makes the man" (I. 203). Pope later provides a series of active verbs to emphasize the fact that happiness comes through right individual action rather than passivity; the good man "will find." He "takes up," "looks thro," "Pursues," "sees," "touches," and "learns" (II. 330-336).

The third quality of happiness is right individual action within a society, in participation with other men; it is achieved by moving beyond hope to love of self, to positive social engagement through the social affections, and ultimately to love of God. While the Indian is satisfied with much less, the good man will progress from hope through faith to self love which is "push'd to social" then divine love (I. 353). While the Indian was limited to his own concerns, his dog, wife, and bottle, the human soul who is to achieve true happiness "Must rise from Individual to the Whole" (I. 362). He must be part of a social group, something Pope apparently believed the Indian was not. Therefore, the placement of the Indian passage in Epistle I, before the description of the rise of society, is quite important. In addition, Pope's shift in tone in the Epistle IV Indian passage is not an inconsistency; it reflects his sharp rebuke of those who like the Indian remain outside some genuine social context. Pope excludes the solitary Indian in the possibility of a broader Christian scheme of redemption; only by operating virtuously within a social scheme can man grow in a connectedness and participation with others, i.e. sympathy, and then with God.

Man's interconnectedness with God, not an impartial watchmaker, occurs within a whole larger scheme of divine benevolence. For Pope, Providence, which is a demonstration of divine benevolence, is part of the order of things, one of the laws of Nature extending through the Universe. Describing the world as a single, integrated whole held together "in one close system of benevolence," at the end of the first Epistle Pope writes:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
 That, chang'd thro' al, and yet in all the same,
 Great in the earth, as in th' aethereal frame, ...
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns;
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. (ll. 267-280)

Here benevolence is a reflection of God's "soul" and part of his larger scheme, his "Universal Care" that extends through all the orders of creation (ll. 159). Mack states that this understanding of God's soul is analogous to "St. Paul's description of the mystery of Christian unity" (*Essay on Man* lvi). It is organic, pervasive, and an all binding part of Nature. In Epistle IV Pope refers to Providence as "One common blessing" which

heaven “breathes thro’ ev’ry member of the whole/ ... as one common soul” (ll. 61-62). Happiness comes only through conformity to this one common order (IV: ll. 327- 340).

Epistle III (line 135) of the *Essay on Man* contains Pope’s only explicit reference to sympathy in the whole of the work. It is similar in its brevity and implications to Shaftesbury’s almost cursory definition of sympathy - one of the “natural affections” and a “Pleasure” in the “participation with others” (*Characteristics* II: Treatise 4, 65). However, Pope’s reference is contained within the larger discussion of the “*Nature and state of Man, with respect to Society*” in which Reason or Instinct operate alike to the good of each Individual” and “operate also to Society” (91). Beginning Book III, Pope calls the reader to observe the “chain of love” that extends through the Universe and within members of a society. Such love is part of “plastic nature,” the influencing and formative power of God that influences all aspects of life – the movement of atoms to the growth, productivity, and death cycle of animal and vegetable life (*Essay on Man* III: ll. 7 –17). Within this chain, all of the parts “relate to the whole” and “Nothing stands alone” (ll. 21- 25) for an “all-preserving Soul” connects each to each. Every man is linked to man so that cooperating together in reasonable effort “mutual wants” might build “mutual happiness” (ll. 93-112). Pope comes to an almost Wordsworthian climax in this sequence in which all creatures are linked, mankind is linked to each other, and an overarching natural order suffuses all –

breathes thro’ the air, or shoots beneath the deeps,

Or pours profuse on earth; one nature feeds

The vital flame and swells the genial seeds. (III: ll. 116-118) ¹⁴

Pope then describes married love, family love, love of parents for children, all of which develop strong and longer lasting bonds which, when aided by “Reflection” and “Reason” grow stronger yet. It is here that he then refers to sympathy, a close personal connectedness with which “we burn,” and by implication he relates it to the deeper human affections, particularly those in marriage. From these affections come additional virtues and new habits of charity on to which benevolence -- a broad social love -- is grafted (III: ll. 133-138). This kind of ideal interconnectedness -- first a proper self love, then a familial or married love, and finally a broad social benevolence -- present an essentially different operation of sympathy, one connected with the formation of virtue and one more thoroughly other centered, than that more purely personal imaginative or emotional interaction of Hume and Smith.

While Smith describes sympathy as that function which eventually draws individuals together and builds community, Pope’s other centeredness founds community on love and a social harmony that generate and accept laws for the overall good. He assumes a mutuality of interest and effort in which broadly shared love, as well as properly restrained self love effect the “social *and* public Good” (91). Self love is restrained or fashioned through laws which the whole community accept so as to respect the rights of each individual member of the community. Here, by mutual agreement, “All join to guard what each desires to gain” (III: l. 277) and to create the “music of a well-mix’d State” (III, ll. 294). Pope concludes:

Such is the World’s great harmony, that springs

From Order, Union, full Consent of things!

Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made

To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade,
 More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,
 And, in proportion as it blesses, blest,
 Draw to one point, and to one center bring
 Beast, man, or Angel, Servant, Lord, or King. ...
 In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
 But all Mankind's concern is Charity. (III: ll.295-308)

Mack's commentary on this passage indicates that Pope was not alone in his emphasis on shared community regard as it contributed to a stable society, nor was he advancing a new or radical idea. Mack explains that is was, in fact, a "common theme in moral and sermon literature"(Mack, "Introduction" to *Essay on Man* 123). Citing John Fell's Sermon of December 22, 1680, he amplifies this idea of the interdependence, aided by charity and benevolence, of all members in a society further:

We area all born naked and unarmed, needing the assistance of each other; but wanting strength or weapons to enforce it; but the Divine Wisdom has so suited things, that the strong depends on the weak, as much as the weak do's on the strong: the rich is assisted by the poor, as the poor is by the rich: the wise is aided by the ignorant, as the ignorant is by the wise. The Scepter rests upon the mattock and the spade, and the Throne upon the plough. The great animal of a Republic has as much consent of parts, as much dependence of them on each other, as any living creature has."
 (Mack, "Introduction" 123)

Mirroring this same concept, Pope closes the *Essay on Man* with:

...true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the same;

That VIRTUE only makes our Bliss below;

And all our Knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW. (IV, ll. 396-398)

It is probably the pervasiveness of this attitude of cooperation at all levels among the English that caused them, unlike the French, to avoid significant internal revolution.

For Pope's virtue and sympathy in action, one might look to Fielding's rather naïve Parson Adams in *Joseph Andrews* or Smollett's comic Mathew Bramble in *Humphrey Clinker*. Both men know little of the vulgar or "real" world; however, both are "representative of Everyman and an exemplum of faith in works. ...[theirs] is a natural goodness" (Skilton 29), responding with charity and good will to the those who seek their help. "Natural goodness," David Skilton argues in defense of Parson Adams, "is all, and Fielding praised the 'natural' gentleman whose qualities and good deeds sprang from a spontaneous goodness of heart" (29). Ironically, though, one of the best literary demonstrations of Pope's virtuous action and sympathy appears in not an optimistic or lighthearted comedy, but in the very dark Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels*. Eighteenth century commentators lambasted Swift for his "intolerable misanthropy" and "debasement of mankind." His first biographer referred to Swift as "the degenerate Yahoo" and subsequent critics accused Swift of representing his "own moral deformity and defiled imagination." Nineteenth-century critic Sir Walter Scott accused Swift of having an "incipient mental disease" for "this horrible outline of mankind degraded to a bestial state." Thackeray advised that Book IV be skipped because it was "filthy in thought, raging, and obscene" (Landa xi). Whatever Book IV's critical response in the

eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth centuries, however a reader responds to the crude and bestial yahoos, one thing about the book stands out absolutely. Pedro is as exemplary a figure of virtue in action, of sympathetic response not in his imagining the feelings and circumstances that Gulliver is in but in his display of social affection, charity and “participation with” the other. Swift himself displayed this same social affection; while cynical and misanthropic himself, Landa takes note of Swift’s response to persons in distress. He states that “this duty he [Swift] never scanted either as a private citizen willingly using his own money or as a public figure with the prestige of his office. It was thus that he became an embodiment of the voice and conscience of Ireland” (xx).

Swift did not generally share Pope’s or Shaftesbury’s sense of idealism and was concerned about writers who presented “only ‘the fair side of human nature’ ... and [were] asserting man’s natural goodness,” who saw mankind sentimentally, as pure benevolence, and who ignored man’s baseness, irrationality, and moral corruption (Landa xxii-xxiii). More like Swift’s own attitude at its most cynical, particularly toward politicians and lawmakers, the King in “A Voyage to Brobdingnag” hears his account of the laws, politics, and customs of his country and replies to Gulliver that “I cannot but conclude that the bulk of your natives [English] to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth” (107). In Chapter XI of Part IV, “A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms,” Gulliver has lost all sense of his own nature as human, and from the perspective of the chain of being, where that nature is in proper relation to the bestial Yahoo or the cerebral Houyhnhnm. He leaves the country of Yahoo and Houyhnhnm depraved in order to find an island where he can reside in solitude because returning to even the “politest” court in Europe would return him “to

live in the society and under the government of yahoos” (228). However, he has to abandon the island chased by hostile natives. Wounded, dressed and acting as a savage, but still desperate to avoid other humans/yahoos, he is taken by some “honest” Portuguese sailors who surprisingly speak “with great humanity” and who would take him “gratis” to Lisbon.¹⁵

It is at this point in a very few pages that Swift describes Pedro de Mendez, captain of the ship which rescues Gulliver, the one character in the entire work who represents a humane voice -- one of Christian virtue, patience, and from Steele’s description, meekness. Gulliver himself recognizes that Pedro is “courteous and generous” even though he himself is “silent and sullen,” then disgusted by human companionship, insulting and slovenly (231). Throughout the entire voyage, the crazed Gulliver remains ungrateful, resistant, rarely successful in concealing his “antipathy to human kind” (232); however, Pedro offers him more than food, housing, and clothing. He patiently tends to his entire care, providing companionship, conversation, protection, good will, and even “very good *human*” understanding and respect -- all of those characteristics which Gulliver fails to credit in a human/yahoo (233). Pedro tries to recuperate Gulliver, to restore him to human activity, and, “taking kind leave” and “embracing” Gulliver, returns him to his own country with money in his pocket. It is clear, though, that Gulliver is unaffected by Pedro for he returns to his family only to live in the stable in friendship and conversation with his horses. Through this brief section, Swift has created an ideal portrait of virtue, particularly charity and benevolence not in rarified principle but in daily social interaction, one in which sympathy as a natural

affection and “participation with others” stands in stark contrast to Gulliver’s resistance to any human society.¹⁶

What becomes clear in all of this discussion about order and virtuous behavior, but more importantly what becomes relevant to the discussion of sympathy, is that here in Pope, as well as in Shaftesbury, the common basis for community is a shared apprehension of the social affections, virtue, and universal ordering principles. Sympathy -- that social affection which is a “participation with others” -- is one component contained within this whole large universal scheme. For the early and mid eighteenth century mercy, justice, love, benevolence, and so on are considered expected behaviors which occur not as an individualized, sense or imaginative response to a sufferer’s circumstance but as parts of a regular pattern of life which grow, accumulate, and intensify. The emphasis is on their occurrence as principled action a priori to any personal, emotional, inquiring, or experiential involvement with a sufferer or another’s circumstance. However, as religious faith declines and social structures dissolve and change through the later part of the century, this whole universal scheme is cast into doubt. Additionally, as Locke’s associationism develops and as Hume’s empirical approach to the moral sense takes hold, the common bond becomes not universal principles but sense experiences that subsequently extend into particularized shared experience through sympathetic identification. The common basis for community becomes personal and experiential. Finally, in this shift from apprehension of universals to individualized experience, the perspective shifts from external to internal, with the result that the sympathetic response no longer is placed within a larger scheme but becomes the starting vantage point from which a larger scheme is developed. This is

dramatically seen in the opening lines of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*; they immediately begin with a definition and description of sympathy.

Sympathy and the moral sense are significantly different for Shaftesbury and Pope than they are for Hume. This difference lies in their fundamentally opposed assumptions about the underlying ordering principles in the universe. For Pope, the moral sense, sympathy, and one person's connectedness to another and thus to a larger community are grounded in a firm belief in a universal, immaterial, providential and benevolent organizing principle -- God. However, for Hume the moral sense is a material sense, similar to the other senses. And it is this understanding of sympathy as a "material sense," along with the spread of Deism and "Hume's Time-bomb" (Wilson 17) which dramatically and radically shifts the whole perspective on sympathy. Eventually as active religious belief became severely challenged by scientific discoveries and the "message of the fossils" (Wilson x), confidence in a providential first principle declined; notions of social responsibility, active sympathetic expression, and faith in man's relationship with other men assumed greater importance than their relationships with an immaterial and unknowable presence.¹⁷

A.N. Wilson's commentary on Hume's attitude toward religious belief in *God's Funeral* is useful for focusing on how substantively different Hume's discussion of sympathy and moral sense is from his predecessors'. While the whole thrust of *God's Funeral* examines the loss of religious faith, in belief in God, and in a sense of purposeful existence that stems from faith in nineteenth century England, Wilson begins with several significant influences of the mid-eighteenth century; two in particular for this discussion are the spread of a particular aspect of Deism and influence of Hume's materialism.¹⁸

Deism was one of the most widely accepted creeds among intellectuals of the mid and late eighteenth century and permeated Gibbon's influential *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.¹⁹ This one particular aspect of Deism, a mechanistic explanation of the universe, portrays God as a "Divine Clockmaker," one who established physical laws of the universe, set it in motion to run according to those laws, and does not now interfere or interact with them (Wilson 22). Such a God could be either "dead or alive," but most surely is one who no longer entertains any interest in his "toy" (Wilson 29). In the *Dialogues*, Hume, the empiricist, describes this Deist universe as "the production of old age and dotage in some superannuated Deity; and ever since his Death, has run on at adventures, from first impulse and active force, which it received from him" (as quoted in Wilson 29). Such a materialist view, as Wilson concludes, completely demolishes "truths which had been taken as self-evident for fifteen or sixteen hundred years" (30). Additionally, such a view does not leave room for a God of active benevolent expression or sympathy.

Wilson's second argument is more extensive and posits that Hume's attitudes toward religion and in particular his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) had significant formative influences. Hume, while not an atheist, was suspicious of religious belief and enthusiasm, telling Boswell that he "Never entertained any belief in Religion since he began to read Locke and Clarke" (as quoted in Wilson 22). However, he went beyond suspicion to criticism of the British at large commenting that as a people they professed "the deepest Stupidity, Christianity and Ignorance" (as quoted in Wilson 23). Finally, with the publication of the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1751- 1776), he created, as Goethe saw it, "not so much a lethal weapon against religion as 'a death

certificate' ” (as quoted in Wilson 23, note 15). In the *Dialogues*, Hume criticizes Deism in particular, and Christianity in general, for their assumption that the universe operates as the result of a mind, and particularly one mind, at work. Instead, well before Darwin, he suggests that the universe might operate according to some inherent material principles. He writes: “For aught we know, *a priori*, matter [rather than the immaterial or a transcendent reality] may contain the source, or spring, of order originally within itself, as well as the mind does” (as quoted in Wilson 24). Hume, therefore, as Wilson argues, effectively “remove[d] any philosophical *necessity* for believing in God” (Wilson 25).²⁰ Obviously, then, with this perspective on religion and on the material basis for all of the universe, Hume’s use of the terms sympathy, moral sense and social affections carry significantly different meanings than the Christian Pope’s. In a not dissimilar way, Adam Smith’s understanding of sympathy also assumes essentially a materialist perspective. Sympathy for him is not a ideal or principle but rather that human, interactive experience which leads to improved social structures.

Chapter 3: Jane Austen's English Idyll: Virtue Solidified

From late eighteenth century vantage points, sympathy functions, or fails to function, under certain conditions. First, sympathy operates when the viewer perceives some similarity -- or there is some "mirroring" in Smith's sense -- between himself and the object of sympathy. Second, sympathy is broader or more comprehensive and more meritorious -- that is, more like Pope's Benevolence -- when the perception of similarity is based on the less particular and more universal. Third, sympathy springs out of a balance between the natural sentiments and necessary education in the social affections and virtue. Finally, without the proper education, sympathy becomes self love and abuse of the affections and impedes the social bond or sense of community. Questions about likeness, similarity, and dissimilarity as they impact the possibility of sympathy were genuine and complicated ones for writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Hume had described the sympathetic process as one in which minds "mirror" each other and create "similitudes" (Bewell 79). But when does the mind create or fail to create those similitudes for an increasingly diverse population? Could Pope's Universal Principles still apply when he himself abandoned hope in the *New Dunciad*? A brief consideration of historical concerns around the relationship between sympathy and

similitude, including the creation of similitude through education, provides a crucial context for describing and evaluating sympathy in Jane Austen's *Emma*.

Confidence in the universality of the social and moral sentiments appears less than absolute after Pope. This confidence is especially shaken when Hume's description of sympathy as an automatic response which creates an identical experience in the observer is supplanted by Adam Smith's opening statements in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that no one truly knows another's experiences -- "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (9). Smith, instead, emphasized an imaginative creation of the experience in the observer with two essential components: first, the recognition of similitude and second, the creation of a hierarchy for the sympathetic response beginning with the closest bonds of similarity -- those within the family -- and continuing through more distant family, less familiar contacts, and strangers. For him, sympathy would more likely occur with those most immediately connected and less frequently occur with strangers or when the viewer was preoccupied with other matters. Rousseau, whose concept of sympathy and the formation of society also had profound effects on the British Romantic writers, described sympathy as "the mainspring of human passion, a law to both nature and man," which "depends on our recognition of the likeness or conformities between ourselves and others" (Bewell 78-79). While he develops many other aspects of sympathy in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, this one -- the recognition of likeness -- is fundamental to any sharing of imaginative experience, for, as Rousseau continues, he would have no way of engaging in that process if he is "ignorant of what there is in common" (Bewell 79; Rousseau

Discourse 517). Such recognition would develop only after primitive man, a hunter and hunted savage not naturally bound by sympathy or mutual interest, formed into primitive groupings based on need and then created more sophisticated societies (Bewell 76-81).

A broad range of writers at the end of the eighteenth century responded to the challenges posed by Rousseau's concepts of the nature of man and education and by Smith's suggestion that sympathy was not automatic and uniform as Hume suggests; instead, it was limited or qualified by experience, relationship, and disposition.

Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793-1798) constructs its arguments about fellow feeling and the recognition of similarity in an imagined "natural man" or "man in his original state" before laws and social restrictions. In this natural state, language, the development of the mind, and the ability to create abstract concepts, all spring from the "act of 'comparison, or the coupling together of two ideas and the perception of resemblances and differences" (Marshall 201; Godwin 157, 159). In his chapter on "Self Love and Benevolence," Godwin recognizes that, because "we are surrounded by beings of the same nature as ourselves," it is possible "in imagination to go out of ourselves" (Marshall 201; Godwin 381). Sympathy, then, in recognizing similarity, is possible.¹

On the other hand, Mary Shelley, twenty-one years later having observed the effects of anarchy and revolution, reflects great anxiety about the possibility of similitude -- recognizing and achieving contact with someone of similar qualities -- much less forming some sympathetic relationship in *Frankenstein* (1818). Consider Marshall's analysis of the scene in which the Monster -- a Rousseau like natural savage -- demands a wife, a creature similar to himself. Up until that demand, the Monster had received no

sustained sympathy or “fellow feeling,” even though he was able to feel his own need for it, from his creator or the family whom he had witnessed through his peep hole because there was no one like him, no one similar to share his experiences and feelings. When he asks Frankenstein to make him a wife/companion, the Monster realizes that in order to experience some shared sympathy there must be some recognition of similitude; he must have someone “of the same species” (Shelley 137; Marshall 198). Shelley repeats throughout the novel the monster’s longing for “beings like myself” (162; Marshall 198). Marshall concludes that Shelley “focuses on the epistemology and the rhetoric of fellow feeling – which, she shows, raise questions about identification, resemblance, likeness, difference, comparison, and the ability to transport oneself into someone else’s thoughts and sentiments” (Marshall 198). She does, in fact, raise doubts about the possibility of sympathy altogether.²

Debates about sympathy and similitude also took other dimensions; sympathy became incorporated into arguments for equality between the sexes and among certain socio economic classes. These arguments were based on recognizing the greater similarities rather than apparent external differences and show up in numerous important contexts, philosophic and economic tracts, treatises on education, poems, and novels. In *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) Mary Wollstonecraft builds her argument for the importance of equality between the sexes, and subsequently for sympathy and fellow feeling, on Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith explains that “the charm of life is sympathy; nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our breast” (Smith 90; as quoted in Marshall 199). Wollstonecraft argues that women are not, as Rousseau would describe them, “half beings” or “wild chimeras,”

but “help meets” in whom the recognition of similarity to males is absolutely necessary. It is the “false system of education,” she writes, that is responsible for portraying women as “subordinate” creatures, significantly different than men, and “not part of the human species” (Wollstonecraft 7-8, 22, 39, 150; Marshall 199). When women are perceived in this way, that is, when men deny women recognition as members of the same species, Wollstonecraft argues, they also deny women sympathy and opportunities for men themselves to experience fellow feeling.³

A brief consideration of the positions on similitude taken by Yearsley, Edgeworth, and Moore contributes to the consideration of sympathy and similitude in terms of gender and social positioning. In Ann Yearsley, these questions of similitude show up in terms of class and social hierarchy. In “Lines addressed to a Gentleman who declined making himself known to the Author” (1.785), Yearsley, a milkmaid poet “far more sophisticated... than her reputation as an ‘unlettered’ milkmaid denotes” (Felsenstein 367), writes to her upper class benefactor and makes an appeal for a more broadly based relationship than aloof or distant benefactor and dependent. She appeals to him as “my Friend,” asking him to consider “how swift Life’s moments roll” because “A few years hence, - we both shall cease to be” (in Felsenstein, 355, ll. 3-4). A self pronounced “rural lyre” and voice of nature, Yearsley continues the poem by arguing for a broadly based shared sympathy -- a “sympathy of soul” -- one that surpasses and is not dependent on gender, class, or economic status. She writes:

Believe me Friend - ...

And if thou know’st not, deign of me to learn

That sympathy of soul affords more joy

Than vulgar Hypocrites can e'er define,
 For mental extasy can never cloy,
 And *Friendship only* is the spark divine.

But Caution chills dear friendships infant root.

On soil so barren, it can never spring.

No joy, no social transport, known to shoot

Beneath suspicion's rapture-freezing wing. (as quoted in
 Felsenstein, 356 ll. 15-24)

Felsenstein concludes of this poem that "As Yearsley herself admits, she may be 'a rustic stranger' and 'one of trifling cast,' yet what she is seeking in her anonymous poem is a friendship that transcends their social difference" (356).

Maria Edgeworth's essay "On Sympathy and Sensibility" from *Practical Education* (1798) reflects late eighteenth century emphasis on education, including in it the careful development of the proper disposition of sympathy and the moral sense. Such emphasis on the proper education was consistent with various theories of psychology stemming from Locke and Rousseau. These theories stressed the role of experiences in the formation of character (Straub 441). In essence, Edgeworth's essay argues that the education of children and women, as well as the management of their experiences, should occur in such a way that their natural tendencies toward excessively sentimental or sympathetic feelings become regulated by principles of virtue. She begins by stating that the expressions of sympathy by children are "artless" but "pleasing" because they are not false or affected and because they represent the "genuine language of nature" (402).

Such sympathy is derived from the natural social affections and is connected with compassion and benevolence that children feel freely and unreservedly. However, supporting her position with multiple examples for training children, Edgeworth stresses that at some point in the maturation process sentiment should not be allowed to flow freely or to be demonstrated without some regulation; it must, of necessity be paired with “propriety and justice; merit and demerit; of gratitude and resentment; self complacency or remorse, complacency or shame” (402). Without reason or any of these regulating components, sympathy alone can respond to the evil, the excessive, or the good without discrimination. For “a being endowed with the most exquisite sympathy” but without reason and education is likely to be “dangerous to the happiness of society” (402). He is unable to make judgments or establish boundaries to his sympathies with the result that he is “influenced by the bad as well as the good passions of others” indiscriminately (402). Edgeworth again provides some examples: someone without education in virtue might sympathize with the rich and overlook the tyranny which comes with great wealth or sympathize with the violent and angry man and neglect to make a judgment about the cause and righteousness of the anger. “Such a being,” she concludes, “no matter what his virtuous sympathies might be, must act either like a madman or a fool.

On sympathy alone, Edgeworth contends, we cannot depend either for the correctness of a man’s moral sentiments or for the steadiness of his moral conduct” (403). Rousseau used terms like “natural goodness” and “excellence of heart,” and described his preference for man in his pre society and natural state when his affections are most natural and unencumbered; however, this approach is wanting.⁴ There is nothing in this description of the “natural state of man” which indicates that sympathy, virtue and reason

automatically come into existence together. Edgeworth then takes her references to Rousseau a little farther to provide a most apt example of the disconnection between sentiments and virtue. She reminds the reader that while Rousseau, as well as Sterne, could write extensively about feelings and sympathy, he led a life of moral depravity (403). Edgeworth concludes that sympathy must coexist with informed reason and moral sense for the well being of the individual and the society at large, and that this combination comes about only through carefully constructed education, example, and habit. Such education and “cultivation of the understanding” not only does not “impede the exercise of the social affections” but also increases them (411).⁵

Hannah More’s “On the Dangers of an Ill Directed Sensibility” from *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) is similar to Edgeworth’s comments on education in respect to the management of the affections and feeling, but it is more pointedly directed at the formation of young women’s characters.^{6,7} Without the proper training in virtue which moderates youthful sympathies, young women grow to take pride in their very weaknesses, become vain, and seek admiration for them; as a result, they develop an “excessive selfishness” (397). Such selfishness leads to the “exclusion of all interest in the sufferings of others” so that instead of genuinely responding to others with compassion and sympathy, the ill trained woman turns that compassion inward and becomes her own focus of concern (397). For More, as it was for Pope’s portraits of women in “Epistle I: To a Lady,” this is an inversion of the proper function of feeling and sympathy. More continues:

When feeling stimulates only to self indulgence; when the more
exquisite affections of sympathy and pity evaporate in sentiment,

instead of flowing out in active charity, and affording assistance, protection, or consolation to every species of distress; it is evidence that the feeling is of a spurious kind; and instead of being nourished as an amiable tenderness, it should be subdued as a fond and base self-love. (397)

More also adds to her criticism of poorly developed women those women of fortune who are without meaningful occupation or “systematic employment.” These women are “open to a thousand evils” and the most “pitiable Object[s]” because they squander money, time, and talent “without plan, without principle, and without pleasure.” They are all the more pitiable because their activities all “begin and terminate in self;” because their perspective considers how all the world might serve their own desires rather than how they might better respond to the needs of other (397). To put More’s language in the terms of this paper, women, who have the capability and means to respond in sympathy but who do not, fail to contribute to the social bond and likewise fail to contribute to a sense of community.⁸

Jane Austen brings together these various issues around sympathy and similitude -- sympathy and perception of similarity, moderation of indiscriminate sentiments via cultivation of the understanding and virtue, and growth from self love to social love, or in Yearsley terms “sympathy of soul” -- in one of her mature novels, *Emma* (published 1816). All of these themes are briefly introduced in the opening paragraphs of the novel which describe Emma’s circumstances. With regard to education and training, Austen makes it abundantly clear that Emma has had her own sway for her twenty one years with very little guidance and “with very little to distress or vex her.” Her father is “indulgent”

and her substitute mother Miss Taylor, a “nominal governess” and “excellent woman,” has been “less as a governess than a friend.” She and Emma had more “the intimacy of sisters” than the role of mentor and student. Since she imposed “no restraint” on Emma, Emma did “just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor’s judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.” In terms of likeness or similarity, Emma has no “mirror” – that is no one around her with whom she sees a likeness, except perhaps Miss Taylor in this sisterly relationship. Those family members with whom she might see a likeness are gone. She barely remembers her mother; her sister has long married and left the household. In addition, as mistress of the house, from early on she has an elevated pride in her station (763-764).⁹ Rejecting Mr. Elton’s marriage proposal, she justifies her rejection of him with the sense that “she was greatly his superior” for “the Woodhouses had been settled for several generations at Hartfield, the younger branch of a very ancient family” (845). Austen sums up both of these characteristics in Emma: “The real evils indeed of Emma’s situation were the power of having rather too much of her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself.” Austen concludes that these characteristics were a “danger” and “disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments”(763-764).

In addition, she lacks the education and habit that cultivates informed reason and the moral sense. As a result, Emma is really isolated from the larger society in the most meaningful ways and limited in her experience of sympathy or fellow feeling. Or, from another perspective, Emma is an amiable version of Hannah More’s “pitiable object” whose “projects begin and terminate in self” (More 397). Or, from a final perspective, she could be seen as a woman whose portrait might soon, without some

intervention, hang not with Martha Blount's but among those others on Pope's wall. I believe that in *Emma*, Austen raises questions about identification, likeness, and difference, but more importantly she focuses on that issue of education through experience which promotes the ability to grow from self knowledge and the social affections, as Pope would have it, into social love. These issues combined underlie Emma's maturation -- that process of coming to know herself, to recognize similarity between herself and others in her community, and to grow in true social affections rather than affectations -- a recognition of likeness not only in gender, class, education, or situation but also in Yearsley's "sympathy of soul."

Lionel Trilling records the 1870 statements of an anonymous reviewer for *The North British Review* who, he believes, captures Austen's idea of character growth through social interaction. This reviewer states that for Austen:

Even as a unit, man is only known to her in the process of his formation of social influences. She broods over his history. ... She sees him not as a solitary being completed in himself, but only as completed in society. Again, she contemplates virtues not as fixed quantities, ... but as continual struggles and conquests, as progressive states of mind. ... A character unfolded itself to her, not in statuesque repose, not as a model without motion, but as a dramatic sketch, a living history, a composite force. (Trilling, Introduction xxii – xxiii)

At the close of the first page, after describing Emma's character, Austen makes it clear that things are about to change and her heroine is about to confront that change.

Describing Miss Taylor's wedding, she breaks the lightheartedness of Emma's character description with the ironic announcement, "Sorrow came" (763). Such change for Austen's characters, and in this particular case Emma, takes place within the dynamics of an increasingly diverse population, one which includes a broad spectrum from the landed gentry, the nouveaux riches and the monied merchant class, to dependent spinsters, orphans, gypsies, farmers, and chicken thieves. With this diversity comes some threat to traditional community structures. And from this diversity, Austen is able to fashion in *Emma* what Lionel Trilling refers to as "the possibility of community," an idyll not to be "confused with the real England," but one with the "remarkable force of the ideal" (Introduction, xxiii-xxiv). The second significant concern related to this discussion of sympathy in *Emma*, besides the development of Emma's character growth into social sympathy, is the broader role of sympathy within the shifting social dynamics that appear here to a much greater extent than Austen's other novels, with perhaps the exception of *Persuasion*.

Austen structures the novel and her main character's growth around pairs of opposites and series of contrasts. For example, Emma is constantly interacting with characters representing false or true aspects of certain social affections or characters of opposing dispositions and temperaments. Or one scene of inappropriate manners is followed by one of appropriate manners. One such example might be seen in Mr. Woodhouse, Emma's father, and Miss Bates. Paired, or parallel, they are both of an older "more respectable" class and are therefore the prominent teachers of manners; both are constant subjects of others' concerns, dominate conversation, and are caretakers of the prominent females. Also parallel are their apparent ineffectuality and dependent

situations. Contrasted are their financial situations, egos, self absorption, and activity levels. On a broader thematic level Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates demonstrate extremely important differences; they function to demonstrate Austen's sense of false and true compassion or sympathy, something which also is demonstrated in Emma's false compassion for Harriet and Knightly's genuine compassion for Robert Martin.

Mr. Woodhouse is always referring to people as "poor," such as Miss Taylor before and long after her marriage, happy and fortuitous as it might be. In this he demonstrates a false compassion or false sympathy which is all talk and no action, an attitude which reflects his own selfish interests in having Miss Taylor nearby and at his service rather than his knowledge of her and true concern for her well being or happiness. Such false sympathy stems not from the quintessential Christian precept, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," but from Rousseau's self interested inversion, "Do good to yourself with as little evil as possible to others" (*Second Discourse: On the Nature of Inequality*, 76). Ineffectual, Mr. Woodhouse never does anything which might demonstrate his sympathy, but instead he uses the term "poor" to draw greater attention to his own needs. On the other hand, Miss Bates' sympathy is based on a true concern, civility, and compassion. Even though she has every right to be insulted and indignant with Emma after the Box Hill outing, she is gracious and, in turn, teaches Emma how to be gracious. Late in the novel, modeling Miss Bates, Emma "spoke as she felt, with earnest regret and solicitude ...sincerely wishing" that Jane's position might be comfortable and to her advantage (995). Upon a close reading, despite Miss Bates' constant chatter, her appearance of ineffectuality is not that at all. She is one of the more positive presences in the novel, a presence that creates opportunity for Emma to grow.

The structural and thematic tension created by the extremes in these two characters, Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates, is Austen's deliberate attempt to present her growing sense of crisis for an aging, declining, often silly or egocentric, unbalanced social class, the one most traditionally charged with providing the example of informed reason and the social affections and of teaching the interrelatedness of manners and morals. Mr. Woodhouse has become so inflexible, or "sick," that he truly is incapable of fulfilling his responsibilities toward his daughter or society. Likewise, Miss Bates is often so indecorous and talkative that what good she might teach is often obscured. Emma might have learned to appreciate her virtues sooner had Miss Bates been a little less of a trial. In addition, neither character offers a positive example of marriage, the life blood for continuing social stability and traditions. For Miss Bates, marriage would be too one sided; her self-effacement and lack of identity are so great that no Darcy -- Elizabeth Bennet balance or Fanny -- Edmund domestic equality is possible. On the other hand, marriage for Mr. Woodhouse, and therefore in his mind for everyone, is a curse. As suggested by his Kitty riddle, relationships between men and women are one-sided ones of power and sexual domination. At the conclusion of *Emma*, Austen is able to draw her upper class society together through Emma and Knightly's marriage; however, she also symbolically stabilizes several socio economic levels through the two other marriages, those between Jane and Frank Churchill and Harriet and Robert Martin.

Emma's education and her self realization through the events of the novel, and Austen's sense of women's education in general, has to be considered first in light of the general thrust of contemporary conduct books written by males. Allison Sulloway's examination of Austen's novels in *Jane Austen and The Province of Womanhood*

concludes that *Emma* is a satire and even a “battle” of the various types of conduct books and something Austen’s contemporaries would have been aware of. Conduct books written by post Enlightenment males, according to Sulloway, “still tended to discuss the matters of women’s learning from the masculine perspective alone,” that is, as stated in Duff’s 1788 to 1810 *Letters on the Intellectual and Moral Character of Women*, “from the relation they bear to the other sex” (as quoted in Sulloway 114). This consisted of “learning humility before divinely ordained male authority.” Other books assumed “women’s ineducability,” basing it in a post lapserian and gender defined “original defect,” a “deficiency of understanding” which precluded any active intellectual capability (Sulloway 114).

Sulloway’s examples of two Austen females who represent the mental pathology incipient in these assumptions about women’s mental capacities are the shy and reclusive Anne de Bourgh and Georgiana Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice* or the neurotic Fanny Price of *Mansfield Park* (115-116). Other conduct books emphasized women’s understanding as “passive” and “retentive,” or they warned women against becoming “absorbed in the depths of erudition” for fear of damaging their self esteem (Sulloway 117-118). Finally, additional conduct books emphasized sentiment, tender feeling, and “the school of the heart” as the proper training for women (Sulloway 118). Sulloway concludes about Austen:

... her treatment of her women characters, indicates how thoroughly aware she was of the delicate subliminal decisions that the minds of young girls had to undergo – and particularly the minds of intelligent young girls. To accept passive renunciation

may ultimately be less complicated, despite the agony of mind and spirit it may produce, than the difficult and subtle task of that the mind must undergo as it tries to decide how much active will and energy to put forth, when energetic and clear-thinking women were the objects of s much national cant. (116) ¹⁰

Emma, who had never been to London nor traveled far from her home, leads a somewhat isolated life. Highbury, a village “almost amounting to a town,” in which she lives “afforded her no equals” (764). She is even more isolated, positioned in between a school of spinsters, ladies whom Emma “found herself very frequently able to collect” for her father’s entertainment: Miss Bates, too chatty; Jane Fairfield, too reserved; Mrs. Elton, too supercilious; and Harriet, docile, easily swayed, and willing “to be guided by anyone she looked up to” (774); and a cluster of predominately unmarried but vocal men: her father, a valetudinarian “without activity of mind or body” whose “talents could not have recommended him at any time” (764); Knightly, a man with “cheerful manner” and always “welcome,” but who also “loves to find fault with” Emma (766); Frank Church, charming but deceptive; and the Reverend Mr. Elton, shallow and vain. All have varying expectations of her. From whom might she best learn? What are her real options? The two married families in the novel, the Westons and the Knightly family who display the closest bonds of familial affection and from whom she might best learn social affections, live at some distance, the Westons at a half mile and her sister’s family, settled in London, “was much beyond her daily reach” at sixteen miles (764).

Emma’s early upbringing is important to consider. Sulloway finds fault with Miss Taylor’s education of Emma. She writes: “Emma’s governess was beautifully trained to

teach her pupil the feminine understanding of the heart, but she fails dismally because she is sadly deficient in human, or mental understanding” (133). However, Sulloway might be taking Emma’s reference to her new condition of “intellectual solitude” out of context. While it may be true that the governess did not teach Emma the classics or educate her as Jane was trained, the intellectual solitude Emma refers to is the absence of Miss Taylor’s sympathetic companionship.

Nor can I be quite so critical of Miss Taylor’s treatment of Emma. She provided sixteen years of tender care, with her “unreserved,” “intelligent,” “well informed, useful, and gentle” manner, her interest in Emma’s every activity, and perfect “affection” (2). Such upbringing puts Emma in much better circumstances than every other Austen female; Elizabeth and Jane Bennet have an invisible father and hysterical mother; Anne Elliot has a severe and distanced father and status conscious substitute mother; Fanny Brice is sent to relatives to be raised since her family is impoverished and neglectful; Marianne and Elinor’s father failed to provide for them after his death and their mother is too thoughtless to function without their guidance. Emma, given all of this affection, is a child raised with the “genuine language of nature.” This is similar to Edgeworth’s description of children and their “natural” affections, benevolence, and expressions of sympathy, “artless” but “pleasing” because they are not false or affected, but free and unreserved (402).

One portrait of Emma’s youthful display of “natural” affection and sympathy occurs in her recollection of Miss Taylor’s treatment of her. Emma is overjoyed at Miss Taylor’s good fortune in marrying. Despite her own loss and the increased confinement she now will face tending to her father alone, Emma is aware that the marriage “had

every promise of happiness for her friend” (763). In fact, this description includes references to a mirroring of affection and mutuality, similar to that in the descriptions of sympathy. For seven years, she and Miss Taylor had lived “on equal footing and perfect unreserved” (763-764). This affection, though, might also be seen as overly indulgent and contributing to Emma’s vanity; Miss Taylor’s attention allowed Emma to be “particularly interested in herself,” in every “pleasure” and “scheme” (764). However, once Miss Taylor becomes Mrs. Weston, Emma herself must figure out how to become Miss Woodhouse and how to enter the world of society, even though it is confined to Highbury. As she matures through the events of the novel, she must become her own teacher, learning through experience to balance this natural sympathy with informed reason and a moral sense, in Pope’s context to grow from self love to social love. It is Emma’s naiveté and youthful freshness that hold the reader’s positive good will toward her despite her stubbornness and occasional flashes of selfishness. ¹¹

Though Emma is quite highly privileged, well bred and modestly educated, physically attractive, initially she is still unformed, not in superficial social courtesies, etiquette, and the arts, but in her ability to perceive any similarity between herself and others. She does she not observe anyone quite like herself (beyond Mrs. Weston) whose experiences and feelings she can mirror. Emma’s first action after seeing Miss Taylor married -- her plan to pursue matchmaking -- reveals that failure to see likeness or similitude in another person within her sphere, either linked narrowly in wealth, social position, circumstance, or gender, or broadly in sympathy of soul. While she feels an intellectual isolation, she attempts to eliminate it through activity and busyness. It might first appear that Emma has fellow feeling or sympathy for the orphaned Harriet Smith by

befriending her; in reality, she does not. In an early conversation with her father and Mr. Knightly, Emma first distinguishes herself from Harriet, denying any interest in marrying or making a match for herself. Then she separates herself from any possible feeling for Harriet's future well being that might develop by explaining her motives for matchmaking: it is "the greatest possible *amusement* [my italics] in the world!" and an activity that might bring her pleasure and "success" (767-768). Emma pursues her own interests in matchmaking by recommending Mr. Elton, someone Knightly had warned was fortune seeking, over Robert Martin, for whom Harriet already had some affection. After Elton refuses Harriet as a prospect, Emma only superficially and temporarily identifies with Harriet's discomfort. Emma, not deeply affected but "in the humour,"

listened to her, and tried to console her with all her heart and understanding – really convinced for the time that Harriet was the superior creature of the two, and that to resemble her would be more for her own welfare and happiness than all that genius or intelligence could do. (849)

Ironically, the operative words here are "for the time," for Emma is not really convinced, nor does she follow through "with every previous resolution confirmed of being humble and discrete, and repressing imagination all the rest of her life" (849). "It was," Emma thinks, anticipating her own irresolution, "rather too late in the day to set about being simpleminded and ignorant" (849). Emma does proceed to take Harriet home and show her kindness, "striving to occupy and amuse her," but, again is more self interested, lamenting that until a cure for Harriet's love sickness was to be found, "there could be no true peace for herself" (849).

Emma's failure in fellow feeling for Harriet only continues despite Harriet's increased anxieties over the Eltons' return to Highbury. Again, Harriet is in a "flutter of spirits" (925). After cajoling and apologizing and lamenting with Harriet, the only way that Emma can find peace for herself is to "attack[ed] on another ground" and urge her friend to "exert herself" on Emma's behalf – that is, to have sympathy or fellow feeling for the agony which Emma is experiencing as well as for "a habit of self command" (925). While Emma's argument for self command is reasonable, she continues to display her own greater self importance, status, and dissimilarity with Harriet. She reasons with Harriet that, "Perhaps I may sometimes have felt that Harriet would not forget what was due – or rather, what would be kind by me" (926). Emma concludes, as she did before, with a burst of emotion about the "superiority" of Harriet's "tenderness of heart," albeit temporary (926).

Emma's naivete, self interest, and vanity followed by her growth into a more reasoned social affection can be seen in two scenes in which she "blunders": first, the sequence of events around Mr. Elton's proposal to her, and second, the Box Hill outing.¹² The initial scene clearly describes one of Emma's many "blunders" which stem from her self invested upbringing. It reveals her inability to understand the relationships among people, their intentions, and behaviors, as well as her inability to see "likeness" or "similitude" with others. She perceives everything through her own mind's narrow and self interested eye, discounting others' motivations, and oblivious to how her own behaviors might be interpreted. Ultimately, her behavior isolates her from a larger social dynamic and demonstrates her failure in the broader social affections. Prior to the Christmas party at the Westons' home, Mr. John Knightly, who had had only brief

opportunity to observe Mr. Elton's behavior, comments to Emma on Elton's interest in her. Commending Mr. Elton's "good temper and good will," she believes it foolish that he should be in love with her; she had been arranging for him to love Harriet.

Nevertheless, Mr. John Knightly advises her to "regulate your behaviour" and consider "whether it is so or not." In a temperate, but concerned way, he advises: "You had better look about you, and ascertain what you do, and what you mean to do" (830). It is obvious to him that Emma is not aware of how she is perceived within a social situation and how her actions might mislead. Emma thanks her brother-in-law for his advice, but blindly assures him that he is "quite mistaken" (830). Self righteous and believing herself perfectly in control, Emma is amused at what she sees as other people's:

blunders which often arise from a partial knowledge of circumstances, of the mistakes which people of high pretensions to judgment are forever falling into; and not very well pleased with her brother for imagining her blind and ignorant and in want of counsel. (831)

The irony in Emma's statement becomes absolutely obvious as soon as Elton, high spirited, joins her in the carriage to the dinner, sits "at her elbow" attentively, and proposes during their return from the party.

Emma wants to live and behave, either innocently or self indulgently but certainly self centeredly, only "as nature prompted" (833), according to her whims and wishes. She arrives at Mrs. Weston's, consuming her hostesses' time, "with such conviction of being listened to and understood, of being always interesting and always intelligible, the little affairs, arrangements, perplexities, and pleasures of her father and herself" (833). In this

vein, when she hears Frank Churchill's name and despite never having met him, she dallies with the idea of marrying him,

in spite of ... [her] resolution of never marrying." She muses, "There was something in the name, in the idea, of Mr. Frank Churchill ... that if she were to marry, he was the very person to suit her. ... he seems ... quite to belong to her. ... She had ... a decided intention of finding him pleasant, of being liked by him to a certain degree, and a sort of pleasure in the idea of their being coupled in their friends' imaginations." (835)

Oblivious to her brother's advice and to the suitor at hand, she creates her own reality – as she had with her imagined relationship between Elton and Harriet - and concocts a relationship in her mind with no real facts or experience of the actual person. Emma a few moments later already assumes authority over Churchill's life in announcing that "he ought to come" and "one can hardly conceive a young man's not having it in his power to do as much as that." Mrs. Weston chides her for this assumption, telling her "not to pretend." However, Emma continues in her own vein, unmindful of her friend's advice and the possibility of anyone else's obligations; she "then coolly said: ' I shall not be satisfied unless he comes' " (836-837). Before dispelling one "blunder," Emma begins a new one.

Neither Emma nor Elton has the capacity for understanding the other, that is, observing some "similitude," much less the capacity for sympathy of soul. During Mr. Elton's proposal, Emma is unable to fathom how it is that he is speaking to her rather than to Miss Smith. She accuses him of not being himself, of drinking too much, of

mistaking her for Harriet, of misleading them both with his behavior toward Harriet, and of having an “unsteady” character for so quickly shifting his affections. On the other hand, Elton is certain that Emma has “seen and understood” his actions and certainly “encouraged” him during the past weeks. Both fail, through inexperience or sheer blindness depending on how harshly one might read the text, to understand how they could have so thoroughly misread or been deceived by the other. Emma adds to this failure, though, deceit when she replies, “I have no thoughts of matrimony at the present” (842-843). And it is this deceit and continued self deception, despite guidance from many around her, rather than her inexperience, for which Emma becomes blameworthy.

The sequence of Emma’s actions and reflections which Austen next constructs is revealing about Emma’s priorities but also about her possibilities for growth. After arriving home, Emma’s self concern comes first. Before she thinks about Mr. Elton’s pronouncements or their impact on Harriet, she has her maid curl her hair. Then she is astounded and miserable that everything that *she wanted* had been overturned. Next, aware of her responsibility to her friend, she considers the blow this circumstance will be for Harriet. She reflects that, “Every part of it brought pain and humiliation of some sort or other; but compared to the evil to Harriet, all was light.” Emma is remorseful and miserable at being so thoroughly deceived. She wavers then back and forth, in part rationalizing her actions and in part evaluating her own inexperience. On one hand, “she had taken up the idea, she supposed, and made everything bend to it”; on the other hand, “his manners must have been ... wavering, dubious ... or she could have not been so misled.” Whatever the reason, “it was all confusion” (844). Finally, Emma steps beyond her immediate experience and recalls Mr. John Knightly’s advice to her; to him, she was

“indebted.” She continues recollecting that Mr. Knightly himself had given her an earlier caution about Elton’s intent to never marry “indiscreetly” and concludes that both “brothers had penetration” and a “much truer knowledge of his character ... than she had reached herself” (844). However, Emma concludes her review of the entire situation with some reinvestment in her own importance – “she was greatly his [Elton’s] superior ... the Eltons were nobody” (845). This self importance, however, is later that evening tempered when, thinking of a new scheme pairing Harriet with William Cox, Emma first reflects “oh, no, *I* [my italics] could not endure William Cox” and then abandons matchmaking, albeit temporary, laughing “at her own relapse” (846).

Before laying entire blame for Emma’s self centeredness and self justification on her, it is important to take note of the historical position that many young women actually found themselves in. This position is reflected in both Frances Burney’s *Evelina* and Elizabeth Inchbald’s *A Simple Story*, as well as many of the period’s novels written particularly by women and certainly not written by Samuel Richardson. Raised in the “sentiments of the heart,” but within confining circumstances, unaware of the often unspoken expectations, loopholes, proprieties, and without a peer “network,” young women matured into society only by trial and error. Marilyn L. Williamson and Jane Spencer both describe obstacles to young women’s entrance to society. Spencer in particular sees women writers in the eighteenth century in a special position as educators and reformers, able to internalize society’s standards of femininity, write in opposition to those standards, and redefine femininity. Some women writers sought to provide alternatives or correctives to the conduct books, most particularly those like Fordyce’s *Sermons to Young Women* (1765) which are represented in Mr. Collins’ lectures to the

Bennet sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*. Here Fordyce describes women as “softer companions” and “elevated” to man, whose “delightful sympathies and endearments” “lighten the load” and “spread grace . . . over human life.” Women are meant to be “obedient,” “modest,” “reserved,” and “gentle” in order to “check” man’s less governed behavior. But this is done confined within the domestic sphere (as cited in Spencer 15-18).¹³

Emma, however, continues to blunder, misread circumstances and people before the close of the novel. She misunderstands Frank Churchill’s true feelings and nature, though he is the one person with whom there is a true likeness of experience and situation.¹⁴ She continues to interfere in Harriet’s affection for Robert Martin and assumes that she is encouraging Harriet’s affection for Frank Churchill, when in fact it is for Mr. Knightly. She misreads Jane Fairfax’s reserve and character, treats other picnickers’ feelings cavalierly, imitating Churchill’s own gross disregard, and callously insults Miss Bates at Box Hill. However, little of this, particularly her behavior at Box Hill, can be excused by the failures of conduct books, Emma’s inexperience or over sheltering. Her actions at Box Hill represent the climax in the failure of her compassion and sympathy, a failure for which there is no excuse. Here, like others of the party, she is particularly willful and perverse, acting contrary to all social affections or sympathetic impulse. At the beginning of the outing, “nothing was wanting but to be happy when they got there” (987). However, Austen repeats the images of separation and disharmony several times to make sure that they are not missed: “there was deficiency;” “there was languor, a want of spirits, a want of union;” “they separated;” “there seemed a “principle of separation.” Frank and Emma flirt openly, but are dishonest in their affections; they

are “lively,” but impudent, and Frank leads the way by insisting everyone say “entertaining things” at Miss Woodhouse’s command. When Miss Bates, a mixture of the “good” and “unfortunate,” admits to saying three things “very dull indeed,” Emma does not resist the temptation to be insulting. Consequently, Mr. Knightly scolds her for her “thoughtlessness” and “pride of the moment” - this failure in compassion and common humanity: “She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and if she live to old age must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion. It was badly done, indeed” (992).

Before Knightly concludes his reprimand, Emma is truly contrite and already aware of her gross failure in sympathy, her “misspent” morning “bare of *rational* [my italics] satisfaction” (993). Emma, learning from her experience of humiliation as much as, or more than, from Knightly’s words, commits herself to a more genuine, but also more rational, pity and compassion. Here compassion, sympathy, and the social affections are not based in fanciful feeling and sentiment, or even a child’s “natural” affection, but in a reasoned affection drawn from experience and education. Unlike previous mornings when she awoke with less resolve or clear headedness, Emma is as determined the next day as she was the night before to correct her actions; she knows how she will engage in her visit to Miss Bates, and ultimately how she will behave in all her social relations. Rather than relying on whim or self centered impulse, a child’s natural affections or sentiment, it is Emma’s decision and will which bring about the “beginning, on her side, of a regular, equal, kindly intercourse” (993).

David Marshall argues that there are certain inherent problems in sympathetic bonding when the “age of sensibility must be played out in an age of skepticism. Both

sympathy and skepticism address the question of whether one person could enter into the thoughts and sentiments of someone else. ...One consequence of their recognition that sympathy must be acted out in the realm of representation and interpretation is ... the threat of misrepresentation and misinterpretation” (*Surprising Effects*, 180-181). A response of sympathy under such circumstances depends not on the ability to observe and then automatically mirror or enter another’s feelings and experience, as Hume would describe it. Instead, sympathy depends on the ability, after observing, to evaluate and interpret the observed, and then make some judgment or assume the possibility that there is some likeness or commonality before extending that sympathy. I would believe that in an age of manners and artifice the same threat of misinterpretation and misrepresentation would also be true. Certainly the plot in *Emma* is constructed on multiple layers of missed meanings and false representations, uncertainties about intent and subtle suggestion based on false manners and conventions of behavior which might be more likely to disguise than reveal, more likely to suggest commonality but to cloak variations in sentiment, principle, and attitude. And Emma has to learn not only how to maneuver her way through these deceptions and uncertainties but also how to represent herself truly and honestly. Joseph Litvak, whom Sulloway cites, considers *Emma* “a contest between Emma and Knightly” or “between two equally compelling interpretations of the self – especially the female self – and society.” He argues that even though “Emma is frequently ‘wrong’ ... she is ‘right’ to question the absoluteness with which Knightly” attempts to correct her (Litvak as quoted in Sulloway 132-133). I would not agree that the novel is this kind of debate between female identity and society; however, I would agree that it is right for Emma to question and test the rightness of Knightly’s positions for the

following reason. The process of testing allows Emma to grow through experience, and while she may arrive at the same conclusions as Knightly, the same sympathy of soul and social affections, she has done so not in pure submission to a “paternalistic will” but as a consequence of her “sense, and energy, and spirits” (771) and her own deliberate choice.

Jane Spenser concludes her analysis of the development of women novelists with these comments on Austen’s contribution to the novel form in *Emma*:

Austen’s critical attitude to the workings of her heroine’s mind leads her to new depths in the portrayal of women in fiction. The rational heroine, whose good sense may be used in support of her author’s feminism, tends to be a static figure. ... Paradoxically, Emma, the heroine who learns to distrust her own mind, gives greater evidence of the heroine’s ‘thinking powers’, and does more to establish complexity of female character in fiction.

The tradition of the reformed heroine ... did contain the implicit assumption that women’s moral growth was both more important and more interesting than had been thought. ... Austen took this development further. It is not just that, as one critic pointed out, Emma ‘has a moral life as a man has a moral life’, but that she is the first character in English fiction, male or female, to have a moral life so richly created and yet ironically analyzed. (177)¹⁵

In *Emma* Jane Austen writes of the “possibility of community” (Trilling’s term xxiii) far more noticeably than in her other novels. It is a novel, Trilling observes, “that is touched - lightly but indubitably – by national feeling,” “a national ethic,” and a

“specifically English ideal of life” (xii). One form of this ideal appears in the descriptions of Donwell Abbey and its grounds as well as the richness of Martin’s Abbey Mill Farm.

¹⁶ Another form of the ideal, the ideal of *An Essay on Man*, is demonstrated by Mr. Knightly in his social affections and sympathetic concern for his neighbors. Emma admires him for his “amiableness,” his ability to be “always agreeable and obliging, and speaking pleasantly of everybody” (847), his “natural grace” (961), and his broad reaching “benevolence” (952). But on a more practical level the novel also displays a greater community of varied classes: in Knightly’s respect for and efforts on behalf of the gentleman farmer Robert Martin; in the obvious injustice and wrongheadedness of Emma’s class biased remarks or her own “superiority”; and in the inclusion of a more diverse population and gradual social change. In addition to the more major characters, though it is only briefly, we hear reference to Joseph the carriage driver who safely navigates the snowy roads; the Woodhouse’s servant, James, and their consideration for his daughter Hannah, who becomes maid to the Westons; Mrs. Goddard, the teachers, and the girls of the “real, honest, old-fashioned boarding school” from which Harriet came; the upper maid who lived faithfully with Mrs. Martin for twenty five years; Mrs. Bates, impoverished and respectable widow; Mr. Perry, an intelligent gentleman-like apothecary; the Knightly children; and the capricious Mrs. Churchill. Some significant hints of social change are Frank’s relocation of the ball from the more selective gentrified home into a more democratic, and somewhat less manicured, inn in Highbury.

Most in keeping with the “ideal of English life” portrayed in *Emma*, though, is the mobility within the social structures. While the novel seems focused on character development and the interplay among Emma, Frank, and Knightly, this movement within

the social classes, particularly into the more comfortable classes through marriage between members of varying social ranks, education, hard work, and family connections, subtly permeates its entirety. It is clearly represented in both Mr. Weston's and Frank Churchill's circumstances. Mr. Weston's family had over two or three generations "been rising into gentility and property" (8). Because he has an education, served in the militia, and developed "an active cheerful mind and social temper," Miss Churchill, with social status, family fortune, and property, loved and married him. After her death, Mr. Weston left the militia and "engaged in trade" which "afforded him a favourable opening," "just employment," and, due to his efforts, enough resources to buy and retire to a small estate" (769-771). Through his marriage to Miss Taylor, a "portionless" woman, he also increases her stature in the social scheme. On the other hand, rising through family connection, Mr. Weston's son, Frank, is assumed into the Churchill family and rises in prestige via name, breeding, and education; he, however, does not display his father's general good will and social temper. Despite his display of all the formal courtesies to his father and the residents of Highbury, he assumes a certain air of disregard or "coldness" toward them, as Emma notices in his letters. She observes that in them there is no "lasting warmth" (924). Mr. Elton's circumstances, Jane Fairfax's upbringing by Colonel Campbell, and even Harriet Smith's attachment to Mr. Martin are three more examples of upward shifts in the social structure through marriage and/or education.¹⁷ Set in contrast to these kinds of social mobility are the slight but threatening incursions into the "idyllic" dynamics of the Highbury community: Mrs. Elton's vulgar taste (Trilling xix), the brief appearance of the gypsies during their assault on Harriet, and the poultry thieves who disturb Mr. Woodhouse's sleep.

The most fascinating consideration about social shifts in *Emma* occurs at the conclusion of the novel as several other elements come together in Emma's sudden awareness of her self interested and non reflective behavior. After Harriet confides that Mr. Knightly loves her, Emma becomes aware of her blindness, her failure to recognize her interrelationships with others "with a clearness" that she has not had before (1013). Austen very deliberately describes Emma bringing not compassion or feeling or even sympathy, but reason and justice to bear on the situation. Subduing her own emotion, out of "concern for her own appearance and a strong sense of justice by Harriet, (... justice required that she [Harriet] should not be made unhappy by any coldness now)," Emma resolves to listen to Harriet's explanation "and endure further with calmness, with even apparent kindness" (1013). At the close of Harriet's revelations, Emma realizes what "insufferable vanity" and "unpardonable arrogance" she had while "she believed herself in the secret of everybody's feelings. Not only was she "universally mistaken," but she also "had done much mischief" (1016). Sympathy is not appropriate here for there is no real likeness between the two women; that is, there is no affinity of mind, the opposite to Emma's early "intellectual isolation," which is where I believe Austen places the emphasis in the novel.

However, Emma does not swing from self interested behavior to complete sacrificial self denial either, for the two are not opposites. She moves to a more balanced position between self love and reason, similar to Pope's description in the *Essay on Man*, the Second Epistle:

Two Principles in human nature reign;
Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain;

Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
 Each works its end, to move or govern all ...

Self love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole.
 Man, but for that, no action could attend,
 And, but for this, were active to no end. ...

Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd. (ll. 53-66)

While humbled and cognizant of her own blindness and self deception, Emma makes a claim on her position as “first” in Mr. Knightly’s “interest and affection” (1017). She does not back away from her own realized affection, nor does she “meteor-like” and “lawless” insult Harriet and betray her emotions.

The next section of the novel includes the final, and Austen’s most interesting, commentary on shifting social relations. Emma realizes that the Knightly - Harriet Smith match would be “the most unequal of all connections” (1016). But she also continues to rail at the mismatch between them because of the implications it has for disrupting a traditional social hierarchy. “Mr. Knightly and Harriet Smith! It was a union to distance every wonder of the kind. ...Such an elevation on her side! Such a debasement on his!” (1016). The “attachment... was impossible. And yet it was far, very far from impossible.” Reflecting on the social shifts implicit in Mrs. Weston’s and Jane Fairfax’s marriages Emma asks,

Was it a new circumstance for a man of first-rate abilities to

be captivated by very inferior powers? ... Was it new for anything in this world to be unequal, inconsistent, incongruous – or for chance and circumstance (as second causes) to direct human fate? (1016)

There is more going on in this scene than Emma's great emotional turmoil and hurt feelings; there is more than the realization of her own folly that brought Harriet to this unfounded and elevated vanity. She questions the whole stability of the universe. First, Emma is extremely anxious about such disruption to the social hierarchy which would be brought about by the pairing of such vastly unequal and dissimilar temperaments and no affinity of mind -- a man of "first rate abilities" with a woman of inferior mind -- probably even more than social rank. After considering the match for some time, Emma doubts that "in Harriet's society," Knightly would find "all that he wanted" (1022). Later, as Knightly and Emma discuss Frank Churchill's marriage to Jane, Knightly clarifies a bit more what it is that constitutes a balanced or equal marriage. It is an "equality of situation ... as far as regards society and all the habits and manners that are important" (1025).

Next, Emma begins a rational examination of her circumstances. After questioning this stability of the world, she reviews what had been stable in her past and realizes that it was Knightly's affection for her. Even though she often "had not deserved" being first in his affections, Emma values Knightly's sympathetic bonding for her based on "family attachment," "habit," and "thorough excellence of mind" -- the process of observing, responding, and correcting or adjusting the observed -- as well as his attempts to educate her in virtue: "he had loved her, and watched over her from a girl, with an endeavour to improve her, and an anxiety for her doing right, which no other

creature had at all shared” (1017). Then, in the next step toward her self actualization, Emma realizes that by losing Knightly she loses that stable, “cheerful” and “rational society” -- again the affinity of mind -- which only he created. Nevertheless, however reduced her own happiness might be, she herself will produce that stability within her own life and, more fully involved in the society around her, she will be “more rational” and “more acquainted with herself” with “less to regret” (1022). Emma realizes that ideal which Pope had described almost a century before: that man by nature is a social creature operating for the good of the self and society because self love and social love are as one. Both are regulated by virtue, particularly benevolence, which springs from reflection and reason, habit, experience, will, and choice (*An Essay on Man*, Epistle III). Finally, as Emma and Knightly come to truly understand each other’s feelings, Austen adds, in her own ironic voice, a portrait of the perfect -- or as close as it can come to perfect -- realization of sympathetic bonding and recognition of likeness. She observes:

Seldom, very seldom does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised, or a little mistaken; but where, as in this case, though the conduct is mistaken, the feelings are not, it may not be very material. Mr. Knightly could not impute to Emma a more relenting heart than she possessed, or a heart more disposed to accept of his. (1027)

At the close of the novel, then, all of these shifting elements in the social structure are resolved, at least for the moment, in the marriage of the benevolent Knightly and Emma, two people who are suited to each other - equally balanced in self love and reason

and joined in “perfect happiness” and “union” (1060). In two ways this union represents a providential ordering, the importance of virtue founded in reason, and stability; on one level it completes the union of the oldest and most respected families, a social stability, and on another level it recognizes their “similitude” and sympathy of soul, which is here a reasoned, intellectual and spiritual stability.

Jane Austen’s idealism draws from a long British tradition seeking a systematic approach to understanding the nature of man and social structuring. Maynard Mack, when writing of Pope’s *Essay on Man*, Epistles III and IV, could just as well have been writing about Austen’s position at the close of *Emma*. He writes:

The leading ideas are drawn from ... ancient idealist doctrines, shored as such materials usually were in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, against the ethical ruin that Hobbism was felt to imply. Hence, in part, the strong insistence on the naturalness of society to man, on the “state of nature” as a condition of concord rather than war, on the necessary foundation of any society in the principle of love rather than fear, and on the reconcilability of self-love and social, of king and peasant, in man’s political and social institutions, according as these seek their sanction and their model in the cosmic order wiled by God: again, the tension of opposing forces must make the structures one. What the fourth Epistle adds to this is a sustained and brilliant account of the pre-eminence of virtue over externals, partly by way of theodicy, vindicating Providence ... partly by way of ethics, showing where true ethical objectives lie. (xxxix)

However, the tradition which is reflected in *Emma* might also be seen in texts prior to Pope's and serving the same function as *Essay on Man*, that of gathering and reflecting the significant world view for a people. Most notable is Sir John Davies' significant summary of the powers and capabilities in man, the animal and rational souls, *Nosce Teipsum*. Davies establishes a hierarchy, first describing that subordinate power, "Feeling," as that "power, which is Life's root," an "outward instrument," an "inner guard" through which all "must pass/ Ere it approach the mind's intelligence,/ Or touch the Fantasy, Wit's (Understanding's) looking glass" (376). Rising up in the hierarchy several sections later in "The Intellectual Powers of the Soul," he describes those higher capabilities which are founded in Nature. Here is detailed the interplay between understanding ("wit"), reason, and will, as they lead to the accomplishment of the "good" or of virtue, all of which are part of Nature. Davies writes:

For Nature in man's heart her laws doth pen,
 Prescribing truth to wit [understanding], and good to will
 Which do accuse, or else excuse all men,
 For every thought or practice, good or ill; ...
 Will puts into practice what the Wit deviseth;
 Will ever acts and Wit contemplates still;
 And as from Wit the power of wisdom riseth,
 All other virtues daughters are of Will.
 Will is the prince, and Wit the counselor, ...
 Wit is the mind's chief judge, which doth control
 Of Fancy's court the judgments false and vain; ...

Will is as free as any emperor. (380)

The conclusion here, then, is that benevolence, compassion, the process of viewing and responding to the circumstances of another and developing a shared understanding, reside more thoroughly in the powers of the soul, understanding or reason and will, rather than in feeling, sentiment, or automatic and fanciful responses. They are responses stemming more from an idealistic and philosophical than psychological and individualized vision of the nature of man, one firmly recognizing the primacy of reason; they do not assume revolution and individual isolation or fragmentation, or feeling and sentiment, rivalry and self interest as the natural or primary overriding conditions of human existence.¹⁸

Chapter 4: Ann Yearsley: Sympathy and the Social Affections, an Agenda for
Social Reform

Ann Yearsley's poems in *The Rural Lyre: A Volume of Poems* (1796) reflect several aspects of sympathy as presented by the moral sense philosophers, particularly Shaftesbury, and by Pope, Edgeworth, and Wordsworth -- that is, sympathy as social affection; sympathy as learned virtue within a moral order; and sympathy as shared and bond forming sensations. Such sympathy is especially important in the face of social unrest, riots, war, and the threatened dissolution of natural affections. Yearsley's anxiety about these social disturbances, however, is not as extreme as Bannerman's discussed in the following chapter. She knows the solution to social disruption and displays some optimism about its viability. Calling for a return to sympathetic and virtuous action, the poems describe the formation of the social bond, the necessary influence of women in its formation, and its vital importance in replacing male generated riots and war with stable familial and social order. Then as a whole, the poems make a positive and hope filled, but urgent, appeal to a sense of national identity and shared social love as the basis for national strength.

Yearsley, the milkmaid poet and voice of nature,¹ is positioned at a momentous historic crossroad standing between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period during which writers examine, doubt, and ultimately reshape the way sympathy is understood. It is a significant literary crossroad when the language of virtue is challenged by the language of the particular experience; an historic crossroad at the end of the French Revolution which pushed Wordsworth “to yield up all moral questions in despair” (*The Prelude* 1805-1806 X: l. 901); and a domestic crossroad witnessing the decline of the feudal and communal family structures -- fundamental bases for any larger social structure -- without any stable replacement.

Throughout *The Rural Lyre*, Yearsley uses the language of moral sense and social virtue as Shaftesbury presented it. As discussed in Chapter One, Shaftesbury’s 1711 *Characteristicks of Men* and “Concerning Virtue or Merit” were well known and enormously popular, examining the nature of virtue and introducing the term “the moral sense” into British moral philosophy (Sprague 430). Virtue for him does not reside in any religion or belief in God; a natural inborn quality, it is “the pursuit of the public interest” and the shared “public good.” The moral sense, as Shaftesbury continues, is twofold: a love for virtue and the “superior pleasures” which result from it, and a preference for virtuous action rather than self interest (Sprague 429-430; Shaftesbury 237-255). Shaftesbury's position, then, represents a reaction to the materialism and self interested motivation of a Hobbesian world view.

According to Shaftesbury, virtues themselves have an existence outside of the mind of man. He elaborates:

In a creature capable of forming general notions of things, not only

the outward beings which offer themselves to the sense are the objects of the affection, but the very actions themselves and the affections - of pity, kindness, gratitude and their contraries, being brought into the mind by reflection become objects. So that by means of this reflected sense, there arises another kind of affection toward those very affections themselves, which have been already felt, and are now become the subject of a new liking or disliking. (Sprague 430)

Shaftesbury concludes that these affections, or moral and social sense, have both a reality within the individual and an external existence of their own. The mercy or pity that someone feels for another, for example, also exists as an objective principle -- a "capitalized" "Mercy" or "Pity" with its own existence.

The Rural Lyre reflects Yearsley's unwavering belief in the social virtues -- what they are, how we come to possess them and then transmit them to children, husbands and wives, lovers, friends, laborers and politicians, and what function they serve within a society. To define social (and in some cases "moral") virtue, these poems make a clear distinction between the properties of the physical sense and the moral sense - between empiricism, the materialism and sense knowledge of "systematic man" and social or moral awareness, the immaterial virtues of the "noble mind" (Sprague 119). In addition, the volume associates this awareness with woman, defining her appropriate role as nurturer of the social affections and creator of proper social relationships, close to natural virtue and free from the artifices of money or position. Finally, the volume almost enshrines Yearsley herself as the inspired peasant and natural voice, the "rural lyre" which embodies England's most admirable virtues of mercy, benevolence and friendship.

Ultimately, then, the poems in *The Rural Lyre* advance the position of women from wet nurse and chicken seller to educator and sage to national spokesperson and goddess. Always voiced with dynamic vigor, each poem in *The Rural Lyre* encapsulates a well defined vision without ambivalence or doubt.

Yearsley's method for advancing her themes varies in the poems: in "The Bristol Elegy" and "Address to Friendship" she makes direct didactic statements; in the Fulvia and Nisa poems she creates a dramatic interplay of characters; in the addresses to Mira and a friend, the Earl of Bristol, the poetic voice reasons and teaches; in "The Indifferent Shepherdess To Colin" the speaker aggressively attacks the conventional idyllic form and stereotypes; and most substantively in the fragment "Brutus," Yearsley creates a pseudo historic account of the founding of Britain. However, she does adopt two very distinct styles in the poems: in most she bases her position on an appeal to objective principles or virtues, a Shaftesbury like "moral sense"; in others, while she may involve these abstractions somewhat, she more heavily relies on describing incidences of private life and thereby better creates shared, felt sympathetic impulses.

In all of the poems in *The Rural Lyre*, Yearsley demonstrates the poet/speaker's affection for one or several virtues. The speaker is aware of both the superior pleasures which arise from a display of those virtues and the way in which the virtues would contribute to the public good. The poems also demonstrate Shaftesbury's second characteristic of virtue. When Yearsley calls on Order in the "Genius of England," or Friendship, "the noblest ardor of the soul" in "Address to Friendship," Universal Love and Virtue in "Remonstrance in the Platonic Shade," Truth in "Familiar Poem to Milo," Joy and Contemplation in "Prayer and Resignation," she is referring to them not as being

abstractions but as having their own real, immaterial existences, outside of any particular individual.

"Remonstrance in the Platonic Shade" especially reveals how Yearsley understands social virtue and moral sense and incorporates them into her work. Yearsley builds "Remonstrance" on a series of contrasts: universal love as the Platonic ideal form and social virtue is opposed to self interested monarchies, decaying institutions, and socially destructive vice. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker positions herself in the sacred and "cool Platonic shade, " the "Haunt of the God invisible" (67). By locating herself here, in the "grove whence Plato viewed," and by associating herself with the philosopher, she, the poet's voice, identifies with and becomes the proponent for the ideal. Continuing, the speaker escapes "cruel duty, " which "fetter' d every sense," and turns toward her "rural lay, " her poems to universal love" (67-68). Yearsley's "universal love" is similar to Shaftesbury's moral virtues; it is "one mighty good," a joined love, friendship, virtue, " which exists both in her "thought" and "wand'ring o're the universe" (67-68). Without this "good," she, the poet speaker, sees an unstable world:

The fires of nature tremble out, the world
Grow cold, and apathy so chill mankind
That order, grace and beauty must expire. (68)

Society falls apart.

The speaker of "Remonstrance" then contrasts her position in the Platonic shade with one on a "frightful" mountain top. Here she views the Hobbesian material world whose institutions are decaying -- where

laps' d ages, towers, and sleeping kings
 Whose heads repose 'mid monarchies engulph'd
 With temples, oracles, long whisp'ring fanes. ...
 There lie vast amphitheatres, where fat
 The monarch with his thousands, to behold
 How beasts of prey could tear the human heart. (70-71)

Concluding, the poet sets herself apart from "yon motley crowd" (73) that is unable to "communicate delight," while she, physically or intellectually bound by "no human institution," engages her "self creative pow'r," "explores" her "sphere, and "flies to this retreat" (73).

Becoming a spokesperson for virtue, the poet speaker in "Remonstrance" assumes an elevated position. However, this distanced position appears to be lonely and, to some extent, despairing. From this position, Yearsley offers little hope for the recovery of social and moral virtue in the world; pessimistically, she refers to her sphere as "gloomy" and her Platonic shade as a "retreat," a separation from the world (73). By relying on these abstractions alone, Yearsley may remove herself from a position of immediate conflict and intellectualize her situation, but she also distances herself from any sympathetic personal or intimate engagement with society or with the reader. In later poems, Yearsley repositions herself in immediate experience with others with a much different reaction.

Wordsworth calls the language of moral abstractions into question in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. He does not substantively question the existence of moral sense or virtue, but he does argue for replacing the abstractions with the "real language of

men" (792). Along with the "Preface," Wordsworth's 1798 fragmentary "Essay on Morals" essentially presents this position: Godwin's rationalism and Paley's dry utilitarianism are "impotent"; they cannot effectively teach morals because they contain no picture of human life; they describe nothing" (103). The poet, however, can teach "moral philosophy ... with sufficient power to melt into our affections" (103). He can speak more directly to the feelings and shared sympathies through the new language of poetry as it relates domestic or rustic incidents. The same is true for Pope who in his closing lines in the *Moral Essay* "Epistle to a Lady" particularizes her accomplishments or in the introductory argument to "Epistle to Cobham" states that "it is not sufficient for this knowledge to consider Man in the Abstract" (549).

Yearsley must have some sense of the ineffectiveness of the "gloomy shade" approach because throughout the text she shifts between it and more direct and immediate scenes of shared sympathy in daily activities. She particularly includes specific details in "Bristol Elegy," "The Consul C. Fannius to Fannius Didius," the response "Familiar Poem from Nisa to Fulvia of the Vale," and "To Mira" - those poems which use historic incidents and domestic scenes from the lives of "real" men and women. Through their more immediate language and realistic incidents, these four poems in *The Rural Lyre* demonstrate the development of the moral sense and social virtue through experiences of the world and proper instruction. They particularly trace the virtues' development through the various stages and situations of life: "To Mira" describes the infant in whom moral sense first sleeps and "sees through mists"; the Fannius and Nisa poems describe its awakening in young adults; "Bristol Elegy"

describes its reawakening in the murderous soldiers as they gaze on the dying mother's "imploring eye."

"The Bristol Elegy," drawn from a real incident of popular revolt, parallels Wordsworth's observations about revolution and his reactions to it. The French Revolution, was violent and savage. According to contemporary press accounts of September 1792, rather than becoming liberated, many French were hunted like "beasts of prey." France exhibited "a frightful spectacle of rapine and barbarity"; "the cannibals tore the bodies ... into innumerable pieces and shared their mangled limbs among them"; and "the multitude who follow this cannibal feast are singing choruses" (Liu 140). The political turmoil generated by the French Revolution and local uprisings contributed to disrupting British visions of a new social order. Yearsley and Wordsworth were among many to be acutely aware of the need for a revitalized social sensibility. But the way they would proceed would be somewhat different.

In general, the shifting political situation of the 1790s, created dramatic shifts in thinking not only about the proper sources and use of power but also about the position of man within a social order and his relationship to others in that society. The differences in Wordsworth's poetry and prose between 1792 and 1798 particularly reflect this shifting national concern. In 1792 and 1793, while supporting the French Revolution, Wordsworth described his own revolutionary position in the Letter to the Bishop of Landaff. To replace the tyranny of the monarchy and social institutions, he, like many British, called for justice despite all human costs and a return to a more primitive, natural and happy state of complete individual freedom. Man and society were "opposing extremes that [could] brook no compromise" (Chandler 70-75). As a result of the French

barbarity, Wordsworth completely revised his thinking. By 1798, aware of the devastation and social chaos that the Revolution's call for individual rights produced, he pursued a different route -- an investment in shared "natural feelings" and "genuine benevolence," a "moral sense" and "presence" that "rolls through all things" (See "Preface" to *Borderers*, "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, "Tintern Abbey" and "Intimations Ode").

Similarly, Yearsley's political position also appears to have shifted between 1786 and 1798. Moira Ferguson describes Yearsley's early position as one which "introduced a different reality into late eighteenth century literature: that of a laboring class woman who ...supported the French Revolution and the rights of British peasants, who allied with, fought on behalf of, and showed compassion for abused men and women around the world, with a message, always, to fight back" (247). In her play *Earl Goodwin*, Yearsley defended individual rights at all costs, and, according to Ferguson paid tribute to the French Revolution (264). The epilogue concludes:

Lo! the poor Frenchman, long our nation's jest,
 Feels a new passion throbbing in his breast;
 From slavish, tyrant, priestly fetters free,
 For VIVE LE ROI, cries VIVE LA LIBERTIE!
 And, daring now to ACT, as well as FEEL,
 Crushes the convent and the dread Bastile! (265)

Ferguson concludes that Yearsley's radical thought and "confrontational politics" in the first volume of poems, *Earl Goodwin*, and "A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade" marked her as a woman "far ahead of her time" (266).

Ferguson in this volume does not deal with the poems of *The Rural Lyre*, however. This 1796 collection of poems represents a different approach for Yearsley than the earlier aggressive confrontationalism; it attempts to establish some means for reconciling opposing forces, establishing a new kind of order, and educating people in a new way. This shift in Yearsley's perspective represents a shift similar to Wordsworth's -- away from political revolutionary fervor toward a new social and moral structuring. Like Wordsworth's ennobled poor in *Lyrical Ballads* -- hermits, beggars, and widows -- Yearsley's women are ennobled. In their positions of wet nurse and chicken seller, mother, young wife and crone, they assume positions of honor and respect; they counsel, advise, protect, and nurture maintaining dignity "Calm in its joy, expanded in its love" ("Bristol Elegy" 107).

"Bristol Elegy" calls for an end to violent political turmoil. The advertisement to the poem describes the actual historical situation: many men, women and children had been shot by the military when opposing continuing bridge tolls in September, 1793. Structurally, the poem is divided into two parts: the first twenty four stanzas which describe the violent massacre of Bristol men and women resisting the toll; the remaining six stanzas which counsel and advise the people of Bristol. In the first part, Yearsley accumulates detail after detail of wasted life: the speaker of the poem hears the "groans of dying men," and sees the "babe" who snatches a "parting kiss" from its mother, the "generous youth" who "silent sinks to death." Each death is mourned by an "aged mother," or a "lonely parent" who will "cheer thy eve of life no more" (101-103). This massacre is the very destruction of society. In its midst there is no sympathy and social virtue; the heart has "no need for being pure " and "soft refinement" finds "only scorn"

(103). Yearsley positions the structural and thematic climax of the poem in the seventeenth and eighteenth stanzas, the last which describes the people of Bristol as they are massacred. The seventeenth stanza describes the death of the creative core of society; a young, "gentle" woman, recently become a mother, is stabbed and thrown into the river. The speaker hears her "fearful scream" which "troubles the air" and sees her "imploring eye" (105).

Yearsley clearly implies that this young woman is the creative core of society in both a literal and figurative way. Literally, she is creative because she is a new mother; figuratively, she is creative because of the way in which Yearsley connects this final scene of death to her call for "compassion, love and sympathy" in the next stanza. Stanza seventeen ends with the speaker addressing the soldiers: "Behold, assassins! her [the young mother's] imploring eye!" Stanza eighteen begins with a command to these soldiers to "Gaze full" on this imploring eye and "feel / [the] Softer emotions" of compassion, love, and sympathy." By connecting the images of one stanza with those of the next in this way, Yearsley shifts from the external sense of sight to the internal sense of "feeling." She then moves toward the resolution: the young mother's softer affections "would heal" the soldiers' "spirits raging with destructive fire" (105).

At this point it becomes important to put these lines into the larger context of a discussion of sympathy. These final lines to the stanza -- the appeal to the soldiers to look and respond -- may appear to be similar to Hume's and Smith's process of sympathy where the observer first sees and then feels or imagines to feel the same experience. In addition, Hume and Smith describe that response as an automatic one, not one that comes as the result of encouragement. However, the officers in this scene do not have an

automatic feeling of love or compassion, nor do they feel the woman's pain; had they, they would have stopped their attack. Any expressions of sympathy and compassion come after the speaker reprimands them and calls on them to reflect on the nature of the situation as well as their moral sense -- "compassion" and "love." And, as such, sympathy as it is used here is more akin to Shaftesbury's social affections that are based on a preference for virtuous action and right behavior than to an automatic psychological response. Yearsley calls on the soldiers to make a choice -- to look, reflect and feel, and then to act in a particularly responsive way. By doing that, the curative effect and social bonding brought about by the sympathetic and virtuous response can occur; the young mother's softer affections "would heal" the soldiers' "spirits." The speaker herself demonstrates her sympathy toward the mother by calling attention to her circumstances and assuming the role of spokesperson in the public interest and shared public good.

Yearsley, with very clear anti-war sentiments, continues the poem with a similar emphasis on deliberate choice and right action as the basis for cohesive social structure. In the concluding twelve stanzas of the poem, she contrasts soldiers and military power with an enlarged social and moral awareness. The "sons of War" "burn" for power and conquest. Disrupting the entire world, their "contention shakes the sphere" from "pole to pole." On the other hand, those who "boast[s] a nobler joy" and "nurse not dark revenge"

Can the true value of existence prove;

In contemplation ev'ry blessing find;

Calm in its joy, expanded in its love. (106-107)

Yearsley establishes a clear hierarchy: she rejects military power and authority as a solution; she then moves to those who can learn the social virtues of sympathy, mercy,

and compassion from the young mother's imploring eye; and finally she progresses to those who can find blessing in contemplation, not warlike aggression. They "alone" can find "the source of human joy" (107-108). This joy does not remain contained, however; it grows beyond the individual. She argues that, once found, joy and love spread so that "the flames of bigotry die" and "hot superstition ... flies" (107-108). Similar to Pope in the *Essay on Man*, Yearsley relates this expanding social love with that "divine Benevolence" which together become "an Almighty Whole" (107). Never to be overlooked, however, is Yearsley's base for this hierarchical growth from individual love to universal love -- the mother. (106).

A final point to make about this poem concerns the way in which Yearsley deals with the historical events of the poem and the speaker's responses to those events. While Yearsley was probably not jotting down details of the scene and her feelings as they were actually occurring, she does narrate the events of "Bristol Elegy" as if they are present and immediate detailed experiences, in both time and place. She also appeals to the moral sentiments which those events immediately provoke. These details, of event or feeling, are not presented as past experience which is now being recollected in tranquility at some later time or some distant place; that is, they are not told as Wordsworth would tell them, as memories of events where it is the memory which produces the sentiments of affection or sympathy. The sympathetic response for Yearsley comes as an "immediate" or present response rather than as a distanced and abstracted one.

It is important to consider the way in which Yearsley uses this historic event, particularly in light of the discussions in Chapters Six and Seven. One of the points in these later chapters is that at the same time Bannerman manipulates historical or pseudo

historical documents to reinvent history or Wordsworth creates self history and reinterprets his past experiences under the influence of memory, they both begin to define sympathy in different terms, subjective and inward turning, than social affections. Here in *The Rural Lyre* Yearsley uses details from the event to make her point about the necessity for immediate and responsive social action -- sympathy -- by putting the reader into the direct experience. She is not saying, "Observe this experience, then turn inward and do a self analysis." Nor is she saying, "Remember that experience of some time ago. Consider how that recollected experience affects your moral sense now." She provides so many details and direct appeals that she puts the reader into the agony and suffering itself and, by doing so, creates the social bond between observer reader and sufferer.

Set in the context of expanding British commerce, "The Genius of England" makes four points similar to those in "Bristol Elegy." It also establishes a contrast between commercial, militaristic power and the true spirit of England.² The speaker of the poem, the Genius of England, rejects the barbaric murder and greed of current British commerce; it offers in their place "boundless Love,/ Concord, harmonious Liberty and Peace"; third, it calls the English to become contemplative and "hold the Pow'rs of Order ...to your Hearts"; and finally, it equates Order and its social virtues of "peace and love,/ Mercy and benevolence" with true Liberty. While the speaker of the poem is masculine (he refers to himself as "Your father's voice" (94)), Order is feminine. The speaker refers to Order as "her," one who has "Charms,/ strength, comeliness, and the features of a god" (94). By equating Order with the feminine, Yearsley is preparing to position herself in the role as national spokesperson. It is also clear in her discussion of a capitalized 'Order' that Yearsley understand's Pope's conception of a chain of being, the hierarchical

ordering of the universe, and views it -- as well as sympathy and the other social affections -- as having an objective existence outside of the mind or desires of man .

The "Advertisement" to "Bristol Elegy," besides giving details of the actual confrontation described in the poem, announces Yearsley's motivation for the poem: first, she "expects her civic wreath," Bristol's acknowledgment of her wise poetic voice. Second, she elevates wisdom and the wise person over wealth. She explains that wealth "must be adored" in its own "becoming manner," but wisdom "ought to be so beloved in Bristol, and everywhere else, that the man or the woman who possesses it, is as a consecrated vessel suffered to lie by for sacred purposes" (100). Once again, Yearsley has elevated herself as poet to the rank of holy.

Several other *Rural Lyre* poems rely on ample immediate and specific details set within current rather than recalled and generalized historical circumstances to develop their themes; they describe additional ways in which women, as nurturers and moral guides, direct the development of sympathy and the social affections and, through that development, sustain a stable society; and they reveal Yearsley's understanding of the social affections. While not specifically and solely focused on the formation and properties of sympathy, the poems do reflect Yearsley's inclusion of sympathy in the larger scheme of the social affections. Finally, the following discussion reflects the poems thrust, like Shaftesbury's and the "moral sense school," that the presence of these social affections in someone reflects an inner moral sense and mental vision, capable of training in "true virtue" and exploring the inner world.

The Fannius and Nisa poems, the second and third of Yearsley's domestic poems for this discussion of sympathy, do not rely on abstractions of the social virtues or

distanced incidents to create their themes. Like "Bristol Elegy," they draw more heavily from incidences in the real lives of men and women, and they rely on immediate and concrete language. Also like "Bristol Elegy," these poems reflect a potentially unstable social order stabilized through virtuous action. But this time, the instability lies within the family and the marital relationship rather than political and economic circumstances. In *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* Alan Liu describes the nonexistence in the close of the eighteenth century of what twentieth century America understands as the nuclear family. The eighteenth century family was constituted of long absent fathers, misused wives, deceased mothers, stepmothers or foster parents, live-in servants and or relatives; home was not necessarily any one place. Children were apprenticed and lived in someone else's home, or they moved from one relative's home to another, "fostered out" and separated from siblings. Liu describes Wordsworth's middle class experience as "always excessive of the nuclear form. Once the conjugal nucleus had accomplished its task of generation, it passed into other family forms with continuing responsibilities: guardianship, education, financial support, occupational and marital advice, and so on" (238-239). Stable, long lived families were unlikely for other reasons also: adult mortality was high, thirty percent of all marriages ended within fifteen years, and infant mortality was high. One fourth to one third of all children died before they were fifteen (Liu 245-247). Liu concludes that those members of a family who lived "had to be fitted into a broad mosaic of kin, village, parish, occupational, and other affiliational networks able collectively to disperse the responsibilities of 'family'" (Liu 247-248; Aries 411-415).³

Wordsworth expressed his concern about dislocation and solitary persons, as well as the effects of isolation and loss, most obviously in *The Borderers*, the *Salisbury*

Plain poems, “Tintern Abbey,” and “The Old Cumberland Beggar.” In all four, displaced persons, widows, orphans, old men, and hunted men, wander the landscape seeking refuge. Their only consolation lies in some human connectedness or some affirmation of non material well being, “On that best portion of a good man’s life” – “His little, nameless, unremembered acts/ Of kindness and of love” (“Tintern Abbey” ll. 113-114). In the “Intimations Ode,” Wordsworth gives “Thanks to the human heart by which we live,/ Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears” (ll. 201-202). These following poems of Yearsley’s emphasize the importance of nameless acts of kindness and virtue.

“The Consul C. Fannius to Fannius Didius” is a narrative poem in which one consul advises another about virtue and respect for the marital bond. The language, situation and plot are simple: C. Fannius describes his attempt to seduce Nisa, a young married woman, and cuckold Tellus, her husband. However, Fulvia, the chicken seller “who bore so patiently” his “boyish feats,” recognizes his intentions and shames him (48). He approaches Nisa, asleep in her home, looks upon her but does not physically accost her, retrieves his gift to her, and departs. In the end, he gives Tellus his land and leaves Nisa “faithful.” He, in turn, learns “virtue” (59). The second poem, “From Nisa to Fulvia of the Vale,” is equally simple. Nisa, responding to Fannius’ instructions to thank Fulvia, plans a letter to her. She breaks off, however, wondering if Fulvia is a witch with special powers.

Built within this seemingly simple double narrative are several Yearsley themes on the role of the poet/ woman. The laboring woman, Fulvia, speaks as a corrective voice, directly, wisely, inside and outside her economic class and gender. Her words have an impact: in the first poem, they strike some chord, Fannius’ moral sense, and cause him

to change his course of action so that, transformed, he turns to virtue. In the second poem, her words leave Nisa wondering if this simple chicken seller possesses some kind of secret knowledge. Nisa says:

I guess, ...

Thou wilt, when I implore, arrest the moon;

When brazen in her belt she draws up woe

From the deep breast t' o'erwhelm the gentle thought,

And tremulate the wise and virtuous mind. ...

When

We pay our holy rites to Juno, come:

Thou shalt our priestess be. (63-64)

Like the "Advertisement" to "Bristol Elegy," the laboring woman is an instructor in social virtue and, as a result, assumes an elevated and sacred position in her society. Also like the "Advertisement," wisdom and virtue assume greater importance in a society than wealth and position. Finally, through the compassionate intervention of the wise woman, the home and the marital bond are stabilized, perhaps made even stronger. While Nisa slept and was unaware of her husband's departure in the first poem, in the second she shows a much greater concern for his physical and emotional well being. She watches his return; she pauses, stops her letter writing and becomes attentive to him because he is "weary and faint" (64).

The last of Yearsley's *Rural Lyre* poems which reflects late eighteenth century historic and social pressures and also which incorporates real incidents and concrete language of the social affections is "To Mira." This poem focuses especially on the role

of mother as the nurturer and creator. For both Wordsworth and Yearsley, a loving, nurturing mother is extremely important in the growth and development of a child. Her generous care affects her child in two important ways: it connects the external physical world with an internal moral sense, and it can regenerate society. Mary Moorman, recounting Wordsworth's early years, describes his life as "free and unoppressed -- full of little festivals" because his mother "had no nervous dread" nor was "puffed up by false, unnatural hopes,/ Nor selfish with unnecessary cares" (2-3). Wordsworth describes his mother in Book II of *The Prelude*:

For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
 No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
 Along his infant veins are interfus'd
 The gravitation and the filial bond
 Of nature that connect him with the world. (II: 11. 238-244)

Her nurturing care first creates in him, and then connects him with the external world in, a "filial bond." Moorman concludes that here Wordsworth regards a loving relationship between mother and child as "the archetype from which springs the happiness of the child's intercourse with the universe" (3). The child, raised as Wordsworth was, is able to experience love, then transfer love for mother to love for nature and society – that is, he forms his social affections and appreciation for virtue through his experiences of her.

Yearsley describes a quite similar relationship between mother and child in "To Mira, On the Care of Her Infant," but she does so with more specific domestic details

than Wordsworth's generalized account. On the surface, the poem's speaker assumes the role of instructing a young mother on the care of her son. However, on a deeper level, the speaker loosely structures a series of oppositions: stern mothering versus compassionate mothering; custom versus nature; warlike man versus forgiving woman; and sense knowledge versus the "soul's" knowledge. By the closing lines of the poem, the speaker positions the nurturing mother, married or unmarried, as the primary and most permanent pathway to virtue and self knowledge, as the base for a properly ordered society, and the route to salvation. Her "softer joys" and "pleasures" are not lightly dismissed as unimportant "women's duties" (10 -11).

A detailed examination of "To Mira" is useful for bringing together all of the interrelated concerns about the moral sense and social virtue: the presence of innate moral sense in each individual, the influence of feminine nurturing on this moral sense, the growth of "soul" and social virtues, the very real need for the social virtues and sympathy as the basis of a stable society, and the preeminence of moral awareness and social virtue over material possession or institutional authority for generating a new society.

First, in "To Mira" Yearsley promotes a rather unorthodox vision of mothering and establishes a different set of values, those charged with a positive energy of "happy Nature" (115). Broadly, the poem's speaker, forming a sympathetic association with the new mother, instructs Mira to disregard current mothering practices: not to tightly bind the infant, not to send him to a wet nurse, not to discipline him harshly or scold him, and not to train him with "stern self denial" (121). Such practices permanently destroy the child's "inward world" (122), for "Custom" destroys "gentle Nature's pow'r" (114) and

"brutal force...check[s] th' enquiring mind" (119). Instead, the speaker offers to teach Mira how to "gently" nurse and care for the child, to both literally and figuratively "clothe him with easy warmth," to show him tenderness (115), to "play life's springs with energy" (118), and generously "give unask'd" (122). She explains that the mother's tender care of the child's sense experience results in his enlarged mind, ennobled spirit, and the growth of "new" "benign and social ...affections .../ Friendship, compassion, sympathy, and love" (117) because "example has its kind" (122). As the child's positive sense experiences grow, so does his thirst for knowledge. A mother's task, then, progresses from providing nurturing sense experiences to "plant[ing] ...true virtue in his mind" (123) so that at death he will "slumber... the sole undoubted property of God!" (124). Sympathetic behavior toward the child will reap sympathetic behavior from the child.

To sum up this first point: there are a number of important assertions that Yearsley makes in this poem about the proper role of the mother - hers is the more important task- and the way in which the social affections are transmitted and developed in another. She is the primary teacher of social and moral virtue; her nurturing trains the child in joy, sympathy, compassion, friendship -- the very basis for transforming a warlike society and generating a new one with new kinds of social bonds.

Second, Yearsley opposes the "systematic" man with one whose "soul spring[s] forward still to know" (119). In doing so, she recognizes and hierarchicalizes two types of perception -- the perception of material world by the five senses and the perception of a non material experience by some inner capability or awareness which she calls the soul. Systematic man, the empiricist, relies solely on his senses, "to see, to touch, to taste, and smell and hear" (119) and his knowledge only of the external world. In this reliance, he

"conceives himself a mighty, finish'd plan (119). However, for Yearsley, he is incomplete because he does not connect the external world with an internal one. This is the person who has no "mental vision," and, consequently, is unable to know himself (122).

However, the speaker asks, "Is this all ... we boast below?" (119) To Mira she poses a series of rhetorical questions. Does knowledge go beyond limited sense experience; "Does not the soul spring forward still to know?" (119) The speaker answers her own questions: empirical knowledge is not enough. The soul -- an immaterial understanding or perception which Yearsley refers to as "she" --is present even in the young but must patiently "wait" until the child matures, "wait behind the useless tongue." This understanding or perception must develop slowly; it first sees "thro' mists" or "sleeps" but gradually becomes "plainer" until finally it is "with "MEANING fraught" (120). Once the soul understands, the child feels "joy, pleasure, and sympathy," immaterial experience. Following the awakening of this understanding, the child should receive instruction; first the eye, one of the material senses, responds; then the operation of the soul "judgment," "follows and decides/ With mental vision" (122). The person with mental vision is capable of training in "true virtue," exploring his inward world, and knowing God (123-124).

Curiously, the speaker in "To Mira" only briefly refers to any other kind of education than the mother's training of the senses and development of virtue. Offhandedly, she tells Mira, "To ancient fathers be thy boy consign'd" (123), yet the brevity of this reference is meaningful in the context of the poem. From the opening lines, Yearsley contrasts the public, masculine, war torn world with the more private, feminine, constructive world. In the masculine world, the father is absent from his

domestic role and engaged in combat where "man to man oppos'd would shake the world,/ And see vast systems into chaos hurl'd" (II: 5-6). He operates within a political and collective sphere that consumes the individual. Mira, on the other hand, is left to the "softer joys" and "mild pleasure" of her home (10-11). The speaker urges her to be ever present, neither absent from nor in opposition to, her son; to bend to his desires; and to encourage the development of his own private, "inward" sphere. Mira, in other words, creates the individual who subsequently forms community based on the social affections and moral sense; in doing so, she assumes a god like role. The "ancient fathers" are almost an afterthought.

Yearsley's "To Mira" takes the development of sympathy and the social affections as they contribute to the formation of community in a direction specific to a feminist perspective. And, rather than generalizing about community and social bond, she gets specific about what it should not be and what it should be. She rejects certain, more broadly accepted social institutions. The son -- the possessor of family name and inheritor of property-- should not belong to the community as it is currently formed; he should not be given to a wet nurse. He does not belong to an extended family, nor should he be given to older aunts or harsh disciplinarians. On no account should he be given to clergy for moral instruction. Instead, she proposes a feminine and familial center education. Mira herself will raise and teach her son, giving her a freedom which "resists" broader community restraints and an opportunity to liberate both herself and her son from vast "chaotic systems." This is not, however, the same kind of revolution as Wordsworth's of 1793; it is not destroying all social institutions to free and release the individual to Rousseau's natural state. It is a strengthening of individual internal awarenesses and values which

allow that individual to positively contribute to and strengthen the primary fabric of society --that moral one.

Yearsley's thinking is similar to Wordsworth's in that it saw a need for new ways to regenerate society. While Wordsworth assigns that regenerating power to the poet, Yearsley assigns the same power to woman. For example, in Wordsworth the poet is the creator of a new vision or moral order; poetry itself restores "man's spiritual powers by bridging the gap between the world about him and the world within, ...bridging the ...internal and external, spiritual and material, subjective and objective" (Zall xiii-xiv). Calling herself the "rural lyre," Yearsley assumes a similarly elevated position, the speaker of truth, even though she does not directly state that the poet has creative and restorative powers. However, she goes farther and extends these same powers to the feminine instructive presence in the mother and the "witch" and the goddess. In "Brutus: A Fragment," the most dramatic of *The Rural Lyre* poems, the feminine presence is extended to Venus, "unsubdu'd" daughter of the king of the gods and emblem of British liberty, and finally, source of "the perfect, good, and fair" (2-5).

Yearsley's poems do not reflect a life lived in a vacuum. Frank Felsenstein's articles on Yearsley and patronage reveal how she was not isolated at all from either the historical and social pressures of the late eighteenth century, but she was in fact active in many spheres. Principally, however, Felsenstein sees her as "a writer, whose work is constantly exploring the nature of friendship" (382). Her poetry reflects her deep awareness of the concerns of the moral school philosophers, most ardently Shaftesbury's discussion of virtue as primary "social feeling or sense of partnership with mankind" (Edwards 430). Within that poetry, she has a dynamic and insistent voice that will not

accept violence, manipulation, or intimidation. Yearsley does not apologize for assuming a role within the domestic, feminine, social or moral spheres because she never suggests that they are less important than, or even *equal* in importance to, the political or military.⁴ Only by living with benevolence, sympathy, and the other social virtues sustained by women's care, can a society flourish. Otherwise, it becomes a Hobbesian nightmare -- a society which consumes and feeds upon itself "like beasts of prey."

Chapter 5: Joanna Baillie at the Pivot Point: Certainty and Doubt in the Process
of Imagining

There is one section of Adam Smith's explanation of the sympathetic process that reflects a problematic issue for the Romantics at a time of revolution in political structures and dissolution of standard assumptions about the nature of man and the social affections. This particular section of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the opening paragraphs, distinguishes Smith's more complex theory from his predecessors' definitions, particularly Hume's, and introduces an element of subjectivity in the spectator's response to a sufferer so as to cast doubt about the possibility of identically or broadly shared feeling. Hume argues that sympathy creates an exact representation of the experience of the other in the spectator. The emphasis in Smith, however, is not on the exact duplication of feeling but on a multi-stepped imaginative creation of feeling within the spectator that is not exact but a conception or estimation of what the sufferer might feel. Smith writes:

As we have no experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of

the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though my brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our sense will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our own sense only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels.

(Smith 9)

Smith's introduction of the imagination to the process of sympathy shifts the emphasis from replication or duplication to such phrases as "forms a conception," "impressions of our own sense only," "we conceive ourselves," "we enter as it were," "become in some measure," "form some idea," "feel something though weaker," and "not altogether unlike." This shift in language not only provides the impetus for the separation of spectator from sufferer, but also it casts doubt on the ability to truly know what the other is experiencing

or be certain about our perceptions of the other. Combined with other late eighteenth century social, economic, and political changes, this doubt about the possibility of shared experience contributed to the romantic sense of isolation.

To this point, in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, the literature has not reflected doubt about the possibility of the experience of sympathy, primarily fellow feeling, the “act of entering into the sentiments of another person” (Marshall, *Surprising* 3). Writers were confident in their characters’ or mankind’s abilities to experience or extend sympathy, as well as the real existence of “Sympathy” itself. However, while the discussion in Chapter 4 focused on the ability of women to experience and extend sympathy, with a call to society to respond in kind, Yearsley’s poems are edged with a sense of anxiety and urgency. Going forward, the discussions in the next chapters look at the various interactive or mirroring aspects of sympathy as they fail, singly or collectively. In Chapter 6, the discussion of Ann Bannerman’s *Tales of Superstition* looks at the inability of the characters to express or experience sympathy at all. Another portrait of isolation, Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Floating Island” in Chapter 7, considers that condition in which the speaker is able to extend her feelings of sympathy but does not experience a return of sympathy. The concluding section on William Wordsworth looks at some of his earlier poetry as specific examples of relying on abstractions rather than real experiences of sympathy.

Here, in the remainder of Chapter 5, the discussion of Joanna Baillie’s *Introductory Discourse* and tragedy *DeMonfort* (1798) represents a kind of pivot point between the chapters before and after it. Baillie’s theoretical base for sympathy and its working out in the drama draw directly from Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but do

not acknowledge any possible uncertainty about the validity of shared sympathy that Smith's work might suggest. In fact, she thoroughly grounds her work in earlier eighteenth century "nature of man" and divine mercy arguments similar to Pope's. However, she also undercuts the whole thrust of the play and the possibility for broad sympathetic community because its conclusion is set amidst an inverted and chaotic world order. While Baillie concludes the play with an appeal to the ultimate Christian source for divine mercy and sympathy, her backdrop is more like Byron's end of the world poem -- "Darkness" (1816).

David Marshall's significant study on theatricality and sympathy, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy*, examines the passage from Smith cited at the opening of this chapter and opens up a number of significant questions that it poses to eighteenth and early nineteenth century writers -- Diderot, Rousseau, Marivaux, and Mary Shelley -- about the nature of the sympathetic interaction as it creates and reimagines suffering and experiences of one person within another. Though he recognizes that there is no single "universal definition," Marshall rephrases Smith to establish this first aspect of sympathy -- that is, the viewer's response to another's emotions -- as the "experience of entering in to someone else's thoughts and feelings, particularly the experience of transporting oneself to the place and person of someone else when faced with either a work of art or the spectacle of someone suffering" (Marshall 4). We can anticipate, implicit in Smith's two statements "We can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected" and "It is the impressions of our own sense only," significant discussion about the subjective experience of sympathy (Smith 9).

But sympathy goes farther than from spectator to sufferer; it is also a reciprocating or mirroring process in which the sufferer imagines the feelings that the spectator has for him and then responds. Marshall considers Smith's explanation of the mirroring aspect of sympathy -- a two way process of imagining -- as an even greater complication in the process of entering and recreating another's thoughts. "The person suffering tries to represent his spectator's point of view, representing to himself in his imagination what they feel as they represent to themselves in their imaginations what he feels." Such a process depends upon the creation of a dramatic "tableaux" or a "text" in which both characters are engaged (Marshall 5). What then becomes truly problematic is the possibility of accurate or genuine mirroring of experience because of the complexity and variability of the imaginings and feelings as they shift from observer to sufferer and back again. From this perspective, Marshall considers sympathy both an aesthetic and an epistemological problem: "Since we cannot know the experience or sentiments of another person, we must represent in our imagination copies of the sentiments that we ourselves feel as we imagine ourselves in someone else's place and person" (Marshall 5). Such a consideration goes beyond merely considering sympathy as introducing problems of subjectivity. As an aesthetic problem it considers the ways in which the thoughts and actions of a character are presented so as not to mislead or prohibit the sympathetic response in the reader. As an epistemological problem, this understanding of sympathy opens the door to questions about the certainty with which the sympathizer can know that the feelings or circumstances that he is imagining are comparable to or the same nature as the sufferer's.

From this perspective, the experience of sympathy is reciprocal imagining, a dynamic interactive process which relies on the abilities of both the sympathizer-spectator and the sufferer-spectacle to do several things: represent their internal feelings and minds to the other and to imagine what the other's imaginings of their own experiences and imaginings are. It becomes an almost forgone conclusion given the fracturing and restructuring social, economic, and political activity of the later eighteenth century that, as the implications of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* are examined from Smith forward, literature, of necessity, begins to consider the effects of such a layering process of imaginings and anticipates misinterpretation, misread responses, a split between the self and other, and eventual isolation of individual mind and experience. The experience of sympathy -- if it occurs at all -- becomes a transcendent one, one that overcomes all boundaries and differences of experience and background (Marshall 5).

More often, literature reflects a sense of desperation for or loss of rather than an experience of sympathy. This desperation can be two sided: either the viewer's inability to generate a sympathetic response to the other in pain or the sufferer's awareness of the failure in others to respond in sympathy. In another scenerio, such as Wordsworth's "Preface" and play *The Borderers*, both of these conditions exist; the characters are incapable of both aspects of this two-sided experience. They can neither extend nor respond to sympathy. The alternatives to human sympathy, one the Romantics chose, were to look to Nature for this dual relationship, obviously Wordsworth, or to deny value to or need for any such relationship, such as Byron's *Manfred*. However, the implications of Marshall's analysis of sympathy might be even more devastating yet -- that situation in which the spectator (or the sufferer) responds with sympathy but fails completely to

understand the other's circumstances or feelings. The isolation and personal devastation here are no less.

It is important to consider Joanna Baillie's work in light of these aesthetic and epistemological problems which Marshall sees as significant concerns for some of her contemporaries, like Shelley, Burke, Godwin, and Wollstonecraft and for the period in general. Baillie draws from the same section of Smith's work for the *Introductory Discourse* and *DeMonfort* that Marshall finds so influential; however, she does not share her contemporaries' same concerns. While friends with Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, and Southey, and part of a large intellectual circle, she includes only one reference in these two works that reflects any uncertainty about the possibility of knowing or sharing closely related experience, nor does Baillie doubt her ability to generate the reader/viewer responses of sympathy that she desires. Firmly set in eighteenth century moral certainties in the nature of man, virtue, and sympathy as a reflection of the redemptive process, these two texts, a theoretical preface and a play demonstrating the principles within that preface, do not yield to uncertainty about the nature or effectiveness of shared sympathy between two people to transcend differences in background or experience. However, uncertainty is reflected in the closing setting of the play about the possibility of a larger shared community. Baillie's sympathy is not "sweetness" and "sentimentality."

The value in examining this essay and play lies in what they reveal about the mentality of the age - what was in the air - at least within the shared intellectual community of which Baillie was a part. Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) can, in fact, be seen as a representative figure of one eighteenth century element which did persist into the Romantic era (and which is reflected in Wordsworth's last *Salisbury Plain* poem),

connecting the period before her with the one after her. On one hand she could have held an intelligent conversation with the elderly Dr. Johnson; on the other, before her death in 1851, she could have met the young Thomas Hardy. So in her we may see a connecting point. Another basis on which Baillie can be seen as one representative of her era might be found in A.O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*. Lovejoy's argument, in fact, presents on a larger scale a rationale for studying writers whose works, as literature, are dead or thought of little value. He states that the rejection of everything which is not a masterpiece "is a natural state of mind, if you don't regard the study of literary history as including within its province the study of the ideas and feelings which other men in past times have been moved by, and of the processes by which what may be called literary and philosophical public opinion is formed" (19). Lovejoy continues by stating that if one does think these matters ought to be of concern, then the "minor writer may be as important as" or "more important than - the authors of what are now regarded as the masterpieces" (19-20). Concluding with a statement made by George Herbert Palmer, Lovejoy recognizes the minor writer actually as most reflecting the concern of his time. Palmer writes, "The tendencies of an age appear more distinctly in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius. ...On the sensitive responsive souls, of less creative power, current ideals record themselves with clearness" (20).

Reading Joanna Baillie's *Introductory Discourse* and *A Series of Plays on the Passions* is aided by knowing something of Baillie's background. Kurt Wittig's premise in *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* is that the literature of a people, particularly the Scots, grows out of the life of the community. Therefore, to study Scots' literature, the critic needs to be aware of the moral, aesthetic and intellectual values of the people (3-7).

David Craig records that the cities of Scotland were small with all the advantages of small scale societies, closeness of neighbors, professionals who were also people of literature, philosophy, and history, and clubs and societies which discussed books and ideas in taverns and on street corners. The Scots professional class tended to support social order and self improvement, viewing them as a cooperative "great work." Even people living on very low incomes could maintain credible places in society (5). The Scotland of 1802 was, to Marilyn Gaull, a "civilized and humane society" which had the highest rate of literacy in the world. There, between 1770 and 1830, literary activity was at its greatest, making substantial contributions to philosophic, political, social and economic thought (17).

Part of many Scots' intellectual life involved firm religious convictions. Margaret Carhart's *Life and Work of Joanna Baillie* records that Baillie was a deeply religious woman strongly formed by the early and rigorous Presbyterian training that she received from her father (5-6). During her life, she had a lengthy correspondence over religious matters with William Ellery Channing; and in 1831, she published a lengthy religious tract entitled *A View of the General Tenour of the New Testament regarding the Nature and Dignity of Jesus Christ* (Carhart 56-62, 208). The *Introductory Discourse* itself refers to God as a source of human nature and Christ as a "harmoniously consistent" figure who should be a model of behavior (33).

Certainly, Baillie's childhood and education within this social, religious, and philosophical environment influenced her during her later London and Hampstead years. For her literary theory, specifically her concept of sympathetic curiosity, Baillie drew from Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. (Carhart records an incident which indicates

Baillie's familiarity with Smith, 13.) For Smith, pity and compassion are words that are used to describe our feeling for the sorrow of another; sympathy *is* a term used to describe the shared feeling with any passion. This compassion or sympathy may be transferred from one person to another "instantaneously" and "antecedent" to any knowledge why. No one, not even a hardened criminal, *is* immune to it, for "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him. ...By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation. We conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments" (8-16). Upon this basis, Smith's principles of sympathy, interest in the other, mirroring sympathetic responses, and imaginative understanding of another's experiences, Baillie constructs a new British dramatic theory, the core of her 1798 *Introductory Discourse to the A Series of Plays on the Passions*.

Baillie's commentary on sympathetic curiosity in the *Introductory Discourse*, as it develops an awareness of and bond with the experiences of others, describes the basis for a broadly recognized sense of shared experience, strongly confident that her characters and readers are capable of extending sympathy. In many ways similar to Smith but emphasizing more the concept of struggle within daily human experience, Baillie writes that sympathetic curiosity is:

a universal desire in the human mind to behold men in every situation, putting forth his strength against the current of adversity, scorning all bodily anguish, or struggling with those feelings of nature, which, like a beating stream, will oft'times burst through the artificial barriers of pride.

(7)

Sympathetic curiosity also arises when the reader or spectator watches a man "contend[s] with" evil "which arises in his own breast" (9) or the "smallest indication of an unquiet mind" (10). This sympathetic curiosity, this close watching and observing, whether in the theater or in life, Baillie concludes "is our most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others," particularly through the drama, we come to know them; however, we also "know ourselves" (12). Baillie invites readers to do exactly that – experience extreme feelings and emotions in a “safe way” through identification and imagining, in this case with *DeMonfort*.

Baillie was highly regarded by many of her contemporaries. Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth, most notably, praised her for her plays and encouraged their performance. (Carhart). Editors of standard collections of British female authors commended her during her lifetime for the "pure and elevated style" of her poetry (Bethune iii-vi). She was the darling of a literary circle, the new Shakespeare, and, as Scott said, "the very model of an English gentlewoman" (Bethune iii-vi). However, during her own period, her plays, like those of the major Romantics, were not widely popular on stage and often thought unfit for performance or undramatic, if they appeared at all. Catherine Burroughs argues that the plays written by women, particularly, were restricted from the stage because they “might reveal more overtly the actual experiences of middle and upper class women” and “elicit[ed] a cultural distress about the position of women” (28). As closet drama, though, they fared better. Jonathan Wordsworth notes that the 1798 edition of the plays was enthusiastically received, reprinted several times, and commended by Southey:

A very good work has passed through my hands, called A Series of Plays

exemplifying the effects of the stronger passions. The author (whoever he may be) bids fair to become an honour to English literature. (4)

Southey particularly admired *DeMonfort* as an "honour to English literature." In the play, "the hero is moody and magnificent... The verse is powerful. The climax is effective and unstrained. And though the theme of the play is hate, we see in Jane de Monfort a convincing portrayal of love" (Jonathan Wordsworth 4).

Even though she was involved in such a literary and social circle that was also politically active, in general Baillie did not reference her works to their politics or to political controversies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Hazlitt commends her in his *Dramatic Criticism* for the "power and spirit" of her dramas explicitly because "she has been placed out of the vortex of philosophical and political extravagances" (18; 308). On the other hand, he strongly criticizes Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Godwin for including so much of the political in their dramas and for their investment in the political struggles of Europe. It is this inclusion of the political, Hazlitt says, which makes the age anything but dramatic; "the age we live in is critical, didactic, paradoxical, romantic, but it is not dramatic. This, if any, is its weak side" (18: 302). The concern for the political, a result of the French Revolution, has caused the English to "become a nation of politicians and newsmongers." He continues:

Our inquiries in the streets are no less than after the health of Europe...

The Muse, meanwhile, droops in bye-corners of the mind, and is forced to take up with the refuse of our thoughts. (18, 304)

Wordsworth, who said of her, "If I had to present anyone to a foreigner as a model of an English gentlewoman, it would be Joanna Baillie" (Carhart 2), wrote his own play *The*

Borderers in response to crisis brought on by the French Revolution. Byron's dramas and dramatic poems, implicit reactions to the same crisis in spirit, admired Baillie, modeled some of his own characters after her concept of an overwhelming passion, and wrote of her, "Women (saving Joanna Baillie) cannot write tragedy" (Carhart 38). Her inclusion of two political figures in *Metrical Legends* stems more from the natures of their characters than any empire building or revolutionary tendencies. Any political concern that might underlie her work seems to be resolved in the *Discourse*, her poetry, and plays within a social, moral, Christian framework. Burroughs reminds us of the preface to *The Martyr* (1826) where Baillie wrote that "Of all the principles of human action, Religion is the strongest"; "it is the greatest and noblest emotion of the heart" (96).

To this framework she adds something new: drama with an original theoretical base, connection of sympathy theory with plays of the passions, and new vocabulary, use of language, and social class to represent human nature. Additionally, Baillie attempts to define the function of drama, to describe what is appropriately British drama and to rid it of foreign influences and dependence; within that definition she spells out the proper role of the poet-dramatist. By bringing these three elements together -- her traditional social religious background, the contemporary philosophical discussion, and the forward thrust of her new kind of drama -- Baillie, in the *Introductory Discourse*, places herself in a pivotal position in the development of dramatic theory. Thus, we see in her not a British spinster amusing herself with moralizing and dependent on the flattery of her literary friends, but an innovator synthesizing social and historical elements and anticipating much of the critical thought of her literary circle while also retaining values of her past. Baillie's most significant contribution to the drama was noted almost in passing, however, in an

encyclopedia entry twenty-five years after her death and concerned not her plays but instead her dramatic theory. The 1876 edition of *Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature* states that her *Introductory Discourse* to the first volume of her *A Series of Plays* (1798) anticipates Wordsworth's literary theory and much of his poetry. In particular, it highlights Baillie's assertion that simplicity in nature should replace decoration and refinement (229). She writes:

Let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion, genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality, whilst the false and unnatural around it fades away upon every side, like the rising exhalations of the morning. (21)

However, after that 1876 statement Baillie received little attention, and it has only been in the past fifteen years that any considerable critical work has been done to explore parallels between Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and Baillie's *Introductory Discourse*, in order to expand a critical understanding of the lesser known *Discourse*, and shed greater light on Baillie's pivotal work. Jonathan Wordsworth's introduction to the 1990 reprint of *A Series of Plays* contributes to that end and concludes by linking Wordsworth and Baillie as "kindred spirits" (4).¹

Introductory Discourse

A close examination of the *Introductory Discourse* to the *Plays on the Passions* will clarify what Baillie means by sympathetic curiosity, how it operates in general, and how she applies it within her plays. This *Introductory Discourse*, as well, includes a broad description of English theater and her plans for its revival, the importance of language, the nature of comedy and tragedy. All of these components, deliberately

described and slowly developed, however, return to the heart of her understanding of the purpose of drama – to allow the spectator experiences beyond the usual so that he may exercise his sympathetic impulse and come to better know himself and mankind.

Intention and the author's justification of intention are deliberate and essential components throughout the whole of the *Introductory Discourse*. Baillie begins the with a clear statement of intention, much as Wordsworth introduces his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, explaining her rationale for attaching introductory remarks to the poetic and dramatic works.² Unabashedly, she admits her desire "to conciliate the favour of the reader" (66) and attempts to dispose him to favorably read the works. For her, the author's statements about the works should be, though very rarely are, taken. In this case, however, they are especially relevant, she argues, because these first three plays are only a small portion of a larger and innovative plan. Then, after weaving explanations about why she focuses on each of the points throughout the discourse, Baillie closes with the argument that since she has no channel to the theater for introducing and explaining her plays, she will necessarily have to present them in printed form, and thus actually have an advantage over performed theater. Baillie writes, "Upon further reflection it appeared to me that by publishing them in this way, I have an opportunity afforded me of explaining the design of my work, and enabling the publick to judge, not only of each play by itself, but as making apart likewise of the whole" (66). Baillie wants to make sure that the reader understands her mindset and examines these plays with that mindset in place.

Part of Baillie's “intentional” mindset requires her to justify the representation of the passions on stage and the subsequent sympathetic response. To accomplish this, she has to position her dramatic theory and plays within a larger framework: she provides a

brief history of the drama and then, in contrast to all that has gone before, she demonstrates the uniqueness of her own plays. She explains that, while the "progress of society" would have given us drama at any rate, the circumstances of its origin in Greece still continue to hamper its development. Greek style, construction, characterization, relationship with the audience, and association with Gods have had too great and pervasive an effect on the drama. Baillie criticizes the classical methods of the "polished" and "admired ancients"; they, and our modern adaptations of them, have restrained the growth of the free and "unbridled imagination" (26-29). Her plan for a new British drama would include freeing the imagination from the ancients' burdens and incorporating greater action and passion; for her, too frequently, has "strong genius" been discouraged, while classical constructions, particularly the unities, have been held up for admiration. The incorporation of such imaginative freedom in the drama allows for a more intense scrutiny of man's real passions and for greater interplay between spectacle and the imaginative operation of sympathy.

Not only does Baillie claim the superiority of her new drama, but she also announces the superiority of the drama to all other forms of writing for its ability to reveal the truth of mankind.³ Baillie contrasts drama with history, biography, philosophy, the novel, and poetry, and finds them only partial recorders of the truths of human nature primarily because in drama the characters "must speak directly for themselves" (24). Drama, and in particular tragedy, reveals the "natural inclination we all so universally shew for scenes of Horror and distress, of passion and heroic exertion" (29). Similarly, Wordsworth in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, raises poetry above biography and

history because of their basic utility; they do not afford the pleasures of the imagination (438).

Following from this argument that speech and dramatic performance are the preferred vehicle for conveying commonly shared passions and emotions, Baillie resorts to her ultimate argument for the primacy of the drama: God. She writes, "He who made us hath placed within our breast a judge that judges instantaneously of every thing they say" (24-25). From the speech of the characters, those who can read and even those who cannot are able to identify with and learn from "creatures like ourselves" (25). Baillie thus rests her arguments for drama in a traditional eighteenth century ethic. However, in creating a new dramatic form, she ultimately values her own methods because they reveal the interaction of a passion-ridden individual with other people, the revelation of the human spirit under trial, the extension of sympathy, and the reestablishment of social order. Not bound by the formal restrictions of the unities and classical structures, she fashions a drama perhaps "more irregular, more imperfect, more varied, more interesting" by adding "more of action and passion" (27-28).

In 1798, two years before Wordsworth's "Preface," the *Introductory Discourse* enunciated this new plan - a single lifelong "extensive design ... which ...has nothing exactly similar to it in any language: of one which a whole lifetime will be limited enough to accomplish" (1-2). She does not, though, outline her new plan or prepare the reader for the ways in which it is materially different at this early point. Piecemeal throughout the *Discourse* the various elements are introduced, and only in the closing pages are they brought together in a fully defined statement of her plan. At the beginning of the *Discourse* she interrupts the discussion of her new drama to explain the premise

upon which she structures her plays and dramatic theory, to communicate to the reader "those ideas regarding human nature, as they in some degree affect almost every species of moral writings, but particularly the Dramatic" (2). Baillie, unlike Wordsworth, has no thoughts about shifting relationships between language, the mind, and society, or she has already resolved them. The whole of Baillie's design presupposes certain specific static ideas regarding what human nature is.

While both writers indicate a concern for moral relationships, Baillie's does not, I believe, allow for the greater social revolution complexities or philosophical doubts that Wordsworth's does. Baillie's ideas begin with an echo of Pope's, "The proper study of mankind is man," when she writes, "From that strong sympathy which most creatures ...feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself. ...Every person, who is not deficient in intellect, is more or less occupied in tracing ...the varieties of understanding and temper which constitute the characters of men" (2). Baillie, at this point, begins to structure the *Discourse* as she structures her plays; at the center, at the very heart of the discussion, is sympathetic curiosity. Around that topic spiral all the other arguments, first the nature of man, drama, tragedy, comedy, and then her own sense of drama, tragedy, and comedy. Each one builds upon the one before it but always comes back to that one center, sympathetic curiosity. "This propensity," Baillie writes, "is universal" (12). And, once again appealing to her ultimate source, Baillie continues, "God Almighty has implanted it within us, as well as all our other propensities and passions, for wise and good purposes" (12). If the reader cannot accept her basic premise that all people share the impulse of sympathetic curiosity, then there is no discussion. The rest of her argument is moot.

This concept of sympathetic curiosity, Baillie argues, becomes obvious when considering the attention we pay to the dress and manners of men under ordinary circumstances and our eagerness to know about the struggles and sufferings of those under extreme hardship. There are very few who are not eager to watch a criminal's behavior or his execution to "read some expression connected with his dreadful situation" or, instead of that, "converse with a person who has beheld it" (6). Baillie identifies a universal desire to witness a person in every situation, to see him when all the disguises he assumes to protect his public image are gone, and to see him "putting forth his strength against the current of adversity ... or struggling with those feelings of nature, which ... burst through the artificial barriers of pride" (7). Echoing Adam Smith, Baillie claims we are naturally drawn through another person's outward expression of emotion to a kind of second hand experience of both bodily torment and mental anguish. We want to know the experience of fear, so we dress as ghosts and see the fear in others. Through this "curiosity," morbid as it may seem in some instances, we come to a shared understanding or "sympathy" of a common humanity. From this we learn the "noble view" of human nature rather than the "mean" (13).

Wordsworth discusses a type of sympathy in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. The poet wishes "to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes" (438), and when he writes that the poet lets himself "slip into an entire delusion" and "identify his own feelings with" others, he shares something of Baillie's notion of sympathy but attaches it in this full state to only the poet. In the "Preface" Wordsworth indicates the primacy of the feeling within the poems; he states that "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action

and situation to the feeling" (435). Baillie, in the *Discourse*, defines a notion of the passions as rising in importance above the situations or events in a play. Following her first universal of sympathetic curiosity is this second universal: that everyone experiences the same passions of anger, despair, love or revenge; that the passions are the "language of the soul"; and that no one could fail to be interested in one under the domination of a passion. She argues that "every eye," "every voice" is interested in the "language of the agitated soul" (10). "There is no employment which the human mind" will so avidly pursue as "tracing the varieties and progress of a perturbed soul" (11).

At this early point in the *Discourse*, we become aware of a most critical part of Joanna Baillie's dramatic theory: the full blown passion, rather than the character, is the controlling force in the man and in the play. Hence, psychological drama. And it is this passion, rather than the character, which Baillie holds "up to our examination" (65). So, in the drama, the audience is fascinated by the passion, by the control it finally holds over the character, and by the torment he feels, but the audience does not condemn the man. This concept, "condemn the sin but not the sinner," is consistent with widespread Christian doctrine. Thus Baillie would have the audience experience the growing consuming passion of hatred or revenge and learn through its sympathetic curiosity the torment of a soul. The drama has an instructive, moral effect.

As a brief aside to this direct discussion of Baillie's argument in order to understand its originality and novelty, it is important to consider how thoroughly assumed the universality or commonality of the passions was in the eighteenth century in certain areas, but how little it was incorporated into any literary theory. Brewster Rogerson's position on the passions and the arts of the eighteenth century is that actors,

musicians, sculptors, and painters had all conversed about passion theory and had agreed that in any of the arts "a wise student of human nature" could be identified by his ability "to paint the *passions* [my italics] in their general truth" (68). Such a "painting" of the passions involved a highly elaborate scheme for representing them by their outward signs -- the pathetic style (68-70). Just as an example, Henry Siddons' *Practical Gestures of Rhetorical Gesture and Action* illustrates in extensive detail the scheme of actions and gestures, the prescribed rules, which actors used to outwardly convey every imaginable passion. These rules were based on a *universal* "grand essence" in *all* expressions of the passions that existed despite any individual, national, age, or sex based variations (8). Siddons concludes that "we have here a general and essential trait -- a tendency to approach and to unite to each other" (10). To be truly accomplished, the actor needed to study the passions on abroad and on a particular base (11). Literary theorists, however, Rogerson argues, at the time had not written about the passions in this way at all. ⁴So it would seem that Baillie's literary essay about the passions begins to fill this void, thus placing her in a role as innovator.

In light of these two works, I believe Baillie's *Discourse* has three important features: a detailed literary discussion of the passions within drama; a continuation of the discussion of "universals" at an historical moment when they were being challenged; and a movement toward a study of the mind, the psychology of a character, and away from a more rigidly external plot. In *DeMonfort* we see Baillie's theory of the passions put into action, the disturbed soul -- the conflict in values and universals when the world itself questioned these values, and a mind caught in the grips of an escalating hatred. Through sympathetic curiosity, Baillie creates her sense of social order; we both learn the

"proprieties" of life and prepare ourselves for difficult situations. These proprieties give a "standard of excellence," "a sense of right," and "a self respect." For her, in examining others "we know ourselves" and "learn to dwell upon the noble view of human nature rather than the mean" (13). Baillie appears to be creating a drama which, while recognizing the spiritual chaos brought on by the French Revolution and the shifting class structures in England, digs in and holds on to traditional ethics.

Only at the end of the *Introductory Discourse* does Baillie fully describe her new plan for the drama, her "noble design " (71), her attempt to delineate each of the passions "not only with their bold and prominent features, but also with those minute and delicate traits" (59). Each passion will be carefully traced in both a comedy and a tragedy. Her aim is "To conceive the great moral object and outline of a story; to people it with various characters under the influence of various passions; and to strike out circumstances and situations calculated to call them into action" (62). The ultimate aim of drama is moral, and the author "who aims in any degree to improve the mode of its instruction, and point to more useful lessons... is certainly praiseworthy" (58). Wordsworth suggests a similar moral concern in the "Preface" when he refers to his new poetry as "not unimportant in the quality and the multiplicity of its moral relations" (433). That Baillie's plays on the passions were actually playable and good drama is another matter. Hazlitt comments that these plays "are heresies in the dramatic art. She is Unitarian in poetry. With her the passions are, like the French Republic, one and indivisible: they are not so in Nature" (5, 147). Critics almost since the day the plays appeared have questioned the dramatic worthiness and appeal of lopsided characters.

The Role of the Dramatist

David Marshall raises a significant question about the role and responsibilities of the dramatist when attempting to manipulate an audience's emotions and sympathetic attachments. This problem of theatricality comes in – and theatricality is Marshall's primary concern in *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy* -- when the dual aspect of sympathy is considered; that is, how can a writer best express himself to create that interactive sympathetic relationship which does not introduce opportunities for “misinterpretation” or does not place the reader into a position where he denies sympathy and thus becomes non-human or a “monster?” In the opening quotation from Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, it would appear that Smith believes that an exact duplication of experience does not occur in the spectator. It is only an imagining in the spectator's mind of what the sufferer is experiencing, not certain knowledge. And while Smith has an extended discussion about how an individual in daily life decides whether or not to become involved in a relationship of sympathy, he does not seem to anticipate the possibilities of or complexities attendant with misreading some one's intentions or feelings or with misplaced sympathies. Baillie, too, is not troubled by misinterpretation of her works, in part because of the accompanying discourse to explain her intent and in part because of her assertion that the dramatist -- the “greater mind” -- is capable of truly understanding the passions which are common to men and of creating theater which conveys the “truth” of shared experience.

Joanna Baillie's definition of the dramatist is based on her own strong moral and didactic thrust. Baillie believes that few people can actually examine the events that occur and the seemingly minute details of human behavior and combine them in meaningful

ways to "learn" from them. Only the greater mind can do this; the great mind, the student of human nature, can make connections between what seem insignificant or unconnected expressions of passions. Hence, the role of the philosopher, historian, poet, or dramatist. To some, men's actions seem capricious, but to the mind with greater sympathy, men's actions are natural and accountable. The great mind can foresee what would become of certain personality types in certain situations and has a god's-eye view of the world. This God's-eye view is represented in the theater, and this god is the dramatist (13-15). Here, Baillie, very subtly, has defined both the true dramatist and the nature of the theater. For her, the dramatist's function is to present an enlarged view of man through the "heightened vision" of the playwright.

Such a "heightened vision," though, relies on specific and minute details to convey meaning to the viewer/reader. Baillie believes that the poet, historian, philosopher, or dramatist needs to include in his writings more than abstract principles or accounts of battles or poetic devices. Predating Wordsworth's statement in 1800 that his principle subject for poems was "incidents and situations from common life" (434), Baillie was in 1798 writing that the dramatist, poet, or philosopher needs to include those personal details and situations of the lives of men, those "lesser circumstances," which give the reader a greater sense of the individual (17). Vivid, concrete details will make a more lasting impact on the reader (17). For Wordsworth these situations from common life are valuable for tracing "the primary laws of our nature" (434). For Baillie the impact comes not only in more easily remembering particulars, but also in connecting the subjects' experiences with our own and seeing a common humanity through sympathy. Baillie thus justifies her inclusion of minute shifts in attitude and the detailed progress of

hate in *DeMonfort*. Through the vividness of the passion in DeMonfort and Jane's constancy to her brother, through memorable specifics, the reader can better comprehend the purpose of her dramas and better understand and identify with the human suffering.

A substantial portion of Hazlitt's comments on the drama reflects this same concern that Baillie has for specific details of character and situation. While Baillie makes no explicit reference to contemporary politics, Hazlitt's *Dramatic Criticism* of 1820 finds fault with current drama because "our attention has been turned to ... the health of Europe, the rise of stocks, the loss of battles, the fall of kingdoms, and the death of kings." The attention of the nation and the dramatist has moved away from "individual caprices, or headstrong passions, which are the nerve and sinews of Comedy and Tragedy." Hazlitt continues by stating that by becoming public, political creatures, we are, and now quoting Burke, "embowelled ...and stuffed with paltry blurred sheets of paper about the rights of man." What is lost for Hazlitt is "force and depth," "particular foibles," and "any single suffering" (18: 304). Because dramatic poetry is, for Hazlitt, "individual and concrete, ... the closest imitation of nature" possessing a "body of truth," it must present individual characters acting in difficult and sometimes extreme circumstances. These characters' passions are "intense" and the circumstances "vivid" (18: 305). Baillie's concern for one particular passion per play, however, probably prevents her from creating the "collision" of as many "hostile interest[s]" as Hazlitt would find necessary for successful drama.

In addition to creating vivid and concrete details of character, Baillie does make one further requirement of the dramatist in the *Discourse*.⁵ Because, ultimately, it is the details of truth in human nature which the reader truly seeks, it is the responsibility of the

writer to select appropriate language and to subordinate literary devices, simile, metaphor, and allegory to the "plain order of things in this world" (21). Baillie, anticipating Wordsworth's emphasis upon the real language of men, insists that men and women in drama should speak and act as men and women actually speak and act, particularly those of the middle and lower classes. In this way, the dramatist is able more accurately to present those aspects of human nature that are true (20-21). In maintaining this position, Baillie makes a two pronged attack: she attacks the Gothic romance and the sentimental novel because they tend to exclude what is most true to human nature and include what is untrue, the grandiose, the sentimental, and artificial.⁶ She insists that the "higher sentimental novels" which try "to interest us in the delicacies, embarrassments, and artificial distresses of the more refined part of society ...have never been able to cope in the public opinion" (20). In addition, the "pleasure ground of more refined society" does not represent what is true to nature and therefore is not appropriate for poetry or drama (19-21). Skill in the delineation of nature, representation of both virtues and vices in a character, and language appropriate to what is natural to men are what draw the reader's attention and produce delight. Heroes, even Christ the epitome of tragic heroes in his expression of fear in "Father, let this cup pass from me," are ones with whom we can identify. From those not perfectly free from fault we "receive the instruction of example" (33).⁷ As a result, Baillie does not model her dramas after others, but creates her own new form, a more uniquely British drama which ultimately depends on her principles of sympathetic curiosity.⁸

Baillie creates several marvelous images that define her truly British theater. In the images themselves, she combines her forward looking attempt at a new drama with

her tradition-bound concern for fidelity to nature; she is that second ranked writer revealing an historically pivotal. In the most wonderful of the images, British theater is equated with British soil. Baillie rejects the theater that is a "beautiful pleasure ground" with "delicate and unknown plants" which enchant us for a while. In its place should rise a new theater which is "the rough forest of our native land." In contrast to the artificial or foreign is the real the "oak, the elm, the hazle [sic], and the bramble ... and amidst the endless varieties of its paths we can wander forever" where we are "upon the watch for everything that speaks of ourselves" (20). In a second image, she considers the content of the plays; plays which are full of 'superheroes,' impetuous and proud, may be produced for and admired by the 'refined classes,' "but the tears of the simple ... have been wanting" (33). In a third image, Baillie considers the source of our sympathy; she argues that "a king driven from his throne, will not move our sympathy so strongly, as a private man torn from the bosom of his family" (35).⁹

At the same time, Baillie criticizes drama and presents her new concept of drama, she continues to spiral around and refer back to her core -- the importance of sympathetic curiosity, human nature, and the passions -- back to her traditional base. Baillie, with her universals at hand, considers how drama makes use of the study of man. Because to the dramatist human nature "is the centre and strength of the battle," a play may have failings of every other kind and still be valuable; "no richness of invention, harmony of language, nor grandeur of sentiment will supply the place of faithfully delineated nature" (23-24). The appeal of the drama is universal and durable (27).

Tragedy, for Baillie, is the "first born" of the theater. Her description of it suggests the elements of Greek tragedy, but she adds to it a new kind of hero who

experiences some great, ruling passion, a "visitation of nature," and becomes subject to it. What Baillie believes distinguishes her tragedy is the unveiling of "the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them" (30-31). The passions that become more and more in control of the man "give their fullest vent in the lonely desert, or in the darkness of midnight" via soliloquy (31-38). Ultimately, tragedy is for her the study of the growth of a passion, not a study of the man. Hers is a psychological drama in which she uncovers one passion and externalizes it. In some ways she anticipates Poets madmen, because her protagonists respond to an external reality only in light of their violently disordered mental states revealed through soliloquies. Reading *DeMonfort*, we are unsure when to believe what he says is true or colored by his growing, consuming hatred. At the beginning of the play, we can wonder whether we see him in almost complete possession of himself or already so possessed by hatred that we cannot trust that what he says of Rezenvelt is true. Certainly, by the time Rezenvelt is murdered, the nature and extent of DeMonfort's imbalance is quite clear. While Baillie says we observe human nature best through what the characters say, she complicates our job of understanding what is true about the characters of DeMonfort and Rezenvelt. This is new psychological drama in which Baillie adds to the growth of a passion and deterioration of a soul, the struggle of a mind already unstable and hard to trust.

Because Baillie categorically states that she deals with one passion at a time, in a dominant character while the lesser characters are subordinate, we could consider her plays as Medieval morality plays or Renaissance plays of the humours in which a "type"

is held up as an example to the audience. All that Baillie presents in the *Introductory Discourse* about the nature of man and drama, the purpose of the dramatist, and sympathetic curiosity would support that consideration of the protagonist as a "type." In addition, her whole plan would present the series of types from which the audience could best learn; all the passions, envy, hatred, anger, jealousy, which destroy a social fabric would be held before the British audience. A thorough study of Baillie's letters might suggest how much her topic of the passions is related to French Revolution and Industrial Revolution upheavals; the *Introductory Discourse* itself does not make explicit reference to current historical events and therefore does not give the reader firm clues.

In the *Discourse*, the passions most suited for Baillie's dramas are those which she says are "great masters of the soul" (39) such as ambition, love, and hatred. The hero is not discussed in terms of his ability to overcome the passion; the passion consumes and takes control; it is the "tyrannical master" (42) if it is allowed to grow beyond its early initial stages. Free will is not any part of Baillie's vocabulary once the passion becomes "full blown." DeMonfort may have been able to control his hatred in the early part of the play or during the time before it begins, but once the hatred for Rezenvelt becomes extreme he is unable to listen to reason or change his eventual outcome. Baillie is not concerned with DeMonfort's freedom to choose or his lack of it; Baillie wants to show us a situation few would really experience to present an "enlarged view" of human nature. The purpose for all of the hero's suffering? To influence our conduct so that we, the audience, may trace the passion back to its origins, see the signs of its growth, and determine when in the early stages the passion could best be overcome (42).¹⁰

Drama for Baillie has the same objects of truth and pleasure as poetry has for Wordsworth: "truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative ... carried alive into the heart by passion" ("Preface," 438). The ultimate effect of poetry and truth is "immediate pleasure ... which is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe" ("Preface," 438-439). However, Baillie is more strongly didactic. Her thrust is one of the moral writer who is both "interesting and instructive," who forcibly "strikes the imagination," and thus who makes a "permanent impression" (15). The study of human nature is the object of poetry, "the centre and strength of the battle" (23). The effect of this study of human nature, because it rises from our "sympathetic interest," is the "highest pleasure" (23). However, Baillie argues, for the dramatist there is an additional imperative that makes the drama a closer representation of truth. The poet, historian, novelist, and philosopher, despite their "richness of invention, harmony of language," and "grandeur of sentiment," cannot "supply the place of faithfully delineated nature" (23-24). Because of the primacy of speech - the characters in the drama "speak directly for themselves" - we more immediately respond to them and "expect to find them creatures like ourselves" (24-25). Or, put in the terms of the universals Baillie relies on, the highest pleasure comes from the sympathetic interest we take in the anguish of the soul of a simple stranger who, through our observation of him, reveals ourselves to us (19- 25). Baillie's emphasis on the speech of a character is borne out elsewhere in the *Discourse* when she discusses the importance of the soliloquy, especially that one "in the dark of night" in which the protagonist can freely reveal all of his feelings (60-61). Ultimately, through identifying with characters like ourselves, the audience receives "instruction by example" (33) in the theater, the "school where much good a/ or evil can be learned" (58).

Hence, the didactic, moral drama. Baillie states and restates her understanding of the function of the drama throughout the *Discourse*; it cannot be avoided, missed, or overlooked. Among the closing remarks is an appeal to the reader in which Baillie reveals her own sense of the traditional concern joined to the new, "experimental" form of her drama. Unsure of her own abilities and the merit of her work but aware of the importance of the endeavor, Baillie is "emboldened" by those "good and enlightened" people who encourage experimental work which results in "pleasure and instruction" (61). The theory of the *Introductory Discourse* anticipates the constant desire of the Romantic literary circles to create a new form, as it also looks back to the traditional didactic, moral concerns of the eighteenth century.

DeMonfort

DeMonfort is an explicit working out of Baillie's dramatic theories. In some ways this approach begs the question about which should come first, the chicken or the egg, the play or the theory. However, since she explicitly states her plan, states her principles for drama, and requests the reader to approach the play with them in mind in the *Discourse*, I would like to consider, and believe it important to consider, elements of the play with Baillie's mindset in place. Such an approach makes a contribution to Baillie and Romantic drama study in the same way that the theory seen within some historical setting can. We can see a secondary piece of literature, perhaps unsuccessful as a performed play, reveal a pivotal moment in history. In *DeMonfort* it is possible to see a world in crisis, a world of shifting values, the effect of an excessive passion on the protagonist and his world, the role of the sympathy-filled poet-dramatist, and the ultimate appeal to a Christian resolution. Within the play, there are types, not fully developed characters but

ones representing world visions, or a passion, or an idea, which reveal Baillie's moral and didactic aims.

The whole of *DeMonfort* is based on contrast: Rezenvelt and DeMonfort are rivals representing opposing world views; DeMonfort and Jane are brother and sister representing hate and love, lack of sympathy and sympathy; Jane and Rezenvelt each respond to DeMonfort: one with sympathy, the other with scorn; Jane and Lady Freberg have opposing manners, appearance, and concerns for social position; the servants Manuel and Jerome shift from absolute devotion to defiance. Even the settings themselves present contrasts: gay frivolous parties contrast with DeMonfort in isolation or haunted woods and abbey dungeons; Rezenvelt's pleasure-filled view of the woods at night and the hootings of the owls contrast with DeMonfort's horror filled vision of the same night and shrieks of the owls; or the opening dignified, "large old fashioned Chamber" (7) in the first scene contrasts with the opening "a very splendid Apartment ... fancifully decorated" (24) in the second scene. Both of these opening settings can be contrasted with the closing location in the long, narrow, dark Abbey gallery with cells on each side (87). While the opening scenes are light filled, the closing scene is dark; while the opening, acts are social encounters and maintain some semblance of order and propriety, the closing two acts include a violent disruption of the social order and an attempt to reassert some kind of social, political and moral order. Even in DeMonfort himself, we witness violent contrasts in "actions and passions," behavior and emotions; he intends to be civil, yet he lashes out at servants and Rezenvelt. He says he "cannot" act and has no will; yet, once he hears the rumor of Jane's engagement, he acts and wills himself to kill Rezenvelt. Before he hears the rumor, he fluctuates between hate for or

feigned aloofness toward Rezenvelt; afterwards he is driven by a cold, hardened, absolute intent to kill. All of these contrasts and juxtaposed extremes represent Baillie's world in crisis.

However, all of these contrasts are resolved in the one constant throughout the entire play --Jane DeMonfort. She is a consistent reconciler, one trying to bring together the oppositions. Jane tries to reason DeMonfort out of his hate, reminding him that he should control it before it becomes all consuming. She tries to bring Rezenvelt and DeMonfort together to reason amicably. In the conclusion of the play it is she who, out of the massive chaos, restores both spiritual and social order. She brings DeMonfort to an awareness of God's forgiveness and mercy; she provides a household for the displaced servants Manuel and Jerome; she instructs the political order during its arrest of DeMonfort and the uneasy churchmen in the appropriate disposition of the body. Finally, she comforts Freberg on the loss of his friend and admonishes him not to grieve; she and he are alike in misery. "The voice of praise was wont to name us both"; both had "no greater pride" than in DeMonfort and Rezenvelt (93). In Jane, Baillie creates a twofold vision. Jane is Baillie's demonstration of sympathetic curiosity, and she is also her definition of the poet-dramatist through whom the less perceptive, and the audience, come to see an order, the essentials of human nature, and a resolution of action and passion in a moral, ethical awareness of God's mercy.

Just as the concept of sympathetic curiosity is the core of the *Introductory Discourse*, so it is for *DeMonfort*. The audience watches DeMonfort's tremendous hatred and torment on the stage; Jane watches his torment during the events of the play, never condemning but always gently reasoning with him. In fact, it is only through her presence

on stage and her interactions with DeMonfort that he displays any rational moments that elicit our "sympathy" for him. In Act I, scenes i and ii, DeMonfort fluctuates between icy aloofness and unexplained peevishness when dealing with his servants and the partying Freberg. Freberg, in the beginning of Act II, understates DeMonfort's state of mind when he refers to him as "joyless" and "suspicious" (26). Jane, the only character to see DeMonfort as "noble," chastises Freberg; aware of DeMonfort as "a man in grief, / Wearing, at times a strange, and scowling eye" (26), she admonishes Freberg for being "less generous than beseems a friend" (26). Fearing her presence might detract from DeMonfort's enjoyment of the party, Jane first asks to be excused from attending so that "Here he will find all that can woo the heart / To joy, and sweet forgetfulness of pain" (27). She explains herself further to Lady Freberg; "I am his sister; Calm and unwearied is my love for him" (27). In these comments and in those like them throughout the play, Jane's generous concern and sympathy for her torment ridden brother become apparent.

The continuation of this scene, though, provides another perspective on Baillie's identification of Jane as the poet dramatist: by watching the actions and passions in others, she has an enlarged understanding through which the lesser minds, the non-poets, can recognize a soul in torment and a shared humanity. Jane, convinced she might remain at the party, does so only in disguise, ostensibly so that her brother won't see her. However, more importantly she does so that she could in her sympathetic pain "watch" and "speak with" him. Ironically, she explains her disguise to DeMonfort who does not recognize her: "Within the friendly cover of its shade / I only wish unknown, again to see / One who, alas! is heedless of my pain" (31). Jane has "Weep'd for," cheer'd" for, and "shar'd" her brother's "weal and woe" (32). In response to Jane's display of generous love,

DeMonfort, for the first time in the play, displays that generous side of himself. He sets aside his rudeness and for twenty-two lines reveals a strong affection for his sister. "She, of whom I speak, / Is the dear sister of my earliest love; / In noble virtuous worth, to none a second" (32). Finally, in DeMonfort's attempt to unveil the disguised woman, his own deep love and need for Jane are exposed; almost pleading, he says, "I'll fall, and worship thee! Pray! pray undo!" (32). In these lines, Baillie consummates what she had theoretically worked out in the *Discourse*: first, she places sympathy above everything else as an ennobling aspect of human nature, and second, she places the poet in a superior, almost holy, position.

This particular scene also demonstrates two other important theoretical elements in the *Discourse* -- the use of particular, common situations of real men and women, and the revelation of true feelings through the protagonist's extended speech. Baillie relies on the siblings' shared childhood memories and affection to involve the audience's concern for Jane and her brother. In addition, she inserts more genuinely tender feeling in these twenty two lines than DeMonfort displays anywhere else in the play.

Jane is recognized by all, except the jealous and petty Lady Freberg, to be noble in bearing and worth. Freberg, rousing all his wife's jealousy, says of Jane, "Oh! what a soul she bears! see / how she steps! / Naught but the native dignity of worth / Ere taught the moving form such noble grace" (28). And again, when Freberg defends his omission of the title "lady" from Jane's name, he says, " princess, empress, queen, / Could not denote a creature so exalted / As this plain native appellation doth, / The noble Jane DeMonfort" (13). Similar remarks are made by Rezenvelt and the servants reflecting their own admiration for Jane. In this common praise for Jane, the very explicit removal of

Lady, a class title, and the very selection of the common native English name Jane, Baillie inserts more of her dramatic theory. We are reminded of the discourse's emphasis on replacing the foreign, artificial and fanciful with the real simplicity, the oak and bramble of native England. We can also see in removing the upper class title Baillie's thrust toward a broad middle class audience, or Wordsworth's notion of the elementary feelings of natural man.

DeMonfort's words to Jane in Act V.ii reinforce both of these points. As he is about to be arrested he says to her, "Stand thou erect in native dignity; / And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee" (86). Momentarily he is endowed with the sense of honest, native pride, an almost Byronic defiance. In making this statement, he also advances Baillie's dramatic theory even farther; he is aware of the supreme worth of the individual. DeMonfort continues his bend-to-none statement with "though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart / It gives a feller gripe than many irons" (86). However, unlike Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Byron's *Manfred*, DeMonfort recognizes he is not completely cut free from all restraints and turns away from assuming an almighty and completely autonomous position. While he does not bend because of the presence of law or the institutional church, he does respond to a moral Christian presence. After telling Jane not to bend the knee to an earthly power, DeMonfort is described in the stage directions as stretching out his hands and looking at them, an implicit reference to the crucified Christ. He then looks at Jane and crosses his hands over his breast, at once an external sign of his response in sympathy with her and his own acceptance of the outcome of his actions within a moral sphere.

Baillie had established this moral sphere at the beginning of Act v. ii, and in it she brings to culmination the appeal to those universal principles that are founded in God. At the beginning, DeMonfort "appears agitated, like one whose Mind is harrowed with the severest Thoughts" (80). Wishing that he had never been born or had been born an idiot, he is the alienated man. Hatred, his overwhelming passion, "that filmy darkness" that "had hung" on his eyes, "clos'd" him "out from the fair face of nature" (80). Not only is he alienated from nature, he is also alienated from society and spiritual goodness. Once again in a soliloquy revealing his most private and honest thoughts, he says, "I now am nothing. / I am a man of holy claims bereft; out from the pale of social kindred cast; / Nameless and horrible" (81). Only with Jane's intervention, the intervention of sympathy (and on another level the figure of the redeeming British dramatist), does DeMonfort become something again. Through Jane's signs of devotion, DeMonfort "feel[s] again/ The kindness of affection." Although his "mind has in a dreadful storm been tossed;/ Horrid and dark," DeMonfort can now weep again and feel "I am human still" (82). This whole section is reminiscent of the redemption scene in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" when the mariner blesses those living things and weeps.

Sympathy will bring DeMonfort part way to his renewed dignity; it rejoins the social connection which had been severed. But for Baillie, who so frequently relies on an appeal to God for ultimate justification in the *Discourse*, this is not enough. DeMonfort continues, "Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond/ Where things unutterable await the soul, / ... We shall be sever'd far" (83). Jane reassures him, "The God who made thee is a God of mercy; / ... E'en the sin of blood may be forgiv'n, / When humble penitence hath once aton'd" (84). They then pray. The scene concludes with DeMonfort's

reborn dignity, Christ-like gesture, and struggle with despair. Human sympathy is supplanted by God's.

Many will find this scene hard to accept or DeMonfort's final nobility too unbelievable. The scene read with Baillie's moral Christian perspective is less unacceptable; read with Baillie's *Discourse* and historical positioning in mind, it is quite persuasive. Baillie makes three statements in the *Discourse* that are particularly relevant at this point in the discussion of *DeMonfort*. About hatred, the passion in this play, Baillie explains that it is of slow growth and therefore cannot be contained *in toto* in a play (64). Only the final stage of hatred can be demonstrated. While the play might be seen as narrowly focused on one passion with insufficient character development, with the *Discourse* in hand the play establishes the conscious mindset of a particular historical moment. Those critics who see DeMonfort as too ignoble and hateful a man himself and unable to rise above his overwhelming passion, again, might find value in the play if they are willing to accept Baillie's further statements about the nature of hatred. It is a "rooted and settled aversion, which from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable" (64). With that understanding in mind, the critic has a greater latitude for reading and evaluating what the play does do rather than does not do. This play's dependence upon a written literary theory is probably what most marks it as a second ranked or developmental piece of literature. However, *DeMonfort* as demonstration of a theory at work does provide an historical reader greater insight into the author's mind and the implications of that theory.

A third statement Baillie makes in the *Discourse* is crucial to her general theory of the passions and her Christian resolution. She writes, "it is the passion and not -- the man which is held up to our execration; and ... this and every other bad passion does more strongly evince its pernicious and dangerous nature, when we see it thus counteracting and destroying the good gifts of heaven" (65). This position, condemn the sin not the sinner, is in line with traditional Christian thought and is revealed in *DeMonfort* in Jane's statements on mercy. It also so thoroughly grounds the play in a Christian ethic of sin and redemption that the play and the theory can be seen in a larger philosophical and social context as an assault on Rousseau-like principles of man.

One portion of the eighteenth and nineteenth century argument about whether or not human nature is fundamentally good is really at issue in the play -- that is, the source and nature of evil. For Baillie, passion rises up from within *DeMonfort*; the evil starts within him and eventually consumes him. For Rousseau, who establishes his principles of education and human nature in *Emile*, the evil, "vice and error, alien to man's constitution, are introduced to it from outside" (Grimsley 221). Early in Book I, Rousseau sets up a system of education in the country, separate from other people and institutions. The education of a child would proceed free from all external influences because, Rousseau claims, "In the present state of things a man abandoned to himself in the midst of other men from birth would be the most disfigured of all. Prejudices, authority, necessity, example, all the social institutions in which we find ourselves submerged would stifle nature in him and put nothing in its place" (37). In essence, "natural man is entirely for himself" (39). Allan Bloom states in his introduction to *Emile* that the morality of the natural man replaces the Christian morality, so that when Rousseau makes

his claim that "man is by nature good, he means that man, concerned only with his own well being, does not naturally have to compete with other men, nor does he care for their opinions" (14). What Rousseau and, in turn, Bloom present is the very antithesis of Baillie's natural, universal impulse of sympathetic curiosity which springs from God and her rationale for social order.

These three differences, the source of evil in the world, the natural impulse of concern for the other, and the social order through mutual concern, are what I believe create the essential underlying conflict between Rezenvelt and DeMonfort, and ultimately the conflict in world visions. This conflict, because it questions such fundamental principles, creates the world in crisis in *DeMonfort* and reflects the growing tensions within the English literary community. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley all created dramas with worlds in crisis similar to Baillie's. In the *Borderers*, *Osario*, *Cain* and *The Cenci*, they question the sources of evil, the appropriate responses to that evil, the nature of man within a society, and the possibility of a true and shared sympathy. These are dramas revealing real crises in spirit which I believe their authors found more difficult to resolve than Joanna Baillie. Perhaps this provides some explanation for their great admiration of Baillie; they saw in her not a complexity and tormented questioning, but an ability to philosophically resolve the crisis.

We can see several signs of Rezenvelt's Rousseau-like characteristics in *DeMonfort*. In the party scene, Act II.i, signs of Rezenvelt's lack of concern for the social order and lack of sympathy are obvious. He surveys the women at the party, their charms and artful devices, and the reader would suspect him of providing merely a playful, but certainly chauvinistic, description until Freberg's comments, "Ha! ha! ha! ha! / How

pleasantly he gives his wit the rein, / Yet guides his wild career!" (30), reveal Rezenvelt's true tone. In Act I.ii, as in the other scenes when Rezenvelt and DeMonfort are together, the reader is aware that Rezenvelt both torments his adversary and delights in his discomfort. Baillie loads Rezenvelt's words with irony when he says, "I humbly crave your pardon, gentle marquis. / It grieves me that I cannot stay with you, / and make my visit of a friendly length. / Another time I shall be less unkind" (23). Rousseau like, he has no sympathy as Jane does for DeMonfort's uneasiness, nor does he wish to do anything but further provoke it. This is demonstrated again Rezenvelt's "natural" wit and smile taunt DeMonfort in Act II.i, Act II.ii, and Act II.iii. Each time Rezenvelt feels no compunction about supplying the torment or intention of providing DeMonfort with any possible resolution. He obviously has no sense of the extent of DeMonfort's hatred when he says, "Let us be friends" (49) after the duel or when he casts aside Freberg's warnings to be cautious (55). He is even not attuned to the disorder in the universe when the owl's screams are to him the "night bird's" greeting and the murky darkness is but a "shapeless band of blacker hue" (67-68).

All of this lack of sympathy in Rezenvelt resembles that freedom from the passions which keep Emile self sufficient (Bloom 15). Compassion for Rousseau is not like Baillie's sympathy, a concern for the other which eventually reveals self; it is a momentary awareness of another's pain, then the realization that it is someone else who suffers. "This is a source of satisfaction," a kind of self flattery (Bloom 18). What follows is the opportunity to show a superiority to the sufferer and a pleasure in "the spiritual freedom to experience compassion" (Bloom 18). When Rezenvelt defeats DeMonfort and offers to return his sword, he does it not out of true generosity, but out of a "self

satisfaction"; he has once again bested DeMonfort. Returning the sword to DeMonfort will allow him to best his opponent yet another time.

While some of this compassion sounds like Baillie, fundamentally it is not. Rousseau's compassion involves an element of self gratification where personal interest outweighs interest in the circumstances and experience of the other. The emphasis is on self independence and superiority rather than the universal bonds of a shared humanity. DeMonfort, while tormented by his hatred for the sneering, superficial Rezenvelt, is even more tormented by the self-centered philosophical position he represents. When DeMonfort talks with Jane, he is aware that their basic world views are the same; they can be honest and compassionate with each other. However, when he is in Freberg's house or with Rezenvelt, he stands aside and tries not to become involved. There is an alien world of self interested fashion in which there is no awareness of a personal evil. DeMonfort is a man out of his element: in a foreign setting, not England; in a world of decoration and superficiality where Rezenvelt, the wit, reigns and the ladies bedeck themselves with artifice, not a world of genuine feeling. There is no resolving the two worlds except through sympathy and mercy or, DeMonfort believes, through death.

An 1836 *Edinburgh Review* article, "Miss Baillie's Dramas," commends Baillie's "superior unity of design," her ability to carefully subordinate "the parts to the whole," and her "steady and visible movement of everything toward the proposed end" in her plays (75). To the modern reader with the *Introductory Discourse* in hand, Baillie's unity of design and proposed end in *DeMonfort* should be relatively clear. Through sympathy the characters in the play, the playwright, and the audience all come to an awareness of a shared suffering and compassion. In addition, the *Edinburgh Review* commendation is

applicable to the *Discourse* itself. There, each argument is carefully reasoned and dependent upon the one before it, building a rationale for replacing the imported and artificial dramas on the British stage with ones expressing a simplicity in nature. Hazlitt, the leading spokesperson for British drama in the early nineteenth century, voices the same concerns in "Our National Theatre" that Baillie expressed thirty years before in the *Introductory Discourse*. He, too, hopes for this "more genuine old English honesty and feeling" on the stage and in the audiences (20, 288). Fretful that the stage which is "part of the vital existence of this civilised country" has come to the brink of ruin, Hazlitt yearns for the masterpieces that are "but the recollections of ourselves, our liveliest pleasures" (20; 288). His sense of the effects of the drama are the same as Baillie's; he concludes this essay: "Whoever sees a play ought to be better and more sociable for it; for he has something to talk about, some ideas and feelings in common with his neighbors. Even the players ...give us a livelier interest in humanity, of which they are the representatives" (20; 288).

Baillie's *Introductory Discourse* and *DeMonfort* synthesize elements of eighteenth century dramatic theory, traditional Christian ethics, and her own new vision of an appropriate British drama to address the shifting perspectives of a post revolutionary world. These documents position her as a predecessor and contributor to Wordsworth's poetic theory and as a spokesperson for an identifiable national theater before Hazlitt, but more importantly they identify her as a pivotal playwright and theoritian through whom all the other Romantic dramas can be more clearly read. In terms of the possibility for and efficaciousness of sympathy that can be shared without misunderstanding, Baillie leaves no room for doubt.

Conclusion

Adam Smith refers to sympathy as “the *problem* [my italics] of sympathy” and Marshall agrees that there is a wide range of problematic ethical and aesthetic issues in theatrical sympathy (Marshall 4). In examining the relationships between characters with in literature, the mirroring or interactive nature of sympathy raises similar difficulty in such cases as these: when the appeal for another’s sympathy is used as a tactic for deception or seduction, such as Miss M.’s appeals to her fiancé in Fanny Burney’s *A Simple Story*; or when the demonstration of sympathy is so complete that it leads to the sympathizer’s loss of self identity, as in T. E. Shaw’s autobiographical identification of Lawrence with the Arabs in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; when the sympathetic response falls short and is merely curiosity about the sufferer’s circumstances and has no moral consequences, as in Yorick in *A Sentimental Journey*; or, when the viewer/reader is asked to demonstrate his concern for and imagine himself in the place of someone violent or evil, a victim of passion, such as Goethe’s Wether. Such is the case with *DeMonfort* -- the sympathizers, Jane and the reader, are asked to identify with a violent murderer. Marshall traces this same kind of association -- sympathy with the perpetrator of a crime -- through Mary Shelley, Diderot, and Marivaux finding this interactive sympathy to be dangerous, or at least problematic, in “convert[ing] fellow feeling into aesthetic pleasure” (Marshall 179).

Until the concluding act of the play, the rehabilitative aspect of Jane’s sympathetic connection with her brother would appear to have failed utterly. DeMonfort completely isolates himself from Jane and becomes unresponsive to her appeals to turn

away from vengeance, eventually carrying out the murder with unrestrained and grotesque violence. In doing this DeMonfort becomes like Rousseau's "first man" or Frankenstein's monster, one who existed prior to the development of society; in fact, the whole play up until the final moments reflects his gradual reversion to the state of chaos and primal men who:

never having seen anything but what was around them, did not even know that [their barbarity]; they did not know themselves. They had the idea of a father, a son, a brother, but not that of a man. Their hut contained all their fellow beings; a stranger, a beast, a monster, were for them the same thing . . . the whole universe was nothing to them.

(Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* 445-447; Marshall, *Surprising on Frankenstein* 202-203.)

DeMonfort fails to see any similarity or shared humanity between Rezenfelt and himself; he sees only a beast, an intolerable presence before him, with the result that he too becomes a beast. Only after becoming that beast himself does he begin to awaken to the horror of his unremitting passion.

DeMonfort's progression beyond the point of human and into beast as well as Baillie's whole preface on sympathetic curiosity can present theatrical and aesthetic problems similar to the one Marshall sees in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (78, 228-227). It certainly accounts for some of the play's negative reviews. The reader/viewer might believe he is asked to either become a perpetrator of a demonic crime in spirit through sympathetic identification, or to inhumanely deny fellow feeling to someone who is so thoroughly under the control of an elemental passion, the focal point of the play, and the

intended object of sympathy. Marshall's summing up of this problematic element for writer and reader/audience in works by Rousseau, Diderot, and Shelley concludes that there is a "deeply ambivalent investment of their authors in acts and spectacles of sympathy: whether works of fiction or aesthetic theory or both, these texts seem compelled to deny, counteract, or warn the reader about the dangerous consequences of the sympathy that they advocate and even seek to elicit" (180). The reader/audience of Baillie's play who has been told through the theory that his bonds with humanity will increase, then, is actually trapped into what might be seen as an ethical and aesthetic noose. However, on the other hand, failure to respond at all to DeMonfort's unfortunate circumstances and view him as a "nonperson" -- as Marshall would say -- is "the ultimate failure of sympathy" (209-213).

Whether Baillie had in mind these kinds of ethical or aesthetic complication for herself or her contemporary readers/viewers of the play is hard to know. Certainly, sympathetic identification can be problematic especially when the crime is so vicious as DeMonfort's. However, based on the texts of the play and the *Discourse*, Baillie sees no problems; she would have the reader/viewer condemn the "passion," the crime, and the sin but not the sinner. Confidently expecting viewers/readers of the play to respond to its hero with sympathy, she argues repeatedly that sympathy is an interactive and innate response based in a common human nature which actually increases the reader's/viewer's potential for virtuous action.

For readers of the *Introductory Discourse* who accept her intentions and for a modern, it is possible that the play allows its reader to slip through the ethical and aesthetic noose by considering the perspective from which she writes -- one employing a

Christian conversion in the final moments of the play that, by implication, redeems DeMonfort from the bestial and transforms him into noble penitent. At the point of death, he responds to Jane in a way that acknowledges her sympathy and creates the interactive link within sympathetic expression. DeMonfort is cast in the form of a cross, responding to his sister's intervention and, in an act of faith, begs forgiveness. In this Christian action, the sympathetic interaction becomes a transcendent experience for sympathizer/reader as well as for the sufferer/responder.

From Baillie's perspective, such an ethical Christian resolution is more than a convenient loophole or quick *deus ex machina*; it is stated clearly in her *Discourse*, springs from her religious and Scots background, and is consistent with her other work. Aloma Noble too argues that Baillie's traditional Christian training is quite clearly demonstrated at this conclusion of *DeMonfort*, a redemption and reconciliation scene appealing to God's mercy (89-90). Such conclusions appear in other plays besides *DeMonfort*; in *Basil*, the God of mercy is "the Power above that calms the storm" and in *The Martyr* Ethelbert recalls Christ as the source of spiritual and physical healing. In fact, in this passage Ethelbert rejects the political, earthbound church of "leagued priests" for that moral source which supersedes it (*Works* 305. 136; Carhart 57-59). For Baillie, then, the function of sympathy extends well beyond a human experience and into the divine. Sympathy perfected becomes God's Mercy, places man back into his proper place, and ultimately restores order to Pope's Chain of Being. In addition, rather than being a "problem," Baillie believes that this close watching and observing process within sympathy, whether in the theater or in life, is also another kind of reciprocating or interactive process, one that "is our most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the

proprieties and decencies of ordinary life and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others," particularly through the drama, we come to know them; however, we also "know ourselves" (12).

Chapter 6: Ann Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition*: In the Absence of All Sympathy
 Ultimate Gloom

A.O. Lovejoy's critical work *The Great Chain Of Being* has provided a sound argument for the study of little known and non-canonical writers even prior to the onset of the late twentieth century explosion of the canon and critical theories. He writes that the rejection of everything which is not a masterpiece may be a "natural state of mind" only "if you don't regard the study of literary history as including within its province the study of the ideas and feelings which other men in past times have been moved by, and of the processes by which what may be called literary and philosophical public opinion is formed" (19). Lovejoy continues by stating that if matters of literary and philosophic opinion are to be of concern, then the "minor writer may be as important as" or "more important than the authors of what are now regarded as the Masterpieces" (19-20). In fact, as Lovejoy and George Herbert Palmer conclude, the minor writer most reflects the concerns and anxieties of his time. "The tendencies of an age appear more distinctly in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius. ...On the sensitive responsive souls, of less creative power, current ideals record themselves with clearness" (20). With this approach in mind, Ann Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition* should be

considered for two reasons: she appropriates traditional sources and recasts them in order to reinvent popular history, and she a world as despairing as that vision in Byron's poem "Darkness," a complete absence of the sympathetic impulse and possibility for social bonding.

Little is known about Bannerman; she had slight formal education, and her entire opus consists of only two volumes. Her second volume, the 1802 *Tales Of Superstition and Chivalry*, deliberately engages with popular literary form and sources and falls within a particular literary tradition, the ballad form that was extremely popular in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. She draws from specific well known and recognized sources, ranging from Elizabethan to contemporary, which reflect their authors' awareness of national identity and patriotic fervor. However, an examination of those sources reveals that she realigns or eliminates details with the effect of transforming the originals' meaning and impact. In addition, she engages in a social, historical moment of crisis, much like Wordsworth's in the mid 1790's, absent of opportunities for sympathy or fellow feeling. Written in the disappointing aftermath of the French Revolution, Bannerman's poems trace an individual's turning inward - a progression from personal and physical isolation to fear, to a complete loss of community, and eventually to loss of ethical sense. Such a negation of social affection is set against the backdrop of individual and national turmoil. Finally, Bannerman's *Tales* reflects a late eighteenth century loss of innocence, a philosophic doubt and anxiety about what forms the basis of knowledge; from the opening Prologue and title page to the closing notes, the volume questions not only the reliability of any sense based knowledge but also its very possibility. Returning to Lovejoy's rationale, then, a study of this volume

of poems presents a clear opportunity to examine the mentality of an age, in this case, early Romanticism's loss of sympathy and faith.

The volume, *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry*, is made up of a Prologue, title page with inscription, several illustrations, ten poems, and four pages of Notes. The poems, as Bannerman explains in the Prologue, are not "of gay delight," but vague and somewhat confusing narratives filled with disappointed lovers, ineffectual clergy, horror stricken knights, and displaced orphans and set against a wild and inhospitable landscape. The final notes include references that connect the ten poems to ancient British ballads and poems and to two popular British works of literature, one fairly recent and one Elizabethan. However, Bannerman clearly implies that she manipulates her sources, her poetic right; as a result, she works toward her self defined position that the past is fearful and blighted.

To begin a study of the poems in *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry*, particularly because they are not well known or studied, it is necessary to place them within their larger political and historic context. They were published at the end of a ten year span when attitudes about the nature of man and the effectiveness, or even possibility, of virtue and sympathy as agents of broad social bonding were shifting radically, when the British watched the French Revolution change from a valiant expression of individual freedom to violent and uncontrolled chaos. An even longer period between 1789 and 1815 represents years of social unrest and political upheaval in Europe. These were "years during which successive shocks and reversals excited men's minds and imaginations" (1). The French Revolution, expansion and exploration, the move to the cities, and beginnings of a new industrialism "engaged the hearts and emotions of whole communities and the deepest

faiths of convinced political parties" (1). However, this engagement with the revolution ended in disillusionment and real questioning about the proper ways to achieve liberty, fraternity, and equality while also maintaining some social cohesiveness. Politician George Dempster reflected the disappointment many British felt once the revolution became violent; he had expected to see "philosophy at last in its proper station on the globe providing by its wisdom and goodness for the happiness of mankind. But alas, ...in the levity and savageness of the French character, in their rigour and folly, my judgment is quite bewildered" (2). The same disillusionment is reflected in the writings of many of the poets and playwrights, but most notably Wordsworth. The war had been so savage and so violent that he abandoned his own extreme revolutionary position, as shown in his letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), for one of political conservatism in all of his poems after 1797, particularly "Intimations Ode" and "Tintern Abbey." Also, following the massive executions, Coleridge was so wounded that he "refused to admit that anything tolerable could possibly come out of France" (5). His poem on the revolution, "France: An Ode" (1798), and Burke's *Reflections* are witnesses to the devastation created by relentless and ungovernable upheaval.

This growing uneasiness with foreign revolution so exacerbated home movements for reform that the British government became oppressive, restricting the people's right to freely criticize government (4). Playwrights and poets could not freely express anti-government sentiments; they had to obscure their criticisms by situating their works in locations other than Britain or periods other than the present. Bannerman herself engages contemporary political and social attitudes in her poems but deliberately cloaks them. Like many other writers, she does not use contemporary events or specific locations, but

she also obscures her poems in another way. First, she consciously borrows landscape, lines, names, and climatic situations from popularly received literary works, but then she alters the situation in which they appear or inverts their meaning or drops key elements from the original so that their impact is very different from that in the original source. These borrowings are oblique or suggestive; for example, she uses a situation from her source as a climactic or propelling moment in her own very differently situated poem, "Basil." Or she takes a national legend and reconstructs its incidents so as to cast doubt on the legend itself in "The Prophecy of Merlin." Her method of engagement she claims as her poetic right in the concluding notes to the volume. Bannerman writes, specifically of the Arthurian legend, but generally of the text: It will not

perhaps be very consonant to popular feeling, that legendary tradition has been violated in the fate and disposal of this great, national hero. But it is all faery ground, and a poetical community of right to its appropriation has never been disputed. (144)

Two poems are particularly useful for demonstrating Bannerman's involvement with the social and political spirit of the age, with the post revolutionary loss of innocence, and with contemporary literature and the British literary tradition. One poem, "Basil," traces the progress of fear in an orphaned fisher boy who has been isolated from society since birth and who witnesses a violent and bloody murder; the second, "The Prophecy of Merlin," traces the progress of fear in a king, the individual who had been the center, the creator of a society but who brings about that same society's bloody and violent end. In both of the poems, the central character is unable to extend or receive sympathy and is isolated from positive social interaction. This central character is then

present to or participant in some crime or offense. Finally, the character is consumed with fear and guilt so that positive social or virtuous action, reflection, and self knowledge are impossible. In addition to character concerns, the larger situation or setting in the poems reflects a hostile world, a world "out of joint," a pervasive social disorder or lack of benevolence, as Pope would have it. The poems conclude with an overwhelming sense of loss and desolation and an absence of sympathetic social community for both the lowly and the mighty.

The literature which Bannerman draws from for these two poems is different, however. For "Basil," she draws upon a contemporary playwright, Joanna Baillie, and parallels, knowingly or unknowingly, characters and situations very similar to those in contemporary poetry. For "The Prophecy of Merlin," she draws from an older literary tradition, from ballads and early seventeenth century heroic "songs," popular at the turn of the century. However, she manipulates the material from these two different kinds of sources in different ways; she aligns herself with her contemporaries in her social and political criticism, but she twists and inverts her older and traditional bardic sources so that rather than glorifying England and its heroes, she vilifies them.

In "Basil" Bannerman connects contemporary issues of individual, social, and natural disorder with the absence of sympathy as a social affection which forms an interpersonal bond. "Basil" recounts the story of a "rude sea boy" who lives in nature, not a nature of tender leaves and leafy bowers but a nature of "sobbing" ocean waves, the "wild sea shore," and "rude sea wind" (79-80). Furthermore, he lives within this nature or natural world at first completely attuned to it. His ear "could dwell/ With gladness" on the

sounds of the low swells when the south wind blew (79); his "heart would sing "dirges for the dead" when the waves were mournful. Bannerman writes that the

...skies, the woods, the winding shore,

Were imag'd on his desert breast. (80)

While Basil hears the breeze as some "even song" of an angel (81-82) and he sees the stars as "serene" and "sacred Light" (82-83), Bannerman rejects this complete absorption in nature as a viable form of life. Positive human life is experienced within a community.

The sea boy is not perfected or completely happy in his exclusive bond with nature. Bannerman describes him as living without physical, social, and spiritual contact. "Like a wildflower of the wilderness" (79), Basil is physically alone, without mother, father, family, or friends. He knows the absence of other people, rather than their presence. Without human companionship, "There was none whose eye pursu'd/ This youth's unfollow'd footsteps home" (81). In addition, he is without any sympathetic social contact; no person comforted or cared for him. "The tones that sooth'd this lonely heart/ Came not from human kind" (81) but elsewhere, from material nature. As a result of this complete deprivation of the more immediate physical and social contacts, Basil's spirit or "soul" is "unseen,/ Unknown, untutor'd" (80). Bannerman is clear, though, in indicating that Basil had the capability of feeling sympathy for others, that he potentially has a social sense; however, this potential is perverted and then completely inoperative. She writes that his heart, rather than bonding with the living, was "Pity's resting place" which sang "dirges for the dead" (80). Eventually, Basil had no feelings for humans at all. While others felt joy and love when their families came home safely from a storm, Basil "steel'd his heart" until he was "feelingless and numb" (81).

Bannerman's account of the murder and the victim emphasizes Basil's inability to experience fellow feeling or sympathy. He depersonalizes the event; he hears a "moan," a "groan," a "voice in death," an "ebbing breath," not a man's groan or a woman's cry. He is aware of a "corse" or a "weight" falling outside his door, not a man falling. The victim is an "it" that lays upon "its face" (81). His isolation from human kind has been so long and complete that during the long wait for morning, he does not act to comfort the dying man or ease his suffering. Instead, he listens to the last breaths and murderers' retreating footsteps; he watches the body through the bars of his window. Basil experiences immediate and paralyzing fear and longs not for life but for death at "the stake" (85).

At the conclusion of the poem, Basil is completely displaced from any possibility of community and from the physical location which had been his only source of comfort. His home, once his only refuge, is "forsaken" and haunted by "the spirit of the slain" (87). Without his home and mountain, he wanders with "worn and naked feet" as though he were "some lone ghost of air/ Scarce human like" (86-87). The stones which cover the bones of the murdered man are a "beacon" on the sea not of life but of death.

Bannerman connects "Basil" to contemporary British literary concerns by citing a line from Joanna Baillie's 1798 play on the passions, *DeMonfort*. In her notes to the poem, Bannerman refers to a line spoken by Bernard, a servant, in the climactic murder scene. The cited line, "I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge/ In any form so laid," occurs as Bernard reports on having found the butchered Rezenfelt, DeMonfort's manipulative and deceitful social rival. In "Basil," the line occurs as the corpse lies outside Basil's shed.

By associating an incident from a larger, more significant scene in contemporary drama with her poem, Bannerman may have been trying to create a personal connectedness to an established literary circle. Certainly, however, the situation in the poem does take on a greater thematic significance by being associated with another text; taken together, *DeMonfort* and "Basil" span the various social classes. What failures in sympathy that occur in the middle and upper class world as in *DeMonfort* impact what takes place in the lower class world of "Basil." The social and personal disruption in the upper classes places greater stress on an already uneasy or socially unstable lower class world. Murder, the absolute negation of sympathy in any of its forms, or any violent act under one set of circumstances, impacts not only the one or two or a few in one context, but has ripple effects on the less socially integrated in another context. Taken together, the play and the poem present a portrait of a broadly unstable and disturbed social environment.

One of the national concerns impacted by the French Revolution and reflected in "Basil" is that of proper relationship of man to his community and to nature as conceptualized in the "natural man." This concept, benevolence, is taken from Rousseau's description of an idealized natural man, pure and simple in his primal, uncorrupted state, in the *Second Discourse*, and presented in Wordsworth's 1791-1792 "Descriptive Sketches." During his early pre-revolutionary period, Wordsworth advocated individual freedom over social connectedness and community well being. In this poem, he almost valorizes a model of individualism, someone who is unrestrained and the "slave of none" (l.445), confessing "no law but what his reason taught" (l. 438), and "guarded" by "faithful Nature" (l. 441). Such a man is in his natural state, unencumbered by

community, social restraints or social institutions; he is "entirely free, alone and wild," as "blest" and "all superior" (l. 433-435).

Challenging Rousseau and the early Wordsworth, Bannerman in no way valorizes Basil's individualism and isolation. In fact, the poem clearly presents the real dangers of such physical, social, and spiritual isolation. She shows Basil having not received compassion, unable to give it. Having been raised without motherly affection and prayer, he can neither identify nor communicate with the living. They include first, an inability to give or receive human sympathy, something Wordsworth would later write was "that best portion of a good man's life,/ His little nameless, unremembered, acts/ Of kindness and of love" ("Tintern Abbey" II. 33-35). Second, the separation from human contact eventually leads to a separation from an ordered or natural world. Again, Wordsworth is aware of the kind of impact this separation from both man and nature would have. Marmaduke, the condemned wanderer in *The Borderers*, while in different circumstances and more self-reflective than Basil, describes their final lots as:

...a wanderer must I go
 The spectre of that innocent Man, my guide. No
 human ear shall ever hear me speak;
 No human dwelling ever give me food,
 Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild, In
 search of nothing, that this earth can
 give,
 But expiation, will I wander on -

A Man by pain and thought compelled to live, Yet loathing life. ... (II: ll. 327-335, 70)

Basil is like Marmaduke, ghost like or spectre like, a homeless and tormented wanderer because he is without any sympathetic connectedness to a community. And both are also without any sympathetic connectedness to the physical environment. Again, unlike Wordsworth's early "Descriptive Sketches," Bannerman's "Basil" does not characterize the universe or external nature as benevolent; it takes on the "spirit of the slain" and becomes hostile "desert" and "crag" (87-88) to the spectre-like Basil.

Bannerman's description of Basil and his pitiful situation is quite similar to Wordsworth's characters in whom he traces the psychology of fear, guilt, and sorrow. In "The Gothic Tale," "The Female Vagrant," "Salisbury Plain," and "Adventures on Salisbury Plain" the characters and general situations are quite similar to Basil's, divorced from nature and mankind and impelled by some terror. In "Adventures on Salisbury Plain" Wordsworth describes the operation of fear in a wanderer who sees a dead convict hanging from a gibbet. The wanderer first views it "with shuddering pain" which "rouzed a train/ Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain" (II. 119-122). But then this pain intensifies such that his "soul" is "toss'd" with "anguish" (II. 127-128). His fear shifts and then grows till "his heart ...groan'd with deadlier pain" (I. 161). For the wanderer, the savage spectacle of the dead man is identical to the spectacle of the murdered man for Basil. And, the impact of the spectacle on both men is similar: the landscape becomes gothic, wild and mournful. Both live in "unrelieved pain" (*Borderers* 19-21).

But Bannerman's description of Basil is also strikingly similar to Wordsworth's political and social criticism in these poems. Stephen Gill writes in his introduction to

The Salisbury Plain Poems that they represent Wordsworth's "radical and humanitarian opposition of the 1790's" in which he participated in a "crusade against the follies and corruption hidden within the apparently ordered and just structure of English society" (5). The vagrant's story about her impoverished life and the community's failure to respond parallel Basil's solitary life and his own isolation from community concern. Wordsworth, and here by implication Bannerman, through the parallel situations of the poor in their poems, are concerned about the social distress which faces England seeing it as a "disaster that threatens a country that has divided into two nations" (5).

The operation of a different form of sympathy, with somewhat different implications, occurs in *Tales* and can be examined in "Basil." For two reasons, previously discussed connections between "Basil," *DeMonfort*, and Baillie and a brief but significant comment in Bannerman's "Prologue," the poems in *Tales* can also be read in light of Joanna Baillie's theory of sympathetic curiosity (as described in the *Introductory Discourse* and discussed in chapter five). The *Discourse* presents a theory about the operation of sympathy, in part, as an experience for a theater spectator; thus, the sympathizer is an external viewer who watches, experiences, and learns from another's misfortune. The resulting emphasis, naturally, is on the spectator's personal insights gained as a result of viewing, not as the result of an action or a shared social bond. However, Baillie is so adamant about and emphasizes so frequently that aspect of "watching and observing whether in the theater or in life," that it is clear that sympathy for her is less than a two sided operation. The crucial part of Baillie's commentary reveals how thoroughly she sees sympathy as a process in which the observer turns inward to self experience and self analysis. Baillie writes that sympathetic curiosity is:

a universal desire in the human mind to behold men in every situation, putting forth his strength against the current of adversity, scorning all bodily anguish, or struggling with those feelings of nature, which, like a beating stream, will oft'times burst through the artificial barriers of pride.

(7)

Sympathetic curiosity also arises when the spectator watches a man "contend[s] with" evil "which arises in his own breast" (9) or the "smallest indication of an unquiet mind" (10). This close watching, Baillie concludes, "is our most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others," particularly through the drama, we come to know them; however, we also "know ourselves" (12).

Bannerman implies a similar kind of sympathetic curiosity relationship between reader and subject in the "Prologue" to *Tales*. She invites the reader to come into her poems to know through the "eye of Fear" not "gay delight." While Basil cannot come to know himself because he has no one to watch, the reader can because he has Basil before him to observe and draw from. By implication, by watching Basil, we, the readers, do have the potential for learning the "decencies of life" and for coming to know the operation of our own minds and emotions. It imaginatively experiences another's circumstances and then turns inward to self reflection. This coming to know is the result of a sympathetic connection that is highly self conscious, calling for self analysis which leads to self awareness. Sympathy here is not a direct call to virtue, benevolence or social action, and there is no evidence in the poems and attendant materials which necessarily prompts the reader to form real social attachments. In fact, the volume, through its sheer

weight of overwhelming despondence, presents the experience of misfortune and offers no hope for that kind of sympathy which creates positive and interactive social connections.

Thoroughly intertwined with the shifting notions of sympathy, the second major area of interest in Bannerman's work is the way in which she recreates or reinvents history by appropriating and altering documents of the historic past. This tendency to revise history and to write self history is part of that romantic mind, as Marion Montgomery describes it, which "is unable to come to terms with history except through the process of divorcing the self from time and making self history their concern" (123). As sympathy is internalized, as it focuses more on self experience, history exists as the self experiences or evaluates it.

Bannerman, in addition to making the Baillie *DeMonfort* reference, lists in her Notes to *Tales* several older British sources for her poems: most notably, Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* along with Selden's Notes to the *Poly-Olbion*; the second volume of Percy's *Reliques*; and Evans' *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards*, more commonly referred to as *Specimens of Welsh Poetry*. But because Bannerman draws from these older, traditional ballads and bardic sources, it can not be concluded that she uses them in the same way she does Baillie's line from *DeMonfort*, nor can it be concluded that she assumes their social and political positions. In fact, Bannerman directly challenges the assumptions of the ballad writers and the historic romanticizers. She places the cited lines into her own "fanciful" context, inverts or drastically changes their original meaning, and ultimately shifts their original positive perspectives into her "drear," "wild," and fear filled vision of the past. The Prologue to the *Tales of*

Superstition and Chivalry makes this one point very clear and explicit: the past is not a source of "gay delight" as we would be led to believe; instead, it is a source of terror and fear. Bannerman reinforces this point by following the Prologue with a quotation from Guarini on her volume's title page: "*Tutto e mengogna!*" --"All is a lie!" Her manipulation of the sources in her poems reinforces, while not explicitly, this same position: the past world of warriors and knights is as desolate and spiritually depleted as Basil's world. Influenced by her experience of the historic moment, she reinvents the stories of the past, as well as their literary forms, to create a very different impact.

The ballad tradition had been popular in Britain at least since 1711 when Joseph Addison wrote his *Spectator Paper* number 70 on "Chevy Chase" and the epic tradition. In this essay Addison defined the components of the heroic ballad: first, the "heroic poem should be founded upon some important precept of morality"; second, the "greatest heroic poets ...celebrate persons and actions which do honor to their country"; the poet "raises the reputation of it [the hero's country] by several beautiful incidents" (81-85). John Butt and Geoffrey Carnall, tracing the ballad tradition, write that through ballads, including the historical ballads, "simple uneducated folks... had their feelings moved," and, as a result, "could be persuaded to political or moral action" (95-96). Evans' *Specimens of Ancient Welsh Poetry*, one of Bannerman's cited sources, is a prime example of the very popular historic ballad form. It begins with call to vigorous and heroic battle, and continues with an appeal to the cup bearer to remember the noble feats of the valiant men "who, in every hardship... deserve a reward" (9-10). Throughout the poems, the noble men who fight, and perhaps die, covered with blood are valorized.

Butt and Carnall also describe an interesting variation to the ballad tradition. They report that within the ballad form it was not uncommon for a writer to isolate an incident or scene from some previous, well known ballad, to eliminate most of the popularly known details, and expand the ghostly, or melancholy, or sentimental "with an eye to invoking terror and pity" (97). Such reworkings were hugely popular. One of the most popular, "William and Margaret," went through at least twenty five reprintings between 1721 and 1800 (97-98). They continued to be popular even with the Romantics; Wordsworth commended "The Childe of Elle," reprinted in the *Scots Magazine* "for its true simplicity and genuine pathos" (105).

Bannerman's "Prophecy of Merlin" falls within this "reworking" category. However, while it may include the ghostly or magical and prophetic elements of this kind of ballad, the poem is not an heroic warrior poem. Instead, it questions the whole heroic tradition. To understand Bannerman's use of the heroic ballad, it is necessary to examine her primary source and then place it next to her poem.

The *Poly-Olbion*, her primary source, is Michael Drayton's collection first of eighteen songs printed in 1612 and later an additional twelve printed in 1619, all of which survey the geography of England and Wales. However, it is more than a study in land formations. As implied by its complete title, *Poly-Olbion, or A Chorographical Description of Tracts, Rivers, Mountaines, Forests, and Other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britain, With intermixture of the most Remarkable Stories, Antiquities, Wonders, Rarities, Pleasures, and Commodities of the same*, the text includes a highly charged geographical survey along with very brief tales or bits of history, mostly legendary, customs, and pastimes. J. William Hebel, editor of the Oxford text of the *Poly-*

Olbion, writes that the work is quite varied; it is a "versified map overcrowded with nymphs of river, hill, and woodland, but also "presents some realistic bit of country life-- the plowman in his field, the hunt with hounds and horn ...the hermit and 'his homely Cell' along with natural descriptions of "some winding river, fruitful vale, or fen musical with the song of birds" (vi).

As a whole, the work is a glorification of the land and its inhabitants; the frontispiece and its description portray a triumphant and glorious Great Britain, one of "Power and Plenty" (ii). Its dedication is to the great Prince Henry who embodies the "Glories" of the English Kings: "Deep Knowledge, Greatnes, long Life, Policy, Courage, Zeale, Fortune, awful Majestie" (iv). And, Drayton's own introduction to the reader describes the text as a opportunity for his countrymen who would prefer not to "remain in the thicke fogges and mists of ignorance," but to "take paines to search into ancient and noble things," to see "gentle gliding Brooks" and "delicate embroidered Meadowes," "simple" Nature and "harmless" peasants (v). In the third song, one to which Bannerman refers, the dawn is "blushing," the east is "cheerfull," the swains are "lustie," and the girls are "loving" (48). The fourth song does not open with the same idyllic scene as the third; rivers, identified as women, are set in conflict with each other. This conflict, however, is described in an heroic manner; one sends out a challenge, while the others prepare a "rich array" for a "heave and shove" (70). One river is "proud," another "wise," another "tinny," while a fourth leads a "lusty rout" (71).

Prior to the publication of the first volume of poems, Drayton engaged John Selden, a rigorous and insightful scholar, to annotate his text, clarifying the antiquarian and historical references (v-ix). Selden produced prose texts or "Illustrations" which

followed and explicated each of the poems and "rank high in the annals of seventeenth-century scholarship" (ix). By referring to specific records, reports, places, and names, these notes serve to reinforce the thrust and the tone of Drayton's document giving its glorification of the land and its people a greater credibility. Together, Drayton and Selden create an heroic vision of a noble Britain.

Overall, Bannerman's landscape and people stand in stark contrast to those in the *Poly-Olbion*. In "The Prophetess of the Oracle of Seam" which draws from "Song I," the landscape is cursed, not blessed. The "black waves boil" (19), the winds are "dumb" (20), the caves hold "terrors" (22), and the vaults are "gloomy" (22). The people, too, are cursed or bewitched and certainly not heroic; they hear a loud "sob" and "shriek of woe" (20-21); their "courage failed them" and "death hung/ O'er every soul" (21). Looking more specifically at the passages Bannerman refers to in "The Prophetess," there is the same inversion or reversal in tone. In her notes, Bannerman makes a specific reference to "Song I," lines 60 and 61:

Those nuns of yore
Gave answers from their caves, and took what
shapes they please. (141)

She also refers to the Selden note that explains that on the isle nine virgin priests had powers over nature and prophecy (141). In the original context, the passage is positive and energetic; Drayton is listing "ever happie Iles" like "Jernsey, bravelie crown'd," "Ligon, her belov'd," and "fruitfull Aurney" (II: 45-59) who wake the deep sea with "shrill and jocund shouts" (63). Before moving on to descriptions of other islands, Drayton pauses to remember the saints, "Their fasting, works, & pray'rs" who are still

honored on the isands. He calls for each saint to have "this due.../ As deigne to drop a teare upon each holie Grave;/ ...For ...they were right simply good" (3: 11. 85-92). In addition to the passage cited in Bannerman's text, Selden's notes indicate that the nine priests showed kindness "chiefly to Saylers" (18). In the Bannerman poem, however, there are no positive energies, merciful saints, or favored sailors. Instead, "death... hung/ O'er every soul" (21) because it was "the fated night of sacrifice/ In the gloomy faults beneath" (22). After the sailors listened to the monk's tale "in dumb despair," they and the ship were "buried in the waves" (26).

The details of "The Prophetess" differ from Selden's notes, possibly, in another way. Both texts refer to a time span of thirty years or months. Prior to his explanation of the priests, Selden describes a practice in which the islanders are engaged every 30 years; they go to sea, travel to an island, and enjoy "the happy quiet of the place" to study nature or mathematics or to indulge in sensuality (16). In Bannerman, the monk is pulled into the cave toward the Oracle of flame after thirty months; this occurs not to please and delight the monk, but to create greater agony. There is no celebration, relaxation, or revitalization by traveling out to encounter nature, but instead a traveling inward toward the heart of the cave, his "sepulchre" (28) and the depths of fear. The monk:

...heard the loud winds blow along,
 And the billows wash his living grave;
 For he was shut from all the earth
 Within that gloomy cave! (27)

Bannerman's second reference to Drayton and Selden occurs in the final poem of the volume, "The Prophecy of Merlin." Here she adapts lines from "Song IV" and then

"Song III," but again she takes the details of her source out of their original context. The two references, the first to the emblem of the Virgin which Arthur wore in battle, and second to "Pendragon's worthie sonne, who waded there in blood" (1~2-1~3), appear in Drayton's references to the battle at Badon, one of Arthur's first major battles to establish him as king (76). In Bannerman, however, they refer to his final battle at Camlan as his kingdom is self destructing.

The Drayton "Song IV" lines are set within a longer section describing the activities of the ancient bards who "in their sacred rage" (l. 171) recorded "the acts of everie Age" (l. 173). Drayton then places himself within the bardic tradition and invokes the help of "the materiall things Muse" to "report" British history (l. 244). He begins, as the bards begin, with Arthur "their most renowned Knight" (l. 246) and "one of the nine Worthies" (l. 247n). He then catalogues by name all of Arthur's armor and weaponry, his trusted sword Escalaboure, "noble" spear Rone, his "great" shield Pridwin, and his bejeweled baudrick, and calls these weapons "monuments of worth, the ancient Britains song" (l. 253). Included with this list of fierce and noble arms is Arthur's standard, the "sacred Virgins shape" (l. 252). It, too, is a "monument of worth." Drayton follows this description with a catalogue of Arthur's victories, first in Britain, then Ireland, Goth-land, Norway, and France. In describing the first battle in Britain, at Badon, where Arthur won his "glorious Gole, his British Sceptre" and where his "weight best sute[d] a sublimated straine" (l. 266), Drayton solidly establishes Arthur as an active, decisive force worthy of his father's name. Here at Badon Arthur proves he is "Pendragons wirthie sonne," a "valiant" warrior, slaying three hundred of the enemy (ll. 270-271). Fifty lines Later in "Song IV." Drayton refers to the cause of Arthur's death not as the result of a

diminishment of his powers in battle or his decisiveness, but as the result of "false Mordreds hand" (I. 231). The national hero is preserved as hero.

Selden's commentary, which Bannerman cites, provides an extended background for the dragon emblem that Arthur wears. Appearing on his helmet, the dragon associates him with his lineage, his father "Uter pen-dragon," with Saxon, English, and Norman kings, and with antiquity. The dragon, taken by Arthur and leaders of many nations as a "supporter" and traditional emblem of might (86-87), places him within the context of military power and conquest. Selden provides no long explanation for the Virgin's emblem, though obviously it represents the Christian Mary. Referring to her as "The sacred Virgin," "our Lady," Selden explains that Arthur wore her figure on his shield or his banner (86).

Bannerman's poem places Drayton's lines and Selden's commentary in quite different circumstances. It changes Drayton's description of Arthur's weapons; instead of noble, his sword is "witched" and a "steel of terror" (129). In addition, Bannerman combines and alters the import of the two emblems. Selden's emblem, or "monument," of historic and familial worth becomes a symbol of vengeance and death; the "brazon" "steel" dragon reflects the "red sun" so that Britain's crest burns "in living flame" (128). The Virgin's form, a religious symbol, is set right next to and joined with the military symbol, the red dragon. Next, she changes the representation and circumstances of Arthur himself. Drayton's righteous conqueror, who "waded" in enemy "blood" to establish a British throne, becomes Bannerman's king who "spurr'd his foaming horse/ Amid that living flood" (129) against a rebel attack on his position at the final battle of Camlan. Bannerman's visual images remove the Drayton/Selden emphasis on noble mightiness

and shift it to the warrior's callousness and anger, from noble accomplishments in victory to the bloody devastation of war. Arthur fought "with the fire of wrath...in his eye" (129). Spurred on by his rider, Arthur's horse foams, crazed and pressing hard in battle, and tromps on and through living humans, "that living flood" (129) where "The red blood ran, like a river wave,/ On the dry and parched shore" (128).

For more Arthurian lore, Bannerman refers to the Selden notes to "Song III" and to a poem by Dan Lidgat included in those notes. In Bannerman's notes she quotes Selden's account of the ancient bards' songs almost directly; she writes:

The bard songs suppose, that, after the battle of Camlan in Cornwall, where Mordred was slain and Arthur wounded, Morgan le Fay, an elfin lady, conveyed the body to Glastenbury, to cure it; which done, Arthur is to return to the rule of his country. (Bannerman 144; Selden 66)

Aside from spelling and punctuation variations, there are no differences between the two passages except that Bannernam omits Selden's identification of Mordred as "trayterous" and of Morgan le Fay as a "great" elfin lady who was Arthur's "supposed neere kinswoman" (66). These differences are significant, however. In the poem, Bannerman describes Modred, not as traitorous but as "mighty" and "dauntless" (129). She then describes the unnamed elfin lady as the "Queen of the Yellow Isle" (132) who bore away Arthur "in deep and death like sleep" and who "tranced" his "soul" by "magic spell" (132). It is she who stands as the naked Queen of Beauty who "lull[s] his soul" (136-137). And, it is she who rather than being "great," smiles "a demon smile" and raises her "hand of blood" (138).

There is a third difference between the two sets of notes about Merlin's prophecy and Arthur's return. Both the Selden and Bannerman notes about the bardic songs consider that purpose of this removal of Arthur's body is to "cure it, which done, Arthur is to returne to the rule of his country" (66). Selden, however includes an anticipatory parenthetical comment, "yet expected" (66), which Bannerman omits. By quoting this passage so closely yet omitting this hopeful anticipation of Arthur's return, Bannerman adopts a significantly different, and less hopeful, position than that of the ancient Bards. Once he reaches the shore of the island, Arthur, rather than being a strong and decisive warrior, was "pallid;" he "trembled" and grew "wild" (137-138). Then, the elfin Queen, rather than offering him a physical cure and a return to his kingdom, offers Arthur "slumber" "Where nought would reach his burial place" except the sound of the waves (139), isolation, and obscurity. While Arthur "knew he would return" (139), the poem casts doubt on this knowledge and offers little hope for a return. It concludes, with the repeated "nought has reach'd his burial- place, / But the murmurs of the wave. ..." (139). There is no expectation of Arthur's return in Bannerman's poem.

Bannerman's notes to the poem reinforce this doubt about the possibility of Arthur's heroic return. Bannerman follows her "near" restatement of Selden's notes with six lines from Dan Lidgat's poem which Selden quotes. These lines recount Merlin's prophecy that Arthur would return to reign again (Bannerman 144; Selden 67). However, Bannerman omits five lines of the citation. They read:

He is a King crowned in Fairie,
 With Scepter and sword and with his regally
 Shall resort as Lord and Soueraigne

Out of Fairie and reign in Britaine:

And repaire againe the Round Table. (67)

These are the most hopeful and positive lines of the Lidgat selection. They promise sovereign and regal political power, a national power which repairs and restores a single chivalric ideal. It is this ideal which Bannerman sees as an impossibility.

In addition, Bannerman's concluding note to the volume indicates her difference with any heroic possibility. She provides an explicit disclaimer, one in which she states that she has knowingly, deliberately, and drastically changed the Arthurian legend. In fact, she writes that her poem "The Prophecy of Merlin" has "violated" legendary tradition "in the fate and the disposal of this great national hero." She provides as her justification for her changes the right as part of a "poetical community" to the "appropriation" of "fairy ground" (144).

Not only does the Bannerman poem differ from the bardic tradition included in Selden's notes, but it also varies from the historic account as given in the notes. Again, this selection and shifting of source material is of importance. Selden recounts the discovery of Arthur's tomb in Glastenbury by clerics in an identifiably Christian burial site. The tombstone was found nine feet down with a cross and Arthur's name affixed to it. Arthur's remains were then "honored with a sumptuous monument" (66). Bannerman's poem, however, reads, "King Arthur's body was not found! Nor ever laid in holy grave" (139). Such a reading is consistent with her other suggestions of Arthur's separation from matters of the spirit and concentration on political power, his "witched sword" and "dragon shield" in several ways. The Virgin on his banner is not an inspiration to purity

or love, nor does it have any traditional or religious connotation. Instead, it is paired and associated with the emblematic dragon of political power.

Second, though she has "eyes, of softest blue," the Virgin's color, the elfin queen who carried him off has a "smooth disguise" and a "demon smile" (136-137). Her magic has "lull[ed] his soul" so that he is enchanted by "that ladie's face" (137). Rather than being the Queen of Heaven and of the spirit, this queen is the Queen of Beauty and of the flesh or material. Arthur, who has knelt to the hand of blood, remains where "nought" can reach him "But the murmurs of the wave" (139).

At the conclusion of the volume, we are reminded of Bannerman's opening, "All is a lie." Nothing that can be seen or touched or heard can be trusted. What Arthur first saw in the queen's blue eyes is a lie; what his lips touched in that "sparkling cup" was a lie; and what Arthur may have heard about a glorious return is a lie (136-137).

Bannerman soundly attacks what has been accepted and thought about glorious warriors and gay times, about Britain's past, and about history itself. All that can be known comes through the poetic and prophetic voice to "Fancy's ear" (Prologue), an explicit reference to Bannerman's reinvention of history to suit her historic moment.

Bannerman's poems in *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* reflect some of the anxieties of the early Romantics, anxieties about the solidity of sense knowledge, the appropriate position of man within his natural, social, and political environment, and the possibilities for any social affection within a material universe. Whether the expression of these anxieties is more "distinct" or not than the masterpieces, as Lovejoy would claim, is not crucial at the moment. What does appear to be crucial, however, is the radical difference between these poems and the poems of the eighteenth century. While Pope, the

epitome of eighteenth century classicism, wrote "Know thyself" in all certainty that self knowledge is possible, Bannerman signals her beginning with a questioning that any certainty is possible. When Pope continues his *Essay on Man* with a description of the Great Chain of Being bound by a universal Benevolence, he is confident in a cosmic ordering system in which every creature has a place. However, no creature has a place in Bannerman's *Tales*; each once is cast out or lost from the possibility of a social connectedness built on either virtue and sympathy or sympathy as a direct, shared experience. And, finally, while Locke, the philosopher of reason and empiricism, advises man to "be content with 'relative and practical understanding'" and warns against setting "loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being" (Lovejoy 8), Bannerman, romantic, calls the reader to travel "dark recesses" with her amid "The' unearthly habitants of faery ground" (Prologue). This awareness above all, the destabilization of an idealized universal order and the loss of confident certainty in man's having a place within a society, permeates Bannerman's volume and characterizes the early Romantic impulse.

Chapter 7: Dorothy Wordsworth and William Wordsworth: The Romantic Mind,
Sympathy, and Self History

William Wordsworth was not of a single mind about sympathy and the restorative or community building effects of sympathetic expression. His work from 1797 to 1806, with the completion of the *Thirteen Book Prelude*, is certainly reflective of his process of recovery from his early revolutionary position. However, it also reflects a complex intermingling of uncertainty, hope, and faith in the possibility of sympathy as an immediate and shared experience between both a sufferer and an observer. Wordsworth's analysis of a malignant mind in *The Borderers* clearly wrestles with not only the absence of sympathy but also the negation of its possibility. His portraits of the impoverished in many of *Lyrical Ballads* are a direct expression of and call to sympathy on a fundamental level. However, his analysis of the workings of sympathy within his own mind in other poems, such as "Tintern Abbey" and *The Prelude*, particularly those poems which can be read as self history, reveal real elements of anxiety. The tensions around sympathy, while resolved in some respects in Book XI of *The Prelude*, "Imagination, How Repaired and Restored," reside in the fact that both sides of the sympathetic relationship -- the recognition of suffering and the response to it -- are absorbed within the same consciousness, "self sympathy," and in the fact that the bonding or community built

through sympathy is not an immediate, present experience but a distanced relationship constructed by the writer and reader relationship. Dorothy Wordsworth's poem, "Floating Island at Hawkeshead," is especially representative of the personal tensions about sympathy existing within the romantic tendency toward self analysis and self history.

In *Relationships of Sympathy* Thomas McCarthy identifies this duality within Romantic poetry; he writes: "While Romanticism is often understood as an effort to dissolve the boundaries between the mind and the external world -- to launch a frontal attack on the dualism of self and Other," there also exists that component of the "other Romanticism" which "underscores the instability of the autonomous self by pointing to its dependence on the sympathetic Other" (155). From another perspective, however, such a duality reflects a shift in whole world perspective -- from that vision of the world as something that has been revealed by a source outside of man or his constructs to that vision which is constructed within the mind and by the experience of culture -- and, consequently reflects a shift in an understanding of the operation of sympathy.¹

All of Wordsworth's responses to the subject of sympathy, direct and assured or tenuous, are consistent with an historical period of considerable flux, one in which traditional values and institutions were directly challenged by social, economic, and political pressures. Widespread assumption of the social affections and moral virtues, represented in Pope's *Essay on Man* statement, "God and Nature linked the general frame,/ And bade self-love and social be the same" (*Essay on Man* IV: ll. 396- 398), as the underpinning of community was challenged not only by the disillusionment created by the extent of the violence of the French Revolution, but also by the increase in business agreements, in worker displacement and poverty, and in social material and

reform movements. (Gaul 109–113).^{2,3} On the one hand, Wordsworth shares Edmund Burke's conservative sentiments on the nature of social relations, as shared community founded on virtue, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Burke writes that society:

Is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and the invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures. (xxv)

On the other hand, Wordsworth lived in witness to the same society as William Blake where commercialism, self interest, and “Love seeketh only Self to please ... And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite” (“The CLOUD & the PEBBLE,” *Songs of Experience*, 32).⁴ Blake describes one victim of many, the chimney sweeper, the child of experience, where poverty and social abuses co joined to produce in multitude:

A little black thing among the snow:
Crying weep, weep, in notes of woe!
Where are thy father & mother? Say?

They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,

And smil'd among the winters snow:

They clothed me in the clothes of death,

And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, & dance & sing,

They think they have done me no injury:

And are gone to praise God & his Priest & king

Who make up a heaven of our misery. (“The Chimney Sweeper,” *Songs of Experience* 37)

In *The Idea of Poverty* which focuses on the impact of the industrial revolution in England, one of the two “epochal events” of the nineteenth century, Gertrude Himmelfarb describes the conflict between the “vision of society devoted to the common end, valuing communal and spiritual rather than private and material goods” and that society which aspires to “the gratification of economic appetites and no higher principle than self-love and expediency” (23). Though critics and historians have debated and revised R. H. Tawney’s analysis of the “chasm” between “the conception of society as a community ... organized for a common end, and that which regards it as a mechanism adjusting itself through the play of economic motives to the supply of economic needs” (Tawney *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 19), Himmelfarb cites it as that tension which began to pervade England in the early eighteenth century with merchantilism and Puritanism well before Adam Smith’s economic and moral theories. (24-26).^{5,6}

Himmelfarb also pinpoints the second “epochal event” for the nineteenth century as that “ideological revolution commonly associated with Adam Smith” and shared in both his moral and economic documents, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations* (24).⁷ On one hand, *The Wealth of Nations* gave impetus to “a political economy that made the wealth and welfare of the people dependent on a highly developed, expanding industrial economy” (44); while on the other, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and particularly the additional chapter of the revised edition entitled “Of the Corruption of Our Moral Sentiments, Which is Occasioned by this Disposition to Admire the Rich and the Great, and to Despise or Neglect Persons of Poor and Mean Condition,” espouse sympathy as the primary component of human nature which at times was necessary even when “the interests of the individual had to make way for the interests of others” (Himmelfarb 46-47). Smith intended both works to make up his “grand design” in which all individual interests worked to promote the good of the whole (Himmelfarb 48- 49); however, private interests, merchants and manufactures did not interpret *The Wealth of Nations* in this way. Smith’s well known statement, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard for their own interest” (*Wealth of Nations* 14), was removed from its broader context and implications of benevolent social interest (Himmelfarb 49).

An additional complication for the romantics which stems from Smith’s work on sympathy lies in the tension between its definition as a broadly shared moral sense which builds community and its description as a personal re-creation of experience -- that is an individual psychological experience -- since, according to Smith we cannot really know what another person is experiencing. Sympathy is an “imaginative” creation in the mind

of the observer, not a duplication of experience as Hume describes it. Gaull suggests that many of the economic, political, literary, and social theorists, such as Smith, Malthus, Burke, Godwin, Wollstonecraft, and Coleridge, responded to these and other external tensions and uncertainties by individualizing and internalizing their experiences. She writes: “They saw in the world about them reflections of their personal if not subjective experience, which they universalized. The social models they formulated, then, were inventions rather than discoveries, autobiographical allegories verifying their own experience or ideals” (112). This tendency toward the development of personalized histories and theories, compounded with other economic and sociological thrusts toward individualism, increased the fragmentation of a broad, cohesive sense of community.

In many of his poems of experience like that of the chimney sweep, not only does Blake paint a portrait of physical misery, but he also implies the dissolution of religious faith as it was occurring during this period. Such a dissolution pointed toward what Thomas Hardy a century later described in his poem “God’s Funeral” - the shift from:

How sweet it was ...
 To start the wheels of the day with trustful prayer,
 To lie down liegely at the eventide
 And feel a blest assurance he was there! (XI)

to crowd “mechanically ... with the rest” both “dazed and puzzled ‘twixt the gleam and gloom” (XVII). Such a tendency in the nineteenth century toward disbelief and/or non belief, according to A.N. Wilson, “accompanies wider symptoms of disturbance” than doubts about the Bible and literal truths, for example. It comes with “a deep sense (personal political, social) of dissolution ... the idea that society had lost, not merely its

sense of the sublime, but also a hold on morals, common purpose, a cohesion and unity” (11). Two British writers, widely read, were most significant in their impact on the decline of faith. Both Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776 to 1788) and Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) led more than any two other books of the period in English to “undermine faith” and Christian values (19). Gibbon’s style was so effective as to make fundamental Christian documents, teachers, and heroes appear as “morally absurd” (Wilson 21-22). Hume’s approach to religion in the *Dialogues* “is not so much a lethal weapon against religion as ‘a death certificate’” (23). Philo, speaking from a position of skepticism in the *Dialogues* and Hume’s position of suspending all judgment about faith or the non material realm, describes a universe devoid of “mind” and “purpose,” one which has a mechanical but “morally pointless” operation. This position is quite consistent with his criticism of the English for their “deepest Stupidity, Christianity and Ignorance” and with his evaluation of the mechanics of sympathy. Its foundation for him lay not in any altruism, an impulse to charity or virtue, but in a purely mechanical operation of the senses, of associations and impulses like those for the physical senses. There was no “necessity” for God, religion, or faith (Wilson 21-26).

In the face of social, political, economic, and religious tensions along with the individualization of experience, the romantics, including Wordsworth, sought some certainty that sympathy exists as an active and integrating part of human nature, that it is efficacious and communal. However, at the same time they personalized the experience of sympathy -- that is, they recorded their disillusionment and uncertainty about its potency, reciprocity, and universality. In the poetry sympathy appears as a private and

psychological experience where either the sufferer desires some sympathetic response from another which is elusive or non-existent, or the observer experiences some sympathetic response but either fails to or is unable to communicate it to the other. In either case, expressions and experiences of sympathy in the literature appear less assured or less consistently convincing about the ability to construct the social bond. In addition, because of the failure of communal sympathy, the Wordsworth and the romantic writers deliberately employ autobiographic forms or “self history,” as Mellor and Montgomery refer to it, in order to create an interconnectedness between text/writer and the reader which approaches the sympathetic relationship between actual sufferer and observer. In such forms of self-experience the poets appeal to the reader to understand, imaginatively experience, and respond with an acute observer’s sympathetic feelings. There are two real limitations to sympathy of this type, however. Such a relationship is insular; it is purely conceptual and does not present an interactive responsiveness that creates a social bond between characters; any interactivity is between text and reader. The second limitation is that the “sufferer,” the writer, does not receive benefit of felt sympathy from the reader. On one hand, Wordsworth’s poems of self history reveal a significant level of self-absorption as well as a subtle but pervasive uneasiness about the possibility of realizing a present genuine sympathy, for there is no certainty of the reader’s response. On the other hand, despite their insularity, the poems provide a broad philosophic conceptualization of a humanity joined by nature in sympathy. There is a constant tension between these elements of the immediate and physical level of experience and the conceptual and immaterial which reflects the not dissimilar historical tensions. An additional tension lies

in whether that joining “by nature” is nature as revealed to mankind or as constructed by man.

However, given this line of thinking, there are several genuine questions about the possibilities for and nature of sympathy for the romantics writing self history. First, can this “co-participation” between text and reader actually exist as the writer might intend? ⁸ Another question is whether sympathy has a future at all -- that is, whether the interactive nature of sympathy through which a genuine social bond is formed can exist via text and reader “co participation” or can actually exist in life; or does this relationship radically alter the definition of what sympathy is? The next question asks whether sympathy or the sympathetic impulse can exist entirely within one individual’s inner life -- that is, operate as a general attitude toward others or as subjective experienced only. An additional question asks whether sympathy and physical and spiritual isolation can coexist - - that is, how does the tendency toward self history redefine the nature of and possibilities for what was once communal, shared, and corrective bonding and what was once prompted by social affections and the underlying belief in the social nature of man. How is sympathy reconceptualized in a world that is more self defining than social?

In *Romanticism and Gender* Anne Mellor discusses the possibility of two different kinds of self history based on gender -- the masculine and feminine self history - - and the ways in which gender impacts the construction of identity. “Masculine Romanticism,” she writes, “has traditionally been identified with the assertion of a self that is unified, unique, enduring, capable of initiating activity, and above all aware of itself as a self” (145). Feminine self history, different from this masculine “egotistical sublime,” occurs within a circumscribed and domestic world rather than “dwelling

above” in a conceptual or abstract realm. The feminine self is relational and fluid, seeing itself more in connection with others than as a model for others. It often reveals a passivity, a submersion of ego and strong identity, which can be taken either as self annihilation or as “expansion ... into visionary community.” More significant, though, in Mellor’s mind is that feminine self history considers a “self that *does not name itself as a self*.” Finally, the feminine self identifies with the physical rather than the abstract; it is “body” rather than “mighty mind” (Mellor 154 -169).

Several current critical discussions about Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Journals* consider her in relation to her brother’s work and also evaluate her contributions to a feminized self awareness and self history independent of him. Set within these discussions, a critical examination of Dorothy Wordsworth’s poem, “Floating Island at Hawkshead, an Incident in the schemes of Nature,” suggests that it is a prime example of “individualized and internalized” experiences. The poem reveals what she “saw in the world” and reflects her “personal” and “subjective experience.” An “autobiographical allegory” recording and “verifying” her “experience,” “Floating Island” is not representative of sympathy as it has been discussed in the previous chapters thus far: it does not reflect the formation of a social bond through the immediate sharing of feelings or an experience; it does not reflect necessarily Dorothy’s reimagining of another’s experience; it does not necessarily bring about changed behavior; and it does not reflect any one of the social virtues, per se, in action. This poem, however, is representative of what becomes of sympathy, as well as the other social affections or virtues; they become internalized, felt and experienced, and both male and female romantic writers, in response to their sense of cosmic chaos and isolation, initially describe that inwardly felt

experience rather than an objectified or external characteristic of mankind. In addition, the poem is representative of a “self history” -- again, a turning inward and reflection on the personal and then on the relational. In the poem’s details, it becomes possible to see sympathetic affection as it is felt within and also as it is desired, albeit hopelessly, from without.

Mellor traces several arguments about Dorothy, self history, and identity to conclude that she is more fully and more specifically connected to both the environment and others than her brother (*Romanticism and Gender* 144-157).⁹ Dorothy’s poem “Floating Island at Hawkeshead, An Incident in the schemes of Nature,” one most fully representative of her work of this nature, is both an example of “self writing,” and of an alternate form of “Romantic self consciousness.” The poem proceeds:

Harmonious power with Nature work
 On sky, earth, river, lake, and sea:
 Sunshine and storm, whirlwind and breeze
 All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth,
 By throbbing waves long undermined,
 Loosed from its hold; - *how* no one knew
 But all might see it float, obedient to the wind.

Might see it, from the verdant shore
 Dissevered float upon the Lake,

Float, with its crest of trees adorned
On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety there they find
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;
There insects live their lives – and die:
A peopled *world* it is; - in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons' space
This little Island may survive,
But Nature, though we mark her not,
May take away – may cease to give.

Perchance when you are wandering forth
Upon some vacant sunny day
Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thither your eyes may turn – the Isle is passed away.

Buried beneath the glittering Lake!
Its place no longer to be found,
Yet the lost fragments shall remain,
To fertilize some other ground. (207-209)

Critics agree that Dorothy is examining self-identity in the poem, connecting herself with the clod of earth.¹⁰ Mellor reads “Floating Island” as a strongly positive affirmation of the “interactive, absorptive, constantly changing, and domestic” self that “produces and supports other lives” with “food, shelter, and safety” (*Romanticism and Gender*, 156). Her analysis coincides with Wolfson’s in that the poem’s growth in inclusion from “I” to “you” to “all” is an “expansion of individual subjectivity into visionary community” (Mellor 156, Wolfson 145). Such an understanding of the self in relation to community, Mellor continues, appears throughout Dorothy’s *Journals*; she connects herself to the actions and needs, physical and non physical, of those around her using abundant physical details (*Romanticism and Gender*, 156-157). Because of the amount and nature of those details, Dorothy’s writing is immediate and personal. On the other hand, Homans evaluates the poem as a portrait of “dissolution” and self “annihilation,” one representative of a negative and diffuse self identity. Homans would not agree with Wolfson and Mellor that the poem is a positive progression from subjectivity to community (Homans, *Women Writers*, 83-85; and Mellor *Romanticism and Gender* 156), but instead concludes that “For a living woman,” in general, “only the role of unthanked handmaiden remains” and for Dorothy, in particular, “she remain an amanuensis” and “accepts” and “enact[s] ... the role of the object of representation, ... allowing her writing to be appropriated by it” (40).

Indeed, there are conflicting elements in Dorothy’s poem to give rise to these opposing positions, as well as others. On one hand, it suggests the isolation and ultimate disappearance of the self - that “slip of earth” that is also a “clod” which floats “loosed” and “dissevered” but is not marked during its life and passes away virtually unnoticed.

The last two stanzas, while suggesting a hoped for remembrance, do truly represent a failure of sympathy. On the other hand, that self exists within the commingling of larger forces - "Nature" and "Harmonious Powers." Even though they include whirlwinds and storms, nature and these powers "agree" "in one duteous task." And indeed, that slip or self, though like a "tiny room," is much more than a temporary survivor; within itself, it is bountiful and productive, a "peopled *world*" that "floats" and nurtures "warbling birds," ripening berries, and blooming flowers. In this latter context, the poem's reference to the death of the insects and then to the passing away of the slip (the "Isle") would appear to offset some of the loss and despair of an unnoticed natural process that will "fertilize *some other* ground," [my italics for emphasis] but becomes part of an ongoing and regenerating cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Dorothy's reference to the Isle as "a peopled world," supported by details from her journal and their relationship to William's texts, very clearly marks the poem as a discussion primarily of self identity and then of inner felt relationships with others, with the natural world, and with Nature and the universe, but again the nature of this identity and these relationships is somewhat ambiguous and depends upon the emphasis an individual reader might place on the various diverging images in the poem. On one hand, through all the images of flourishing life on the island, as a poem of self identity which examines relationship with others, it does reveal a strongly nurturing sympathetic affection that is rooted in the deeply personal and individual experience. This experience is lived in a harmonious relationship with nature or some broad universal forces, even though the island is separate from the mainland, the community of others. Or, on the other hand, as stated from the opposite, less affirmative perspective, it is a poem of self

identity which desires sympathetic affection or even notice from others, but despairs of it in the present moment. It is this view ultimately reflects longing for community and the actual isolation of individual experience despite a larger harmonious universe. The speaker seems ambivalent and guarded.

In some of its language, “Floating Island” anticipates the grieving isolation felt in Matthew Arnold’s “To Marguerite – Continued” (1849), when the speaker anticipates his separation from his beloved. He, once connected with her, is no longer part of a “single continent” but divided by a “watery plain,” an “unplumbed” and “estranging sea” (ll. 16-25). “Floating Island” is curiously reminiscent of John Donne’s “Meditation XVII”; in other ways, particularly its point of view, there is a distinctive and ironic inversion which points out how sympathy has shifted from an idealized and objectivized reality to an inner, subjective experience over the 150 year time span. Donne writes:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend’s or of
thine own were. (68)

Donne’s meditation reflects a firm belief in the fundamental interconnectedness among all humanity; the life of one is intertwined with the lives of all. The sadness of one becomes the sadness of all. And the relationship between all humanity is so tight that “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind” (68). Dorothy does describe her direct connectedness with the harmonious universe, but not with mankind. In an inversion of Donne’s statement, deliberate or not, Dorothy, or the slip, is an island unto herself; she has broken off from the main and been washed to the sea. Within

herself, though, she is whole and active and “peopled” with varying forms. The isle, though a tiny room, is filled with and nourishes lush trees, fruit, and flowers as well as insects and birds. This interconnectedness between the diminutive slip and the living things upon it is an image representing Dorothy’s feelings, sentiments, and sympathetic affection, her felt connections with other people, her inward affections and relationships that she describes as flourishing and bountiful. This is a strongly positive statement about her inward life and felt sympathies or social affections, but not a statement describing her outward actions, connectedness, or actual demonstrated sympathy involving interactions with other people.

There is a second initial similarity between Donne’s meditation and “Floating Island” which is inverted. Of the impact one person’s life has after his death, Donne writes: “All mankind ... is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language” (68). Conceptually similar, Dorothy writes that “the lost fragments” of the disintegrated isle “shall remain,/ To fertilize some other ground.” However, the island’s existence and passing are hardly, if at all, observed; there is no sadness among passers by or friends, and she certainly does not see herself as of that “one volume.” All that the speaker of the poem hopes for is that its absence might be noticed by a passerby on “some vacant sunny day.”

In terms of obvious differences, there are these: Donne writes from a seventeenth century religious mindset in order to point out that the ultimate source of unity is God; for Wordsworth, from a romantic’s perspective, it is Nature as the ultimate source. She tells us that “Harmonious Powers” working with “Nature/ ... All in one dutious task agree.”

Second, the points of view or perspectives are quite different – and it is these that really begin to differentiate classic from romantic. Donne comes at his sermon describing broad truths for all – all mankind; Dorothy writes "Floating Island" describing her own perceptions of her experience and how she supports or nourishes that which exists within that experience. In addition, despite all the positive language of harmony, there is an underlying sorrow or isolation that exists beneath the surface of Dorothy's poem, which really is not the case in the "Meditation." The last two stanzas really reflect this sorrow or at least a nostalgic longing to be remembered after death, even while she is alive.

Dorothy poses to the reader/viewer that some day, he might look and find that the island Dorothy is "passed away." What suggests the melancholy is the overtly casual word selection -- she suggests that the reader who is passing by "without an object" might "perchance" notice her – counterbalanced by the poignancy of the circumstances. Her use of the word "slip" to describe the island is the ultimate irony; she "slips" away, she is elusive, and barely noticed. Jerome McGann describes this crucial difference between the assumptions of Donne's age and those of the Wordsworths' in *The Romantic Ideology*. He writes: "Donne does not question his culture's inherited grounds of judgment for the very reason that he does not see those grounds as culturally determined. ... They are matters of fact and truth" (75). Romantic poems, however, tackle such subjects precisely because they "occupy areas of critical uncertainty" (74).

Another significant difference between the two works, one most revealing about sympathetic affection, is the perspective the describer takes regarding the relationship between the part and the whole. Donne, as later would Shaftesbury and Pope, writes that all men/islands are connected to the larger whole continent/humanity. The image of

physical, as well as the emotional or spiritual, connectedness of one person to the whole of humanity and then to a universal system is absolutely clear. Pope, approaching a somewhat different but not unrelated topic, describes the same kind of relationship -- that is, of the part as it fits into the whole -- in the Great Chain of Being. Mankind has a specific place in relation to other men and within the larger cosmos. Edgeworth relates the part to the whole by describing how women need to be trained into the larger scheme of virtues and conduct in order to properly manage their sympathy in society. And Yearsley appeals to rioters and police to understand their appropriate relationship to the community in order to form a more perfect social bond and national identity. The perspective that the writer/describer takes in all of these is an external and objective one, drawn from experience, education, or the senses, which appeals to a conceptual ideal of “appropriate” relationships and the “proper nature” of mankind.

Dorothy Wordsworth does not do this. From her inner and subjective perspective, she reflects that the isle, herself, and the larger universe operate under one broad influence of nature and “harmonious powers” through which they agree on and accomplish a “duteous task.” In addition, she is aware that the life within her -- that which populates the isle -- is nourished and nurtured and lives in harmonious accord. But the clod is dissevered, physically separated from the larger whole of the continent, as she is from mankind. Or, put another way, the broad, universal powers work in harmony as do the life forms nourished by the individual isle; however, there is no middle ground, no “society,” mankind, or “social bond.” So the relationship in Pope is one in which the individual is a part of society which represents humanity, a larger universal ideal; in Dorothy Wordsworth the relationship is one in which the nurturing and intermingled

affections and components of a specific individual's inner being are assumed within "nature's" "harmonious power." There is no intermediate stage of society or mankind in the "chain." While we may say that this represents individual autonomy, it is more like the portrait of isolation from society, hopeful of sympathetic recognition, but not very. In terms of the nature of sympathy as it is reflected in the speaker of "Floating Island," it can be said that sympathy is an inward attitude, not unlike Nature's powers, of nourishment and nurturing, not necessarily demonstrated -- this we cannot tell from the poem -- but reflected on and valued.

Mellor concludes *Romanticism and Gender* with the statement that feminine self history and feminine Romanticism "were based on a subjectivity constructed in relation to other subjectivities, hence a self that is fluid, absorptive, responsive, with permeable ego boundaries" (209). For Mellor they involve "an ethic of care as opposed to an ethic of individual justice" (Mellor 209-210). From this critical perspective, I believe, then, that such subjectivity has implications for the nature of sympathy. The representation of sympathy ultimately lies in varying writers' perspectives as they shift and respond to larger cultural and political dynamics. From an objective, external, or conceptual perspective sympathy is a social affection or virtue rising from the moral sense in which one person experiences or creatively imagines the sensations of another and through which those two people and a larger society form a shared bond. From a subjective perspective, though, it becomes an inward examination of feeling and experience, not necessarily demonstrated or bond forming. The sympathetic affection here in "Floating Island" is one of many inner feelings or sensibilities, which together become a relational and nurturing inter-connectedness of the self and its immediate, varied, abundant, active

inner life and which all together form individual identity. This kind of self history -- a feminine one -- is not a “mighty mind” but a physical embodiment of inner life (Mellor 157), incorporating sympathy not an abstraction or a principle, but a lived experience. Or, as Homans puts it, Dorothy’s experience is a “personal identification with the literal” (Homans, *Bearing*, 65).

For the romantics, sympathy and other affections, such as those in “Floating Island,” exist in significantly different ways than they do for their predecessors’ ideas about order, moral sentiment, or imaginative recreation of someone else’s situation. While Pedro of *Gulliver’s Travels* and Parson Adams of *Joseph Andrews* can also be said to engage in “an ethic of care” while tending to Gulliver, Joseph Andrews, and the unfortunate, Fielding and Swift would call their caregiving virtuous acts of charity and benevolence extended to others and would see them as appropriate interactive behavior *within* a larger community, a moral and social construct. They do not examine their actions or reflect on the nature of their feelings or sentiments. For Dorothy Wordsworth in this poetic reflection on and analysis of her inner life, this ethic is part of her identity, what would constitute for Mellor “a merging of self and other” (Mellor 212).

However, I do not read Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Floating Island” so positively as Mellor does. There is an underlying and pervasive sense of isolation from others, particularly in the last two stanzas when the speaker suggests that the passer by turn his eyes and see where the island *had* been, nor is the tone of loss or regret displaced by the vitality of the island’s inner life. The speaker in Dorothy’s poem might be relying on the power of autobiography -- that is, the relationship between text and reader -- to move that reader to a position of compassionate response and sympathy toward her; however, any

compassionate response on the reader's part, just as the desire for compassion, is purely conjectural and left unsatisfied because of the absence of immediate and proximate social interaction. Such an isolation and loss do not exist for Parson Adams or Pedro for they are set among a larger interactive community.¹¹

The same isolation appears, but more directly stated, in Dorothy's description of herself, her own sense of exclusion from a broader male poetic tradition, and her perceived difficulty writing poetry:

I have made several attempts and have been obliged to give it [writing poetry] up in despair; and looking into my mind I find nothing there, even if I had the gift of language and numbers, that I could have the vanity to suppose could be of any use beyond our own fireside, or to please, as in your case, a few partial friends; but I have no command of language, no power of expressing my ideas, and no one was ever more inapt at molding words into regular meter. (20 April 1806 75-77)¹²

In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M.H. Abrams, distilling the work of Schiller and A.O. Lovejoy, differentiates between the naïve poetry of the ancients and the modern or sentimental man. Apt to the poet and "Floating Island, Abrams concludes that in "sentimental poetry, the poet is constantly present in his work and solicits our attention to himself" primarily because the poet, "no longer in unity either with nature or himself, tends in poetry to substitute his ideal for the given reality" (238). The role of the reader therefore, is, as Schiller expected in his own reading, to "seek the poet in the work, to meet his heart, to reflect with him upon his theme – in short, to see the object in the subject" (as quoted in Abrams *Mirror* 238).

The prime example of masculine self history -- the “assertion of a self that is unified, unique, enduring, capable of initiating activity, and above all aware of itself as a self” (Mellor *Romanticism and Gender* 145) -- is Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* (subtitled after Wordsworth’s death by his widow *Growth of a Poet’s Mind; An Autobiographical Poem*) (1799-1805, 1850). Here Wordsworth attempts to present the development of a continuous or unified self identity which draws from memory, physical sensation, and associationism, but which is more importantly founded on the development of mind and consciousness. Intended to be part of a larger whole including *The Recluse* and the *Prospectus*, Wordsworth describes it as the development of a “transitory Being” who ultimately achieves an enduring “Vision” (Abrams *Natural Supernaturalism* 73-74). Coleridge, responding to the poem, refers to it in “To William Wordsworth” as the “foundations and building up/ Of a Human Spirit” (ll. 4-8). Abrams argues in *Natural Supernaturalism* that *The Prelude* is a “Crisis- Autobiography,” similar to the structure of St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, which includes confession and conversion as well as “retrospection and introspection,” but secularized (Mellor *Romanticism and Gender* 145, Abrams *Natural Supernaturalism* 71-140).¹³ According to Mellor, differentiating masculine from feminine self history, the heroic or converted masculine self of *The Prelude* is “nothing less than the triumph of the maker of the social contract, the construction of the individual who owns his own body, his own mind, and his own labor, and who is free to use that body and labor as he chooses. . . . As Wordsworth enthuses, ‘Now I am free, enfranchis’d and at large,/ May fix my habitation where I will (I: 9-10).’” However, while the hero experiences a fall, there is only a “possible (but never certain) redemption” (147).¹⁴ Abrams argues, though, that while some readers who

persist through the conclusion of *The Prelude* believe that his “shift from pain and evil to love and good has been managed by a logical sleight of hand,” his conversion is, in fact, “instant and absolute” (112-113).

Marion Montgomery’s significant study of Wordsworth, Dante and Eliot, *The Reflective Journey toward Order*, considers Wordsworth’s use of self history as a “quest toward certitude” and a search for “finding some way to transform history into a myth which is believed because it is true absolutely and not simply metaphorically” (xiv), the key problem for the Romantics. Montgomery posits that Wordsworth, as it is also with T. S. Eliot, writes at an historic moment of crisis when materialism threatened spiritual values, when the desire for the new created a “great deal of violent stumbling in the dark,” but also when “ what emerges more and more is that the hunger is for a reasonable and emotionally assuring sense of continuity” (Montgomery 11). Crowley’s work on consumerism and material goods in *The Invention of Comfort*, tracing the ways in which culture and consumerism are related, confirms the significance of the thrust toward material consumption during the late eighteenth century and concludes that early modern Britain became a “society of self conscious consumers oriented toward the satisfaction of new needs” (291). Wordsworth’s poetry acknowledges the dangers of such consumerism and makes clear his fears that the material world was “too much with us” and that “we lay waste our powers” by too much “getting and spending,” (“The World is Too Much With Us” ll. 1-2) such that sensibility was “endangered” to the point that it was immanently “threatened with extinction.” (Montgomery 6-11). This concern, voiced in T. S. Eliot’s questions, for Wordsworth is:

“When the stranger says: What is the meaning of this city?

Do you huddle close together because you love each other?"

What will you answer? "We all dwell together

To make money from each other" ? (Eliot as cited in Montgomery 9)

Wordsworth's response to that question of living together – of community and the social bond - is not to create portraits of impotent J Alfred Prufrock like figures or women coming and going "talking of Michaelangelo" unable to ask the central question about love.¹⁵ His response to the tale of the widow in the "Prospectus" to *The Excursion* is both to review "that Woman's sufferings," to feel the "comfort of a brother's love," and to "bless her" and also to trace "That secret spirit of humanity/ Which... still survived" (I, ll. 922-930). He accomplishes these by detailing a portrait of his own mind, active, creative, and synthetic, not only in the descriptions of his experiences but also in his later analysis of and commentary upon them. Not money, business, or increasing activity of the city, but "man's mind," and particularly the poet's mind, is the "creator capable of rescue from that death in Eliot's wasteland" (Montgomery 9). It is this active and creative mind that is charged with responding to the critical disintegration of the whole social fabric.

While Wordsworth evolves new rules for the diction of poetry and new poetic forms, like this autobiographical form of self history, he also sees the poet's proper role as affecting the continued possibility for human sympathetic connectedness.¹⁶

Montgomery concludes his introductory comments about Wordsworth, as well as Eliot, defining their similar visions:

They too were interested in community, interested in a possible meaning in the city of man larger than its appearance as a place

where one huddles with his fellows “To make money from each other,” the city of getting and spending. Their concern was more generally intelligent than our own frenzied concern. For Eliot and Wordsworth too, among others of our fathers, were concerned with communities of minds and bodies as healthfully founded under the banner of that four letter word which has become so notoriously distorted by us – love. (13)

Wordsworth does this by looking into his experience as did Dorothy, and analyzing his mind and nature for “the forms of things” (“Prospectus” l. 940) or “universal things.” Here he finds human love but also that intellectual love which “proceeds/ More for the brooding soul, and is divine” and “exalted” reason which has “been the moving soul / Of our long labour” (XIII, ll. 164-172).

In discussing self history, Mellor argues that Wordsworth takes this role, one of looking into his own mind, to an extreme especially in *The Prelude* and believes that his self absorption, one component of masculine self history, is quite apparent and clearly exemplified to the extent that it distracts from, if not “under cuts” and defeats the thrust toward community building (Mellor 145-154). Montgomery, too, doubts that Wordsworth is actually able fully to escape or stand outside of his own romantic and inwardly turning mind; however, I also believe that Montgomery’s argument differs from Mellor’s in that he doubts that absorption in any kind of self history, per se, can foster the social bond. He argues that some parts of Wordsworth’s early work represent the activity of living in the past and “invoking the phantom of past experience” (122). When such work, “not only in the early Wordsworth, but subsequently in many writers who are

unable to come to terms with history except through the process of divorcing the self from time,” reflects only the temporal, it becomes either “malignant” or “voluptuary” self history. Wordsworth repudiates Oswald’s reduction of benevolence in early *The Borderers* (1796-1797, 1842) to having “Become[s] at last weak and contemptible” (II, 70); such self history promotes neither sympathy nor community building. Montgomery concludes, though, that the later Wordsworth was his own most severe critic in this matter, particularly as shown in “Ode to Duty” and “Elegiac Stanzas” (122-125), and his later poetry reflects a hopefulness yet of a “sensibility still alive” (Montgomery 122). Wordsworth discusses his own awareness about the dangers of excessive absorption in one’s own mind in other texts, notably in an essay “On the Character of Rivers” which accompanies *The Borderers* -- a play with semi autobiographical elements of Wordsworth’s mindset during the French Revolution. This essay demonstrates through a downward spiraling the extent to which the romantic mind can “exhaust itself in constant efforts” (62), eventually to misguide and deceive, turning “back on herself” (II, ll. 233-234) so thoroughly that it is unable to judge. The mind bent completely inward asserts “its own place” and “creates its own world” (Montgomery 114); it has its own “feelings” and “reason” that are “equally busy in contracting its dimensions and pleading for its necessity” (Wordsworth, “Character” 68). What Wordsworth implies throughout the whole essay and states directly in its first sentence is that the self absorbed mind is absent of “any solid principles of genuine benevolence” (62).

“Nutting” (1899-1800) can be read as self indulgent self history until the last three lines and except for two words inserted in the poem which reflect or comment on the incident rather than describe it. The explanatory words which preface the poem explain it

as a self history of sorts -- that it was “intended as part of a poem on my own life” and a “remembrance of the feelings I had often had when a boy” (111). The poem itself, a spot of time full of the language of a voluptuary, details his setting out filled with the “eagerness of boyish hope” (l. 4) and discovery of a “virgin scene” (l. 21). The scene, as he describes it, is lush -- “beds of matted fern,” hazel tress “tall and erect, with tempting clusters,” “ a “banquet” before which he stood “voluptuous” and “with sudden happiness beyond all hope” (ll. 15–29). The scene then assumes for him the nature of a “bower of bliss” – of pure sensuous delight, pleasure, ease, and joy. “Merciless” and self indulgent, the boy ravages the trees, leaving them “deformed and sullied” (ll. 45-47). The poem, left at this point, would remain self history in which the mind turned inward “asserts its own place” and “creates its own world.”

However, there are two words, “indifferent” and “Wasting” (ll. 41-42), inserted before the description of the destruction of the bower that suggest a later commentary or reflection and self criticism and that also anticipate the sudden shift in voice in the closing three lines. For the boy at the time of the excursion, these things, the nuts, trees, stones, and moss, are not indifferent, nor from his perspective is he wasting his energies; however, for the mature and reflective poet, these things and the energies he put into them do not carry the same importance or engage him in the way that a non material nature -- a “spirit in the woods” -- now does (l. 51). His mind cloaks them in a different way. In the last three lines, the poet’s address to “dearest Maiden” takes the poem a step away from complete self absorption toward concern for another. But the poem does not present a complete expression of sympathy or other centeredness; it is still his temporal experience or self history upon which he bases this connection of some intimacy with

both the listener and Nature. The poet assumes, but does not verify or have evidence to verify, that his listener has sensibilities that are “finely tuned” enough to respond with sympathy or understanding.¹⁷

“Tintern Abbey” (1798), Wordsworth’s great poem in worship of physical nature and that sublime Nature, that presence which “rolls through all things” (l. 102), can also be read as self history, and as such, despite his reference to Dorothy, a poem more concentrated on private experience than social. The lines prior to his reference to Dorothy (ll. 1 –115) trace Wordsworth’s recollection of the scene as it was five years before and as it is now in his more somber and meditative state. The details of the landscape are plentiful, and the poet recollects that *he* saw, *he* heard, *he* beheld, *he* luxuriated in the experience of nature. Such luxuriating created “sensations sweet” and then passed to his “purer mind/ With tranquil restoration” (ll. 27-30). From that awareness of physical nature, the poet recalls his transformation into a “Living soul” where “We see into the life of things” (ll. 46-49). The poet continues on to contrast his sense experience of physical nature in the past with his present awareness of that “motion and spirit, that impels/ ...And rolls through all things” (ll. 100- 102). He concludes that that perception is “The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/ Of all my moral being” (ll. 110-111).

The very form of the poem -- autobiography with constant attention on what the speaker felt, learned, observed, perceived -- however, undercuts the credibility or impact of references to acts of sympathy. For example, the poet refers to one influence the experience of nature has -- that of “unremembered pleasure” and of “little,” “nameless” acts/ Of kindness and love” (ll. 30–34). The word that is important here is

“unremembered.” The poet does not remember the specific acts of kindness or love themselves which produced his pleasure (l. 31). However, the poet does recall that his experiences were pleasurable to him. What stands out here above all is *his* pleasure, *his* experience, not the sympathetic interaction or the social bonds that might have resulted from the acts of love. The same kind of approach might be taken with Wordsworth’s reference to his hearing the “still, sad music of humanity” (l. 91). This is not a line expressive of his sympathy for a suffering humanity if sympathy is understood as an interactive process where the observer and sufferer respond to each other. It may be that this line expresses some genuine sentiment or almost existential sympathetic feeling toward others, but that feeling is contained within the poet rather like Dorothy’s vitality and affection are contained within herself in “Floating Island.” Or it may be that within romanticism, sympathy mutates and becomes one sided precisely because romanticism is essentially self history; here, the poet is aware of suffering humanity but is either so thoroughly self absorbed -- the “egotistical sublime” -- to engage with it or is so reflective, so within his own mind, as to be incapable of action and interaction.

From one perspective, the reference to Dorothy and Wordsworth’s appeal to her would yet again fall short of being representative of an opportunity for sympathetic bonding. It is too one sided. The poet reaffirms his union with both nature and Nature “of eye, and ear, -- both what they half create/ And what perceive” (ll. 106-107). They are the “guide” and “guardian” of his “moral being” (110-111). However, at this moment when the poet seems most intensely reflective, he somewhat abruptly recalls that Dorothy is with him, and it appears that he addresses her as one in sympathetic union with him. He writes, “Thou art with me ... thou my dearest Friend/ My dear, dear Friend” (114-116).

From one the vantage point of self history, the poet operates egotistically from within his own mind and assumes that his experience will be Dorothy's. In addition, instead of offering his own love or sympathy toward her as comfort in the future, the poet extends to Dorothy the reminder that their "cheerful faith" and "Nature" will uphold them against disappointment (122-132).

From another perspective, the entire concluding section represents a significant appeal for sympathy. The poet assigns Dorothy tasks, but these are no ordinary tasks; rather they are tasks involving feeling. Dorothy is affectionately called to remember that together they stood at this site, to recall that he worshiped nature with holy love and zeal, and to remember that this landscape was dear to him for its sake and for hers. This perspective, once again, is one sided and comes from self -- the poet's experience of it, his understanding of her, the dearness of it all to him -- for Dorothy has no voice. But it is here that the poem goes farther in terms of sympathy. The lines from the introduction of Dorothy to the close appear to be fraught with anxiety; Montgomery states that here in "Tintern Abbey" "Wordsworth stands troubled in the shade [with] ... the fear that feeling is not inherent in nature but imposed upon images by the lonely awareness" (154).

Throughout the poem, his mind has assigned to nature significant powers that inform his identity. And while the poet says that he trusts nature, that "Nature never did betray/ The heart that loved her" and that nature leads "From joy to joy" (ll. 122-125), he says these things as part of a prayer and "cheerful faith" (l. 132), not from absolute knowledge and certainty. Montgomery continues: "That turning to Dorothy suggests itself a movement to escape the terror of the self as an illusion. It is a reaching outward to another person to affirm her mind as a mansion for all lovely forms as his has been. He sees in her eyes a

proof of his memories of at least that experience of five years earlier” (155). Wordsworth, at this climactic point in the poem, is the sufferer appealing to Dorothy for her sympathy. He is the “worshipper of nature,” but despite that still a sufferer, hopeful that through her intercession and her memory, his experiences will have some greater meaning.

At this point, it becomes necessary to step back for a few moments and consider sympathy and social interconnectedness from a third perspective. Basing his arguments in Condillac’s theory of the development of language and Adam Smith’s comments on the development of self identity and conscience, Alan Bewell in *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment* argues that self reflection, which is a significant component of “Tintern Abbey,” is “intrinsically social” and “mediated by others” (77).¹⁸ Bewell builds his case in this way: Adam Smith’s *Theory on Moral Sentiments* includes a discussion of the importance of the presence of another or of a “mirror” in order to develop an idea of self. His position, as is Condillac’s, is that a “wild child,” someone outside of or prior to the formation of society, is without self identity or an idea of self because he has no “mirror,” no one to reflect back on or interact with to determine an identity (77). Smith writes:

Were it possible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, tan of the beauty or deformity of his own face.... Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before.” (Smith 110; Bewell 77)

Bewell continues this analysis of Smith: “ ‘Who we are’ as well as ‘who we think we are,’ depends on our ability to see ourselves reflected in the actions and the eyes of others. Others provide us with the means of seeing ourselves, which we ‘cannot easily see’ or which we ‘naturally’ do ‘not look at’” (Smith 112, Bewell 77). Bewell concludes, given this line of argument, that “Self reflection, then, always comes from the outside” and involves some interplay between self and others (77). In this respect, it shares at least one significant component with sympathy.

This analysis of self reflection in Smith does not appear to operate within Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Floating Island” poem, but it does clarify even further an understanding of Dorothy’s identity as island -- one that desires to be seen even if it is after its death. Separate, floating alone, slipping away, it does have an identity, some certainty within itself, and a conception of itself as inwardly vital. Whether this identity is the result of an interactive process that results in self reflection prior to the onset of the poem or it is the result of a purely internal process is uncertain; there is no information given that suggests that there is a “mirror” or that identity is mediated by or dependent upon others. Instead, this identity is formed, individual, independent, and self defining in relation to the larger natural world. From this perspective, what the closing lines of “Floating Island” do is put the reader/observer on notice and appeal to him to “see.” The tone of loss resides, not in confusion about identity, but in the solitariness of the island’s existence and disintegration in the human world. Consistent with Mellor’s discussion of feminine self history, the larger social dynamic stands independent of the formation of female identity. Would it be possible to consider Dorothy’s relationship with the reader as one of “sympathy in potency” and one that goes both ways -- as one in which the

speaker/island's appeal for sympathy is completed by an attuned but distanced reader, as well as one in which the self reflective reader turns toward the island and finds her own identity reflected in the island's existence?

The self reflection in William Wordsworth's poems, however, with this line of argument, does contain a social interactiveness, a sympathetic interplay between self and others, in order to solidify both knowledge and identity. The present dear and trusted listener can operate as "mirror" and conscience. All throughout, the poems emphasize the poet's solitary ways and inward turning. In "Nutting" he travels out into nature and ravages the grove alone. In "Tintern Abbey" the poet turns inward upon his own mind, and the recollection of the past scene and the reflection on his changed perceptions occur as though he is alone. However, the poet, aware that the presence of "others provide[s] us with the means of seeing ourselves," also turns toward or appeals to, albeit briefly, a present listener. In "Nutting" the presence of the "dearest Maiden" allows the poet's mind, as Smith describes it, to function and create the opportunity for him to scrutinize his conduct. The closing lines reveal an almost confessional acknowledgement of sin, pain, contrition, and broadened awareness along with a resolve to not only avoid the "sin" again, but also teach the inexperienced, much as the Ancient Mariner does. The presence of the listener in "Tintern Abbey" initially comes as a surprise because the poet's inward turning appears to be so thorough and so enthusiastic as to exclude another. The sudden appeal to a present listener, again, this time Dorothy, sets up an opportunity for the poet to avoid solipsism, acknowledge his own lack of certainty, express his hopes that his perceptions of nature are true, to join with Dorothy in prayer, and to entrust his inner self to her care. Thus, he turns to Dorothy, the mirror, to establish a sympathetic connection.

Shifting his focus from those circumstances when the sympathetic others are present to those when they are absent, Bewell continues his discussion of this self reflective activity by again referring to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but this time to a section on conscience. Conscience, according to Smith, acts in the place of an actual separate observer. Internal to the sufferer, it is an imaginative response that acts as if it were the observer, present to view and respond to the sufferer; thus, both sufferer and observer are within the same person. It contains the same self reflecting properties, just as if the observer were present. Smith describes the operation of conscience:

We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behaviour and endeavor to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct." (Smith 112, Bewell 77).

In this context, conscience, a reflecting mirror, has all the principle components of the classic definition of sympathy except for one, the fact that observer and sufferer are two different people. Instead, the observer and sufferer are two components of the one self. Conscience observes and then responds to the suffering self with correction or support; it responds in an imaginative way; the suffering self, in turn, responds back to the conscience (self); as a result, some form of communication and a bond are formed between the two. This operation of conscience in an age of feeling, of increased emphasis on individual experience, of self history, I propose, is a form of sympathy that I would term "self sympathy" -- one form that sympathy takes among the romantics, if any kind of demonstrated interactive sympathy (rather than sympathy in potency) is to exist at all.

Such sympathy is a completely internal, reflective process stemming from an isolated or individualized experience, and in essence different from the sympathy between a sufferer and an external observer because it does not immediately form a social bond or enrich community life.

Following this logic farther, “self sympathy,” a circumstance in which the sufferer and observer reside at the same time in the same physical person, has the potential for creating a divided or split self, particularly for the romantic, and thus exacerbating the sense of isolation, or it has the potential for creating intense and active examination of inner life. Self sympathy is what characterizes the divided and “malignant mind,” one too devoid of external contact to act as an external sympathetic corrective as in *The Borderers*. On the other hand, self sympathy of the undivided self most completely describes the circumstances in the “Floating Island” poem. Dorothy both experiences and observes that experience; she is able to suffer, respond to that suffering, and objectify her life as positive and fruitful. She may be isolated, but she is not a divided self.

Smith’s description of the operation of conscience is structured in the same way as his description of sympathy; he uses the language and relationships of observer and sufferer similar to those of sympathy; and he details the notion of the divided self:

When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself, as it were, into two persons; and that I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judges of. The first is the

spectator, whose sentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavour to enter into, by placing myself in his situation, and by considering how it would appear to me, when seen from that particular point of view. The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself, and of whose conduct, under the character of a spectator, I was endeavoring to form some opinion. The first is the judge; the second the person judged of.

(113)

Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1799-1805, 1819- 1820, and 1832-1850) ¹⁹ is obvious self history which incorporates Smith's sense of conscience -- that mind which is both sufferer and observer -- especially because of the poem's structure, its inclusion of Wordsworth's actions and experiences, his immediate and later reflections on and judgments of the experiences, the poem's shifts between past and present tense, and the poet's method --more than a fifty year extensive reworking and revision of the texts. As a result is also represents self sympathy. It began as an assemblage of fragmented autobiographical details and when completed became a detailed portrait of the development of the imaginative and prophetic mind (Reed I, 4). M.H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* describes the structure as a "present remembrance of things past, in which forms and sensations...evoke the former self which coexists with the altered present self in a multiple awareness that Wordsworth calls 'two consciousnesses'" (75). He points out that passage in Book II in which Wordsworth describes the "vacancy" or gap between the self of present time and the self of the past times described in the poem. This "vacancy" appears to be "two consciousnesses, consciousness of myself/ And of some other Being" (II. 27-33). This structure then creates that circumstance in *The*

Prelude, in which Wordsworth is both sufferer and observer. In addition, the Advertisement to the poem indicates that it is the poet's "review of his own mind," the "origin and progress of his own powers," and, really emphasizing the self reflective and mirroring nature of the work, a record "as far as he was acquainted with" those powers (124). Wordsworth himself acknowledges the two parts within himself in *The Prelude* in Book XIII – those two natures, / The one that feels, the other that observes" (330-331).

In *The Reflective Journey toward Order* Marion Montgomery concludes that, given this approach of autobiography and self history, romanticism represents an unhealthy – or non social - mindset, one self absorbed, one that turns in upon itself (115-123). Such a mind in which sufferer and observer reside colors the world and has no corrective voice. It becomes, as Max Scheler defines it in *The Nature of Sympathy*, egotistical, self illusory, and not founded on external or objective values. Wordsworth himself concludes, describing his inward turning mind and the peak of his despair in Book XI of *The Prelude*, that without the external objective and corrective power of a sympathetic other, he became:

Confounded, more and more
 Misguided, and misguiding ... endlessly perplexed
 With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
 Of obligation, what the rule and whence
 The sanction; till, ... I lost
 All feeling of conviction, and in fine,
 Sick, wearied out with contrarities,
 Yielded up moral questions in despair. (*Prelude*, XI: ll. 293-305)

This reference to Wordsworth's youthful experiences recorded in *The Prelude* as self sympathy is not to deny, however, its significance as a poem that from 1805 onward reflects "intensifications of his [Wordsworth's] desire to explore the interrelationship of his personal experience, the generic nature of human growth to maturity of spirit, and the common experience of humankind during the great shaping events of his era" (Reed I: 5).

²⁰ On one level early lines in Book I of the *Thirteen-Book Prelude* make clear the structure that pervades *The Prelude*: Wordsworth's split into two components within himself, his method of recollection and then reflection on an experience, and his incorporation of self sympathy. Even though Wordsworth, fearful of complete insularity, appeals to his friend Coleridge and to Dorothy as corrective voices, for sympathy, both Coleridge and Dorothy are "auditor[s] in *absentia*" (Abrams, *Natural* 74).

21

Wordsworth proceeds in interior monologue or in "an extended colloquy with the landscape in which the interlocutors are 'my mind' and the 'speaking face of earth and heaven'" (74). Beginning with line 117 and using the past tense, Wordsworth recalls his "admiration" and "love" for the "life/ In common things" which were followed by a "longing" to "fix in a visible home/ ... The many feelings that oppress'd my heart" (I: 117-134). ²² Shifting to present tense, he progresses to reflect on his hope but describes his current disappointment in that hope. He writes, "But I have been discouraged: gleams of light/ Flash often from the East, then disappear/ And mock me" (I: 135-137). In addition, he describes the split within himself between mind and heart; while "many feelings" "oppress'd his heart," his mind now "finds impediments" (I: 138-141). Finally, the poet moves from description of himself to reflection on his current circumstances set

within a larger framework. However, within this description is a very clear awareness in the poet of both a split and an interplay between mind and instincts or voluptuous activity and “infinite delay.”

And now it would content me to yield up
 These lofty hopes a while for present gifts
 Of humbler industry. But, O dear Friend!
 The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;
 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
 Though no distress be near him but his own
 Unmanageable thoughts. The mind itself,
 The meditative mind, best pleased, perhaps
 While she, as duteous as the Mother Dove,
 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end
 But hath less quiet instincts, goadings-on
 That drive her, as in trouble, through the groves.
 With me is now such passion, which I blame
 No otherwise than as it lasts too long. (I: 142-157)

The poet on one hand “yearn[s] towards some philosophic Song/ Of Truth that cherishes our daily life,” but on the other “from this awful burthen .../ Take[s] refuge, and beguile[s] myself with trust/ That mellow years will bring a riper mind/ And clearer insight” (I: 235-239). He is divided between “want of power” and “paramount impulse,” “timorous capacity” and “prudence,” “humility” and “subtle selfishness” (I: 240-251). In fact, the poet extends this sense of split within himself farther by admitting that his

own “selfishness” betrays him; it locks up his “functions,” “dupes” him; it “beats off/ Simplicity and self-presented truth” (I: 248-252). The poet vacillates even more, wondering if it were “better far... to stray about/Voluptuously through fields and rural walks” and give himself over to “vacant musings” (I: 253-256). The poet and his mind are at odds; he is “baffled by a mind” that “Turns recreant to her task” and travels “Unprofitably ... towards the grave” (I: 260-270). While Donne’s poem “No Man is an Island” and Pope’s *Essay on Man* reflect firm belief in the interconnectedness of all men and certain universal principles, “the aim of the Romantic poem,” from McGann’s perspective, “is to rediscover the ground of stability” (73).

The next lines of Wordsworth’s self history describe two central spots of time, scenes of his schoolboy bird poaching and nest robbing, and they continue this idea of duality within the self. However, more importantly, they form the basis for understanding how the elements of the traditional definition of sympathy – imaginative response to another’s situation which is interactive and creates social bond – become the romantic’s sympathy. First, in these scenes Wordsworth sets up the two components; he refers to both “I” and “my soul” and to the opposition between “strong desire” and “better reason,” the boy and his as yet vague awareness of “the spirit in the wood” (I: 305-322). This is not an opposition between the boy and physical nature, but the boy and his perceptions. Guilty, the boy perceives/hears sounds of nature, “low breathings coming after” him and “loud dry wind” blowing through his ears (I: 329-250), in response. These perceived sounds, heightened by the imagination, act as mirrors, as conscience as Smith describes it, or as agents for the boy’s later self reflection and analysis of his relationship

with nature. In other words, these perceived sounds represent the observer, the other, and the corrective influence that the sympathetic observer provides.

Wordsworth immediately follows the second of the two spot of time scenes with a shift from his personal, youthful recollection to a broad commentary on the harmonious workings of the mind. Just as the observer and the sufferer form a social bond through sympathy, the components of the self reflective mind form a sympathetic unity “framed even like the breath/ And harmony of music” (I: 352-353). Wordsworth describes this unification brought about through:

A dark
 Invisible workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, and makes them move
 In one society. Ah me! That all
 The terrors, all the early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, that all
 The thoughts and feelings which have been infus'd
 Into my mind should ever have made up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself. Praise to the end! (I: 353-362)

Here, in Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, and romanticism, is the epitome of self history; here, through sympathetic self reflection, the unification of the components of the self is glorified and praised, and forever supplants the unification between self and external sufferer as the primary focus of sympathy.²³

There are two significant considerations at this point which redirect the discussion of sympathy at this point. The first is an analysis of the writer/reader relationship at the end of the eighteenth century as one founded on the expectation of a sympathetic rapport. The second is Wordsworth's own maturation and repositioning which, as James K. Chandler suggests, is fundamentally a reinvestment in traditional British cultural and social values. In *Relationships of Sympathy*, Thomas J. McCarthy, framing his position on sympathetic autobiography, argues that during the English Romantic period not only was sympathy "prominent," but readers also expected to be "engaged in sympathetic relationship with texts and authors" (117). The writer of self history, or the autobiographer, "is relieved of the burden of 'explaining' or 'revealing' himself before the reader, since the reader actively, willingly ... participates in the self- constitution" (117). McCarthy draws from Elizabeth Bruss's work, *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre*, in order to emphasize that, more than being a "kind of writing," autobiography included an "active quality" in which the "reader's co-participation" is "intimate" (Bruss 163).²⁴

McCarthy argues that romantic authors of autobiographical works viewed the success of that autobiography or 'life' as dependent upon a 'mutuality,' the extent to which readers co-participated in that life and responded with sympathy. The experience of mutuality from the writer/sufferer's perspective is anticipated, sought after, or assumed, and, as McCarthy argues, is the basis for creating meaning (118). Romantic autobiography, then, by nature and authorial design is reciprocal, creating a new kind of sympathetic bond between the experience of the writer as presented in the text and the reader. However, and this is the central problem to sympathy as the interrelationship

between text and author - that mutuality, or sympathy, is always a hoped for and never a present or demonstrated response; it may never occur within the writer's actual experience but exists in some different realm than two people confronting each other. This is what creates its tenuousness. Since the text-reader mutuality is not immediate, it has the potential for leaving the sufferer wallowing in his solipsism, uncorrected or unsatisfied (unless that correction occurs through the process of self sympathy), and it necessarily excludes an interactive social bonding and display of virtue. In some way, the poem or the literary expression itself must be effective enough to become the basis for forming community.

McCarthy, however, defends romantic self history against arguments of ineffectiveness, insularity, and solipsism on the basis of the cultural milieu. He describes the culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as one in which "sympathy was prominent." On a large scale, the very fact that texts were autobiographical marked a "culminating phase in a history of self consciousness" and created the expectation that readers were "engaged in sympathetic relationship" with these texts, a relationship of "a remarkably intimate level." This "distanced" kind of sympathy, then, rather than a display or opportunity for virtue or interaction between two people, becomes the writer's goal, relying upon "co-participation" between the writer or text and the reader (117). However, the effectiveness of such "co participation" is dependent upon the writer's ability to create clear linguistic patterns or patterns of meaning, his desire for that sympathetic bond, the reader's active willingness to cooperate, and his ability to respond to descriptions of sometimes extreme psychological or emotional states (McCarthy 118, 144).²⁵

Wordsworth, in his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, defending his use of the ordinary language of men, makes clear language heightened importance for establishing this co-participation: “Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. . . . the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves” (796). Alexander Smith’s 1835 essay, “The Philosophy of Poetry,” consistent with Wordsworth’s description of the proper role of the poet as binding “together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society” (795), contends that poetry especially must “transmit that feeling from one mind to another . . . creating a sympathetic participation of it in the mind of the hearer” (McCarthy 145). As a result, poetry or the literary work, according to Richard Altic, “ceased to be an artistic object and was transformed into the person of its creator” (Altic 148).²⁶

The more mature, reflective Wordsworth defines sympathy in terms of the philosophic mind and of faith. While the process of sympathy prior to the romantics progresses from internal to external - from observation, to identification, to instruction and interaction, and finally to community building - with the romantics, confronted with individualization and self history, the process of sympathy is essentially internal; it begins with self absorption in the sensation followed by observation of that sensation, then self analysis. Only after that self analysis proceeds some synthesis with or connection to broader human experience, even though it, too, is completely internalized. It is on this other level that a second structure pervades *The Prelude* and creates a tension between self sympathy and a broader sympathy and philosophic awareness. Wordsworth describes precisely what those connections with the broader human experience are in “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” (1803-1806) and in the later lines of the “Prospectus.”

In the “Intimations Ode” itself Wordsworth steps beyond self sympathy and the workings within his own mind, even if they included the “visionary gleam,” to see more directly that philosophical and

primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be,

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,

In the years that bring the philosophic mind. (ll. 182-187)

Similarly, the old Man in the “Prospectus” tells the listener not to mourn the widow’s death because her consolation lay in the might of prayer and “that consolation” which springs/ From sources deeper far than deepest pain” (I, ll. 936-938). The listener, in sympathetic response, experienced in his “heart ... / So still an image of [the widow’s] tranquility” that his own

sorrow and despair...

Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,

Nowhere, dominion o’er the enlightened spirit

Whose meditative sympathies repose

Upon the breast of Faith. (I, ll.945-955)

Here sympathy is not experienced with the same physical immediacy as it is between Jane and her brother in Baillie’s *DeMonfort*; however, it does have a similar basis in faith as well as a broad foundation in benevolence.

Wordsworth's stated goal, of which *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* were intended parts, was to create a vast record examining the nature of man, rather like Pope's intended project with the *Essay on Man* and the *Moral Epistles*. In tracing the progress, twists, and turns of his own mind, he provides a model for all of mankind, one in which he warns "repeatedly" of threats to the "moral fiber of his countrymen" brought on by "social, political and economic disintegration" (Montgomery 4). In this intent, Wordsworth's *Prelude* acts as the sympathetic observer of the "wasteland" about to engulf the English. Montgomery sees the great poems –"Tintern Abbey," "Intimations Ode," and *The Prelude* as demonstrating Wordsworth's concern:

for establishing his own identity in an alien world, and the necessity of a poetics suitable to it, [which] lead him to discoveries and statements about the possibilities of poetry in the modern world. He set out to treat the common in an uncommon way, to make legitimate to the art of words a subject that has become the burden of modern song and story: the insignificant individual as a substitute for Oedipus or Prometheus. He set out, in other words, to replace the burden of the song of the ancient poets, addressed by them to the elite in the interest of their glory, with the burden of those folk ballads which treat of the lowly with a concern for their oppression and abuse." (Montgomery 231)

However, while Wordsworth's tendency to be caught within the isolation and subjectivism of self sympathy and self history infuses his early work, including the early *Prelude*, his intent was to bring forward his mind as a model for mankind and to counter the effects of empiricism, rationalism, and progress of science in the world around him. His prefatory words to the "Intimations Ode" (1807) suggest some of this subjectivism

and his later rejection of it; he writes, “I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature” (353).²⁷ In the closing lines of Book XIII of *The Prelude* (1850 version) the more mature poet describes the mind as sympathetic observer and correcting influence, and at the same time he also acknowledges and distinguishes between the world of his mind and an external reality, one infused with moral life.

Moreover, each man’s Mind is to herself
 Witness and judge; and I remember well
 That in life’s every-day appearances
 I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
 Of a new world – a world, too, that was fit
 To be transmitted, and to other eyes
 Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws
 Whence spiritual dignity originates,
 Which do both give it being and maintain
 A balance, an ennobling interchange
 Of action from without and from within;
 The excellence, pure function, and best power
 Both of the object seen, and the eye that sees. (ll. 366-378)

Wordsworth, taking Burke’s conciliatory and synthetic approach in the political arena, as poet assumes the position “We compensate, we reconcile, we balance” (Burke 198).

Self immersion is replaced by that one Mind, benevolence, which rolls through all things. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth, a century after Shaftesbury, calls

the language of moral abstractions into question. In addition, his 1798 fragmentary “Essay on Morals” essentially presents this position: rationalism and dry utilitarianism, as represented by Godwin and Paley, are “impotent”; they cannot effectively teach morals because they contain no picture of human life; they describe nothing” (103). In both of these documents, Wordsworth does not question the existence of sympathy, the moral sense, or virtue; however, he does argue for replacing abstractions with the “real language of men” (792). The poet is the one who can teach “moral philosophy ... with sufficient power to melt into our affections” (103) because through his own heightened experience and through the new language of poetry he can speak more directly to the feelings and shared sympathies. Wordsworth conceived of his whole work, *The Prelude*, *The Prospectus*, and *The Excursion* combined, in the same terms that Hazlitt introduced his “Argument in Defense of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind” -- that “the human mind is naturally disinterested, or that it is naturally interested in the welfare of others in the same way, and from the same direct motives, by which we are impelled to the pursuit of our own interest” (1).²⁸

James K. Chandler’s study of Wordsworth’s poetry, *Wordsworth’s Second Nature*, also argues against any position that suggests that *The Prelude* is essentially an insular autobiographical study and an immersion solely in the self. Chandler challenges two kinds of arguments: one that relegates large portions of the *Thirteen Book Prelude*, most notably the spots of time, to be read as purely private moments, psychological descriptions of a single person’s reaction to affecting situations, psychoanalysis, Wordsworth’s “private vision” or “private myth” (Chandler 184-185). The other argument that he dismisses labels *The Prelude* as that single most document which marks

the “great break” from all that had gone before. This massive autobiographical and psychological study is, he argues, a reflection of the ongoing inner life of the English when all of the parts are read in the context of the whole. That is, *The Prelude* reflects longstanding tradition, the British mindset and culture itself; whether consciously or not, he points out, it thoroughly incorporates those persisting British natural and moral sentiments, including the concept of sympathy. While it would appear that the specific eighteenth century “communally accepted patterns” and “symbols” which had “made sense of the world” had begun to disappear, the chain of being, for example, the Romantic poets, Chandler argues, shared many of the broad general cultural characteristics with those who came before them.

Specifically, Chandler points out that Wordsworth constructed symbols and patterns among his experiences in order to find meaning, a process which would offset any tendency to perceive the world as chaotic. Within the whole of *The Prelude* Wordsworth’s mental activity and discipline created analogies and saw likenesses among experiences as did his eighteenth century predecessors (Chandler 185-186). One prime example of this activity is Wordsworth’s analysis of and reflection upon the spots of time in order to relate them to his later experiences. In Book XI of *The Prelude* on the imagination, he refers to these spots of time as restorative, retaining:

A vivifying virtue, whence ...
 our minds
 Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
 That penetrates, enables us to mount,

When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen. (ll. 26-268)

These spots of time are “Such moments” that are “worthy of all gratitude” (l. 274).

Wordsworth’s mental engagement in a process of locating “correspondences between the literal and figurative,” goes beyond any similarities with his eighteenth century predecessors, however; it is an essential characteristic of the entire British national character and a “cultural inheritance” (Chandler 197).

In an additional way, Wordsworth takes part in a larger cultural tradition. Initially a radical in search of psychological anonymity and the “freedom of the individual mind,” he rejected rationalism to embrace the tradition of moral sentiments. He writes:

... I took the knife in hand
 And stopping not at parts less sensitive,
 Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
 The living body of society
 Even to the heart; I pushed without remorse
 My speculations forward; yea, set foot
 On Nature’s holiest places. ...
 And the errors into which I was betrayed
 By present objects, and by reasonings false ...
 Out of a heart which had been turned aside
 From Nature by external accidents. (X ll. 873 – 887)

By “human love” and “Nature’s self,” Wordsworth passed “through the weary labyrinth” / ...to open day” (X ll. 919-924). Finally, Wordsworth, as well as his eighteenth century predecessors, was aware of a connection between the moral sense and feeling. About this

“inner feeling,” Chandler argues that “the cultural past” which is expressed in terms of the moral sentiments survives in Wordsworth in Book XI as:

Those mysteries of passion which have made,
 And shall continue evermore to make –
 In spite of all that reason hath performed,
 And shall perform, to exalt and to refine –
 One brotherhood of all the human race,
 Through all the habitations of past years,
 And those to come. (ll. 253-258) ²⁹

Chandler concludes that “what this Romantic poet [Wordsworth] finds when he looks into the disciplined mind of man is not a substitute for tradition... but rather tradition itself, in its psychological recapitulation” (198). He goes even further to suggest that British “traditionalism” – including Wordsworth’s and even Edmund Burke’s – “depends upon a strongly psychologized view of the world... and has survived in spite of suspicions to the contrary” (198). What Chandler refers to, then, as Wordsworth’s second nature is his deeply embedded and culturally inherited psychological life, best demonstrated through the Book X rejection of excessive rationalism and the Book XI spots of time passages. These are, in conclusion, compelling arguments that despite all his anxieties about the possibility of sympathy, the later Wordsworth assumed into his thinking and relied on the existence of the very social affections, sympathy and benevolence, that Pope detailed so confidently and dogmatically.

Lionel Trilling, prior to Chandler, likewise argues that *The Prelude* is more than pure self history. In *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling, drawing from Wordsworth’s

“Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, explains how “sentiments become ideas by a natural and imperceptible process.” Wordsworth continues, “Our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings” (Trilling ix.). Trilling explains in another way; “Everything begins in sentiment and assumption and finds its issue in political actions and institutions. The converse is also true: just as sentiments become ideas, ideas eventually establish themselves as sentiments” (Trilling ix). Realism of this kind is displayed through the “moral imagination,” that is, “those sentiments, attitudes, and implicit beliefs that temper pure reason and take the social form of manners” (Congdon 306-307). In an essay critiquing the moral sense tradition, Congdon describes it as an amalgamation of mind and emotion, “the rational and the sensible” that dignifies social relationships and that allows for the exercise of liberties, the maintenance of social order, and the encouragement of virtue, sympathy and benevolence (307).

However confident Wordsworth might or might not have been in the possibility of sympathy and social connectedness, the era in which he matured assumed within it, if not the chilling gloom of the opening lines of Coleridge’s “Dejection: An Ode,” the pervasive sorrow in his poem “The Mad Monk”:

There was a time when earth, and sea, and skies,
The bright green vale, and forest’s dark recess,
With all things, lay before mine eyes
In steady loveliness:
But now I feel, on earth’s uneasy scene,
Such sorrows as will never cease; -

I only ask for peace;

If I must live to know that such a time has been! (4)

At the end of the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke wrote in the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in praise of those “sentiments which beautify and soften society” (Congdon 307). Anticipating the attacks on a moral sensibility inherent in revolution, he worried that:

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 own naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded [by the French revolutionaries] as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.”

(as quoted in Congdon 307)

Burke’s fear about the impact of revolution, and subsequent devaluing of sympathy and moral sensibility, was realized within fifty years, not by internal political upheaval but by the redefinition of the nature of man and his individual liberty within his own country. John Stuart Mill’s fundamental principle of liberty emphasizes individual right and exercise of freedom in such a way as to strip away any focus on shared sentiments or principles for the collective good. Mill writes that “the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individual or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self protection” (Mill *On Liberty* 81-84). The problem for sympathy here is not so much Mill’s argument for a person’s right to freedom of movement or thought, but his emphasis on non interference, a complete separateness, as a first principle, and on self protection – as though the first assumption about any contact is that it is hostile, or at

least something which detracts from individuality. The underlying assumption destructive to community represented in Mill is that primacy of autonomous individuality in which the essential *modus operandi* is self interest (Congdon 310).³⁰

Summing up, then, the distinguishing elements of sympathy in a period of self history do not include a display of virtuous and other centered action based on broad, communal, or revealed principles so much as an operation of the individual mind or a self examination of one's own disposition toward sympathy which is then made public. In some cases, such a self examination also is projected in such a way as to represent universalized human experiences. Specifically these characteristics are: first, a focus on personal experience and feeling which extended becomes a focus on the experience or absence of sympathy within the writer himself; second, a longing for but uncertainty about, loss, or absence of the external sufferer and observer relationship and the resulting social bond which sympathy brings about; third, on occasion in the absence of an external or projected observer, the construction of both roles -- observer and sufferer -- of sympathetic interaction within the writer himself; and finally, uncertain but longed for reliance upon the reader to assume the role of sympathetic observer, sympathy in potency. It is the poem itself or the literary expression that becomes the basis for forming community, the text's transmission of inner experience so that the reader can feel and respond to the sufferer/writer. However, such a reader's response can have no reciprocal transforming impact on the writer/sufferer. Community, then of necessity, is created in a very different way -- outside of the bounds of time and through the experience of art, not through a display of virtuous or charitable action.

While Shaftesbury and Pope do not question the existence of moral sentiments and the classically defined nature of man, the post French Revolution Wordsworth hopes and has faith that the moral sentiments, benevolence and sympathy are universally true. Shaftesbury and Pope assuredly describe and list characteristics; however, Wordsworth, analyzing the language for and the inner workings of sympathy, also makes abundantly clear its tenuousness, the same tenuousness that Ann Yearsey describes in the Bristol riots. While Baillie and Austen value sympathy for its creation of actual, physical, social connectedness and structures, both Dorothy and William Wordsworth convincingly portray the extent to which intellectual and internalized experiences of sympathy far exceed immediate opportunities for intimate bonding. Finally, in the absence of another, the romantic begins in isolation with self analysis and self sympathy, then projects that analysis and sympathy onto a broader humanity to form some philosophical form of social affection, distanced and located in text. The most significant difference, however, in the various perceptions of sympathy among the writers lay in the extent to which they were assured or doubted that the characteristics associated with sympathy were more than values but inherent truths; the extent to which they were confident in a universal or natural ordering which places man within a benevolent universe; the extent to which they perceived social, political, scientific, and economic shifts as permanent threats to community; and the extent to which the shared acknowledgement of virtue resulted in active response, collapsed into individualized and uncertain sentiment, reformulated itself into faith or “a cultural model of the intellectual’s role in history” (Chandler, *England in 1819*, 539).³¹

Postscript

Tawney's is one way of describing the "abyss" -- the engines of acquisition and material production opposed to the concerns of the spirit -- within England. Two very recent critical texts -- John Crowley's *The Invention of Comfort* (2001) and James Chandler's *England in 1819* (1998) -- reflect ways in which these two apparently opposing elements become complicated. Crowley examines the drive toward popular production and consumption of goods, in part as prompted by Adam Smith's economics, and the development of the attitude that physical and "domestic comfort began to be asserted as a right and an obligation"(xi). This drive towards comfort via the possession of material goods certainly identified individual status, but also, by the end of the eighteenth century, providing material comfort to those in need became apart of the cultural and "moral enlightenment" (204). Crowley's examination of "architectural pattern books" indicates that they "provide crucial evidence for the invention of the image of the cottage as a comfortable house: they demonstrate the historical contingency of comfort [rather than convenience or necessity] as a value" (205). He explains that by the end of the eighteenth century, such an "assertion of basic architectural needs for physical comfort," combined with social and humanitarian movements in housing, was one of the ways humanitarians identified a common humanity across social gulf' (218-219). Sympathy came to be acted out in terms of housing and material goods rather than, or in addition to, a mental or emotional or spiritual response.

On the other side of the abyss, in *England in 1819* Chandler examines the Romantic's construction of history as self history, each one reflective of the intellectual variety which appears in part in Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* (1825). For Chandler, the

spirit of the age is that there is no one spirit except that it is widely disparate and contradictory. Hazlitt, he argues, “in the very act of positing a unified spirit, ... has constructed a very scheme of contradictions. Not only are the contradictions discernable; they are emphasized” (181). Hazlitt pairs writers who not only have different positions and backgrounds but also would “agree on virtually nothing” (181). For example, Jeffrey is one who “asserts the supremacy of the intellect,” while Wordsworth displays a “hebetude of his intellect” (as quoted in Chandler, *England* 179). Similarly, Hazlitt places the spirit of the age in both Scott whose “mind” is “brooding over antiquity” and Gifford who exhibits a “rash and headlong spirit,” one marked with a “restless and revolutionary spirit” (as quoted in Chandler, *England* 180). Thus the age is both essentially retrospective and also ... it is essentially prospective” (180). Chandler warns against relying upon any appearance that Hazlitt might be identifying one specific figure as representing the mentality and spirit of the age. While Hazlitt appears to be contradicting himself by making such widely varying identifications, he is, in fact, not. He argues that Hazlitt’s 1825 volume puts forward “the irreducible multiplicity of representatives and representations” because it “aims precisely to refuse, or at least diffuse, such an epitome and such a resolution” (*England* 184).

Reflective of the age, too, is Hazlitt’s resistance to Wordsworth’s claims in *The Prelude* and the Prospectus to *The Recluse* that he (Wordsworth) represents the “post-Milton, post-Enlightenment” age by “making its hopes his hopes and its disappointments his disappointments” and also “by way of sublimation” making “his recompenses its recompenses” (185). For Hazlitt, Wordsworth’s “quest romance,” Chandler concludes, is “his way of offering his own experience as an epitome of his historical culture and his

narrative of that experience as the resolution of its contradictions” (185). *The Prelude* is a “cultural model of the intellectual’s role in history” (Chandler’s term applied to Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” 539); however, his moral quest in these works is just one facet of the whole experience of culture (185).

Notes

Chapter 1

1. The movement known as the Scottish Enlightenment is thoroughly covered by Campbell and Skinner. Alexander Broadie's text is a convenient anthology of representative philosophical texts of this movement.
2. Leever's work on the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, particularly Hume, and sympathy provides fuller discussion of this scientific background, as well as a sympathy from a theological perspective.
3. William Hazlitt's idea of intersubjectivity is similar to Smith's description of "changing places in Fancy with the sufferer." Refer to his youthful "An Essay on the Principles of Human Action."
4. Gertrude Himmelfarb opens *The Idea of Poverty* with a substantial chapter on Smith's economic and social theories.
5. Consider Wordsworth's despair in *The Prelude*, particularly Book XI line 330, and Tennyson's in *In Memoriam*.
6. Because Schopenhauer and Kant fall outside the range of the work in this paper, there is only a brief mention here to show the general direction that discussions about sympathy take. Three thrusts become apparent with shifts in world view and the conception of sympathy: Victorians' sense of despair, increased attention on the interior life, and Victorians' call to public action.
7. Refer also to Wispe's discussion of Hannah Arendt (1955), a modern philosopher and social anthropologist writing of contemporary society and sympathy.

Chapter 2

1. Refer to Mack's edition of Pope's *An Essay on Man* for detailed sources and discussion of critical traditions. White and Tierney, Nichol, Piper, Cutting and Swearington also discuss literary traditions, reception, content, and influences. Note Cutting and Swearington's argument that Pope substitutes a secular narrative for a Biblical one such that God becomes a creature in man's picture of the world, rather than man existing as a creature in the mind of God.
2. In 1733 Pope issued two of his *Moral Essays* with his name and felt that they did not receive a fair hearing. Mack's "The Proper Study" provides an explanation as to the reasons Pope published *Essay on Man* anonymously. France details the poem's reception on the continent, one widespread among the French common man, with more than 240 editions of his works appearing between 1717 and 1825.
3. On the continent, the reception was different due in part to the difficulty of translating conceptual components, poor translations, and varying perspectives of the nature of society and the principle of plenitude. See Mack's "Introduction" to *Essay on Man* xviii-xxii.
4. Mack's "Introduction" xlii – xlvi provides arguments for Pope's optimism.
5. Piper describes the structure and stylistic elements in *Essay on Man* on which he basis his argument that it is a neo classical work.
6. Tillyard's *Elizabethan World Order* provides the most substantive discussion of order, chain of being, chaos, sin, microcosm, macrocosm, and the body politic demonstrating how thoroughly interconnected these concepts are.

7. Bernard Fabian, setting Pope in relation to a Newtonian mechanistic universe, sees Pope's use of macrocosm and microcosm as a reflection of a "universe governed by mathematically –formulated mechanical laws" (537).
8. Cragg provides a general treatment of religious influences, including enthusiasm.
9. For general treatments of social, religious, and political background, see Donald Greene (36- 86), Ford (5-96), and Brewer.
10. Ford's rationale for the relationship between literature and religion is: "The religion of the age is relevant to literature in various ways: firstly, because of its conviction of moral truth and moral law, to be found by faith and good sense, was a source of assurance; secondly, because its latitudinarian charity had much to do with the eighteenth centuries' social sympathies; thirdly, because more than any other subject it deepened the writing of men like Law, Berkeley, Johnson, and Cowper; and fourthly, because the insurgency of Methodism was a sign of something profoundly evolving in the temper of the time, the passing of the phase of reason and judgement in favour of that of passion and 'possession'" (42).
11. Skilton discusses the Puritan influence and providence in Defoe (13-18). Crusoe's shifting attitude toward providence can be traced through the novel. See especially pages 156-157, 175, 188, 196, and 209.
12. Crusoe is much like Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* in this process of sin, punishment, and redemption. The mariner alone escapes life in death until he learns to bless "those happy living things."
13. We can see Pope's own discussion of this in the "Epistle to Cobham"; because "plain Characters we rarely find" and "Contraries," "Affectations," "Falsehood,"

- “Cunning,” and “Frailties” all affect behavior, it becomes difficult to make judgments about a person’s nature (ll.122-129). The only way to make judgments is by observing the “Ruling Passion.” Epistle II of the *Essay on Man* describes the ruling passion theory further. It is the “Mind’s disease”; where once “each vital humour” fed the whole, they all now flow to feed one passion only (ll.138-144). Also compare this dominant passion concept to Joanna Baillie’s passion theory in her *Introductory Discourse*.
14. This passage parallels Virgil and Mack notes the similarity to Dryden’s edition of Virgil VI ll. 980 ff. See Mack “Introduction” 104.
 15. See D.W. Jefferson in Ford on Book IV, pages 240-249 and Kathleen Williams’ article “Gulliver’s Voyage to the Houyhnhnms” for treatments of Swift’s satire.
 16. Pope’s own satiric “Rape of the Lock” is a portrait of the anti social and non virtuous Belinda who relies on the sylphs for advice rather than honest human contact. In contrast, his presentation of Martha Blount in “The Epistle to a Lady” is a portrait of virtue. This poem weighs the value of the material (Belinda’s coquetry and card game – both games of power and acquisition) versus the immaterial (Martha’s general good will in her engagement with others, virtue, and generosity).
 17. Consider Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* as it reflects this decline in faith and greater sympathetic connectedness with Hallam.)
 18. Wilson’s *God’s Funeral* contains additional treatments of and variations in Deism. Also refer to Emerson (646-652).

19. Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the second of these works, 1776 to 1788, effectively undermining traditional Christian history "as an anti-Christian propagandist." For Coleridge, Gibbon's style was "detestable" (19).
20. By the time Lyell and Darwin wrote their scientific discoveries, the Victorians were prepared for the empirical data to support Hume's theories (Wilson 25).

Chapter 3

1. Rousseau in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* describes the original state of man as outside of society, free and unencumbered. Social structures limit his freedom and have negative impact. He argues that we should not come to the same conclusion that Hobbes does – that is "because man has no idea of goodness, he must be naturally wicked" (71). Before birth, man has both a desire for self preservation and compassion – "an innate repugnance at seeing a fellow creature suffer" (73).
2. Marshall's *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy* (202 ff.) discusses Rousseau's theories of natural man, language, and the operation of pity. See also Bewell (79 ff.) where he discusses "Rousseau and the 'Giants' of Primitive Perception." Refer to Mary Poovey's discussion of *Frankenstein*.
3. In *Maria, or The Wrongs of Women*, like *Frankenstein*, Wollstonecraft's concept of gender based inequality is dramatized (Marshall 200).
4. See Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* especially (76).
5. Edgeworth (411-412) sounds like Mary Wollstonecraft in her description of education for women to "cultivate their reasoning powers."

6. Hannah More discusses the effects of unregulated sentiment in young women in “On the Danger of an Ill Directed Sensibility.” Inchbald’s *A Simple Story* illustrates the playing out of Edgeworth’s and More’s principles -- of feelings and sympathy with and without the influence of proper education.
7. Fordyce and Gisborne are sources of historical concerns around women as moral models, the importance of the proper education for women.
8. Sulloway’s discussion of More (189-190) which describes her “Edenic” vision of women in *Female Education* II: 26; I: 86-89.
9. Page numbering reflects pagination in Modern Library edition of *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*.
10. Refer to Mellor’s notes and rationale for this position (222-223 and note 1). Also see Barbara Schnorrenberg’s article describing improvements in education for women.
11. Trilling describes Emma’s appeal in the “Introduction” to *Emma*.
- 12.** Certainly, there are other sequences which will demonstrate this as well; Emma’s interactions with Jane and Miss Bates and her attitudes toward the Harriet and Robert Martin alliance are a couple.
13. Jane Spencer’s Introduction to Inchbald’s *A Simple Story* treats the heroines’ upbringings and their effect on her behavior.
14. Mellor’s describes this sympathetic identification Emma has with Frank.
15. See Trilling’s “Introduction” to *Emma* for Austen’s own appreciation of the character of Emma. He writes that her appeal lies in her “energy,” “style,” and “intelligence” (ix).

16. I believe that contemporary attitudes toward comfort and the importance of physical comfort emerge particularly in the descriptions of Robert Martin's farm. Crowley's discussion in *The Invention of Comfort* argues that the eighteenth century shift in the meaning of the word "comfort" coincided with shifting ideas of sympathy, with the result that, as comfort moved from a moral sphere to a physical sphere, sympathy came to be expressed in physical terms, such as the proper housing, room size, architecture, etc. "Domestic comfort began to be asserted as a right and an obligation" (xi).
17. Alexis de Tocqueville's comments in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Anchor edition, 82-83) on the English understanding the classes, particularly mobility and identification as "gentleman," make the position different from that in continental class structures, and thus makes England less given to revolution. As cited in Trilling ("Introduction" xiii-xiv).
18. James K. Chandler, when writing of Wordsworth in *Wordsworth's Second Nature*, places him squarely in the British moralist tradition despite the fact that he appears to be immersed in self history. The same cultural past is embraced in Austen. See Chandler's Chapter 8.

Chapter 4

1. Refer to Tinker's *Nature's Simple Plan* for a discussion of the natural voice of uneducated poets like Yeasley and Stephen Duck as it represents British traditional values.
2. The engraving at the beginning of *The Rural Lyre* represents an heroic female Britannia.

3. Like most of her laboring class, Yearsley's life was neither comfortable nor stable. She lived much like Wordsworth's poor, in crude housing and extreme poverty. When Hannah More and the Bluestockings took her in, she, her husband, her mother, and her six children were starving. Several of her children died while still infants; both her husband and most beloved son died before her (Ferguson 266). *Earl Goodwin*, Yearsley's play, opens with the warning that all women -- "dowerless maids, unjoyful widows, or the faithful wife" -- are unprotected in a society which does not fully value innocence and virtue (Ferguson 262-263).
4. Felsenstein details through Yearsley's letters how forcefully direct Yearsley was in her dealings with her patrons as well as how closely related in an equal friendship "for whom social division had become insignificant" she had become to William Gossip (382).

Chapter 5

1. Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and Baillie's *Introductory Discourse* are similar in many of their points. A close parallel examination of the two throws greater light on Baillie's originality and on the pivotal ways she reasons through her literary theory, manipulating Smith's concepts to create an experience of the transcendent powers of sympathy.
2. Wordsworth informs the reader that he is actually reluctant to write about his intentions; only the encouragement of friends caused him to attach his remarks to this second edition. He lists his reasons for being reluctant: he is suspicious of "reasoning" the reader into approving the poems rather than "evaluating the poems themselves; a preface provides insufficient space for a sufficient discussion

of all the arguments; and finally, to give a full discussion would require examining the state of public taste and determining its health, which in turn would require a study of the relationship between the human mind and language itself. Wordsworth cannot be taken completely at face value here; much of the "Preface" establishes his own logic connecting language with the mind and nature. And, before he was completely finished with his prefatory remarks years later, Wordsworth had rewritten them twice and attached an appendix, and Coleridge had devoted two chapters of *Biographia Literaria* to explaining the premises for *Lyrical Ballads*. But, in 1800 for Wordsworth, to give a full account would ultimately mean retracing the "revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself" (433). Wordsworth, perhaps because of his own turmoil in moving out of a Godwinian, revolutionary stance toward a more traditional, Christian vision, is aware of the complex problems in defining a static language-mind-society connection. He completes the introductory comments by stating that the poems, however, because of their material difference would benefit from some brief statements. In *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth says, he presents the "real language of men" which is perceived by the poet in a "state of vivid sensation" and which brings "pleasure which a poet may rationally endeavor to impart." His intention is to present a new design, "a new class of poetry," which is "not unimportant in the quality and in the multiplicity of its moral relations" (433). By choosing incidents of common life, Wordsworth plans to "trace the primary laws of our nature" (434).

3. A similar position occurs in Shelley's "Defence" and "Ode to the West Wind."

4. Wordsworth criticizes the "gaudiness and inane phraseology" of modern authors, a style he will not copy and indicates his preference for the real language of men over "sickly and stupid German tragedies" (433-434). Baillie predates Wordsworth's insistence upon the real language of men.
5. Baillie's attitude and awareness about social class, though, appear to have a different orientation. While defining drama, its audience and subject matter, she reveals a conservative and somewhat isolated social awareness. Implicitly aiming her drama toward a middle class society, she, in a round about way, excludes both the highest and lowest classes. She admits that the lessons of drama will never reach the lowest class, the laborers, the ones she calls the "broad foundation of society" (57-58), even though she has already established that their language and actions closely reveal the truths of human nature. This social foundation cannot be changed without "endangering everything constructed on it." The laboring class has the ballad for expressing itself (58). I do not believe Baillie intentionally demeans the dignity of the laborer; quite possibly she is reacting to and fears the horrors of the French Revolution's social upheaval for England. While placing the laborer within a structured hierarchy, she can try to hold on to a social status quo. However, Baillie does address this class in her own highly acclaimed and best valued work, her own ballads. Baillie continues her definition of the proper audience and subject for the drama when she states that dramas do reach to the next higher social class which will always exert itself over the laboring class (58).
6. When Wordsworth announced his intention to create a new kind of poetry, Baillie had already announced her new kind of drama. Adding to her theory of

- language, Baillie seeks to correct other past and contemporary dramatic failings; drama fails when dramatists prefer the artificial embellishments of poetry, copy their sources, forget to include characters like ourselves, or attend to composition and structure.
7. Throughout the *Discourse*, Baillie voices her opposition to the current fashions on the stage. Because Gothic and sentimental drama use language and situations which are not natural to man, dramatists attempt to use greater and greater bombast. So, when a scene really calls for climactic or urgent language, there are no words left to use. Secondly, the over use of love as a topic for the stage, has created an "insipid similarity" in the major characters (51). Since there is no originality in developing the major characters, what is left for the stage is to develop secondary or minor characters. This creates a disunity in the play because, while we should be interested in the major character, our attentions are drawn to others. Thus, the general effect of watching a play as a whole is damaged. Third, variations in character type have been very limited, and the many subtle shades of character and emotion disregarded. Or, characters in a drama are frequently too strongly contrasted without the natural variations in behavior or emotion. Or, characters are distinguished from each other by what seems to be whim. Fourth, characters in their middle years have long been excluded from the stage without good reason. Such people, Baillie argues are still vigorous and engaged in the world sufficiently to be interesting and instructive (51-53). Fifth, comedy is, on occasion, inappropriately introduced in parts of the tragedy (though not always), and stronger passions more appropriate to tragedy are introduced in

- and weaken the comedy. This disturbs the "unity of effect" of a simpler structure. Sixth, high and mighty characters do not create so great a sympathetic curiosity as the "gentler and more familiar" characters (54). Finally, minor characters who are assigned strong passions distract the viewer from the primary concern, the single strong character in turmoil (55).
8. In discussing comedy, Baillie again defines what is and is not appropriate. Dividing comedy into five types, she finds the only suitable one the Characteristick Comedy. The features of this type of comedy are essentially the same as those for drama in that it presents variety of character, ordinary situations, and natural emotions, language and behavior from which we learn. The characteristics which distinguish it from tragedy are "ludicrous effect of passion," "clashing of opposite characters," "play upon words," and "whimsical combinations of ideas" (50). Comedy, as well as tragedy, can be bold, entertaining, and morally instructive. Baillie thus weaves in and out of her traditional base, adds to it, and forms her new direction for the theater.
9. Some critical work has been done in recent years on Baillie and *DeMonfort*. Past critical work includes Carhart's 1923 biography with substantial references to Baillie's contemporaries, critical reviews of the plays as they appeared, commentary on the plays, discussion of Baillie's treatise on Christ, the ballads, and poems. Norton (1947) considers Baillie's psychological approach and concern for human nature, "wrongheaded" and similar to Byron's, too limiting to be successful on stage. Bertrand Evans (1947) and Samuel Chew (1964) review Baillie in light of her Gothic elements and influence on Byron, though Evans

believes the dramas substantive enough to warrant further study. A.G. Inch (1962), Virginia Blackwell Lamb (1973), and Aloma Noble (1983) all believe that the plays and dramatic theory need to be studied in light of their historical context, other theories of the stage, other nineteenth century plays, and theories of the passions. Terence Tobin (1974) considers Baillie one of the many overlooked Scots playwrights and believes that *DeMonfort* successfully demonstrates her dramatic theories.

Chapter 7

1. Refer to the collection of essays edited by Barry Barnes and Steven Shapin, *Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture*, which suggest as a whole that “the knowledge conveyed by the cultural vanguard... came to be diffused throughout society as constituting reality” (Cooter 87).
2. Marilyn Gaull’s summary of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century milieu in *English Romanticism: The Human Context* broadly trace some of the dynamic changes which occurred in whole world vision and structures over the course of a generation. The shift in the center of power, from the kingship to parliament, coincided with the growing influence of the competitive marketplace and rise of individual wealth to significantly impact and replace the older feudal social structures. As a result, whole world view and older conceptualizations about the nature of society and the role of man within that society unraveled.

Gaull continues:

The vision of society as a hierarchical structure based on inherited wealth

and position, based in other words on status, was evolving into the uncertain but vital one based on contract, the competitive exchange of goods and services. Just as the traditional relationship between man and God, man and nature had been shifting, so the traditional relationships among men had been opened to question, specifically to discover what the best and necessary relationships were. As soon as individuals, particularly those productive members of society engaged in agriculture, manufacturing, or trade, attributed their livelihood to other men rather than to God or nature, as soon as the post feudal system of obligation and dependencies was replaced by one of rights and duties, by what Locke called the Social Contract, the social sciences – economics, political science, and sociology – emerged to help define that contract, the distribution of rights, duties, and rewards. (111-112)

Interdependence within the various structures gave way to individual liberty and competition. By implication, Gaull argues that because the romantic poets, philosophers, and theorists valued most individual and subjective experience as it fostered “genuine liberty,” they had to grapple with tensions between individual right and social obligation, between self concern and other concern and resolve those tensions in some new way.

3. For an alternative description of the historical framework and substantively different evaluation of Wordsworth, see Christopher Caudwell’s historical income, lives on the products of industrialism even while he enjoys the natural scene ‘unspoilt’ by industrialism.” He demands “freedom from social relations ...

- while still retaining the products, the freedom, which these relations alone make possible” (106-107). As a result, romantic poetry, including Wordsworth’s, “ has separated itself from the story, the heart from the intellect, the individual from society” (110).
4. Both Himmelfarb’s *Idea of Poverty* (2 –19) and John E. Crowley’s *The Invention of Comfort* (203-223) detail the way in which social movements responded to the needs of the poor and, consequently, shifted attitudes towards the poor and about sympathy. Once charitable acts came to be seen as duties, social obligations, or condescending and advantageous behaviors.
 5. See Himmelfarb’s discussion of Mandeville’s *Fable of the Bees* in *The Idea of Poverty*, the rise of charity schools, and “The Age of Benevolence” (30 – 40.)
 6. Thomas Malthus, in 1798, the year of *Lyrical Ballads*, would aptly write of the economic basis of the period that “We are touching on a period big with the most important changes, ... changes that would in some measure be decisive of the future fate of mankind” (Gaul 112).
 7. See Himmelfarb’s *The Idea of Poverty* Chapter II “Adam Smith: Political Economy as Moral Philosophy” (42-64) for a full discussion of the impact and interrelationship of both texts. See the prologue and Chapter I for discussion of the rise of the industrial revolution. See Caudwell’s materialist analysis of the impact of the Industrial Revolution in *Illusion and Reality*. Here he argues that “the growth of capitalism transforms all idyllic patriarchal relations – including that of the poet to the class whose aspirations he voices – into ‘callous’ cash-nexus” (101).

8. David Marshall's discussion of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy* asks this same question.
9. Mellor relates these two works and a considerable portion of the argument in this section draws from her work in *Romanticism and Gender*. See her extended commentary on the poem in "Self Writing," 154-156.
10. Mellor compares Dorothy's poem to William's self description in Book III of *The Prelude*. There he writes of his Cambridge days:

Rotted as by a charm, my life became
 A floating island, an amphibious thing.
 Unsound, of spungy texture, yet withal,
 Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
 And pleasant flowers. (Prelude III: ll.339-344)

In general, Mellor sees Dorothy's poem as her "most mature response to her brother's concept of the self" (156). Susan Wolfson considers it as Dorothy's "resistance" to William's conceptualization of the self and to his "poetic strategies" (Wolfson 139-166, Mellor R and G page 234). It is clear that William Wordsworth almost dismisses this youthful experience, viewing it in negative terms as a "rotting," "spungy," and unsound nature. He also writes about it in generalized, non specific terms; the flowers and weeds have no colors, shapes, or details to particularize the experience (Mellor *Romanticism* 234). Margaret Homans approaches the difference in language between Dorothy and William in a different way, one which I believe significantly informs the reading of the "Floating Island" poem. Homans evaluates these differences in each one's poetic

descriptions of the 1820 excursion past Gondo Gorge and Simplon Pass – William’s in *The Prelude* Book VI and Dorothy’s account of the same scenery in her *Journal of a Tour on the Continent*. While William “force[s] a meaning on” the setting – the rocks, crags, and waterfalls in the Alps – as “types and symbols of Eternity,” Dorothy “celebrates” more directly the landscape itself (Homans, *Bearing* 57-58). William creates the symbolic, while Dorothy “literalizes” and “naturalizes” to create a “personal identification with the literal” (*Bearing*, 61, 65). In *Bearing the Word*, Homans builds her argument upon Thomas Weiskel’s examination of Wordsworth’s use of language in *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

11. See Homans, *Women Writers*, 35- 36. Also see Marshall on Frankenstein 195. It reflects some of the same “tragedy” that exists in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Both the speaker of the poem and the monster in the novel appeal to the reader/observer for sympathy.
12. Mellor explains that this was the poem with Dorothy while she was hospitalized (154-156). In addition, as a number of the romantics, especially William Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats would conclude, complete absorption in the inner life carries with it dangers of self annihilation.
13. See Abrams, 71-140. See Mellor’s continued discussion of *The Prelude* 145-154, her references to Geoffrey Hartman’s work in *Wordsworth’s Poetry*. She also considers his language, specifically references to elements in nature, as creating tension between the masculine and feminine.

14. Mellor cites similar proclamations throughout *The Prelude* further identifying those characteristics specific to masculine self-history: the poet achieving confidence and autonomy, of operating as “pure,” “mighty,” and transcendent mind and soul which exists beyond the material and beyond death, one which “dwells, above this frame of things” (XIII: 448; Mellor 147-154). The representation of sympathy, then, in a masculine self history with such characteristics, as one might expect, takes on a different hue than the feminine.
15. Prufrock is unable to ask the essential question about love or find meaningful connection with others.
16. Refer to “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) and “Essay, Supplement to the Preface” (1815) for descriptions of the functions of the poet.
17. See David Marshall’s discussion in *The Figure of Theater* 216-221.
18. Refer to Condillac’s discussion of the origin of language and its relationship to sympathy in “An Essay on the Origin of the Human Knowledge” (trans. 1756). See also Chapter 2 in Bewell for a detailed discussion of Condillac’s theory and influence.
19. See *The Prelude 1798-1799* edited by Stephen Parrish for its earliest form; see Reed’s Introductory remarks to the Cornell edition of *The Thirteen Book Prelude* for the development of the text from its two book to thirteen book format; see W.J.B. Owen’s edition of *The Fourteen-Book Prelude* for its final format. Also see the Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill complete edition. References here are primarily to the Reed *Thirteen-Book Prelude*.

20. Refer to M.H. Abrams' discussion in *Natural Supernaturalism* of "a fully developed poetical equivalent of two portentous innovations in prose fiction" – the *Bildungsroman* and the *Kunstlerroman*, the growth and history of the poet's mind as well as the development of his poetical education (74-80). Also see *The Mirror and the Lamp* for Abrams' discussion of the subjective and objective in romantic literature.
21. Abrams describes this massive work as a "sustained address to Coleridge" (*Natural* 74).
22. References are to the AB-Stage Reading Text of Cornell edition of *The Thirteen-Book Prelude*. This text reflects the "latest accepted readings for the poem as it was completed in 1805- 1806" (Reed xii). An alternative text, the C-Stage Text, which represents the poem in its accepted revised 1818-1820 version, or the 1850 text are available, but not texts selected for use here unless noted. The two extended passages from *The Prelude* which are quoted are identical in both the AB and the C stage texts.
23. This discussion of sympathy in Wordsworth is necessarily limited; it does not include sympathy and possible relationships with the "corresponding breeze," those connections between the poet's mind and the "mighty Mind" or "sweet breath of heaven," or representations of the poetic mission as prophetic. M.H. Abrams' article "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor" discusses the leitmotif of wind or breeze in *The Prelude* "representing the chief theme of continuity and interchange between outer motions and the interior life and powers" (39), a "universal inner experience and an omnipresent outer analogue"

- (49). Sympathy is also not considered in an aesthetic sense – the artist’s ability of “soul” to understand or imaginatively create any experience. In this latter sense, see M.H. Abrams’ *The Mirror and the Lamp* and his discussion of Shelley’s concept of poetry as moral action which engages with fellow feeling. Poets through universal sympathy become “hierophants of ... and the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (332). See also Bate on the sympathetic imagination.
24. See McCarthy’s discussion of romantic autobiography, its relationship with the culture and dependence on “rhythms of identity formation” and patterns which are “interhuman” in Chapter 4 (117). Bruss, Elizabeth. *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins: 1976.
25. Refer to Marshall’s similar discussion.
26. McCarthy has an extended discussion of all the components of the sympathetic relationship and subjectivity in Chapter Five 144- 165. See Paul Privateer on ‘the other Romanticism.’
27. Montgomery has a related discussion on pages 168-173.
28. William Hazlitt’s essay parallels some of Smith’s statements about imaginative experience of another’s circumstances.
29. Chandler expands on this in pages 186-200. See Bishop’s analysis in “Wordsworth and the ‘Spots of Time’.” *ELH* 26 (March 1959): 45.
30. The Victorian response to poverty produced by industrial and social changes is discussed in Gertrude Himmelfarb’s *The Idea of Poverty and Poverty and Compassion*. She characterizes late Victorians particularly as highly activated philanthropic and social reformers prompted by a strong sense of compassion.

Himmelfarb differentiates sympathy from compassion using Adam Smith's distinction that compassion is an active response to the "misery" or "sorrow" of others, an attempt to "do good" which produces some kind of intervention or aid; sympathy's response to others is limited to "fellow feeling" only, a sensation of the other's experience (*Poverty* 3-7). In *On Looking into the Abyss* and *The Demoralization of Society*, studies of manners, morals, virtues and values among the Victorians, Himmelfarb points out that discussions of a "moral sense" or "moral imagination" did not continue in the same fashion or with such thorough conviction among the Victorians. Here, manners replaced the moral sense in great part due to: the advances in science, particularly the impact of Darwin's conclusions about natural science on social science and religion; the rise of industrial society prompted by increased mechanization, the division of labor, and other related outgrowths from the applications of Adam Smith's economic principles in the *Wealth of Nations*; confusion created by the rise of sentimentalism between the moral sentiments and excessive emotional "feeling"; political discussions about the nature of freedom and the individual in a political state; and finally, the decline of the influence or effectiveness of the Church.

31. Chandler analyzes Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" in precisely these terms.

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