

Synopses

Memory and Community:
Wordsworth's Epitaphic
Imagination in
"Michael"

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The purpose of this essay is to analyze William Wordsworth's "Michael" in terms of the relationship between romanticism and nationalism. Many of Wordsworth's lyrics tell a story in which the poet narrator encounters a landscape or a human that gives him a strong impression. In the process of time the object is forgotten, but when the object is revived in his memory through the power of imagination, he comes to know the real meaning of the object. His lyrics thus have a temporal structure in which an object existing in the real world is lost and forgotten but revived after a passage of time as a mental image. Paradoxically, the poet has to be forgetful of his own experience in order to understand the full meaning of what he experienced. I would urge that the temporal structure of the Wordsworthian lyric describing the process of the recovery of the lost object in memory offers an imaginary story that forms the core of the ideology of nationalism. "Michael" is a story of a shepherd who, living a traditional style of life, eventually lost his estate and was ruined through his involvement in the modern monetary economy. It must be noted that the old agricultural community described in this poem becomes a symbolic home or an origin of people living in a modern commercial society. "Michael," offering an archetypal history that can be shared by readers as a story of the past they have in common, embodies a national story. In this essay, reading "Michael" with some short lyrics, I clarify that the temporal structure of Wordsworth's poems fulfills an ideological function of creating a modern nation state as an imagined community.

Jane Austen and the
Theatricality: Crossing
the Literary and Visual
Arts

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This paper aims to reconsider the theatricality in Jane Austen's novels by exploring the close relationship between the literary and visual arts. With the frequent use of free direct speech, the light and witty conversations give her novels a dramatic air in the great tradition of English drama, and her heroines become descended from Shakespeare, Restoration, and contemporary comedies. In the eighteenth century, some texts from Shakespeare and on to novels were published with illustrations. One of the early characteristics was a front view of the stage, because the illustrators, like Francis Hayman, were often scene painters in the theatre. The literary representations of pictorial imagery, as well as the illustrations with theatrical perspective, might have impressed quasi-theatrical scenes on the minds of the reading audience. I would like to investigate how Austen meta-theatrically conspires with readers and represents the two comediennes, Elizabeth Bennet and Mary Crawford, focusing on their images confronting or overlapping with portraits of such famous actresses as Sarah Siddons, Francis Abington, and Dorothy Jordan.

During 1780s and 1790s the high art portraits of celebrated actresses as comic or tragic Muses were much sought after and exhibited at the Royal Academy, which praised their professionalism and enhanced their reputation. Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* in 1784 was the utmost culmination of the personified Muse. Siddons had the sublime and moral images of a tragedienne and left no room for personal scandal, while Abington and Jordan had the obscene and sexual images of lower comediennes and affairs with the aristocracy in real life. The identified image with a courtesan had been long imprinted on the actress, and their engraved copies of portraits and caricatured prints were widely circulated in the public. In *Mansfield Park* Mary Crawford is harshly blamed for her gaiety and lightness associated with a corrupted mind. Elizabeth Bennet is the most playful and energetic heroine in Austen's novels, so emphasizing her attractiveness as a comedienne potentially puts her in danger of taking on such an immoral image.

In the latter half of *Pride and Prejudice*,

Austen adopts a strategic shift from lively dramatic conversations in free direct speech to illustrate their characters toward inner descriptions of her heroine's state of mind in direct speech like dramatic monologue, or in the subtle mixture of indirect and free indirect speeches. Unlike Mary who evokes a courtesan-like image of the comic actress, Elizabeth fully exhibits her morality and mental development to avoid associating herself with prostitution. This shift, however, has her blessed comic talents disappeared largely from the scenes. It is the dynamic conversations between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine that re-bestow a dramatic air upon the narrative toward the ending. In conspiracy with the reading audience, the faded dowager and the obstinate girl perform as if the rival queens of the theatres were confronting each other on the stage. Mrs. Reynolds shows the gallery in Pemberley and the full-size portrait of Darcy spreads out before Elizabeth's eyes, while any portrait of herself is absent through the whole work. Crossing the literary and visual arts, Austen meta-theatrically describes her most favorite heroine as a comedienne with both playfulness and morality, that is, as the Comic Muse equivalent to Reynolds' celebrated portrait *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse*.