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New-born: Affect, attachment, and the infant embodied unconscious in Romantic literature and medicine

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by

Mary Jane D. Kennedy

Committee in charge:

Professor Julie A. Carlson, Chair

Professor L.O. Aranye Fradenburg

Professor Kay Young

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The dissertation of Mary Jane D. Kennedy is approved.

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L.O. Aranye Fradenburg

_____

Kay Young

_____

Julie A. Carlson, Committee Chair

September 2018

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Mary Jane D. Kennedy
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EDUCATION

PhD, English, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2018
Dissertation: "New-born: Affect, attachment, and the infant embodied unconscious in Romantic literature and medicine"
Committee: Julie Carlson (chair), Kay Young, and Aranye Fradenburg

MA, English, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2013
Exam fields: Romantic/Victorian Literature, Restoration/Eighteenth-Century Literature, and Literature and the Mind

BA, English, University of California, Los Angeles, 2010

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Editor, Agile Press, 2010-Present

Content and Course Developer, Agile Research and Technology, 2010-Present

Distance-Learning Course Developer, Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Naval Postgraduate School, 2005-2011

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Associate (instructor of record), Department of English, University of California, Santa Barbara, Summer 2014

Teaching Assistant, Department of English, University of California, Santa Barbara 2012-2014

Teacher, REACH Program at Regis High School, New York City, 2015-2016

AWARDS

Department of English Outstanding Teaching Award, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2013-2014
Department of English Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2011-2012

PRESENTATIONS

February 2017: Western Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, "Share not thou a mother's feelings": Maternal imagination and affect in Isabella Kelly's "To an Unborn Infant"

ABSTRACT

New-born: Affect, attachment, and the infant embodied unconscious in Romantic literature and medicine

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Mary Jane D. Kennedy

This dissertation investigates how Romantic-era literary and medical texts represent the infant's embodied unconscious as affected by and affecting the other bodies, forces, and feelings surrounding them. In both discourses, the powerful embodied and affective connections that mothers, but also other female caretakers, share with the infant enable them to form his mind and body through invisible forces like imagination and rhythm, love and aggression. Within the last decade, Romantic critics have increasingly emphasized the importance of examining Romantic literature's relationship to contemporaneous medical and scientific debates and frameworks, especially those regarding the emotions and the embodied mind. This also holds true for studies of the Romantic infant and child. Whatever the infant was—a blank slate, a child of Nature—it was impressionable and malleable, and it was vital that parental hands formed it responsibly. Theories of attachment, intersubjectivity, and affect provide the theoretical framework for my analysis, as they emphasize the embodied nature of emotion and the porosity between bodies that is fundamental for understanding the maternal-infant relationship.

My project opens with a simple contention: that in order to theorize a "Romantic infant," one first must (re)consider the Romantic fetus. "Maternal imagination," the belief that a pregnant woman could imprint upon, deform, or otherwise mar the body of her fetus through her mental fixations, emotional shocks, or "longings," was a prevalent topic within social, literary, and medical commentary, and I use it to think about Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*, William Wordsworth's "The Thorn" and "The Mad Mother," Isabella Kelly's "To An Unborn Infant," arguing that maternal imagination in its later instantiation allows writers to consider its potential to operate as communication with, rather than simply on or through, a child's body, which in turn shapes the child and mother in various ways. Chapters 2 and 3 progress with the fetus into infancy while still retaining important traces of the womb, shifting our attention onto a new figure: the sleeping (or near-sleeping) baby and its attendant poetic genre, the lullaby. Chapter Two, "'There is a *chaunt*': Poetic rhythm and infant embodiment," considers "lulling" as depicted in medical literature and children's texts, that also have implications for Romantic (specifically, Wordsworth's and Hazlitt's) ideas about rhythm, meter, and the embodied unconscious's role in poetic composition. Chapter 3, "'Listen, and let your heart awake!': Formation, prophecy, and masculine inheritance in the Romantic lullaby," builds from this foundational insight about the lullaby, rhythm, and embodied openness to discuss two largely overlooked Romantic lullabies: Walter Scott's "Hush thee, babe" (from Daniel Terry's theatrical adaptation of *Guy Mannering*), and John Keats's lullaby to the "little child / O' the Western wild," which share common themes of control and inheritance as they relate to the masculine infant body. The fourth and final chapter of this dissertation, "One"/ "We": Mourning the Shelleys' Infant "Companion(s)," offers a different angle on the unconscious infant by focusing on the figure of the dead child

in the work of Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley, identifying the "infant companion" as an important figure to the Shelleys, which originated in Mary Wollstonecraft's own daughter, Fanny Imlay, and found its successor in Percy's and Mary's son William. The first strand of this chapter's argument concerns how Percy and Mary consider parental love, mourning, and the stakes of representing the (dead) infant in their works. The second examines how the highly contested and negotiated body of shared works between two authors who wrote, overwrote, and mournfully echoed each other, materializes in this figure of the infant companion.

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Introduction:

Affect, attachment, and the infant embodied unconscious in Romantic literature and medicine

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's revisions to "Frost at Midnight," made between his 1798 quarto edition and the 1829 version of *Sibylline Leaves*, have become a touchstone for critics concerned with how Coleridge in particular—but also British Romantic writers more generally—figured and fretted over the infant mind and body.[1] The isolation his speaker feels and hears in the winter countryside's "strange / And extreme silentness,"[2] compels him to look both to the past and the future, to his own dreamy and wistful childhood and the idealized boyhood he hopes he has orchestrated for his sleeping infant son, Hartley. In the 1829 version, this son slumbers through the length of the poem, providing the poet with an object for his meditation and a rhythm to his composition as the baby's "gentle breathings" break through the speaker's inward reflection and "[f]ill up the interspersed vacancies / And momentary pauses of [his] thought" (50, 51-52). Though a significant presence in the poem, the infant Hartley is largely that—a presence, whose quietly rhythmic body lends form to the articulate expression of his father's mind. This contrasts greatly with Coleridge's earlier version, which extends into a final, six-line vision of the child in the following morning, grasping for the icicles his father had reflected on the night before.

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[1] Beyond merely addressing it, critics have inevitably weighed in on which version makes a better poem, a precedent established here by Coleridge himself. Nancy Yousef and David Ruderman have provided excellent psychoanalytic readings of the poem and this particular revision; see Nancy Yousef, *Romantic Intimacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 125-126, 173-174; David B. Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry: Romanticism, Subjectivity, Form* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 90-92.

[2] "Frost at Midnight" appears in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Fears in Solitude* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1798). All lines from the poem, cited parenthetically hereafter, appear in this version of the poem.

Like those, my babe, which ere tomorrow's warmth

Have capped their sharp keen points with pendulous drops,

Will catch thine eye, and with their novelty

Suspend thy little soul; then make thee shout

And stretch and flutter from thy mother's arms,

As thou would'st fly for very eagerness.

(80-85)

Coleridge insists that the original ending "destroyed [the poem's] rondo,"[3] while his peaceful alignment of the still-sleeping infant with the "icicles, silently shining to the silent moon" preserved his vision of poetic and thematic self-containment (79). "Poems of this kind and length," he explains, "ought to be coiled with its tail round its head."[4] The canonical Hartley of 1829 remains isolated, self-enclosed, impenetrable in his unconsciousness, while the buoyant, squealing infant of 1798, who disturbed the poem's silence (and with it, Coleridge's sense of aesthetic closure) is a tiny yet insistent person whose energetic grasp toward the sparkling forms of nature physically embodies his father's imaginative striving after them.[5]

This dissertation investigates how Romantic-era literary and medical texts represent the infant's embodied unconscious as affected by and affecting the other bodies,[6] forces, and feelings surrounding them. "Frost at Midnight," already a well-cited text for considering the Romantic infant, provides rich material for my interests because Coleridge's explanation and omissions touch on two Romantic anxieties central to this project: the unconscious infant and

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[3] This comment appears in George Beaumont's copy of the poem; see Paul Magnuson, *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 165.
[4] In Magnuson, *Coleridge and Wordsworth*, 165.
[5] Yousef, *Romantic Intimacy*, 126.
[6] By "embodied unconscious," I refer to the aspects of experience and memory that are inscribed on the body and which can exist alongside, as well as below, conscious perception.

the poet's ambivalent treatment of the mother (or, in other cases, the mother-figure). When Coleridge eliminated the lively form of his conscious son in favor of depicting him as a more general, sleeping infant, his poem became a rumination on and alongside the unconscious infant's seeming impermeability. Both sleep and infancy strengthen the sense that Hartley is more object than subject, heightening the conscious mind's illusion of control over the unconscious other. However, though the conscious father describes his unconscious infant as separate, self-contained, and object-like, he must also acknowledge the ways in which this sleeping body has seeped into his own, from the sensations of "tender gladness" that "fill[… his] heart" when he looks at his "beautiful" son (54, 53, 53), to the creative and co-created rhythm emerging between them. The poem in some ways reinforces the boundaries between conscious/unconscious, self/other, and father/son, but in other ways concedes how proximate bodies—especially those bonded by protective and loving feelings of attachment, but also when tinged with jealousy, pain, and regret—influence each other both above and below the threshold of consciousness.[7]

Along with the unconscious infant, this dissertation's second organizing concern is the mother, increasingly valorized during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for her importance to the child's interior and external worlds, but who simultaneously figures across various disciplines as a source of great ambivalence and distrust. When he eliminates the final six lines of "Frost at Midnight," Coleridge erases Hartley's mother entirely,[8] a change

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[7] Coleridge's poem recounts his fantasy of unconsciously shaping his son to achieve the potential that his own limited childhood prevented him from fully realizing, and his son's presence likewise shapes him through mingled feelings of pain and pleasure felt when he reconsiders his past boyhood in relation to his son's future. By "unconscious," I here refer to the elements and conditions of life he has, and will, expose his son to by allowing and enabling him to interact with nature and "wander like a breeze" through the countryside (59).

[8] While it also may be evidence of the strained relationship between Coleridge and his wife (especially thirty years after the poem's initial composition), it also speaks to a more general mistrust of women/mothers, even during a time when they were becoming, ostensibly, more valorized.

that, like maintaining the child's unconscious state, isolates the infant and reinforces the poet-father as the poem's centralizing conscious mind. However, the mother's role depicted in those deleted lines is literally as Hartley's support: her encouraging embrace enables him joyfully to explore and interact with Nature not as a solitary "wander[er]" whose spirit is "mould[ed]" mystically by God (as Coleridge envisions earlier in the poem) (59, 68), but as a child in the arms of his loving mother. The new poem shifts the infant from a maternally-inclusive world to one that seems more of a Romantic paternal poetic fantasy: the son under the guidance and authority of his father-poet and God.

In the following chapters, this dissertation will continue to investigate how Romantic literary, as well as medical, writers used the infant as depicted in varying states of unconsciousness, as well as his mother, to question, fear, and fantasize about the embodied mind's malleability and permeability. In both discourses, the powerful embodied and affective connections that mothers, but also other female caretakers, share with the infant enable them to form his mind and body through invisible forces like imagination and rhythm, love and aggression. Respectively, I analyze the fetus, the sleeping infant, and the dead infant to uncover how developing fears of and fascinations with the nursery shaped and echoed Romantic writers' ideas about central ideological preoccupations like imagination, emotion, memory, and the unconscious. The body of the unconscious infant makes this task markedly more difficult because it resists more obvious ways of knowing the infant (through observing behaviors, expression, and arousal states), yet, as will become clear in my chapters, it is a body that undeniably speaks and is spoken to through affect. Because infancy, the unconscious, and the body are sites where language's systems of signification falter, the

unconscious infant provokes anxieties about what gets carried through to, and indeed, shapes, consciousness.

Alongside more canonical Romantic texts about infancy like "Frost at Midnight" or Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, my project considers underexplored literary texts from writers who have defined the period (like Keats, Scott, and the Shelleys), works from lesser-known, but increasingly regarded writers (like Isabella Kelly or the anonymous authors of children's nursery rhyme collections), and even texts in which infancy seems tangential (Hazlitt's musings about Wordsworth and Coleridge's embodied poetic practices, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*). My focus remains largely on poetry, a significant genre not only for the ways in which poets shaped ideas about the Romantic child, but also because of the way the form self-consciously employs the expressive, paralinguistic features of language so engaging to infants and very young children. However, I also discuss novels and essays in order to show how different forms approached concerns about the infant embodied unconscious and its reverberations into the unconscious aspects of adult aesthetic and affective response.

In order more effectively to examine literary representations of infant body, I consider them alongside depictions from various medical texts—obstetric and pediatric[9]—from the period. These include William Cadogan's *An Essay Upon the Nursing and Management of Children* (1772),[10] George Armstrong's *An Account of the Diseases Most Incident to Children* (1783),[11] Hugh Smith's *The Female Monitor, Consisting of a Series of*

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[9] While the term "pediatric" did not come into official usage until later in the nineteenth century, I use it here because the texts that I consult are focused on infant as well as maternal health.
[10] William Cadogan, *An Essay Upon the Nursing and Management of Children* […], 10th edition (London and Boston: Cox and Berry, 1772).
[11] George Armstrong, *An Account of the Diseases Most Incident to Children* […] (London: T. Caddell, 1783).

Letters to Married Women on Nursing and the Management of Their Children (1801),[12] Michael Underwood's *A Treatise on the Diseases of Children* (1793),[13] Martha Mears's *The Pupil of Nature* (1797),[14] and William Buchan's *Advice to Mothers on the Subject of Their Own Health* (1811)[15] and *Domestic Medicine* (1800).[16] As medicine became increasingly professionalized during the course of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, texts like these became more important for physicians invested in establishing themselves as medical authorities on pregnancy and early infant care. Associating the nurses and midwives who had traditionally performed this office with "art" and superstition, and themselves with nature and reason, they frequently enlist mothers (their readers) as their medical and moral agents within the domestic sphere. The urgency with which they address issues spanning from "maternal imagination" and cradle use, to the affective, embodied connection between mother and infant, stems from three important imperatives: 1) the need to guide the mother (and thus childcare) back under the authority of reason and nature by underscoring the powerful embodied connection between mother and infant; 2) the alarming infant death rates they identify in Britain; and 3) the ways in which physicians had historically underserved infants, whose general frailty and inability to describe their pain made them difficult or uninteresting patients. Armstrong argues that the medical community has too long ignored or

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[12] Hugh Smith, *The Female Monitor, Consisting of a Series of Letters to Married Women on Nursing and the Management of Their Children. By the Late Hugh Smith, M.D. With Occasional Notes and a Compendium of the Diseases of Infants, by John Vaughn* (Wilmington: Peter Brynberg, 1801). This is a later edition of Smith's earlier text and includes notes and commentary by John Vaughn.
[13] Michael Underwood, *A Treatise on the Diseases of Children* […] (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1793). Though this edition was printed in America, the title page emphasizes Underwood's position as "Licentiate in Midwifery of the Royal College of Physicians, in London, And Physician to the British Lying-In Hospital."
[14] Martha Mears, *The Pupil of Nature; or Candid Advice to the Fair Sex* […] (London: Printed for the Authoress; Faulder; Murray and Highly, 1797).
[15] William Buchan, *Advice to Mothers on the Subject of Their Own Health* […], 2nd edition (London: T. Caddell and W. Davies, 1811).
[16] William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine; or, a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases* […] (London and Edinburgh: Strahan; T. Caddell and W. Davies; J. Balfour and W. Creech, 1800).

dismissed the infant body simply because infants cannot speak their complaints: "though infants are not capable of expressing their complaints by words, the very symptoms themselves will, for the most part, speak for them, in so plain a manner as to be easily understood."[17] The physician and the parent should read, interpret, and empathize with infant pain, because damage sustained by the infant can more easily result in death or lifelong ailments. As self-help medical texts became increasingly popular and more widely circulated during this period, sources committed to pre- and neonatal care encouraged their (often, maternal) readers to reconsider their understandings of and relationship to the infant body.

Within the last decade, Romantic critics have increasingly emphasized the importance of examining Romantic literature's relationship to contemporaneous medical and scientific debates and frameworks, especially those regarding the emotions and embodied mind. Alan Richardson, Sharon Ruston, Joel Faflak and Richard Sha, and Noel Jackson have demonstrated that interrogating the binary opposition between the arts and sciences (which were increasingly stratified during the nineteenth century) reveals the ways in which literature and medicine were entwined during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[18] Though Roy Porter argues that the astronomic advances in medicine during the later nineteenth century make it seem that "it would be unwarrantable to imply that the [Romantic]

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[17] Armstrong, *An Account of the Diseases Most Incident to Children*, 5.

[18] Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Joel Faflak and Richard C. Sha, *Romanticism and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Noel Jackson, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Sha's work on the mechanistic underpinnings of models of feeling highlight the "material happening" or emotions in Romantic scientific discourse. Ruston, meanwhile, argues that the creation of "Romanticism" emerged from a public sphere that did not differentiate the goals of the literary and scientific, but rather that the scientific was subsumed under the aegis of a "culturally-inclusive" understanding of the literary. Jackson follows Romantic-era medical and anatomical discoveries as a means of elucidating poetic discourse concerning feeling, perception, and understandings of the structures of both mind and body.

age constituted some revolutionary watershed that transformed clinical medicine,"[19] Romantic medical texts demonstrate that medical authorities were reconceptualizing maternal and infant care, which held great implications for the female (political and maternal) subject, as well as her child.

Integral to understanding figurations of the Romantic child during this period is also understanding the ways in which parents were addressed, solicited, and represented as the guardians and, most frequently, the formers of the infant mind and body. Scholars like Ann Weirda Rowland, Alan Richardson, David B. Ruderman, and Julie Kipp have previously examined how figurations of the child relate to broader Romantic discourses about consciousness, attachment, imagination, and language.[20] Whatever the infant was—a blank slate, a child of Nature—it was impressionable and malleable, and it was vital that parental hands form it responsibly. During the Romantic period, the cult of sensibility and the preeminence accorded to the works of Rousseau meant that the figure of the child became increasingly important to nationalist discussions of education, domesticity, even consumerism and human rights. I do not seek to follow Coleridge's revisions to "Frost at Midnight" in isolating the child, but instead to keep it within the interpersonal frameworks of its affective attachments. Since very young children are incapable of complex speech, parents relied on other ways of reading and speaking to their bodies, with poetry/song playing an important role in this process. My decision also continues feminist and other body studies

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[19] Roy Porter, "Medicine," in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, edited by Iain McCalman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 170-178,171.
[20] See Ann Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood: The Infantilization of British Literary Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, and, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994); David B. Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*; Julie Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

criticism by asking readers to reevaluate the assumptions we make about literary bodies, including those of infants and mothers.

Theories of attachment, intersubjectivity, and affect have provided the frameworks and vocabularies necessary for my thinking about the infant body, partially because of the intensity of powerful feelings like love and tenderness, but also irritation and aggression, that the vulnerable infant body elicits, especially from the bonded adults around it. Theorists like Daniel Stern, D.W. Winnicott, Colwyn Trevarthen, Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven, and Ellen Dissanayake—all of whom stress the importance of early infant-mother interactions for the healthy development of the individual—feature in and inform my thinking about these interactions and texts.[21] From the infant's need for a transitional object to cope with his mother's absence, to the affective attunement and vitality forms that help infants and mothers reach a sense of mutual mindedness, to the affective transmission uniquely embodied in the pregnant-fetal shared body, these discourses have been built around the idea that the communication and impressions experienced in (and, at times, before) infancy—though beyond the reach of conscious memory—fundamentally shape how individuals continue to encounter and know the world into adulthood. Poetic language, as Julia Kristeva and Mutlu Blasing have argued,[22] brings us back to infancy by showing how the paralinguistic features of language continue to mean alongside signification. Poetry recalls infancy because it connects us to the features of language—rhythm, repetition, rhyme, and other sounding-

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[21] Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (USA: Basic Books, 1985)*;* D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Oxon and New York: Routledge Classics, 2005); Colwyn Trevarthen, *Communicative Musicality: Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven, *The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012); Ellen Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy: How the Arts Began* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2000).

[22] See Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.)

patterns—that we shared and participated in with others even before we understood the meaning of words. Moreover, its incantatory aspects seem to have a physiological power beyond what can be understood as association.

My project opens with a simple contention: that in order to theorize a "Romantic infant," one first must consider the Romantic fetus. As British physicians attempted to revise popular cultural understandings of the maternal-fetal relationship during the Romantic century, one recurring topic was "maternal imagination": the belief that a pregnant woman could imprint upon, deform, or otherwise mar the body of her fetus through her mental fixations, emotional shocks, or "longings." Physicians largely dismissed the superstition by the end of the eighteenth century; however, while they denied that the mother's imagination directly trafficked with the fetal body, they conceded that the fetus could be substantially harmed by the mother's unguarded and toxic emotions, shifting her from affective agent to environment. This also meant that over the course of the century, maternal imagination transformed from being a spectacular, legible threat—one could literally read the infant body and deduce the inspiration of maternal imagination—to one more diffuse, unknowable, and insidious.

Drawing on this medico-cultural context, Chapter 1, "'Share not thou a mother's feelings': Maternal imagination, intercorporeal affectivity, and Romantic constructions of the maternal-fetal relationship," (re)considers Romantic texts in which maternal imagination is either figured explicitly (for instance, in Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*) or implied (in Wordsworth's "The Thorn" and Isabella Kelly's "To an Unborn Infant"). I argue that the cultural shift from the older model of maternal imagination to its newer form allows writers to consider maternal imagination's potential to operate as communication with, rather than

on or through, a child's body, which in turn shapes the child in various legible ways. In Scott's older, supernatural model of maternal imagination, the marks left on the child's body are a reminder of the intergenerational trauma suffered by women who are unable fully to participate in, but still are victims of, the violent political upheavals of aristocratic men. The blood drops that Darsie's mother imprints on her daughter are a non-semantic, embodied expression of her extreme suffering, as well as an unconscious act of violence against her unborn child. However, in the older model of maternal imagination, the scope of its damage is both clear and articulable; paired with his sister's explanation behind the marks, they communicate and substantiate their mother's suffering, reestablishing the bonds of kinship between Darsie and his sister and breaking the cycle of Redgauntlet familial violence. Wordsworth and Kelly's maternal imaginations figure as affective transmission and embodied communication between maternal and fetal bodies; because their models are less literal than Scott's, they are free to explore maternal imagination as communication not only through, but *with*, the infant body. Wordsworth explores this kind of affective transmission between mother and fetus/infant in poems like "The Thorn" and "The Mad Mother," offering new implications for the Wordsworthian infant, who arrives in the world "[n]ot in entire forgetfulness" and whose "mute dialogues" with his "mother's heart" form the basis for his connection with the world and his poetic creativity. In contrast, Kelly—a mother herself—writes about a pregnant speaker's struggle to repress her turbulent emotions in order to shield her baby from the harm she fears they would cause. However, she ultimately regards maternal imagination as a potential form of communication, understanding, and empathy when she instructs her future child, upon her own death in childbirth, to articulate the

inexpressible grief she felt (and which her child experienced in-utero) to her surviving husband.

Chapters 2 and 3 progress with the fetus into infancy while still retaining important traces of the womb, shifting our attention onto a new figure: the sleeping (or near-sleeping) baby and its attendant poetic genre, the lullaby. Chapter 2 considers "lulling" as depicted in medical literature and children's texts, two distinct but highly resonant genres that also have implications for Romantic ideas about rhythm, meter, and the embodied unconscious's role in poetic composition. Both physicians and children's writers regarded lulling—singing, rhythmic intonations, shushing, rocking—as almost magical in its ability to soothe children's restlessness and pain, empirical observations upheld by current medical and neuroscientific research. In the eighteenth-century medical community, lulling was discussed variously as acceptable, harmless, or insidious; however, its powerful effect meant that a self-interested mother or nurse could compel even an untired infant to sleep through its influence. These fears about lulling physically materialized in the increasingly popular cradle, which some physicians regarded suspiciously as an irresistible technology whose steady, external rhythm and felt movement could override the infant's natural internal rhythms of sleep and wakefulness. In contrast, the editors of nursery rhymes like *Mother Goose's Melody* (1791) and *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book* (1788) use the power of lulling to market their texts to curious, nostalgic, or desperate parents; using these collections of lullabies and nurse's songs, parents could harness the nurse's power to entertain and put their irritable children to sleep. These discussions of children and the power of the lullaby/lulling (with its attendant soothing, rhythmic, embodied elements) form interesting parallels with Romantic poetic discussions of creativity, the embodied unconscious, and poetic composition. Starting with

Hazlitt's characterization of Wordsworth and Coleridge's "*chaunt*"—the ineffable manner in which they recited poetry and captivated their audiences—I then trace connections to Hazlitt's descriptions of their rhythmic embodied compositional practices, as well as his and Wordsworth's ideas about rhythm's control over affective intensities in both the reader and the writer of poetry. Like the sleeping infant of lullabies, the poet and reader alike are bodies laid open by and to rhythm.

Chapter 3 builds from this foundational insight about the lullaby, rhythm, and embodied openness to discuss two largely overlooked Romantic "lullabies": Walter Scott's "Hush thee, babe" (from Daniel Terry's theatrical adaptation of *Guy Mannering*) and John Keats's lullaby to the "little child / O' the Western wild," his brother George's unborn child. Though their audiences could not have been more different—Scott's was a wildly popular song of the stage while Keats's was a poetical musing from a private family letter—these lullabies share common themes of control and inheritance as they relate to the masculine infant body. Working from Alan Richardson's ideas about "motherese" and Romantic masculine anxieties about the origins of poetic language, this chapter focuses on poems that offer not depictions of unarticulated lulling, but which are openly declare themselves as lullabies. The male poet circumscribes the feared maternal voice by ventriloquizing it, and his subject-position as nurse-singer allows him freely to fantasize about the powerful effects that both the music and words of his lullaby have on the sleeping infant. The infant body becomes a site on which the poet ruminates and onto which he confers masculine political and poetic authority. However, to do this, the poet must enter freely into a traditionally feminine space—the nursery—and perform a traditionally feminine office—lulling the child to sleep. The power deployed in these lullabies resides not in a sentimental valorization of the

mother-infant relationship but in these writers' preoccupation with forming proper masculinity through unconscious communication between poet and male child. The lullabies of Keats and Scott urge the male infant to submit to the power of song while the songs thematically reinforce masculine power and right to inheritance. In Scott's lullaby, the nurse encourages the infant heir to survey his estate, while also warning him that "war comes with manhood"; his power will be vast, but it will be violently contested, forcing him to embrace his martial identity. Keats's lullaby imagines the child's political authority as a result of his poetic inheritance. He will be the "first poet" of America, in no small part because of the identity and powers conferred on him by the voice (and song) of his acclaimed uncle.

The fourth and final chapter of this dissertation, "One"/ "We": Mourning the Shelleys' Infant "Companion(s)," offers a different angle on the unconscious infant by focusing on the figure of the dead child in the work of Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley. Specifically, it identifies the "infant companion" as an important figure to the Shelleys, which originated in Mary Wollstonecraft's own daughter, Fanny Imlay, and found its successor in William Shelley, the 3-year-old son whose loss Mary deeply mourned for the rest of her life. The first strand of this chapter's argument concerns how Percy and Mary consider parental love, mourning, and the stakes of representing the (dead) infant in their works. If Percy's poetic infant is frequently ethereal and fantastic, Mary's is viscerally and painfully embodied—an expression of maternal "tenderness" which has, in this case, devastating effects. Mary reflects this in her emphasis on the close ties between William's material body and her own. In this way, this chapter contributes to a long history of critical work on the relationship between the Shelleys' lives and their texts, as well as parents and children, by closely examining how the beloved infant companion's specter haunts the

margins of their work. In the case of "Her voice did quiver" / "Thy little footsteps in the sand," I examine the poem as a whole—a topic that, interestingly, has not yet been explored substantially in scholarship, but which lies at the nexus of many of the critical concerns surrounding the Shelley circle. This poem in its totality shows Percy exploring a more embodied and personal model of infancy and maternal attachment through Wollstonecraft's loving, though often viscerally painful, language of maternal experience. While this poem comprises the heart of this study, it is necessary to consider it alongside other texts that these authors wrote about the infants they knew and loved, who lived and (frequently) died. For Percy, it means tracing some of his ideas about infancy more generally throughout his work to discuss why he valued the infant and how those values shaped the way he represented and mourned the dead and live, companionate and distanced, children from his life in his texts. Within Mary's work, I examine her autobiographical commentary about William and other children in Percy's poetic collection, as well as her autobiographical elegiac poem "The Choice" and her 1826 novel *The Last Man*.

The close and sustained examination of medical texts and ideas can offer substantial insights into the ways Romantic literary texts represent and interrogate bodies and embodied processes like imagination and sympathy, both of which are critical for defining the Romantic aesthetic. This is especially true in the case of the bodies of mother and infant, as both literary and medical texts increasingly emphasized the importance of the mother to the infant's world and wondered about the far-reaching effects of her early presence and habits. As writers considered how inaccessible or partially-accessible early childhood memories might structure their understandings of and responses to the world, the maternal-infant and even maternal-fetal dyads took on new (at times more frightening, at times celebrated)

significance. If Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," with the infant Hartley exuberantly reaching out from his mother's arms to take in the external world, represents the mother as the individual's secure base from which he can pursue that which captures his attention and "suspend[s] [his] little soul" (83), to erase her is also to erase the child in an imaginative act that the Romantics so valued.

Chapter 1:

"Share not thou a mother's feelings": Maternal imagination, intercorporeal affectivity, and Romantic constructions of the maternal-fetal relationship

In Isabella Kelly's 1794 poem, "To an Unborn Infant," a speaker nearing the brink of childbirth expresses her "anguish" at her husband's prolonged absence.[1] Emphasizing the injustice of their external circumstances (he has been "wrong'd, imprison'd, robb'd of right" [13]), she suffers without directing much spite towards him. However, she emphasizes their probable physical and emotional alienation through her decision not to style her poem as an apostrophe to her missing spouse but instead by speaking to the unborn child sharing her very pregnant body. Worried about the effect that her turbulent emotions might have on her fetus, she implores it to "[s]hare not thou a mother's feelings" (21) and promises to use her own body to "safely guard" it from "this bleak, this beating storm" (3, 4). While her determination is admirable, she undermines her own injunction by sharing her feelings with her child in two distinct, but interrelated, ways: verbally, through the poem she writes, and environmentally, within the body that they both inhabit. Her final vision of her child as one day delivering the message of her maternal suffering, death, and redemption to her returned husband suggests that through sharing her emotional pain with her child, both on an unspoken, embodied level as well as through her poem's articulate expression, Kelly has imagined a kind of maternal-child sympathy that transcends any model that could be offered by unshared bodies and unconnected minds.

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[1] Isabella Kelly, "To an Unborn Infant," in *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology*, edited by Roger Lionsdale (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 482-483, line 15. All references to the poem, cited parenthetically hereafter, are from this edition.

Kelly's preoccupation with the safety of her unborn child and the dangers (but also positive potential) that her own thoughts and emotions might pose to it carries important significance in the context of shifting eighteenth-century conceptions of the maternal-fetal relationship. As critics have noted,[2] Kelly's poem evokes a popular debate over "maternal imagination": the belief that a pregnant woman's unexpressed or illicit fixations, "longings," and powerful emotional states materially affect the body of her fetus. This theory had ancient roots and persisted in differing forms throughout the Renaissance and Early Modern Period,[3] but the voices of an increasingly powerful, professionalized, and male-dominated community of eighteenth-century medical practitioners gradually dismissed it as a vestige of misguided (and potentially dangerous) feminine superstition—an old (mid)wives' tale. Whereas in 1726 physicians debated seriously whether a woman named Mary Toft gave birth to several rabbit parts following an unsatisfied craving for it,[4] by the end of the eighteenth century, they were exasperated to find themselves still frequently debunking this myth, with Buchan writing of the "incalculable mischief" that has been caused by the belief.[5] This is not to say that physicians came to believe that a pregnant woman had no effect on her fetus, but rather that while the fundamental concerns of maternal imagination—how a mother's apparently

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[2] See Elizabeth Johnston, "Looking into the Mirror, Inscribing the Blank Slate: Eighteenth-Century Women Write About Mothering," in *Disjointed Perspectives on Motherhood*, edited by Catalina Florina Florescu (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013), 185-200; Jenifer Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature: The Maternal Imagination* (Basingstroke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 189-208. This chapter was conceived and drafted prior to Jenifer Buckley's publication of *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature.* While our ideas about why Romantic studies can benefit from a closer and broader engagement with theories of maternal imagination align, our approaches differ (Buckley's is a historicist approach, while mine is informed by theories of attachment and affect), bringing to light different interpretations and emphases in our texts.

[3] Jenifer Buckley and Rebecca Kukla provide cogent overviews of the transformation of this belief in European cultural imaginations and iconographies. See Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, chap. 1; also, Rebecca Kukla, *Mass Hysteria: Medicine, Culture, and Mother's Bodies* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), chap. 1.

[4] King George even sent his own personal physician to assess Toft's claims. Her story became a huge cultural phenomenon and the object of satirists including Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and William Hogarth.

[5] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 42.

immaterial mind affects the shared maternal/fetal body—endured, understandings of the nature, causes, and effects of maternal imagination evolved. The older, more literal model of maternal imagination, in which a mother could "read" and interpret imprinted evidence of her emotions, desires, and ideas on the body of her infant, was replaced by the general supposition that a pregnant woman's unregulated affects could harm her fetus, and that this harm was impossible to predict, translate, even articulate.

This first chapter, then, opens my project with a simple contention: that in order to theorize a "Romantic" infant or child, one first should consider the "Romantic fetus." This is because the child's developing mind, body, and character, as well as its special relationship with its mother, does not commence at birth but builds on the embodied, affective connection they shared during pregnancy. This claim touches on three enormously important topics in Romantic critical discourse: the child, imagination, and emotion, all of which are relevant to discussions of maternal imagination. By examining Romantic texts in which maternal imagination is either explicitly featured (for instance, in Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* [1824] or William Wordsworth's "The Thorn" [1798]) or strongly implied (Kelly's "To an Unborn Infant" or Wordsworth's "The Mad Mother" [1798]), we accomplish two things: first, we can reevaluate Romantic models of embodied imagination, emotion, and the creative mind from a perspective from which most of the canonical and influential male poets were necessarily excluded. Specifically, maternal imagination held powers that the male imagination did not because it presided over the domestic and familial domain as well as potentially over the aesthetic. Moreover, the threat and potential offered by models of maternal imagination reveal anxieties about whether and how a woman's conscious and unconscious sorrows and desires are communicated to her fetus and ultimately, transmitted to her child through their

powerful and mysterious embodied connection. "At the heart of eighteenth-century materialism in its myriad forms," Helen Deutsch and Mary Terrall write, "is the mystery of matter, and at the heart of that mystery is language and imagination."[6] By this logic, the Romantic infant is not at birth a "blank slate" or an untouched product of nature, as the philosophical traditions of Locke and Rousseau, common starting points for thinking about the Romantic child, are frequently interpreted to suggest.[7] Rather, the infant has already (potentially) been formed in some way by not just the body but also the subjectivity of his mother. "[T]he history of man for the nine months preceding his birth would, probably, be far more interesting and contain events of greater moment than for all the three score and ten years that follow it," Coleridge mused in 1802.[8] It seems then, that some male Romantic poets, like Coleridge and (as will be discussed later in the chapter) Wordsworth, recognized that because fetal life shapes the evolving child, it could be considered relevant to discussions of the child. Of course the child would have no distinct memory of his *in utero*

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[6] Helen Deutsch and Mary Terrall, "Introduction," in *Vital Matters: Eighteenth-Century Views of Conception, Life, and Death*, edited by Helen Deutsch and Mary Terrall (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 3-12. 5.

[7] Rousseau is far less explicit about the maternal-fetal relationship; he mentions in *Émile* that Sophie should "take care" during her pregnancy and after childbirth. Excerpt from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, Book 5; quoted in "Woman's Nature and Education," in *Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in Documents, Volume One, 1750-1880*, edited by Susan Groag Bell & Karen M. Offen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 46. On the other hand, Locke interestingly contends that the fetal mind develops "simple ideas" about sensations it experiences "as the unavoidable effects, either of the bodies that environ them, or else of those wants or diseases they suffer" (he conjectures "hunger and warmth"). He emphasizes that any ideas the fetus has emerge relationally from his interactions with and experience of his environment and the maternal body, and are not "innate" principles of unknown, supernatural (or heavenly) origins. Cited from John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding and A Treatise on the Conduct of Understanding* (Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, Publishers, 1860), 99.

[8] Quoted in Aidan MacFarlane, *The Psychology of Childbirth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 5. MacFarlane locates Coleridge's comment in the margins of Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642). Aidan MacFarlane notes that the line Coleridge was responding to was, "Every man is some months older than he bethinks him, for we live, move, have being, and are subject to the same actions of the elements and the malice of diseases, in that other world, the truest Microcosm, the womb of our mother." Kiran Toor has examined how Coleridge's attitude toward maternal imagination reflects both skepticism and fascination, and how "pregnant metaphors" of male creation surface with some frequency in his writing; see Kiran Toor, "'Offspring of his Genius': Coleridge's Pregnant Metaphors and Metamorphic Pregnancies," *Romanticism* 13, no. 3 (2007): 257-270).

experience, but this formative period and this primary, embodied relationship leave indelible marks on his infancy and the growth of his mind.

Though Romantic "imagination" has traditionally been viewed and discussed as a faculty of mind, critics like Sharon Ruston, Richard Sha, and Alan Richardson have become increasingly interested in the medical, biological, and phenomenological body of Romantic models of subjectivity.[9] The modifier "maternal" further dispels any doubts about whether the Romantic conception of imagination is embodied, gendered, and relational. Meanwhile, previous studies of maternal imagination have focused on establishing the belief's cultural context or examining it from the perspective of contemporary feminism. What has not been fully explored—and what this chapter seeks to address—are the ways in which discourses of psychoanalysis,[10] intersubjectivity, and affect theory offer useful ideas and terms for understanding maternal imagination in relation to Romantic models of being-with(in) embodied by pregnancy.[11] For instance, the pregnant body concretizes Theresa Brennan's

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[9] See Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in Literature, Science, and Medicine of the 1790s*; Richard Sha, *Imagination and Science in Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts*

[10] Here I must mention Kristeva's concept of the "chora," the chaotic stage of early infant development, where the boundary between mother and child have not yet been delineated, and which emerges in the rhythms and other material aspects of language (the "semiotic") which poetry especially heightens. Aranye Fradenburg explains, the "semiotic chora" [is] the primordial 'receptacle' whose rhythms precede but always undergird language and our perceptions of space." L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, *Staying Alive: A Survival Manual for the Liberal Arts*, edited by Eileen A. Joy (Brooklyn, NY: punctum books, 2013), 118. Bracha Ettinger, whose theory of the "matrixial borderspace" would also be interesting here, lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. Bracha Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

[11] Discussing the maternal-fetal relationship in terms of intersubjectivity presents a daunting challenge because the status of the fetus as "subject" (and moreover, a knowable and conscious subject) is obviously a notoriously vexed and unresolvable issue. I offer the following two propositions in order to justify my use of the term "intersubjective": first, that the fetuses being discussed are done so during the late stages of pregnancy, and second, because the mothers themselves, whose bodies the fetuses rely on and share, discuss/address the fetuses as their "unborn" children. Writing about the intersubjective relationships that expectant fathers can create with the fetus, Erik Jansson Böstrom argues the value of a model of "emerging intersubjectivity" that can account for the experience of an expectant parent (Erik Jansson Böstrom, "The Unborn Child and the Father: Acknowledgment and the Creation of the Other," in *Phenomenology of Pregnancy*, edited by Jonna Bornemark and Nicholas Smith [Stockholm: Södertörn University, 2016], 141-156,143). Obviously, an adequate theory of

discussions of affective transmission by locating maternal-fetal affective exchange within the shared environment of the mother's body.[12] More recently, April Flakne has pointed out that the "'oddity' of pregnant intersubjectivity" can be regarded simply as an extreme manifestation of "intercorporeal affectivity"—the ways in which other bodies, whether internal or external to us, "affect us on introceptive, proprioceptive, and intrasensory 'levels' at all times."[13] Affect has always encouraged the deconstruction of familiar binaries such as self/other, mind/body, inside/outside, and individuality/plurality.[14] It also will be useful for discussing differences between the two models of maternal imagination—the older, where one could literally "read" the body of the infant as a physical record of his mother's thoughts or emotions during pregnancy, and the second, where her unguarded emotions could present an unknown and illegible (and perhaps more insidious) danger to the fetus and hold formative power over the child's general constitution or moral character.[15]

I begin this chapter by looking at key aspects of the medical debate over maternal imagination, then turn to three examples of Romantic writers who relied on, modified, or gestured toward maternal imagination as either a destructive, traumatic force or its potential as a unique site of intercorporeal affectivity. I argue that the cultural shift from the older model of maternal imagination to its newer form allows writers to consider the potential of maternal imagination to operate as communication with or through, rather than on, a child's

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pregnant intersubjectivity must account for the asymmetry of the relationship both in terms of power, control, and consciousness.

[12] Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). See especially chapter 1 for Brennan's overview. In this book, Brennan interrogates how the Western fantasy of the monadic individual has allowed theories of subjectivity to overlook ways in which the self is constantly entered—and physiologically changed—by other bodies around her.

[13] April Flakne, "Nausea as Introceptive Annunciation," in *Phenomenology of Pregnancy*, edited by Jonna Bornemark and Nicholas Smith (Stockholm: Södertörn University, 2016), 103-118, 116.

[14] See Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-25.

[15] Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, 70.

body, which in turn shapes the child's unconscious mind. In Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824), maternal imagination serves as an imprinted reminder of the Scotland's violent political upheavals. In contrast, Wordsworth explores affective transmission as "communion" among mother, fetus, and infant in poems like "The Thorn" and "The Mad Mother" (both 1798), offering new implications for the Wordsworthian infant of *The Prelude* (1805) who arrives in the world "[n]ot in entire forgetfulness" and whose "mute dialogues" with his "mother's heart" form the basis for his connection with the world and his poetic creativity. Finally, Kelly—a mother herself—writes about a pregnant speaker's struggle to repress her turbulent emotions in order to shield her baby from the harm she fears they would cause, though she ultimately finds this connection empowering and comforting.

"By the Force of her Imagination"

The professionalization of obstetric medicine during the course of the eighteenth century held enormous implications for how society constructed views of children and childhood, mothers and maternity. Both Kukla and Buckley have provided thorough and compelling histories of how beliefs about maternal imagination and pregnancy evolved during the medical debates of the period.[16] A related development concerns how female midwives were displaced (at least theoretically) by more respectable male midwives or even physicians during a particularly difficult birth. As advisor to the mother throughout her pregnancy, the male physician fashioned himself as the guardian of the next generation of British political subjects. According to Kukla, the physician's developing status as "an

[16] For two very useful overviews, see Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, 13-19, and Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, chap. 2. Buckley points out that the exchange between Daniel Turner and Augustus Blondel is a catalyzing moment in the debate between the Imaginationist and anti-Imaginationist stances, as it resulted in the displacement of the older, more legible model of "maternal imagination," and the emergence of a model of "maternal passions," which was based on the effects of the mother's powerful, though unintentional, feelings (see Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 65-68; also, 89-97).

important member of the bourgeois sphere and the keeper of the body politic and national character" is related to this new model of conceptualizing the maternal body and character in relation to the emergent child.[17] Pregnancy was also increasingly regarded as a medical condition to be monitored by an obstetrician, rather than as a natural (if changed) state of physicality. Julia Epstein provides a telling example in her discussion on "quickening."

> A woman only became officially and publically pregnant when she felt her fetus *quicken*, or move inside her, and she alone could ascertain and report the occurrence of quickening. In 1765, William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* concluded that life 'begins in the contemplation of the law as soon as an infant is able to stir in the mother's womb.[18]

Epstein discusses the rise of the maternal imagination debate as "crucial, not only for their cultural representation and medical analysis of women's bodies, but also for the ability of women to control their own lives."[19] In both the cases of increased physician surveillance, as well as quickening, maternal agency is shown to be increasingly encroached upon if not largely eroded; similar dynamics are at play in revised views of maternal imagination. For the purposes of this chapter, I offer close examinations of passages from Romantic medical texts in order to address the following concerns: what is maternal imagination and how do theories about it shift during the period? What advice do physicians give mothers regarding maternal imagination? What is the role/responsibility of the father during pregnancy? And, finally, can maternal imagination ever be a positive force? These questions illuminate my

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[17] See Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, 71-73.
[18] Julia Epstein, "The Pregnant Imagination, Women's Bodies, and Fetal Rights," in *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science, and Literature, 1650-1865*, edited by Susan C. Greenfield and Carol Barash (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 111-137, 112. In this chapter, Epstein examines eighteenth-century legal and social discourses surrounding maternal imagination with contemporary discussions of fetal and maternal rights.
[19] Epstein, "The Pregnant Imagination, Women's Bodies, and Fetal Rights," 116.

interrogations of the function and meaning of maternal imagination in Romantic literary texts varying from lyric poetry to the novel.

In the early eighteenth century, maternal imagination was understood to describe a mother's impression on, formation, or alteration of her fetus as a result of her mental and emotional preoccupations or longings. Sometimes these effects were considered beneficial but more frequently they were manifested in marks of monstrosity, and these examples dominated the public imagination throughout the century. Such widespread cultural interest (if not belief) meant that, by the end of the eighteenth century, increasingly powerful physicians routinely had to stoutly dismiss maternal imagination as a superstition propagated by ignorant nurses who terrorized naïve mothers with their ridiculous claims. "Every man long in business," Underwood writes, "has known many instances of affectionate mothers, (for this needless distress falls only to the lot of such) who have tormented themselves for six or seven months together, in the painful apprehension of discovering some sad blemish in the child...which has afterward proved to be as perfect as they could have wished."[20] Commenting on Smith's dismissal of the phenomenon, Vaughn sardonically observes, "[I]f children were affected by every bodily disease, much less, every mental impression of their mothers, mankind would become a feeble tribe of speckled beings."[21]

Mears identifies the fear of maternal imagination, not the act of maternal imagination, as the real source of threat to the child: "It is of the utmost moment to root out of the mind those fatal apprehensions; or they will often produce the very evils to which they are so tremblingly alive."[22] The mother can only harm her child *by* giving in to her worry about

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[20] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 310.
[21] Smith, *The Female Monitor*, 41.
[22] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 27.

harming him. "Langour, debility, and disease are the consequences; the difficulty of child-birth is increased; and a puny, or distorted infant is sometimes brought forth--the victim of its mother's terrors."[23] Likewise, Buchan writes of "poor women, who may do themselves a real injury by the dread of an imaginary evil."[24] In short, the material evidence that believers in maternal imagination had traditionally pointed to in order to substantiate their belief—marks on the child's skin, disfigured limbs, and so forth—were largely random acts of nature that were simply being over-read.

However, as the warnings of Mears and Buchan suggest, the underlying danger of maternal imagination—that a mother's mind or powerfully-felt emotions could harm her fetus—remained a threat, even in the eyes of an increasingly skeptical medical establishment. Jenifer Buckley distinguishes between the older model of maternal imagination, associated with "longings," and the "maternal passions" that Dr. Blondel redefined in 1727.

> As a physical injury clearly had nothing to do with the expectant mother's mind, Blondel's logic reduced the broad scope of maternal imagination to only one possible form – a mother's passions could effect some kind of accidental (and damaging) change upon the development of her foetus in the womb. Any other claim to maternal imagination was either biologically impossible or unrelated to the mother's actual imagination – in other words, maternal longings were always fabricated by the woman, whereas maternal passion might be genuine.[25]

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[23] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 28.
[24] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 51.
[25] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 67. Buckley notes that "the concepts of maternal imagination and maternal passion became synonymous during the later eighteenth century," guiding my use of the terms as well.

Under these designations, maternal imagination describes a model of maternal impression on the fetal body that could be read and interpreted, much like a text. In contrast, the effects of "maternal passions" were more generally described in terms of "damag[e]" because they did not leave a sign or mark on the child's body that would be legible (that is, interpretable). In ways, this model of discussing fears about the power of women's emotions is more insidious to maternal agency because it made her body more vaguely terrifying, and thus the regulation and surveillance of her body increasingly necessary. (This is not to say that older beliefs about maternal imagination were consistently empowering for women.) At the same time, while the old model determined that fetal deformities might be caused by the maternal body, they were not necessarily the mother's fault because she couldn't necessarily control either external circumstances or her unconscious, embodied "longings." Moreover, the narrative behind maternal imagination fundamentally depended on a woman's interpretation of the mysterious, invisible workings of her pregnant body and mind. This narrative and ascription of agency to women, shifts in the transition from maternal imagination to maternal passions.

Medical writers had different ways of talking about how and why different emotions impacted the fetus. For Martha Mears, exercising emotional control, especially over the "tempest" of "ungoverned anger,"[26] is vital to the health of both mother and fetus during pregnancy. "[Anger] poisons all the sources of nutriment and life: its feverish spirit escapes the filtering, corrective powers of the *placenta*, and enters into the system of the child, which nature had in vain secured from every other taint."[27] Mears represents maternal anger alternately as an internal storm and a toxic emotion, "poison[ing]" the defenseless unborn

[26] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 31.
[27] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 31.

child. Buchan likewise warns his readers against the especial danger of maternal rage, illustrating his claim with a description of shocking violence.

> I have also met with a most shocking instance of a fighting woman, who in the paroxysm of rage and revenge, brought forth a child, with all its bowels hanging out of its little body. There is little doubt that passionate women are most subject to abortions, which are oftener owing to outward violence or internal tumult, than to any other cause.[28]

Though Buchan denies the existence of maternal imagination in its earlier, more literal construction, his graphic image seems familiar (for instance, one famous anecdote of maternal imagination concerned a pregnant woman who saw a man broken on the wheel and gave birth to a child with mangled limbs).[29] However, because he does not attribute this broken infant body to a visual scene reconstituted, as it were, on the infant body by maternal imagination, his general attribution of it to the emotional disposition of the mother indicates his movement against the earlier tradition. In addition to rage, Mears also addresses "fear, melancholy, even despair"—those "vultures of the mind"—which can "sap the constitution by a slow and gradual decay."[30] (Buchan describes the "chilling influence of fear, and the depressions of melancholy."[31]) The mother's emotions clearly present a violent and pervasive threat to the child within her body, placing the pregnant mother in the difficult position of being at once "in an increased [state] of sensibility" and having to exert extraordinary control

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[28] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 34.
[29] On a similar note, Buchan exclaims, "how many headless babes had been born in France during ROBESPIERRE'S reign of terror!" (Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 48).
[30] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 31.
[31] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 33.

over even the internal manifestations of her negative affects.[32] The most important way in which a mother could protect her child from her emotions then is by regulating them, as their destructive force was too powerful for the vulnerable fetal body to withstand.

Could maternal passion ever be a positive force in the way that earlier models of maternal imagination thought possible? Mears suggests as much, as Buckley has noted.[33] If a mother experiences joy or pleasure, her body becomes a pleasurable environment for the fetus. "Every painful emotion of the mind impairs the health of the body, and, on the other hand, whatever is pleasing to the former, when under no improper bias or fascinating illusion, is in the like degree salutary to the latter."[34] For her part, Mears suggests for the disquiet mother a regimen of books, "agreeable company,"[35] and above all, "natural" music.[36] If "[t]he music of business is to raise strong emotions,"[37] it becomes essential that pregnant women listen to the right kind of music. Mears "do[es] not wish to lead pregnant women to our theaters, our operas, our public concerts,"[38] but offers a compelling illustration of the kind of "natural" music that is acceptable, even "desir[able]":[39] "pure, lively, and impassioned music, to the notes of which the heart beats in time—every nerve, every fibre, is in perfect harmony—the blood flows with assenting vibrations;—and health and pleasure, as if in unison, pervade the whole frame.…The fiddle, the flute, or the music of the voice alone, will banish care, and will sweeten labour, will often prevent and sometimes expel disease."[40] Mears emphasizes that even before the child has been born, it can be formed in relation to

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[32] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 38.
[33] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 4.
[34] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 32.
[35] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 33.
[36] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 33.
[37] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 35.
[38] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 36.
[39] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 36.
[40] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 36.

song (a theme that will be revisited in the following chapter) through its mother's positive emotional engagement with music. Contemporary medical research upholds the central theme of Mears's theory, as music therapy programs for pregnant women have been found to reduce maternal stress, decreasing the risk of fetal, even infant, complications.[41]

Lastly, given the prevalence of abandoned, disappointed, and bereaved mothers in the literary texts of this chapter, the father emerges as a notable tertiary presence who, though outside of the shared maternal-fetal body, exercises a profound (and here, negative) influence over the mother's mental and emotional health. Early models of maternal and paternal imagination as they affect the moment of conception (for instance, the infamous clock-winding scene of *Tristram Shandy*) more directly implicated the father in the infant's (mal)formation.[42] Discussion of the father's direct role generally lessened as responsibility was increasingly placed on the mother to control her emotions during pregnancy. "The authors of pregnancy guides such as William Buchan and Martha Mears particularly underscored the importance of a father during pregnancy," explains Buckley, "as they claimed he could soothe the mother, protect her, and alleviate her worries."[43] Since the mother's turbulent emotions were the new source of medical anxiety for the child, the husband's task was to "share in and lessen pain [her] by tender sympathy."[44] Mears rhapsodizes, "What delightful emotions must that man feel, who dries the tear as it steals down the cheek of beauty,—who anticipates the silent wish,—and shelters from each rude

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[41] See, for example, Mei-Yueh Chang, Chung-Hey Chen, and Kuo-Feng Huang, "Effects of music therapy on psychological health of women during pregnancy," *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 17, no. 19 (2008): 2580-2587.
[42] For Buckley's reading of the importance of paternal imagination in Sterne's novel, see, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, chap. 4.
[43] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 102.
[44] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 29.

blast the tender buds of mutual affection!"[45] Mears interestingly offers the male body as a form of "shelter" for the fetus (an image that Kelly uses to describe her maternal body), showing him as an indirect intermediary between mother and fetus. If the father faces and quells the "rude blasts" of feminine emotion, the child will not have to withstand them. The father should not consider nurturing his wife in this way a degradation or insult to his masculinity; it is not "making yourself the slave of caprice, or of female tyranny," she emphasizes, "it is bearing with the infirmities of your dearest friend."[46] Mears's image of conjugal love and support, interestingly, does not appear in the literary texts of this chapter, which more often portray male betrayal and failure as the source of maternal agitation and grief. To this, Mears admonishes fathers that to betray the mother is to betray nature herself: "It is not superstition, it is the voice of nature that bids thee tremble at the ravings of a distracted mother, and at the cries of infant blood!"[47] Though mothers may bear the primary responsibility for their infants, fathers were in some degree culpable, as well.

Ultimately, this chapter's selection of literary and medical texts explores the same themes regarding maternal imagination: the mysterious yet powerful relationship between the mind and body of an individual and the ways in which questions over that relationship increase when another presence (whose subjectivity is unknown and unknowable) is developing in that individual's body. While physicians, concerned with establishing themselves as the preeminent authorities on the maternal body, sought to dismiss the old, superstitious model of maternal imagination and impressionability from acceptable discourses about the maternal body, they also upheld the idea that a woman's violent, often

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[45] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature,* 29.
[46] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 32.
[47] Mears, *The Pupil of Nature*, 30.

illegible emotions were quite dangerous to herself and others. Literary writers would use both models to consider how the maternal body speaks on, and through, the infant body in this act.

"The shape which tradition assigned it"

Published almost three decades after the other literary texts in this study, Walter Scott's 1824 novel *Redgauntlet* takes place in 1765 during a third—final, failed, and fictional—Jacobite rebellion.[48] It is an account of two friends—Darsie Latimer, an English-Scottish heir of mysteriously concealed origins who is kidnapped by his politically dissident uncle, and Alan Fairfield, an aspiring young attorney who embarks on a journey to rescue him. The novel is an experiment in historical speculative fiction, merging a romantic, political fantasy with the detailed realism typically associated with Scott's historical novels. The Scotland of *Redgauntlet* has been violently fractured by centuries of tension and war with England, creating an insurmountable divide between Scots who support the overthrow of the Hanoverian regime and the reestablishment of the Stuart monarchy (like "Herries"/Hugh Redgauntlet, whom Darsie discovers is his uncle), and the emerging middle class intelligentsia of Edinburgh (represented by Alan Fairford) and the political elite backing Hanoverian Britain (as "Darsie Latimer"/Sir Arthur Darsie Redgauntlet ultimately will). Upon being taken hostage by his dead father's brother (whose identity is unknown to him until midway through the novel), Darsie eventually must decide whether reclaiming the Redgauntlet family name means taking up their violent political goal: to finally place Bonny Prince Charlie back on the British throne. Both his uncle and sister (who had also been

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[48] Emily Allen argues that *Redgauntlet* was crucial for recovering Scott's reputation as a critical darling after the disastrous *St. Ronan's Well*, describing its triumph as a "remasculinization" which allowed him to "return to his rightful estate, the potent field of historical romance" (Emily Allen, "Re-marking Territory: 'Redgauntlet and the Restoration of Sir Walter Scott," *Studies in Romanticism* 37, no. 2 [1998]: 163-182, 172). The novel is familiar to most modern readers for "Wandering Willie's Tale," a story that explicitly engages with the Redgauntlet family's associations with the diabolic and supernatural.

kidnapped by their uncle, though when a young girl) provide Darsie with details pertaining to the Redgauntlet family history that are supplemented by his own dimly-remembered childhood memories. Ultimately Darsie resolves to stand firm in his inherent Hanoverian loyalty; meanwhile, the Stuart plot is thwarted and the rebel forces, dispelled. As Hugh Redgauntlet embarks for the Continent alongside his failed prince and Darsie assumes his rightful place as the Laird of Redgauntlet, the novel concludes with a powerful affirmation that a Scotland in which "Jacobite will be henceforward no longer a party name" is a Scotland which finally has fully entered modernity.[49]

Despite the novel's sustained critique of ancient, under-examined, and overly-passionate political affiliations, the supernatural and superstition—including maternal imagination—play important roles in the narrative's interrogation of fate, free will, and familial inheritance.[50] Particularly prominent is the pervasive Redgauntlet sense of "doom": the family, though they would "continue to be powerful amid the changes of future times,"[51] has been fated to fight on the losing side of every political cause they undertake because Sir Alberick, a Redgauntlet ancestor who fought during the 13th century against the English-aligned Edward Balliol, ruthlessly (though unintentionally) trampled his own son and heir with his horse during battle. This curse is substantiated not only by the string of violent losses the family has sustained over the centuries, but also by an elusive and menacing horseshoe mark that appears on the brows of Redgauntlet men—a replication of the death-wound of Sir Alberick's son. Though now a familial trait, this shape was originally formed

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[49] Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet. A Tale of the Eighteenth Century* (Project Gutenberg, 2008), *Project Gutenberg*, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2516/2516-h/2516-h.htm, chap, 23.
[50] Though maternal imagination has not been examined in regards to *Redgauntlet*, David Sandner has addressed the pervasiveness of superstition to the novel ("Supernatural Modernity in Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* and James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*," *Extrapolation* 48, no. 1 (2006): 73-83).
[51] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.

by maternal imagination: upon discovering that her husband has killed their elder son, the Lady Redgauntlet enters into premature labor. Before dying in childbirth, her powerful grief impresses the mark on the forehead of her unborn son, who is to become Alberick's new heir. According to Herries, this physical trait has been passed down through subsequent generations of Redgauntlet men ever since, though it is only visible when their faces are contorted in rage.

Though the novel refers to this image of maternal imagination frequently as a means of reinforcing Darsie's struggle with familial duty, inheritance, and fate, it is not the only instance of maternal imagination in the novel, as Lillias Redgauntlet reveals when she ungloves her hand to show her brother a birthmark resembling five bloodspots. These are attributed to her mother's deep grief for her husband—Darsie's and Lillias's father, and Herries's older brother—who was executed following the second failed Jacobite rebellion in 1746. Maternal imagination thus materializes the intergenerational trauma suffered by women who are unable to fully participate in, but are still victims of, the violent political upheavals of men. The marks of maternal imagination are a non-semantic, embodied expression of a mother's extreme suffering as well as an unconscious act of violence against her unborn child. Because they are transmitted in the older model of maternal imagination, the scope of maternal imagination is both clear and articulable; paired with the narrative explanations that accompany them, they communicate and substantiate maternal suffering in a way that, once properly acknowledged and redressed, can provide the kind of self-reflection necessary to reestablish the natural bonds of kinship and break the cycle of Redgauntlet familial violence. Both marks register the traumatic loss of a family member to a

political cause; in other words, they mark political allegiances as unnatural or monstrous because they have violated the bonds of family.

Alberick violated the "natural" ties of family by privileging his political ties over the life of his "rebel" son and must confront the enormity of his violation—as well as the fatal grief he caused his wife—in the "innocent" face of his new infant son:

> …From that moment, whatever [Alberick] might feel inwardly, he gave way to no outward emotion. [His commander] Douglas caused his infant to be brought; but even the iron-hearted soldiers were struck with horror to observe that, by the mysterious law of nature, the cause of his mother's death, and the evidence of his father's guilt, was stamped on the innocent face of the babe, whose brow was distinctly marked by the miniature resemblance of a horseshoe. Redgauntlet himself pointed it out to Douglas, saying, with a ghastly smile, "It should have been bloody." Moved, as he was, to compassion for his brother-in-arms, and steeled against all softer feelings by the habits of civil war, Douglas shuddered at this sight, and displayed a desire to leave the house which was doomed to be the scene of such horrors.[52]

Maternal imagination, that "mysterious law of nature," has determined that despite Alberick's sudden determination to "g[i]ve no way to outward emotion," his new son would be a constant reminder of his wife's emotional pain and the unnatural sacrifice he made of his eldest son, the son whom this child replaced as heir. The body of the new son and heir is marked by the political struggle between his father and brother. In contrast to Alberick's emotional repression—which manifests in the "ghastly smile" and harrowing comment that

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[52] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.

the mark "should have been bloody"—his wife's maternal grief is overpowering, inducing the onset of labor which would both disfigure her child and kill her. While her grief is excessive, it is still natural compared with the unnatural willingness of her husband to not only cause but refuse to grieve the death of his rebel son. Unlike the mark of Cain, the horseshoe is borne not by the sinner but by the "innocent" child, and its fatal casualty is not the father but the similarly innocent mother. Herries mentions that Douglas, Alberick's "brother-in-arms," cannot stomach the "sight" of this scene, but the "horror[…]" that makes him "shudder" is Alberick's monstrous emotional dissonance. The story's allusion to maternal imagination as the origin of the Redgauntlet mark demonstrates that the horseshoe is not merely a sign of a supernatural curse but also is a trace of profound maternal grief and a visual reminder of the ways in which Redgauntlet women suffer the unnatural effects of interfamilial and civil violence, despite their almost complete lack of agency.

The novel, in fact, has a paucity of mothers. Darsie's and Lillias's mother, Alan Fairfield's mother, and Sir Alberick's wife are all dead. The maternal absence means that, conversely, the novel is full of characters grieving their attachment to and loss of these mothers. In fact, Darsie points to the death of "that kind, that ill-rewarded mother" (he does not seem to recall the loss of his sister) as his first sobering entry into a reality from which she had sought to preserve him.[53] "I do not think I had before this event formed, any idea, of death, or that I had even heard of that final consummation of all that lives. The first acquaintance which I formed with it deprived me of my only relation."[54] Without her, Darsie found himself alone in the world, unattached by any (known) familial bonds. Though herself absent from the novel's narrative trajectory, the mother materializes her presence in the form

[53] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, letter 1.
[54] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, letter 1.

of imprinted emotion on the body of her child. Maternal imagination is not a deviation from nature's order, but a reassertion of it. The strength of maternal grief insists that the marginalized maternal body will speak on the skin of the infant and through the voices who retell its story, despite the mother's lack of political agency or even her death. Because the mother figure is lost, maternal imagination becomes one of the only ways of knowing her presence and seeing that her grief refuses to be repressed or superseded by the political order. Where political attachments take the place of familial attachments, the next generation of both political subjects and family members will be rendered monstrous.

Scott's representation of the horseshoe mark in the story of Sir Alberick's son resonates with earlier medical accounts of the power of maternal imagination. However, because of the alignment of the "fatal sign" with the supernatural Redgauntlet curse, it (allegedly) becomes an inherited physical trait within the family—a tendency that is not present in the medical accounts of maternal imagination. "'It has been so handed down from antiquity, and is still believed,' said Herries. 'But perhaps there is, in the popular evidence, something of that fancy which creates what it sees.'"[55] Herries does not speculate about whether the horseshoe was originally created by "imagination" and passed on through the generations, or if the power of the story accompanying it has allowed other minds to continue to recreate it through their own "fancy." Public imagination, he suggests, might be just as impressionable as the fetal body. At first, Darsie has doubts because, even upon tracing the mark in his own visage, he cannot form it unless through genuinely-felt anger.

> I folded my brows in vain into a thousand complicated wrinkles, and I was obliged to conclude, either that the supposed mark on my brow was altogether

[55] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.

> imaginary, or that it could not be called forth by voluntary effort; or, in fine, what seemed most likely, that it was such a resemblance as the imagination traces in the embers of a wood fire, or among the varied veins of marble, distinct at one time, and obscure or invisible at another, according as the combination of lines strikes the eye or impresses the fancy.[56]

Like his uncle, Darsie cannot conclusively state whether the mark exists indisputably or is a figment of the imagination of the viewer. Rather, it is an interplay between the two, rendered mysterious by the unconscious expression of emotion required to produce it. Darsie cannot imaginatively construct it through summoned feeling, characterizing his attempt as "moulding [his] visage like a mad player,"[57] which is only effective when he becomes "angry and ashamed" upon being interrupted by a "terrified" servant-girl.[58] Herries emphasizes that his own prominent mark has been etched more noticeably into his brow by years of untempered rage: "Doubt not that it is stamped on your forehead," Herries tells Darsie, "the fatal mark of our race; though it is not now so apparent as it will become when age and sorrow, and the traces of stormy passions and of bitter penitence, shall have drawn their furrows on your brow.'"[59] According to Herries, the Redgauntlet face is "stamped" with a mark that exists initially only as potentiality until it is activated and reactivated by anger—the ungovernable anger that is the identifying feature of the Redgauntlet family. Darsie ponders the meaning of this sign as he later examines his uncle: "his displeasure seemed to increase, his brow darkened, and was distinctly marked with the fatal sign peculiar to his family and house. Darsie had never before observed his frown bear such a close resemblance

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[56] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.
[57] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.
[58] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.
[59] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 8.

to the shape which tradition assigned it."[60] The meaning of "tradition" is ambiguous: is it the tradition of maternal imagination (real, inherited, material) or the "tradition" surrounding the horseshoe as it is constructed and reconstructed by others interpreting or reading it?

Whether or not the horseshoe imprint has become a "real" hereditary trait, its effects are real, as it has become a legible display of social power and threat among those familiar with the Redgauntlet family. When the Laird of Summertrees warns Alan Fairford, "ye dinna ken what it is to look a Redgauntlet in the face,"[61] he refers not only to the rage associated with the house of Redgauntlet, but also the mark represented by and materialized through that rage itself. Provost Corsbie's wife, a fourth cousin in the Redgauntlet family, demonstrates a kindred sense of political volatility when she becomes engaged in an emotionally-charged confrontation with Summertrees at dinner, after which he refers to her as a "witch" to the provost.

> '[Y]ou should nail a horseshoe on your chamber door—Ha, ha, ha!'
>
> This sally did not take quite so well as former efforts of the laird's wit. The lady drew up, and the provost said, half aside, 'The sooth bourd is nae bourd.[62] You will find the horseshoe hissing hot, Summertrees.'[63]

The horseshoe that began as the mark on the brow of Alberick Redgauntlet's infant operates here as the site where the ambiguity between joke and aggression becomes the point of contention between Summertrees and Lady Crosbie; as soon as he invokes the sign of the Redgauntlet house, Lady Crosbie, distinctly affiliated with her ancestral home, "dr[aws]

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[60] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap 17.
[61] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 12.
[62] In a note to the text, Scott translates this for the reader as, "The true joke is no joke."
[63] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 12.

up"—the same language used to describe the physical response of Herries when his family pride is touched upon. In this moment of characteristic Redgauntlet anger, Lady Crosbie construes the joke, however lightly meant, as an act of aggression and responds accordingly. Provost Crosbie alludes to Alberick's original horseshoe, threateningly impressed on the body of the political opponent as a scorching brand, "hissing hot" as it is burned into the flesh of its enemy. The provost's "half-aside" characterization to his friend of the ramifications of his wife's rage implies that he has been the object of her Redgauntlet wrath, as Summertrees surmises ("You can speak from experience, doubtless.").[64] The horseshoe mark thus remains unstable as both material and immaterial, sign and curse, a mark of grief and rage that flares up when the family pride is broached. Herries too uses the mark as a threatening social display when he discovers that Darsie does not share his political ideology or support his cause: ''The spirit of Sir Alberick is alive within me at this moment,' [Herries] continued, drawing up his stately form and sitting erect in his saddle, while he pressed his finger against his forehead; 'and if you yourself crossed my path in opposition, I swear, by the mark that darkens my brow, that a new deed should be done—a new doom should be deserved!' "[65] Herries's threat reminds Darsie both of the cruel kin-slaying that originated the mark, as well as the rage which is an inevitable effect of their curse: great familial influence perennially relegated to the losing side.

Darsie's emotional responses to seeing the mark vary from titillation (as when he attempts to recreate it) to uncanny foreboding. Ultimately he comes to recognize his uncle's mark as a sign of misguided and self-destructive family pride, as well as of unnatural

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[64] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 12.
[65] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 19.

attachments to an outdated political dream. However, as a man "alone in the world,"[66] he recognizes its value as a shared family trait, while nevertheless acknowledging it as a mark brought on by interfamilial violence, the very threat he faces if he does not support his uncle's rebellion. He finds his ignorance of his own familial origins "peculiarly afflicting" in Scotland, "a country where high and low are professed genealogists."[67] His eagerness to find shared personal traits with his uncle—even in an expression he finds disturbing—bespeaks both his profound loneliness and his attraction to the romance of his elite, politically rebellious, and stalwartly Scottish family. However, his fascination with his uncle's mark also has roots in a repressed memory from his childhood.

> The tale, when told, awakened a dreadful vision of infancy, which the withering and blighting look now fixed on me again forced on my recollection, but with much more vivacity. Indeed, I was so much surprised, and, I must add, terrified, at the vague ideas which were awakened in my mind by this fearful sign, that I kept my eyes fixed on the face in which it was exhibited, as on a frightful vision; until, passing his handkerchief a moment across his countenance, this mysterious man relaxed at once the look which had for me something so appalling.[68]

As Darsie remembers his uncle's failed attempt to kidnap him and the success of his seizure of Lillias, the horseshoe mark of Redgauntlet rage is revealed through its impression on Darsie's memory and imagination, passing through forms both material and immaterial. Yet he seems transfixed on the sign itself, or rather on the face that displays its form. Again, the

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[66] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, letter 1.
[67] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 1.
[68] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 6.

horseshoe serves as a symbol of the willingness of politically-motivated male family members to violate a "natural" or familial order in favor of political ambitions: Darsie is only by chance saved from abduction from his mother at the hands of his uncle, while his sister Lillias is taken. Darsie's uncle does not kidnap him until he comes of age and can be politically useful to the Jacobite cause (and until he crosses from the safe space of Scotland into England), but Herries nevertheless has left an indelible impression on Darsie's childhood mind. In this moment, Herries transports Darsie into a child-state, not only in his flashback to his "infancy" (as his uncle had cleverly anticipated), but also in the stark revelation of their asymmetric power relations: as Darsie is transfixed by the "vivacity" of this long-repressed memory brought on by the sight of the horseshoe mark, Herries has hidden himself from the sight of the other men present and, when his point has been silently accomplished, he "pass[es] his handkerchief a moment across his countenance" with striking nonchalance, savoring the effect he has created.

The Redgauntlet horseshoe also represents and testifies to the strength of affective bonds between family members in the novel; this is so not only in the case of mother and son (the horseshoe) but also wife and husband (Lillias's bloodspots). Throughout the novel Darsie revisits the similarity he shares with his uncle, sometimes with awe, sometimes with revulsion or horror, but always with the sense that the two men are intimately, if tragically, connected in substantial ways. Naming Darsie "the heir of all my hopes and wishes,"[69] Herries also demonstrates that his propensity for unnaturally powerful anger does not sever the depth of his emotional connection to (at least the idea of) Darsie: "I have sought for thee, and mourned for thee," he tells Darsie, "as a mother for an only child. Do not let me again

[69]Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 19.

lose you in the moment when you are restored to my hopes. Believe me, I distrust so much my own impatient temper, that I entreat you, as the dearest boon, do naught to awaken it at this crisis.'"[70] In this figuration, Herries does not align himself with a paternal affection, despite his recognition that Darsie plays an important role in the political future of the Redgauntlet house; Darsie is, after all, the true heir to the Redgauntlet name and estate. His characterization of himself as a "mother" is notable both for its surprising gender reversal and because their relation is traced through the Redgauntlet patrilineal line. Herries does not style himself a replacement for his deceased brother. Instead, he characterizes the power of his grief as maternal, as if Darsie was somehow carried and nurtured by his own body. His words are undoubtedly a veiled jab at Darsie's mother, against whom he struggled (through legal and illegal methods) for the child's custody. But it also recalls their shared Redgauntlet mark, made by the maternal ancestor who imprinted the first horseshoe sign on her unborn child when she irretrievably and unnaturally lost her (then) only son and heir in a doomed political struggle.

Though a Redgauntlet as well, Lillias, Darsie's sister, does not demonstrate the family's innate propensity toward rage, nor does she seem to have the horseshoe mark shared by Darsie and Herries. However, the blood-spots on her hand left on her by her grieving mother, the second instance of maternal imagination in the story, play an important role in reuniting brother and sister and placing the narrative regarding maternal imagination not in the legendary past, but the immediate present, and from the perspective of a woman. Although Darsie remembers the trappings of his mother's grief for her executed husband—her morose manner, her black clothing and hangings in the home—it is Lillias who

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[70] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 19.

physically bears her scar, whose fetal body sustained the violence of her mother's emotional shock. Once she reveals her identity to Darsie, she likewise reveals to him this mark.

> 'See, brother,' she said, pulling her glove off, 'these five blood-specks on my arm are a mark by which mysterious Nature has impressed, on an unborn infant, a record of its father's violent death and its mother's miseries.' […]'You were not, then, born when my father suffered?' said Darsie. 'Alas, no!' she replied; 'nor were you a twelvemonth old. It was no wonder that my mother, after going through such scenes of agony, became irresistibly anxious for the sake of her children—of her son in particular.'[71]

This scene, near the novel's climax, is the only time that Lillias displays or even mentions the "record" of her mother's grief and her father's execution. Her characterization of the mark differs substantially from the discourse surrounding the Redgauntlet horseshoe, however, because its presence and origin story seem undeniable. For her, the "myster[y]" surrounding the sign is not a matter of whether it exists—it isn't a mystery to be pondered, merely referred to. Unlike Summertrees, who refers to Henry Redgauntlet's execution as "murder," Lillias describes his "violent death" and the attendant "scenes of agony" her mother was forced to endure, phrases that acknowledge her father's brutal death without designating it a crime. This explanation, along with the mark, has (presumably) been given to her by her mother, who in the tradition of the older model of maternal imagination would have borne witness to this sign as evidence of the emotional state which caused it. Even the number of bloodspots seems to refer to the five family members whose lives were destroyed by this traumatic loss: Henry Redgauntlet, his wife, their two children, and his wrathful brother. Her

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[71] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 18.

mark is not tied to a "legendary history,"[72] as are the Redgauntlet horseshoe and curse. It is a clear message from Nature of the unnatural suffering her mother endured because of their family's ill-advised and ill-fated rebellion.

Scott further differentiates Lillias's mark from the Redgauntlet mark by lending it an air of reality, adding to her story an explanatory note which contains an account of how maternal imagination (without naming it such) can register the traumatic loss of a family member on the skin of the next generation.

> Several persons have brought down to these days the impressions which Nature had thus recorded, when they were yet babes unborn. One lady of quality, whose father was long under sentence of death previous to the Rebellion, was marked on the back of the neck by the sign of a broad axe. Another whose kinsmen had been slain in battle and died on the scaffold to the number of seven, bore a child spattered on the right shoulder and down the arm with scarlet drops, as if of blood. Many other instances might be quoted.[73]

Interestingly, he adds this explanation of maternal imagination to Lillias's revelation, a scene that occurs substantially later than the story of Alberick's horseshoe, even though they both clearly depict instances of maternal imagination. Scott's decision to include this aside as a note, rather than placing it in the mouth of the narrator or a character, adds realism by providing anecdotal evidence that would be familiar to his nineteenth-century readers, regardless of whether they believed in maternal imagination. It also creates a sense of tension between the factual voice of the note and the mysterious and romantic elements of the story and its setting. As the novel leaves its characters facing a modernized, cosmopolitan

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[72] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 18.
[73] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, note to chap. 18.

Scotland, these folk stories, beliefs, customs, and even former political affiliations, for which his readers desperately hungered, will also become the stuff of fiction—supernatural signs for keen readers, not believing members of the community, to interpret. The fact that all the deaths described in this note are violent, political deaths of men accentuates pervasive Scottish suffering and intergenerational trauma. Scott does not amuse his readers with stories of women giving birth to rabbits or children covered in hair, but describes children marred by the sufferings of their fathers, scarred with the humiliation and submission of Scottish nationalism. Here mothers are obscured much like they are throughout the novel, existing only as emotional traces left behind on the bodies of their children, a mark of perpetual mourning for murdered men. Through maternal imagination, "Nature" has kept a centuries-old record of the political losses Scotland has sustained in its struggle with England for the power to author its own liberty.

By expelling Herries and his Pretender Prince and establishing Darsie Latimer as the preeminent (and wealthy) representative of the Redgauntlet family, the novel's end clearly demonstrates that a new age for Scotland (and Britain) means accepting present reality and banishing the broken past, be it superstition or outdated romantic political dreams. For these reasons, the Redgauntlet curse must be declared over. Herries acknowledges this as he departs for France alongside his thoroughly defeated (though impressively magnanimous) Prince: "'The fatal doom,' he said, with a melancholy smile, 'will, I trust, now depart from the House of Redgauntlet, since its present representative has adhered to the winning side.'"[74] Herries's "melancholy smile" mirrors the "ghastly smile" of his cursed ancestor, but the strong overtones of mourning, rather than repression, signal his acceptance of defeat—an

[74] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. 23.

act that is just as significant as Darsie's commitment to standing firm against his uncle's zeal. The Redgauntlet rage, an emotional reaction to their perpetually thwarted ambition, will no longer dominate and define the Redgauntlet face. Regardless of whether Darsie eventually passes this physical trait to his own children, the narrative behind the mark will fade further into the legendary past, rendering the question of its presence increasingly immaterial.

Scott's legible model of maternal imagination, which operates on the surface (skin) of the infant, identifiable within the phenomenon's older medical and cultural discourses, differs greatly from the form conceived by Wordsworth and Kelly. In the poetry that follows, maternal imagination is posited as a possible (though mysterious) form of communication with—rather than just on or through—the infant body. As such, the asymmetry of power between the maternal and fetal bodies, as well as the unknowable subjectivity of the fetus, moves further into the forefront.

"Communion with a stirring child"

If the priority of imagination has defined Romantic critical discourse, it is in large part due to Wordsworth. According to him, the poet's combination of heightened imagination and sensibility sets him apart from other men and generates his social and cultural value to others. Ultimately, the poet's imaginative articulation of his inner world helps others cultivate their own imaginations and feel more keenly the joys of life. For Wordsworth, imagination denotes an individual creative, but also an empathic and social, capacity, which among other things allows the individual to feel connected to others (regardless of whether the "others" are people).

Because Wordsworth's ideas about imagination are often self-reflexive, Wordsworthian poetic imagination has been traditionally figured in terms of the poet's own

body: solitary and meditative, self-absorbed, self-contained, and (implicitly) male. However, as Jenifer Buckley too has recently observed, Wordsworth features maternal imagination explicitly in at least one of his poems.[75] I would further add that its invocation holds interesting implications for his investment in infancy as a space and time for anchoring and cultivating the finer feelings of adulthood. Beginning with the word "communion," which Wordsworth uses to characterize the unusual form of maternal imagination at work in "The Thorn," I trace this powerful and intimate sense of sharing and being-with from the maternal-fetal relationship in pregnancy into Wordsworth's depictions of infancy in "The Mad Mother" and Book II of the 1805 *Prelude*.[76] For Wordsworth, communion is a form of unspoken sharing (though it often exists alongside language), marked by receptivity and openness to another "mind" and physical presence.[77] Outside of the maternal-infant/fetal dyad, communion is often figured positively as an ennobling force. However, the radically shared embodiment of the pregnant and breastfeeding maternal bodies, as well as the fetus and infant's stark vulnerability, illustrate the dangers latent in communion.

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[75] While many of my and Jenifer Buckley's observations about maternal imagination in "The Thorn" converge, our focuses and interpretations of salient points differ: she explores how Wordsworth's masculine identity enabled him to fantasize about maternal imagination's potentiality in ways from which women poets, who had more immediate fears of their own maternal reputations and bodies, were excluded. Furthermore, though she mentions that Wordsworth "returns" to the idea of maternal/infant exchange in the "Blessed the infant Babe" passage of the Prelude, she does not elaborate beyond clarifying that "he does not make it clear whether is discussing pre- or postnatal influence" (Buckley 231). In line with the theme of her study, she remains more interested in a stricter focus on the maternal-fetal relationship, rather than closely tracing resonances through maternal-infant relations. Finally, because of the divergence in our readings of maternal-fetal exchange in Kelly's poem, as will become clear at the end of this chapter, I find Wordsworth's and Kelly's models of being-with(in) to be more similar (though working to different ends) than Buckley does.

[76] References to line numbers in "The Thorn" and "The Mad Mother," cited parenthetically hereafter, are taken from the 1798 edition found in William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, 1798 and 1802*, edited by Fiona Stafford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). References to line numbers from the 1805 *Prelude*, cited parenthetically hereafter, appear in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, edited by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[77] I use "mind" throughout this section to designate the felt other as a presence with which one can (in the words of Coleridge in "Frost at Midnight") "hold commune." What I would like to posit is that a process can be felt to be intersubjective—and can indeed demonstrate some of the features of intersubjectivity—when the other's mind (be it fetus, Nature, or reader) is imagined and felt.

With its explicit engagement with maternal imagination, "The Thorn" offers a model of thinking about how the fetus offers its abandoned mother communion and, through it, a form of healing. Six months pregnant and showing "to any eye plain" (138), Martha Ray suffers the after-effects of the "cruel, cruel fire" that Stephen Hill's abandonment "sent" into her "bones" (129, 130)—a devastating emotional shock that "dried her body like a cinder / And almost turn'd her brain to tinder" (131-132). She cannot hide her physical or mental conditions from the prying eyes of the village community: "She was with child, and she was mad" (139). But from within the gossip of the community around her emerges the possible narrative that the "mad" Martha Ray found solace through the child *within* her.

> Sad case for such a brain to hold
> Communion with a stirring child!
> Sad case, as you may think, for one
> Who had a brain so wild!
> Last Christmas when we talked of this,
> Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
> That in her womb the infant wrought
> About its mother's heart, and brought
> Her senses back again:
> And when at last her time drew near,
> Her looks were calm, her senses clear.
>
> (144-154)

In contrast to the narrator's foreboding characterization of this affective exchange between the mother's "brain so wild" and fetus as a "[s]ad case," he acknowledges that the

community was divided about whether Martha Ray's pregnancy could be regarded as beneficial. Old Farmer Simpson's assertion—"That in her womb the infant wrought / About its mother's heart"—stages the awakening of Martha's maternal feeling as a fetal embrace, a powerful image for the agonized isolation Martha endures throughout the poem.[78] As Buckley notes, the poem alludes to the "positive effects" maternal imagination might have;[79] it complicates the understanding of maternal imagination by showing its influence at work on the mother, giving the fetus a kind of agency and a kind, caring impulse. The fetal presence, once her source of distress and social ostracism (along with her abandonment), seems also to be her (temporary) source of comfort. This idea suggests that maternal affect could be seen not simply as a violent force but also as a form of intercorporeal communication: rather than harming the fetus with her powerful negative emotions, Martha has communicated her sadness in a way that impels the "infant" to respond by comforting her, restoring her "senses." The emphasis on Martha Ray's changed "heart" directs the reader toward hopefulness, despite the poem's earlier reference to an "infant grave" (52). Her outward "calm[ness]" and apparently "clear" "senses" do not betray whether Martha Ray's implied resolve comes from noble or hardened motivations. In this light, Farmer Simpson's (seemingly) touching representation of Martha Ray's restored sanity may not merely be a sentimental depiction of surprising, transformative love. The speaker's sudden break in the next stanza ("No more I knew, I wish I did" [155]) reveals that mother and child did not live happily ever after. Read alongside the poem's startling turn toward tragedy, Farmer

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[78] Though his study is not focused on maternal imagination, Gavin Budge too has highlighted important role of the fetus in this unusual and striking passage, though his medical analysis stems from a study of Wordsworth's interest in Brunonian medical theories of the body; see, Gavin Budge, *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Natural Supernatural: Transcendent Vision and Bodily Spectres, 1789-1852* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 61.

[79] Buckley, Gender, *Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 215.

Simpson's declaration regarding Martha Ray's mental state can alternately be read as suggesting that she was not as a woman maddened by grief, but as a cold-hearted and unnatural maternal killer.

The speaker does not specifically articulate the negative effects he fears Martha Ray's "wild" "brain" might have had on her "stirring child," but popular discourse about maternal imagination and passions emphasized how these forces posed real, physical danger to the fetus, including miscarriage and fatal deformities. Perhaps he cannot specify what the effects of maternal imagination might have been because the key piece of evidence—the infant body—never appears in the poem except by means of association or suggestion: a mound of moss stained red, a ghostly face in the pond, the quaking ground.

> No more I know, I wish I did,
> And I would tell it all to you;
> For what became of this poor child
> There's none that ever knew:
> And if a child was born or no,
> There's no one that could ever tell
> And if 'twas born alive or dead,
> There's no one knows, as I have said…
>
> (155-162)

As he acknowledges, for all his diligent empiricism,[80] the narrator cannot specify whether the child was actually born. The poem leaves the baby's fate unresolved: was it stillborn or did it die immediately after birth (whether this death was an effect of maternal passion or not)? Or

[80] See Stephen Parrish's characterization of the narrator; in Stephen Maxfield Parrish, "'The Thorn': Wordsworth's Dramatic Monologue," *ELH* 24, no. 2 (1957): 153-163.

did Martha Ray, in spite or perhaps because of the communion they shared, kill the child herself? In the words of the narrator, "There's no one knows," but he maintains that he "do[es] not think she could" (224).

In any case, the child's death endows the landscape with meaning, one as unknowable and illegible as the communion between mother and child. While the tree and the pond signify the death of the child (204-5), it remains unclear whether they are the sites of the child's death. Buckley argues that Wordsworth has created a scene where the powers of maternal imagination have been externalized: the moss seems to be marked red not with actual blood or from a supernatural source, but from the force of Martha Ray's violent emotions, as the body of the infant might have been in the older model of maternal imagination,[81] like the bloodspots on Lillias's hand in *Redgauntlet* though displaced onto the landscape instead of the infant body. In this way, the discourse surrounding maternal imagination further reinforces the reading of the mound of moss as the infant body. I would add that the moss's refusal to let others outside of the mother-fetal/infant relationship disrupt their dyad by seeking "public justice" for the charge of infanticide demonstrates the primacy of a feminine rule of nature over the paternal law of man.

> And some had sworn an oath that she
> Should be to public justice brought;
> And for the little infant's bones
> With spades they would have sought.
> But then the beauteous hill of moss
> Before their eyes began to stir;

[81] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 218.

And for full fifty yards around,

The grass it shook upon the ground…

(232-239)

The "law of nature," which facilitated the communion between infant and mother, overrides the laws of man, by insisting that the union of mother and child cannot be severed by death and cannot be rectified by communal justice. Maternal-fetal communion continues; death is not a transgression of it. The mound of moss—which is evocative of the pregnant belly, as Buckley notes, pointing to the argument of Philip Martin[82]—houses and hides the child's body in death as it did in life, keeping the two in a perpetual (if torturous) state of communion. Whether Martha Ray would have preferred this fate is unclear; it seems the moss's unspoken injunction against the villagers' interference intercepted them before they could reach her. But that she cannot escape it is clear. In any case, the animated landscape continues to torture her with its insistence on the spectral presence of the infant; it seems rather that the "law of nature" has its own method of exacting vengeance.

"The Thorn" is not the only poem in *Lyrical Ballads* to explore the dangerous instability of mother's connection with child; as in "The Thorn," "The Mad Mother" offers a model of embodied maternal communion, though from the vantage point not of pregnancy but infancy and breastfeeding. Positing the integrity of the maternal body as separate from the infant body was in some ways more complicated in eighteenth-century medical discourse, even after birth; physicians gave the same injunctions against unwieldy maternal passions to

[82] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power*, 216-217.

nursing women as they did to pregnant women, regardless of whether that nursing woman was a mother or a wet-nurse.[83]

> The mother's potential ingestions—of food, drink, drugs, but also sights and other experiences causing immoderate passions—were particularly targeted as a source of corruption of the fragile fetus. Indeed, the danger of the impurity of the maternal body and its corrupting possibilities outstripped pregnancy and applied to new motherhood… Milk was seen as a direct medium of transference of the nursing body, not only physical but moral, to the infant.[84]

Like "The Thorn," "The Mad Mother" tells the story of an outcast woman abandoned by her lover and left to care for her child alone; unlike "The Thorn," the majority of the poem is spoken by the mother, as related by an unnamed balladeer.[85] Also shared by the two poems is the question of whether this child has the potential to "save" the mother from madness through loving communion with her But the mother also poses great risk to her child—not only in the case of direct violence (whether intentional or not) but mentally, through the close physical and emotional communion she shares with her vulnerable infant. Because the "Mad Mother" is an unreliable narrator, it is ultimately unclear whether her child is also mad, but her anxiety about his mental state, even if it is a projection of her own, as Hale suggests,

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[83] Barbara Gelpi traces a similar logic when she discusses Percy Shelley's anxiety about wet-nurses when his first wife, Harriet Westbrook, refused to nurse their daughter Ianthe (Barbara Gelpi, *Shelley's Goddess: Maternity, Language, Subjectivity* [New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992], 3-5). As Gelpi relates, Shelley was so overcome with outrage that he opened his shirt and attempted to nurse the child himself, convinced that this genuine desire to nurse the child might physiologically change his body and enable him to do so. Both concerns about emotionally-tainted breast milk and those of maternal imagination, as Kukla argues, reflect similar preoccupations with the powerful and potentially dangerous connection between mother and child, mind and body.

[84] Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, 11.

[85] For my purposes here, I am commenting on the 1798 version of the poem, as with "The Thorn." For an extended analysis of the changes Wordsworth made to the poem in later revisions, which among other things changed the dynamic between the voices of the mother and the balladeer, see Robert Hale, "Wordsworth's 'The Mad Mother': The Poetics and Politics of Identification," *Wordsworth Circle*, 39, no. 3 (2008): 108-114.

echoes broader cultural concerns about infants imbibing emotionally-, morally-, or spiritually-tainted breast milk.

Unlike the loquacious narrator of "The Thorn," the balladeer of "The Mad Mother" positions himself merely as the conveyor rather than commentator on the mother-infant scene. Thus the mother's is the strongest voice in the poem, a solitary figure, but for the "baby on her arm" (5). As a result, the mother-infant relationship, as well as their moments of embodied "communion," are related from her "mad" perspective. Unlike Martha Ray, the mad mother declares that the mutual love between her and her child forms their duty to one another. The mother acknowledges her debt to the infant, "to Thee I know too much I owe / I cannot work thee any woe" (19-20). The "o" sound present in these lines echo the exclamation "Oh!" of Martha Ray's "Oh, misery!" complaint, a shared characteristic that is notable because (perhaps) unlike Martha, the mad mother refuses to kill her child based on her acknowledgment of her indebtedness to him as a source of her transformative, unconditional love. The ambiguous exclamatory "O" of Martha Ray's despair is thus aligned in this poem with "woe," "owe," and "know," a sound-pattern which suggests that the misery or harm she can inflict on her infant is held back by her knowledge of the debt she owes him. This situates the mother-infant communion in "The Mad Mother" within the laws of an emotional and moral economy which she recognizes and is unwilling to transgress.

Both the Mad Mother and Martha Ray have been driven mad by their abandonment, and both of their children are presented at least speculatively as the consequence of, but also the redemption for, their sexual transgressions. This madness is likewise characterized in both women as a "fire"—one that "almost turn'd [Martha Ray's] brain to tinder" and which gave the Mad Mother a "dull, dull pain" (22). "The Thorn" however confines readers to

limited representations of Martha's interiority while the Mad Mother describes her madness as dream (without specifically designating it as such).

> A fire was once within my brain;
>
> And in my head a dull, dull pain;
>
> And fiendish faces one, two, three,
>
> Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
>
> But then there came a sight of joy;
>
> It came at once to do me good;
>
> I waked, and saw my little boy,
>
> My little boy of flesh and blood;
>
> Oh joy for me that sight to see!
>
> For he was here, and only he.
>
> (21-30)

Like the fetal presence which restores the "sense" of Martha Ray, Mad Mother's "fire" dissipates when she "wakes" and sees "[her] little boy of flesh and blood" (27, 28), though he seems to have also penetrated her unconscious as the "sight of joy" that precipitates her awakening. Despite her characterization of him as her emotional savior, however, her dream vision betrays latent aggression. The three figures populating her interior world—herself, the infant, and his absent father—seem likely candidates for the three "fiendish faces" that (23), "h[anging]" and "pull[ing]" at her (24), seem hallucinations as the baby in her arms roots at her bosom. Frantic, she asks the baby to "press[her] with [his] little hand" a loving gesture of reassurance (35), but also a physical stimulus to refocus her attention and quell the anxiety

response overtaking her panicked body. “It loosens something at my chest,” she assures him (36). “About that tight and deadly band / I feel thy little fingers press’d” (37-38).

The “press” of the infant’s hand seems set in opposition to the “pull[ing]” fiends, but the “pull[ing]” also can be likened to the “suck[ing]” he does at her breast (31), which provides her temporary relief but would have been thought a dangerous action for the child if she is mentally or emotionally unstable, a reading of the mother that, notwithstanding the title of the poem, seems likely based on the desperate note of her pleas. “Suck, little babe, oh suck again!” she exhorts him (31). “It cools my blood; it cools my brain; / Thy lips I feel them, baby! they/ Draw from my heart the pain away” (32-34). The mother’s heightened sense of urgency, as well the image of the child sucking her pain into his own body, creates a deep unease in the poem. Following the enormous popularity of *Émile* and its uptake in domestic ideology spurred by the French Revolution, the act of breastfeeding was valorized as one of the most ennobling acts and imperative duties a mother could perform, and yet the mysteriously material nature of the affective transmission taking place during the process continued to worry physicians even after they had long dismissed the threat of maternal imagination.[86] In the case of “The Mad Mother,” the embodied communion between mother and infant is dangerous because the mother’s emotional and mental fractures are transmittable; in other words, according to medical and popular thought of the day, the infant might literally be imbibing this mother’s madness. This uncertainty is all the more noticeable when the narrating mother questions the child’s sanity for the first time once he stops suckling:

—Where art thou gone my own dear child?

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[86] See Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, chap. 2.

What wicked looks are those I see?

Alas! alas! that look so wild,

It never, never came from me:

If thou art mad, my pretty lad,

Then I must be for ever sad.

(85-90)

Though the mother suggests that if her son is mad, it "never, never" could be her fault, her language "came from me" carries with it the literal connotations of the material productions of her body: both the child and her tainted breastmilk. The poem's focus on the act of breastfeeding, as well as the mother's identification of her son's (potential) madness immediately following breastfeeding, suggest this reading, especially within the pervasive discourses about the ideological significance and physical benefits (but also dangers) of maternal breastfeeding. Thus though they focus on different stages of fetal-infant development in relation to a mentally unstable mother and her child, both "The Mad Mother" and "The Thorn" interrogate how the powerful embodied and emotional communion of mother and child can alternately heal and destroy both mother and child.

This greatly contrasts with the almost unambiguously positive model of communion Wordsworth explores in *The Prelude*,[87] which comments more directly on the infant's perspective of imagined and idealized mother-infant dyad. Both these and the poems from *Lyrical Ballads* demonstrate Wordsworth's continued interest in the unspoken, embodied

[87] To Wordsworth, this same model of communion as a powerful, benevolent being-with emerges in passages both about Nature and especially with his sister Dorothy; consider the following passage from "There is an Eminence,—of these our hills," which refers to her: "And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved / With such communion, that no place on earth / Can ever be a solitude to me, / Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name" (William Wordsworth, "There is an Eminence—of these our hills," in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, 203, lines 14-17).

sympathies between mother and child, and how this relationship structures the child's later experience of Nature, as well as the continuities and transformations that occur between fetal and infant life. Here Wordsworth figures communion as foundational to understanding the realm of the intersubjective, as what enables the mind to hold communion with another mind (perceived or actual) in a meaningful way. In *The Prelude*, Book 2, the poet famously identifies the intersubjective relationship he shared with his mother as the foundation for his connection to the natural world and thus his store of sublime poetic feeling.

> From early days,
> Beginning not long after that first time
> In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
> I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,
> I have endeavoured to display the means
> Whereby this infant sensibility,
> Great birthright of our being, was in me
> Augmented and sustained.
>
> (II.281-287)

Though he does not term their "mute dialogues" as "communion" specifically, the interaction is one of intense spiritual and emotional "being-with," an embodied communication that can exist alongside, but does not require, language. The poet recognizes that this exchange is foundational to his ability to hold "communion" with the broader world and the objects and people within it, especially those existing in Nature. Although his "infant sensibility" is the "birthright" of the individual—one of the inalienable rights of man and notably *not* the especial provenance of the poet—it is a potential or capacity that can be "augmented" and

"sustained" by the continued "mute dialogues" with the maternal "heart" through their shared language of touch and affection. In contrast to the children of "The Thorn" and "The Mad Mother," Wordsworth describes his own infancy, though beyond the reach of his conscious memory, as not only harmless, but actively good. Though his mother holds tremendous affective power over him, their relationship is characterized in terms of "dialogue"—that is, mutual exchange. This more subdued image of mother-infant "touch" is not frenzied or visceral like the mother-infant breastfeeding of "The Mad Mother," a feeling reinforced by the poem's quiet and sustained blank verse, as opposed to the highly regular, almost dissociative sing-song of "The Mad Mother."[88] The separation between the mother and infant allows exchange to occur in a far more controlled way. The mother's emotions, tenderly formed for the care of her child, possess no violent undertones of aggression or despair. This unremembered infant experience, Wordsworth posits, is the kind of foundational relationship that can securely anchor, facilitate, and uphold the sensible poet of contemplation.

In the critically controversial passage that immediately follows this scene, Wordsworth identifies the moment at which he recognized how important this experience was for his ability to withstand loss.

> ...I was left alone
> Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
> The props of my affections were removed,
> And yet the building stood, as if sustained
> By its own spirit! All that I beheld
> Was dear to me, and from this cause it came

[88] Robert Hale provides a Kristevan analysis of the semiotic, maternal identification, and mother-infant exchange; see Hale, "'The Mad Mother': The Poetics and Politics of Identification."

That now to Nature's finer influxes

The mind lay open, to that more exact

And intimate communion which our hearts

Maintain with the minuter properties

Of objects which are already beloved...

(II.292-302)

The scholarly debate about this passage arises from uncertainty about who or what could be so significant to the poet's identity that it can continue—even to his own surprise—to structure or "prop" his "affections" in spite of its absence. Barth notes that the two dominant interpretations have been that either the "prop[…]"refers to Wordsworth's mother (perhaps merged with Nature, or his father), who features so prominently in the preceding lines, or, as he argues, the "external stimuli" from which the poet's "active mind or imagination" can now operate independently.[89] Both readings are compelling, but perhaps most telling is the ambiguity itself. If Wordsworth maintains earlier that the intersubjective, embodied communion with his mother fundamentally shaped and nurtured his ability to connect with "external stimuli," the resulting triumph of his own imagination to evoke and re-experience then demonstrates how imperative the unremembered, emotional, and embodied interactions with his mother were to his ability to imaginatively create, connect, even "sustain" himself as a person, on his own. Put more simply, even if he is referring not to his mother, but to other, more vague "external stimuli," his positive relationship with his mother is what enabled him to connect with external stimuli in the first place. She is the invisible structure supporting this

[89] See Barth, "'The Props of My Affections': A Note on 'The Prelude' II, 276-281" *The Wordsworth Circle* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1979): 344-345. Though Barth is engaging with Wordsworth's 1850 version of *The Prelude* (accounting for the difference in lineation of the passage), his commentary is nevertheless applicable here.

connection throughout his life, and the "communion" he learns from and with her "opens" his capacity for affection ("all that I beheld / Was dear") and poetic sensibility.

Wordsworth is clearly invested in the mother's formative power over the child in infancy and how this unconscious, unremembered (imaginatively reconstructed, but trusted) affection continues to structure his experience of the world. But given the threat of darker, potentially destructive maternal-fetal/infant exchange in *Lyrical Ballads*, does he imagine whether a positive prenatal exchange between mother and fetus could be as beneficial as the mother-infant of *The Prelude*? Or is maternal passion, as Romantic medical texts generally argue, primarily a negative force? Might there remain on the infant body and mind a trace of a mother's love that precedes birth (i.e. their physical separation)? As Buckley, Richardson, and others have noted, Wordsworth (like Coleridge) demonstrates interest in the mystery of prenatal experience.[90] If loving embodied communion preexists birth, then the infant does not immediately proceed from his "celestial origins" into infant life. Rather, the "sleep and [...] forgetting" of birth includes both the heavenly origin of the souls, as well as the infant's unknowable bodily communion with his mother. Her body is the intermediate, interactive environment he experiences as he travels between heaven and earth. Like his heavenly source, the child likewise forgets his first communion with the mind and body of his mother; however, how this fundamentally shapes his experience of the world remains (as it is) mysterious. But because mother-infant intersubjectivity undergirds the poet's later experiences of communion, it becomes imperative to locate the mother's body as the physical

[90] Buckley, *Gender, Power, and Pregnancy in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 212; Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Maureen McLane, *Romanticism and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The others use the term "pre-natal" quite loosely, but Buckley briefly refers to a general interest in prenatal experience in her discussion of maternal imagination and how, previously, the phenomenon has gone unexplored in critical treatments of Wordsworth's poetry.

"prop"—that is, supportive physical "structure" in which the child lives (as the mother-fetal relationship in "The Thorn" shows), as both an environment and a communicative subject. The infant is a continuation of the fetal being, and the "special intensity" of childhood "belongs to antenatal experience."[91]

"Share not thou a mother's feelings"

Though mothers (and other mother-adjacent figures) addressed lyrics to fetuses and newborns throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,[92] Kelly's "To an Unborn Infant" is notable both for its content as well as its context: first, because it clearly alludes to maternal imagination,[93] and second, because Romantic women poets were more interested in representing the interiority of the pregnant mother rather than maintaining stricter focus on the child, as their earlier counterparts did.[94] Jenifer Buckley has recently argued that Romantic women poets demonstrate ambivalence about representing their maternal anxieties (including about the dangers of maternal imagination) out of fear of being considered an "unfit" mother, given the "culture of maternal blame inherent in the concept of maternal imagination and exacerbated by the culture of dutiful, martyr-esque motherhood."[95] In addition to any misgivings Kelly as a woman and a mother might have had about publishing

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[91] Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*, 41.
[92] In addition to Kelly's poem, for more Romantic examples, see Joanna Baillie, "A Mother to Her Waking Infant" (1790), Anna Letitia Barbauld, "To A Little Invisible Being, Soon to Become Visible" (1795), Ann Yearsley, "To Mira, on the Care of Her Infant" (1796), and many others, in the *Oxford Anthology of Women Poets,*
[93] Anna Letitia Barbauld's "To A Little Invisible Being, Soon to Become Visible" (1795) similarly seems to allude to maternal imagination and is frequently read alongside Kelly's poem, as Buckley, Henderson, Raisanen, have observed. See, Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 206-211; Andrea K. Henderson, *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Raisanen, "Pregnancy Poems in the Romantic Period: Re-Writing the Mother's Legacy," *Women's Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): 101-121.
[94] Raisanen, "Pregnancy Poems in the Romantic Period," 101.
[95] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 211.

the poem,[96] the speaker of "To an Unborn Infant" worries that expressing her negative feelings will stir them to the surface when her primary goal is to "repress" them until the child is born (14). The nebulous threat of maternal imagination means that expressing genuinely painful emotions is dangerous while child and mother coexist in the same body, but because she anticipates her own death in childbirth, the mother feels compelled to record her feelings so her child might "learn…the mournful story / Of thy mother's suffering life" (29-30), and communicate this experience to her now-returned husband.

Critics interested in the poem's allusions to maternal imagination have been divided over whether the speaker regards maternal imagination as a positive or negative force. Elizabeth Johnston and Elizabeth Raisanen ultimately construe its presence positively as a distinctly feminine expression of agency; respectively, as a mother's means of achieving self-examination by "rewriting" her autobiography on the "blank slate" of the fetal body,[97] and as an assertion of her own power to "form" her child according to her maternal vision, despite her inevitable early death and absence from her child's life.[98] Andrea Henderson meanwhile focuses on the "happy and unoppressed" passivity of the fetus (who will become her

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[96] Kelly's autobiographical context remains relevant here because she used her writings as a means of supporting her family while her husband was incarcerated. Per Buckley: "As Kelly struggled to support her own children financially, it is likely that her tale of maternal self-sacrifice and suffering aimed to capitalize on the popularity of late eighteenth-century sentimental poetry" (Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 205).

[97] Elizabeth Johnston, "Looking in the Mirror, Inscribing the Blank Slate," 186. Elizabeth Johnston reads is as part of a pattern among eighteenth century women authors who imagined their child's birth as a form of their own rebirth, and sees maternal imagination molding the child in the poem as "a figure through which to speak, much like a ventriloquist through a doll." By focusing on affective transmission and models of intersubjectivity that account for the asymmetry of subjecthood in pregnancy as it relates to maternal imagination, we can think about the poem's maternal/fetal relationship as relational, rather than just a projection of the mother's own fantasy on to the child.

[98] Raisanen, "Pregnancy Poems in the Romantic Period," 108-111.

mother's replacement, "supply[ing] her vacant place" with her husband [36]),[99] and Buckley on the mother's painful struggle to repress her distress.[100]

However, I contend that while Kelly alternately worries that her maternal imagination might "harm" her fetus or hopes that her "fancy" might "form [it] sweet and lovely" (11), she transcends this more simplistic understanding of maternal imagination by emphasizing that, however unknowable the subjectivity of her "unborn child" may be during pregnancy, their unique embodied state creates a heightened form of sympathy or intercorporeal affectivity between the two as they literally "share" each other's feelings. She is not merely molding the child's body for better or for worse, but communicating with it. Because she can transmit an emotional impression of her suffering—which although a "negative" feeling, is ultimately rooted in a deep love for her family—directly and wordlessly onto the body of the child in addition to the surface of the poem's page, she refigures maternal imagination not as deformity but as a form of meaning embodied communication between mother and child. In doing so, she finds a way of communicating both the expressible and inexpressible aspects of her sorrow with a beloved stranger who has already shared these feelings with her because they shared a body.

The mother's central predicament is her ambivalence about "shar[ing] her" emotions with her child. Her promise to "repress the rising anguish / Till thine eyes behold the light" (14-15), as well as her plea that the child "share not thou a mother's feelings" (21), resonates with medical advice that mothers empty themselves of negative emotions so that their bodies can serve as benign vessels for their children. Acutely aware of the movements of her child and interpreting them as evidence of distress (she urges it to "Be still" and "[s]tart not" [1,

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[99] Henderson, *Romantic Identities*, 34.
[100] Buckley, *Gender, Pregnancy, and Power in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 204-206.

16]), the mother vows that "no harm shall reach [it]" (1). "Thy mother's frame shall safely guard thee," she promises her child, "From this bleak, this beating storm" (3-4). The mother's determination to repress her "anguish" reveals her awareness that, despite her determination to "guard" her fetus with her own "frame" from external threats (3), the child still faces the "bleak and beating storm" within her maternal body (4). She is subject to the human trials of life, and inevitably will have emotional responses to them. Though Henderson identifies a lack of anxiety in the poem, referring to the child as "happy and unoppressed,"[101] it is worth pointing out that, within the tradition of maternal imagination, the object of the speaker's anxiety is anxiety itself. While the mother fears the "sorrow" (19), "care" (20), and "strife" that will inevitably greet the infant upon its entry into the world (20), it is the "unfinished" body of the fetus about which she particularly worries. The fetus's safety is highly tenuous because it is vulnerable to the potent force of her agitated imagination, an idea that further exacerbates maternal imagination's "culture of blame" that Buckley has identified.[102] In short, if any harm comes to the baby, it will be her fault. According to the logic of maternal imagination, once the child is born and the maternal-fetal dyad is (at least partially) physically broken, the mother can enjoy some degree of cathartic release in her own "rising anguish" while more effectively "shield[ing]" the infant in her "fond[…]" and "feeble" arms (14, 8, 7).

Despite the mother's express determination to repress her potentially harmful emotions, the poem dramatizes her inability to achieve this while still achieving her primary objective: relaying the story of her suffering and love to her child, who will never come to

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[101] Henderson, *Romantic Subjectivities*, 34.
[102] While this worry directly alludes to the dangers associated with maternal imagination, Kelly's mother's "fancy" forms the child "sweet and lovely"—a conscious gesture that suggests use maternal imagination to form the child with love, as Raisanen has observed ("Pregnancy Poems in the Romantic Period," 109-110).

know her. The mother's decision to record her experience of intense maternal agitation is an acknowledgment that complete repression is a (male, medical) fantasy; she must self-memorialize as well as metabolize her negative affects through writing, inscribing her feelings of anguish on the page and within the fetal body. Her vision of qualified hope at the end—that her child will not let her husband "forget her / In a future happier wife" (31-32), because she will tell him the story of her "suffering mother's life" (30)[103]—rests on the certainty that the child one day will "[l]earn…the mournful story" depicted in the poem (29), as well as "whisper all the anguished moments / That have wrung this anxious breast" (37-38). The repetition of the word "anguish" holds significance because it is the precise emotion ("rising anguish" [14]) that she had previously resolved to repress. In contrast to her desperate repression, the child's "whisper" evokes the loving intimacy and physical closeness between the three triangulated figures of the poem (36): wife/mother, husband/father, and child. The mother's narrative of suffering, shared, understood, and articulated by the child, become a means of reconnecting the dead wife to her former husband, as well as bonding the child to her father through their shared loss. Despite her initial attempt to shield her fetus from her anguish, the mother recognizes that articulating this emotional experience is integral to her sense of peace and resolution within her troubled marriage.

The mother imagines that the security of this vision depends on her daughter's ability to understand and articulate the depth of her feeling, which is why both poem and the affective transmission between the maternal and fetal bodies are necessary for conveying that

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[103] Kelly's speaker does not specify whether the child she envisions at the end of the poem is female, but her hope that the child will "inherit" the qualities that "pleased" her husband and that it will "supply [her] vacant place" have led Raisanen and Henderson to suggest it is a female child, evidence I find compelling; see Raisanen, "Pregnancy Poems in the Romantic Period," 108; Andrea Henderson, "Doll-Machines and Butcher-Shop Meat: Models of Childbirth in the Early Stages of Industrial Capitalism," *Genders* 12 (1991): 100-119, 114.

which can and cannot be communicated through language. As the two surfaces receiving the inscription of the mother's grief and distress, both poem and child register different aspects of the full story of the mother's suffering. Deviating from a traditional model of maternal imagination, maternal suffering is not immediately legible on the child's body (as, for example, with the traumatic horseshoe mark or blood drops of *Redgauntlet*); rather, the child must act as a messenger of her mother's emotional experience. The mother's anguish becomes the child's, transformed from disappointed love to sober bereavement. The child's body, as what shared in her mother's emotional experience and whose birth coincided with her mother's death, is the material evidence that the mother offers to substantiate the story she tells in the poem. However, though the child experienced her mother's pain, the poem is still necessary that she may "learn" her mother's "mournful story" (29), reliving it upon rereading it and ultimately testifying to the man who was not present to witness (and alleviate) it himself. Though the mother is lost, both poem and child remain as evidence of her maternal passions. The poem is not only a counterpart of the surviving child; it is a relic of the absent mother, an expression of her love and a substitute for her presence.

Kelly's poem, like Wordsworth's and Scott's, show how Romantic discourses of maternal imagination evoke fears but also interest in the relationship between pregnant mother and child, as well as continuity between fetal and infant experience. In Scott's work, these continuities, contained in the maternal mark, are legible, clear, and meaningful to the point of symbolism. The relationality explored by Wordsworth and Kelly means that the mother does not determine (even unconsciously) the meaning or expression of maternal imagination, but rather that it is a co-created, co-felt experience shared by two beings in a highly unique state of embodiment. What the body retains from prenatal and infant

experience, especially when its effects are unconscious or invisible, comprises the main concern of the following chapter on Romantic theories of poetic and embodied rhythms, affective regulation, and the lullaby.

Chapter 2:

"There is a *chaunt*": poetic rhythm and infant embodiment

In "My First Acquaintance with Poets," William Hazlitt recalls listening to Wordsworth recite *Peter Bell* in his youth, a memory that compels him to compare Wordsworth and Coleridge as writers, as well as readers, of poetry. According to Hazlitt, these two poets shared an irresistible performative charisma: "There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth," he muses, "which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment."[1] In the written text, Hazlitt's "*chaunt*" is italicized but undefined, rendering it as striking and mysterious as the effect he attempts to describe. He refers to this characteristic as an "ambiguous accompaniment" to the men's poetic recitations,[2] wryly suggesting that their "habitual use" of this power has enabled them to "deceive[…] themselves" about the merits of their own poetry.[3] Hazlitt does not explain what comprises the *chaunt*, instead focusing on its effects as something that casts a magical "spell" over both the audience and himself. The auditor's "judgement" is "disarm[ed]," but similarly is that of the poet, who no longer can gauge the merit of his work by relying on his audience's reaction to it. While it seems an enjoyable experience for all, the *chaunt* threatens everyone who encounters it because it "disarms" the defenses of the mental, aesthetic, and moral faculty of individual judgement. Without judgment, both speaker and listener are

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[1] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," 387-388. From William Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," in *Literary Remains of the Late William Hazlitt* […], vol. 2 (London: Saunders and Otley, 1836), 359-396.
[2] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," 388.
[3] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," 388.

overly-susceptible to the ineffable charms of poetry—even of bad poetry (as many of Wordsworth's contemporaries deemed *Peter Bell*).[4]

Hazlitt's amusing interlude reveals a preoccupation he shares with Wordsworth's poetic thought: the influence that poetic rhythm exercises over the minds and bodies (and, therefore, emotions) of both readers/listeners and writers/reciters. After all, rhythm is the defining feature of *chaunt* (more commonly, "chant"): "[a] measured monotonous song; the musical recitation of words."[5] Though the OED notes that the word has a "vague range of meaning" during the nineteenth century, it "usually impl[ies] something less tuneful than an air or song."[6] The *chaunt*/chant is therefore a musical performance of language which does not dismiss melody or "tune," but rather foregrounds the role of "measure," or rhythm, in language and especially in poetic linguistic structures. Poetry plays with and through rhythm's effect on a reader/listener's embodied emotion, a phenomenon highlighted in Hazlitt's anecdote. For Hazlitt, rhythm structures, but also potentially disrupts, an individual's experience of voice, body, and text both above and below the threshold of consciousness. But how and why?

While Romantic poets and literary critics consider rhythm's powerful effect on the body in their discussions of meter, contemporaneous physicians and children's authors are also attuned to the effects of rhythm for good and for ill. In particular, both authorities express similar anxieties about the effects of lullabies upon infants, one of the first poetic forms that the child encounters—and one which, Ellen Dissanayake argues, belongs to a

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[4] For Wordsworth's and his contemporaries' thoughts on *Peter Bell*, See John Worthen, *The Life of William Wordsworth: A Critical Biography* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2014), chap. 26.
[5] "Chant, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. Web. 27 February 2017.
[6] Ibid.

cluster of expressive maternal affective-regulative forms that anchor cultural expression.[7] These eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors argue that the infant's heightened sensibility and undeveloped capacity for judgement render her particularly susceptible to rhythm's influence. On the one hand, editors of nursery rhyme collections like *Mother Goose's Melody* (1765/1791) and *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book* (1740/1788) eagerly market their texts as sleep-aids,[8] proclaiming their collections' abilities to pacify distressed children and relieve worried (and tired) parents. Physicians, however, approach the lullaby more cautiously: because lulling is so effective, they argue, it is subject to abuse. Because they tend to direct their texts to mothers, these physicians often point at self-interested (and sometimes demonic) nurses as potential abusers of lulling's power. They also take up the cradle as a technological intervention that enhances rhythm's potency, with some physicians tracing its apparent effectiveness to the infant's retained but unconscious embodied memory as a fetus in the intrauterine environment. Because nurses are depicted as the wardens of the nursery, rockers of cradles, and singers of lullabies, they are the figures on whom physicians and writers displace their anxieties about and fascination with the seemingly magical power of rhythm and song.

In this chapter, I examine the role of rhythm, meter, and music in Romantic theories of embodied emotion and the creative unconscious in relation to recent mind-brain

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[7] See Ellen Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy*, chap.1.

[8] Anon., *Mother Goose's Melody; or, Sonnets for the Cradle* […] (London: Francis Power and Co., 1791), and Anon. *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book* […] (Worcester, Mass.: Isaiah Thomas, 1788). Because original editions of these publications do not seem to have survived to the present day (and therefore their precise form cannot be confirmed), the first date indicates the purported original publication date, and the second the earliest extant version, with which I am working in this chapter. Despite the American publication site of this copy of *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*, it is acknowledged to be a reprint of a British text, including the frontmatter "letter" to "Nurse Lovechild." For more on the history of this text, see Andrea Immel and Brian Alderson, *Nurse Lovechild's Legacy: A History of Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book* (Los Angeles, CA: Cotsen Occasional Press, 2013).

developmental research, psychoanalytic thought, and developmental and evolutionary psychologies. Hazlitt's interest in the *chaunt* of Wordsworth and Coleridge reveals the interest that all three men share in this phenomenon, both in their writings focused on aesthetic embodied theory and practice and in the ways that infancy recurs thematically and metaphorically in these discussions. While Ruderman and Tim Fulford have discussed Romantic poetic investments in animal magnetism, mesmerism, and the unconscious,[9] its relation to the lullaby specifically as a genre has not yet been explored. I see this resulting for two reasons. First, treatments of children's literature primarily have focused on a text's didactic or imaginative capacities, which are both (largely) conscious processes. This overlooks the lullaby as a "functional" genre, as its primary aim is to soothe children to sleep.[10] Second, as Alan Richardson has cogently explained, Romantic poets demonstrate an ambivalent relationship, both "professionally and ideologically,"[11] to the communicative musicality which structures and heightens early infant-adult (especially maternal)

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[9] Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, 158-159; Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43, no. 1 (2004): 57-78. By linking Hazlitt's anecdote with Bracha Ettinger's "matrixial borderspace," Ruderman relates the *chaunt* explicitly to the infant in his theorizing of what he calls the "poetics of dissolve": "I am suggesting that the chaunt in the recitation styles of Coleridge and Wordsworth might be read as encoded in the very meter of the poems themselves, and that the spell cast on readers and poets has this formal, extralinguistic dimension. Prosody, rhythm, meter—because they are experienced at the level of the body and are primarily auditory as opposed to visual, all have the capacity for what Coleridge calls correspondence…and that we might think as the capacity for dissolve" (159). I agree and would add that my own focus on the embodied compositional practices of the poets (discussed later in the chapter), as well as my examination of the lullaby and cradle, expands the concept beyond the "primarily auditory" to account for the role of the felt movement and rhythms that can heighten this effect. Lucy Newlyn highlights the centrality of the speaking body as well, tracing the charismatic power of the *chaunt* to oratory and the pulpit; see *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chap. 9.

[10] Also included in this "functional" genre (though beyond the scope of this chapter's argument) are nursery rhymes and "dandling songs" (for example, "This Little Piggy," or "Who's there? / A grenadier"), which comprise most of the content of *Mother Goose's Melody* and *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*. These poems are primarily concerned with play and social bonding, and introduce preverbal children to musical, paralinguistic features like rhythm, rhyme, and other sound-based poetic devices.

[11] Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, 135.

interactions.[12] "How much more threatening… might a woman seem if the role of the mother's voice or "Nurse's song" in language acquisition—and in helping to *establish a template for mature poetic activity*—were fully acknowledged" (emphasis mine)?[13] While Richardson examines this question from the perspective of Romantic theories of language acquisition and natural history, I find similar fears, hopes, and questions about rhythm's power over emotions and consciousness in contemporaneous medical and children's literary texts. Moreover, their emphasis on rhythm's irresistible somatic power over the body (and therefore, over consciousness) echoes the intense vulnerability that Wordsworth and Hazlitt fear and fantasize about in their writings about poetry. Regardless of whether one is an adult or infant, reader or writer, conscious or unconscious, self or other, our bodies and minds are all susceptible to rhythm's influence. And if in infancy we are exposed to this force through the lullaby and other soothing rhythmic structures, have our minds, bodies (and texts) been affected in ways that we—or others—can tap into?

This chapter and the next explore the lullaby as idea and genre during the Romantic period. This chapter is largely theoretical, focusing on depictions of rhythm's powerful effect on the permeable body in Romantic-era literary and medical texts. Questions about the infant body, I argue, reveal a lot about latent anxieties over the unseen forces at work within adult bodies, how forces like rhythm and music evoke—or manipulate—emotional intensities, states of consciousness, creativity, or embodied memory. Grounding my claims about the infant body in two seemingly unrelated discourses—medicine and children's literature—I

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[12] Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, 116-138. While Richardson addresses lulling (among other marked paralinguistic features of infant-directed speech), his primary concern remains with how Romantic poets represent these maternal speech-acts voiced by erotic female figures, and how they are often "countered only by the bards and priests of official male culture" (135). This topic, as well as Richardson's thoughts, will be revisited in Chapter 3.

[13] Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, 135.

examine similar worries about the influence that poetry can have on adult readers/listeners, as well as the speakers/writers. This provides a theoretical foundation for the following chapter's more precise study of the role of masculinity, prophecy, and inheritance in two lullabies written by major Romantic writers, John Keats and Walter Scott. In these lullabies, texts which are not considered part of the Romantic canon despite the fame of their authors, the infant body is opened out by the forces of rhythm, love, and the coming of sleep and then inscribed into a nationalist identity that serves patriarchal culture. While recent years have borne exciting and illuminating scholarship on how children's and popular literary forms shaped the commercial marketplace and British national identity during the Romantic period,[14] the lullaby has often been positioned among these various children's genres without a lengthy discussion of the ideas, anxieties, and experimentation specific to it. Much of the lullaby's representational power derives from ideas about the infant body on the precipice of sleep as particularly plastic, receptive, inter-relational, and open to the magical power of song and rhythm. "Lullaby," Jean-Luc Nancy muses, "one charms, one enchants, one puts mistrust to sleep before putting wakefulness itself to sleep, one gently guides to nowhere."[15] Likewise, the lullaby is semi-improvisational: for it to be recognizable, it needs to have some sense of a distinct identity, but for it to be useful, a singer must be able to adapt the form to changing situational needs, including how quickly a child falls asleep, the caretaker's memory of the song, and other environmental factors.[16] The lullaby resists fixed meaning in

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[14] See Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, esp. "Introduction" and chap. 4; Katie Trumpener, "The Making of Child Readers," in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, edited by James Chandler (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 553-578, https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521790079.026.

[15] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Fall of Sleep* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 30.

[16] Contemporary studies in fact suggest that a live performance is more effective than recorded music because it allows the performer to respond and adapt to infant needs; see, for example, Shmuel Arnon, et. al. "Live Music Is Beneficial to Preterm Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Environment," *Birth: Issues in Perinatal*

other ways when considered alternately as text or performance, making it a complicated object of study. While literary, anthropological, and sociological studies might focus on the lullaby's static text, during any given performance, words are vehicles for the soothing affective transmission taking place between mother and child. Furthermore, the words may signify differently for either subject, especially for the preverbal or barely conscious infant. The child may not understand the song's meaning, but still responds to its quiet sounds, gentle rhythm, and familiarity. The mother, on the other hand, may use it to articulate feelings of frustration and praise, as bribery, to invoke protection for the baby, or even to "check out" mentally while singing.[17] The secondary role that narrative (or semantic meaning, when discussing the preverbal or unconscious infant) plays is also reflected in the important role played by the rhythmic embodied expressions understood to attend the lullaby: rocking, humming, and repetitive non-semantic sounds. Both adult-singer and infant-listener benefit from its soothing effects.[18] Lulling is consistently linked to embodiment because it unites the song's soothing cadence to physical movement, as both bodies are made vulnerable to rhythm and through rhythm.

Contemporary research confirms that music affects the body in powerful ways, and the lullaby is a common tool for those studying music's effect on the very young infant. Music generally, and the singing human voice particularly, positively affects neonatal care, regulating the heartrates of premature infants and helping them gain weight in the NICU and

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Care 33, no. 2 (2006): 131-136, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0730-7659.2006.00090.x; and Joanne Loewy, et. al., "The Effects of Music Therapy on Vital Signs, Feeding, and Sleep in Premature Infants," *Pediatrics* (2013), https://www.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-1367.

[17] See Nicholas Tucker, "Mothers, Babies, and Lullabies," *History Today* 34, no. 9 (1984): 40-46.

[18] Elizabeth MacKinlay and Felicity Baker, "Nurturing Herself, Nurturing Her Baby: Creating Positive Experiences for First-time Mothers Through Lullaby Singing," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 9 (2005): 69-89, 71, DOI: 10.1353/wam.2005.0010.

fostering an easier transition home.[19] As an effective source of pain management, song offers doctors and parents a risk-free alternative to opioids.[20] The lullaby is not only a tool for medical care, it also serves a social function, bonding child with parent. For a premature infant whose body is too sensitive to withstand the pressure of touch or whose medical and monitoring devices prevent her from being handled, singing is a reassuring sign of human presence, soothing and allowing her to be, in a sense, "held" by her caretaker.[21]

From an evolutionary standpoint, Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven point out that music encourages the brain to produce oxytocin, a hormone that facilitates social bonding between mother and offspring.[22] Though they admit that the subject would benefit from further research, Panksepp and Biven make a larger argument for the power of music using a lullaby in the semi-documentary *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003), wherein a mother camel rejects her colt following an unusually long and difficult birth. The camels' shepherds rely on music to rejoin the two,[23] and the movie endows the lullaby with the magical power to cross species lines and restore "natural" animal bonds. Humans can, through music, recalibrate nature. Panksepp and Biven note the importance of the relationship between sound and touch in the scene as the "female head of the family" sings the lullaby while "gently stroking the

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[19] Joanne Loewy, "NICU Music Therapy: Song of Kin as Critical Lullaby in Research and Practice," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1337, no. 1 (2015): 178-185.
[20] Alexandra Ullsten, et. al., "Live Music Therapy With Lullaby Singing as Affective Support During Painful Procedures: A Case Study With Microanalysis," *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 26, no. 2 (2017): 142-166, https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2015.1131187.
[21] I am indebted to Aranye Fradenburg for her idea of holding with the voice, which came from her experiences in UCLA's NICU.
[22] Panksepp and Biven refer to the brain system behind this phenomenon as the maternal "CARE system," pairing it with the infant "PANIC/GRIEF system" in the complex social and physiological dynamics of the infant-mother dyad. According to them, the CARE system not only rewards mothers for keeping their offspring alive and thriving, it also contributes to the offspring's overall sense of well-being, confidence, and chances for success in the future. See Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven, *The Archaeology of Mind, chap*. 8.
[23] Panksepp and Biven, *Archaeology of Mind*, chap. 8.

neck and body" of the mother camel.[24] In this moment, the camel becomes like the infant child: sung to by (a) mother and physically soothed through her touch. It is through this role-play of infancy that the camel's "heart open[s]," enabling her to reinstate herself as mother and thus reclaim her offspring.[25] Humans, Panksepp and Biven argue, can not only recognize, but also derive a lesson from, the "spell" that this music and primal scene of mother-offspring bonding offers.[26]

The human infant shows a similar innate musicality, which many scholars agree is not just an expression of sociability, but a propensity that makes sociability possible. Colwyn Trevarthen argues that fetal attunement to the rhythm of its mother's "stylistic preferences of speech," suggests that "the cerebral apparatus for 'intersubjectivity' had begun learning *in utero*."[27] In other words, fetal rhythmic attunement does not merely have implications for infant language acquisition; even before birth, rhythm forms the fetus in relation to its mother, enhancing the future success of their intersubjective relationship. The rhythmic dimensions of human speech and embodied interactions also mediate the child's absorption, appreciation, and participation in culture, a process that Ellen Dissanayake refers to as "enculturation."[28] For Dissanayake, rhythm is an integral part of "the sharing of emotional states in patterned sequences with others," in short, of "mutuality."[29] This applies not only to the rhythm of language but also to the gestural or embodied aspects of nonverbal communication. "While talking or making sounds, mothers rock or pat the baby as well as

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[24] Panksepp and Biven, *Archaeology of Mind*, chap. 8.
[25] Panksepp and Biven, *Archaeology of Mind*, chap. 8
[26] Panksepp and Biven, *Archaeology of Mind*, chap. 8.
[27] Colwyn Trevarthen, "First Things First: Infants Make Good Use of the Sympathetic Rhythm of Imitation, Without Reason or Language, *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* 31, no. 1 (2005): 91-113, 102.
[28] Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy*, 7. Richardson discusses the importance of Dissanayake's ideas to his own thoughts on "motherese" in *The Neural Sublime* (see Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, chap. 7).
[29] Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy*, 7.

look at or gaze into its face. They usually smile," she observes. "The things they say are structured in time, like poetry or song: if transcribed, they reveal formal segments like stanzas… The utterances are rhythmic and highly repetitive."[30] For Dissanayake, infant-mother interactions are poetic, structured by rhythm, repetition, and other forms of feeling. They also span different sensory modalities, like touch, sound, sight, and proprioception. Daniel Levitin contends that these sensory distinctions matter less to the infant than they will later in life: "[D]uring the first six months or so of life...the infant brain is unable to clearly distinguish the source of sensory inputs; vision, hearing, and touch meld into a unitary perceptual representation."[31] This idea suggests that the infant experiences rocking not as an accompaniment to the lullaby but as part of its generative whole, and rhythmic motion, in fact, enhances the chances of a lullaby's (or other maternal vocalizations') success,[32] perhaps because it reaches back into the child's embodied memory of fetal experience. During the last trimester of pregnancy, a fetus can hear and feel his mother's voice, along with other of her physiological rhythms and movements. A newborn already can recognize voices heard while in utero, and prefers his mother's to others. [33] Because of this, Russian pediatrician Mikhail Lazarev refers to the mother's voice as the "acoustic bridge" spanning fetal and infantile experience.[34] However, Daniel Stern maintains that the infant's ability to distinguish

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[30] Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy*, 30.
[31] Daniel Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Dutton, 2006), 256.
[32] Laudan B. Jahromi, Samuel P. Putnam, and Cynthia A. Stifter, "Maternal Regulation of Infant Reactivity From 2 to 6 Months," *Developmental Psychology* 40, no. 4 (2004): 477-487.
[33] P. G. Hepper, D. Scott, and S. Shahidullah, "Newborn and Fetal Response to Maternal Voice," *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology* 11, no. 3 (1992): 147-153, https://doi.org/10.1080/02646839308403210.
[34] Nina Perry, "The Universal Language of Lullabies," *BBC News Magazine*, January 21, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21035103. Perri Klass furthermore suggests that newborns have been shown to prefer languages rhythmically similar to the one they've heard during fetal development ("Hearing Bilingual: How Babies Sort Out Language," *The New York Times*, Oct. 11, 2011, accessed 9/17/2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/11/health/views/11klass.html).. Rhythm therefore seems to be capacity of

one sense from another is ultimately crucial to her healthy social and subjective development: as a mother raises and shakes her hands as her baby lets out a high-pitched squeal of delight, the baby knows they are experiencing the same emotion, individually.[35] The expressions of the mother and infant share the same vitality affect—excitement—but communicate it through different sensory modalities. This similarity fosters the child's sense of security ("Mom understands what I am feeling") and empathy ("I understand what Mom is feeling"), while the difference preserves its self-identity ("I understand that my feelings are my own and hers are hers").

The lullaby poses a unique challenge to its own status as an intersubjective model because of its aim to compel another to surrender her consciousness. This surrender is not necessarily peaceful; the fact that human cultures almost universally have relied on the lullaby's ritualized song and movement to ease this transition suggests as much. Giorgio Adamo, working from the research of Renata Gaddini, argues that the lullaby functions as a transitional object—an object that signifies and feels like the presence of the mother in her absence, and which facilitates the child's independent development—as it comforts the child through the "traumatic" process of "losing" both the mother and consciousness.[36] With eyes closed, the infant nevertheless hears (and feels) his mother's presence, allowing him to "maintain contact with the outside world" through the familiar sound of her voice.[37] For the listener of the lullaby, participating is most fully realized when one surrenders to its soporific force. Meanwhile, the "principles of the organization of sound – repetition, assonance,

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sensory experience to which we are predisposed to attune ourselves; one of the modes to which we become enculturated before birth.

[35] See Stern, *Interpersonal World of the Infant*, chap. 7.

[36] Giorgio Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," in *For Gerhard Kubik Festschrift on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday*, edited by August Schmidhofer and Dietrich Schüller (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994), 549-562, 550.

[37] Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," 551.

analogy, cyclic structure, etc.,"[38] lend to the lullaby an added "element of reassurance,"[39] before the "unravelling" of consciousness through sleep,[40] through structure and familiarity.[41]

The lullaby also functions culturally as one of the infant's primary introductions to music and poetry, "forming [the child's] first perception of the fundamental elements of [a culture's] given musicality (in terms of timbre, rhythm, expressiveness, melodic patterns, etc.)."[42] Jonathan Culler finds rhythm in particular to be "one of the major forces through which poems haunt us,"[43] implying that it leaves its traces on listeners/readers of poetry in a way that can be comforting or unsettling. The idea that music, and the lullaby particularly, forms a child's sense of and relationship to prosody surfaces in the literary texts that this chapter examines. Drawing on Northrop Frye, Culler points to the "charm" at work in rhythmic structures, which seem to "appeal[…] to involuntary physical response" by means of "short-circuit[ing]" the mind:[44] "Refrain, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, pun, antithesis…Such repetitive formulae break down and confuse the conscious will, hypnotize and compel to certain courses of action." Though they might evade the "memory of understanding,"[45] lullabies and work songs nevertheless function as "charms" because they in-form our understanding and experience of rhythms, our bodies, and our own subjectivities.

"This lullaby-labour"

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[38] Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," 553.
[39] Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," 553.
[40] Nancy, *The Fall of Sleep*, 3.
[41] Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," 553.
[42] Adamo, "First Notes on a Psychoanalytic Approach to the Functions of Music," 553.
[43] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 140.
[44] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* 140.
[45] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 139.

The magical and practical properties of lullabies were recognized jointly during the Romantic period. Like their modern counterparts, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parents sought various methods for soothing sleepless infants. Physicians offered support in their medical manuals, and a study of these texts reveals familiar-sounding advice about how to cultivate healthy infant sleep habits, including activity during the day, changing soiled clothing, and gradually transitioning a child to a strictly nighttime-based sleep schedule. Romantic medical texts by and large urge parents to "follow nature" in their childcare practices. Though the implications of this principle varied from doctor to doctor, the underlying logic is that action must be informed by tender parental feeling as well as the advice of a reputable physician. Physicians generally agreed on one "unnatural" and therefore dangerous practice: relying on anodynes, opiates, and similar medicines to put a child to sleep.[46] This was generally viewed as an alarming menace to public health and a stain on parental virtue. "[H]owever wakeful a child may be in the night," Underwood warns, "it cannot receive a greater unkindness than from the exhibition of Godfrey's cordial syrup."[47] Hugh Smith adds that the child will continue to feel the effects of this act in body and mind throughout his or her entire life. Because of its administration, "[t]heir tender constitutions are enervated during life; and their mental faculties, frequently impaired."[48] Chemical dependence poses too great a risk to the child's formation to be a viable solution for the responsible parent, who naturally places the child's well-being above her own convenience. With opiates ruled out, physicians needed to provide parents with an alternative for effectively and ethically soothing infants to sleep.

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[46] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 388.
[47] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 388-389.
[48] Smith, *The Female Monitor*, 88. The text is unclear, but this also could be one of Vaughn's notes.

To most closely follow nature, some physicians instead advocate sleep methods based on non-chemical intervention, including lullabies and accompanying repetitive, rhythmic motions such as patting, rocking, stroking, and gentle bouncing or jiggling. These, they note, have a powerful soporific effect on infants, which contemporary research on the infant vestibular system confirms.[49] Underwood observed that this behavior appears to come naturally to parents, rather than as a result of conscious strategy or even medical advice: "[P]arents seem, as it were by instinct, to bat and gently move a child, whether lying on the lap or the arms, whenever it appears to awake prematurely."[50] For Underwood, this method of rhythmic and repetitive action is so natural that it is shared by parents regardless of gender. It is not the product of feminine enculturation or innate maternal tenderness; it is evidence of innate parental knowledge.

William Buchan extends this positive evaluation to the lullaby, amplifying repetition's rhythmic dimension by associating it with music. "The only composing means, which art may at any time be allowed to employ," he writes, "are gentle motion and soft lullabies."[51] Buchan links affect regulation to the creation of music through the word "composing": by "composing" or creating music, the caretaker restructures the child's agitation, "composing" his emotions. The "art" of song is a natural expression of concern and gentleness which the infant experiences somatically through "gentle motion" and sonically through "soft lullabies." The caretaker expresses her tenderness and concern for the infant's distress through different though complimentary sensory channels, enveloping it in a

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[49] See, for example, Rosemary White-Traut, "Providing a Nurturing Environment for Infants in Adverse Situations: Multisensory Strategies for Newborn Care," *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health* 49, no. S1 (2004): 36-41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmwh.2004.05.004.
[50] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 388.
[51] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 243.

multimodal reassurance of her loving presence. Though Buchan separates these two experiences of the lullaby into motion and song, he portrays both as part of the same experience and directed toward the same goal—sleep. As part of that goal, "motion" and "song" share the same affect, tenderness, through related modifiers ("soft" and "gentle"). The mother's emotional connection to her child regulates the motion she produces, just as the motion in turn regulates her child's emotions. Using motion and song, the mother introduces the infant to an external rhythmic structure aimed at temporarily organizing the disorder brought on by its agitation, bringing to the infant both relief and sleep.

Physicians depict the powerful combination of motion and lullaby as desirable when it is regulated by natural principles, parental feeling, and their own professional medical advice. Absent these controls, "gentle motions and soft lullabies" can wreak havoc on the vulnerable infant body. Though Buchan finds the infant safe "in the hands of careful and affectionate mothers," he points out that the cradle can become a "great danger" to "the delicate texture of the infant brain" if it is in the hands of "impatient nurses, or of giddy boys and girls."[52] Such fears are most keenly illustrated by physicians' depictions of the nurse, whose suspect character serves as a foil to the "natural" instincts and behavior of the mother. Buchan offers his readers a frightening image of a nurse beside the cradle, "often worked up to the highest pitch of rage; and, in the excess of her folly and brutality, endeavours, by loud, harsh threats, and the impetuous rattle of the cradle, to drown the infant's cries, and force him into slumber! –She may sometimes gain her point, but never till the poor victim's strength is exhausted."[53] The nurse's excessive emotions take the form of rage, and music and motion are united in his alarming use of "pitch," which denotes the degree of her anger,

[52] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 243-244.
[53] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 245.

manifested in the quick, violent pitching of the cradle and the piercing sounds of her "loud, harsh threats," the baby's "cries," and the cradle's "impetuous rattle." The rhythm of the cradle and the intensity of the nurse's anger are caught in an amplifying feedback loop: rather than soothing the child through a slow and steady tempo, the feverish pacing of her rhythm seems to amplify her fury. In this monstrous inversion of the lullaby's sentimental associations with domestic tranquility, the child is compelled by a caretaker to regulate his own rhythm according to her external one; however, his submission to the rhythm and sleep is due to physical "exhaustion." He does not attune to the rhythm of his caretaker but is overpowered and "force[d] into slumber." His cries are not soothed, but are "drown[ed]" out, rendering him not a satisfied, sleeping infant but a "poor victim."

When denigrating the nurse, physicians do not always depict her as an enraged monster. At times, they characterize her as apathetic and mechanical, a mercenary motivated by studied self-interest. William Cadogan advises his readers to remain vigilant against the negligence of hired help: "Orders should be given to these Nurses to keep the Children awake by day, as long as they are disposed to be so, and to amuse and keep them in good humour all they can; not to lull and rock them to sleep, or to continue their sleep too long; which is only done to save their own time and trouble, to the great detriment of the Children's health, spirits, and understanding."[54] Cadogan does not state that children should be kept awake unrelentingly, but echoes Underwood's principle of "follow[ing] nature" by leaving the duration of sleep to an infant's natural tendencies or "disposal." However, he fears that the artificial drowsiness created by the nurses' overuse of the lullaby will produce a sickly, sullen, and stupid child—a frightening prospect. Because she lacks parental ties of

[54] William Cadogan, *An Essay Upon the Nursing and Management of Children*, 40.

affection to the infant and is instead directed by commercial motivations, the nurse is a mechanized (and capitalized) mother. Caretaker in name only, she lacks the necessary tenderness to properly term her work as "care." George Armstrong concurs that "some nurses are apt to take advantage of this," arguing that a healthy child, even when awake, "can be lulled to sleep almost at any time by the motion of the cradle and singing."[55] In the mouth of the nurse, the lullaby becomes a locus for physicians' anxieties about abusing this powerful force for "unnatural" purposes. In both cases, the nurse, "studying their own ease," poses a threat because of her awareness of the irresistible force of song and rhythm over her infant charge. This power is so strong that it works on the child regardless of whether he is tired. Rhythm overpowers the infant's innate powers of self-regulation, interfering with nature. Like the arguments they make against opiates, physicians warn that the long-term effects of this tactic can be damaging, as it may become impossible to put the child to sleep without it. "[T]hey sometimes get into such a habit," Armstrong laments, "that it is with great difficulty they can be made to sleep without those aids."[56] As a mechanized mother, the nurse turns the child into a rhythm addict: through rhythm she overrides the child's natural defenses and taps into his automatic physical responses. While the infant probably will fall asleep, he also may become overly-reliant on rhythm's soporific effect.

This effect is further articulated in medical debates on the "naturalness" of the cradle, which is sometimes regarded suspiciously as a technological manifestation of the mechanization of care. Emphasizing the artificiality of its "custom," Hugh Smith's tone is intensely vitriolic in discussing methods that "force" sleep upon the infant.

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[55] Armstrong, *An Account of the Diseases Most Incident to Children*, 172.
[56] Armstrong, *An Account of the Diseases Most Incident to Children*, 172.

> [N]one but a fool first thought of a cradle; it was certainly invented to save the attendants trouble...I never permitted a cradle to disgrace my nursery. Infants, when well, sleep without this lullaby-labour; and such forced dozings generally render them peevish and watchful in the night; which is the most proper time for them and their nurses to enjoy their rest.[57]

Smith's dismissive phrase "lullaby-labour" materializes the work of the nurse into the cradle itself, a mark of "disgrace" that in its very presence provokes his disgust. Smith castigates the unnatural state created by the lullaby and the rocking cradle, but the extremity of his disdain seems directed at the idea of "sav[ing] the attendants trouble." Some physicians likewise argue that the cradle is complicit in amplifying rhythm's power, a technological intervention whose constant motion negatively affects natural infant development. According to these physicians, the motion of the cradle interferes with digestion, can make the infant too cold, hinders proper mental and physical development, or is dangerous in itself. One image used with frequency is that of being "jumbled about" in a mailcoach.[58] Buchan writes, "I believe that a poor child would suffer as much from the one as from the other, were he not a little more confined in the former."[59] While Buchan was not bothered by motion but objected to rockers particularly (he offers an alternative in "*suspended cots*"), some doctors took issue with the sleeping child being set in constant motion by an external actor. If adults and even children do not require motion while sleeping, why should the infant be any different? Smith offers his readers a rather patronizing compromise.

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[57] Smith, *The Female Monitor*, 90.
[58] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 388.
[59] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 245.

> The prejudices in favour of cradles, will probably render all attempts to prove their inutility, unavailable. We must therefore propose a reciprocal treaty—if the good ladies, who are fond of cradles because their mothers used them, will dispense with the *rockers*, we will allow them the cradle as a parlour bed for the child. This machine is used under the specious pretence of exercise, but it is a mere apology for healthful action, and usually rendered the unnatural agent of motion during sleep.[60]

Smith ultimately traces the cradle's enduring popularity to displaced maternal attachment; mothers "fond" of cradles are so because their mothers were as well. A woman's attachment to her mother—or at least, to her mother's style of mothering—becomes part of why she finds it difficult (or impossible) to leave outmoded techniques behind in the new era of professional (male) medical and care advice. The terms of the compromise are that cradles—the "unnatural agent of motion during sleep"—must be stripped of their rockers, robbed of their potential for rhythm. Smith concedes that the child may be brought to sleep in a communal room in the house during the day, his resting place no longer a cradle but a "parlour bed," but he must forgo the sleeping aid offered by the cradle's repetitive motion.

Not all physicians regarded the cradle with the same level of antipathy; in fact, some interpret its efficacy as evidence of its value. Michael Underwood points out that the cradle is not itself dangerous, merely the "abuse of it, from any violent rocking."[61] Following his caveat to "follow nature," Underwood leaves use of a cradle to a mother's discretion. "I cannot, on the whole, but give an opinion rather in favour of the cradle. It is, at least, among the little things in which we may harmlessly err, and in which every mother may therefore be

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[60] Smith, *The Female Monitor*, 209.
[61] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 388.

safely guided by her own opinion, or even by her feelings."[62] Because it is not an immediate danger to the safety of the infant, Underwood considers the issue a matter of maternal discretion. He divides "opinions" from "feelings," implying that even if a mother felt herself unsure of what to believe about the cradle, her own "feelings"—her emotional assessment of its use and its benefits for her child—will "guide" her. Underwood offers his opinion "rather in favour of the cradle," but creates room in his rhetoric for mothers to decide whether it is best for their individual children and whether it accords with their own comfort levels.

Both Underwood and Buchan question whether the cradle's rhythmic motion is to the newborn a reassuring reminder of the womb. Underwood makes an interesting case for how the embodied memory of intrauterine life carries over into the child after its birth. "[T]here is something so truly natural, as well as pleasant, in the wavy motion of the cradle, (when made use of at proper times) and so like that children have been used to before they are born, being then suspended and accustomed to ride, as it were, or be gently swung in a soft fluid, upon every motion of the mother, and even during her sleep, from the effects of respiration."[63] Underwood makes it clear that the cradle can only be beneficial to the child "when [it is] made use of at proper times," but also contends that parents should take cues for their care strategies from the "pleas[ure]" expressed by their children. From this perspective, motion is not unnatural; Underwood destabilizes the very idea of "natural"-ness. The scope of "natural" for the infant must be broadened to include fetal experience of the maternal environment—that which has been made natural to him through his prior experience because embodied experience precedes birth and consciousness. Though frequently associated with the *tabula rasa* model of the infant mind, John Locke expresses similar thoughts about fetal

[62] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 387-8.
[63] Underwood, *Treatise on the Diseases of Children*, 387-88.

experience in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. "I doubt not but children, by the exercise of their senses about objects that affect them in the womb, receive some few ideas before they are born, as the unavoidable effects, either of the bodies that environ them, or else of those wants or diseases they suffer."[64] For Locke, though the fetus may not have "innate principles," it develops "simple ideas" based on perception, during its time *in utero*.[65] Similarly, the infant is not a truly blank slate for Underwood and Buchan because it has become accustomed to and thus feels associative pleasure in experiencing rhythmic motion that it associates with the womb. In this light, the motionless sleep environment for which some physicians so staunchly advocate seems positively artificial.

Buchan likewise finds a counterpart to the rocking, sleeping infant in the "suspended" fetus, but he advocates for literal continuity from the intrauterine environment to the external world. Suspicious of the violent rocking, Buchan recommends an alternative that, while perhaps "in fashion," finds precedent in ancient medicine.

> GALEN mentions the propriety of placing children to sleep in …*hanging little beds*; and the reason for such a contrivance is this explained, with great clearness and simplicity, by VAN SWIETEN: 'As the foetus,' says this accurate observer of nature, 'hanging from the navel-string in the womb, is easily shaken this way and that, while the mother moves her body; hence it has been reasonably presumed, that new-born infants delight in such a vibrating motion. They have therefore been laid in cradles, that they might enjoy this gentle exercise, and be more and more strengthened. Daily experience teaches us that the worst-tempered children are soothed by this

[64] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding and A Treatise on the Conduct of Understanding,* 99.
[65] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding and A Treatise on the Conduct of Understanding,* 99.

> motion, and at last sink into a sweet sleep. But the shaking of the cradle should be gentle and uniform; on which account, *those cradles that hang by cords are the best of all*, as they may by a slight force be moved equably, and without any noise. At the same time, the motion communicated to these cradles is imperceptibly diminished, and at last ceases without any shock.'[66]

In "the hands of the careful and affectionate mothers," rocking cradles pose little threat to the sleeping infant because their rhythm will be "gentle and uniform." But "suspended cots" require less emotional control or tender attachment from the cradle rocker because they minimize the danger of violent "shock." Rather than exposing the infant directly to the constant rhythm of a nurse "worked up to the highest pitch of rage," the suspended cot only needs to be set periodically in motion "by slight force." The movement of the cot from motion to rest mirrors the infant's sink into sleep: its movement is "imperceptibly diminished" over time, so it will cease to move once the infant has succumbed to sleep and requires it no longer. Without need for a constant attendant to preserve its sleep-rhythm, the child in the suspended cot perhaps seems more alienated, its care even further mechanized and removed from human touch. But because the caretaker does not need to give herself over entirely to the task of preserving rhythm, the physical, mental, and emotional demands of soothing a tired but sleepless infant are lessened, alleviating the apparent stress level pervading discussions of the nurse's relentless quest for "convenience."

"[T]he best things… may be made ill use of"

During the latter part of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, the rising culture of bourgeois commercialism positioned the child in a new and surprisingly

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[66] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 242-3.

potent seat of power: as a consumer. John Newbery's spectacular success as a seller and author of children's books created a new, professionalized market for these texts, "reinvent[ing] children's literature by commercializing children's publishing and inaugurating a new epoch of juvenile consumption."[67] Savvy publishers like Benjamin Tabart and even William Godwin understood the promise of public demand and staked their fortunes (with varying degrees of success) to join the rising ranks of children's authors, publishers, and booksellers. Whereas prior to the mid-eighteenth century, children's and adult literature were not completely distinct—chapbooks (popular cheap tracts with imaginative stories, songs, and moral tales) were marketed to the "fancy" of child and adult reader alike[68]—the last half of the century experienced a boom in the production and consumption of literary texts designed for the "small hands" of children.[69]

Mother Goose's Melody (1765/1791), which was "Printed for Francis Power, (Grandson to the late Mr. J. Newbery)," is one of these texts.[70] While its nursery rhymes and lullabies are ostensibly meant for children, the anonymous author of its wry preface addresses parents,[71] whose interests he clearly and shrewdly seeks to exploit. The prefatory material of *Mother Goose's Melody* emphasizes how lullabies particularly act on the child's body, advertising them as the collection's primary genre, though only one of the nursery rhymes ("Hush-a-bye baby") seems primarily concerned with infant sleep. The title page

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[67] Katie Trumpener, "The Making of Child Readers," 554. For more on revolutions in child readers and the children's book business during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, see M.O. Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700*-1840 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[69] Trumpener, "The Making of Child Readers," 554.

[70] For more on the history behind *Mother Goose's Melody*, see Iona Opie, "Playground Rhymes and the Oral Tradition," in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, edited by Peter Hunt and Sheila Ray (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 173-186, 173.

[71] Though the text is anonymous, some wonder if this author is Oliver Goldsmith, who did some authorial and editing work for Newbery during the period this text was published. See Iona Opie, "Playground Rhymes and the Oral Tradition," 173.

announces that *Mother Goose's Melody* "[c]ontains the most celebrated Songs and Lullabies of the old British Nurses, calculated to amuse Children and excite them to Sleep." The verbs "amuse" and "excite" demonstrate the project's strategy of using song to stimulate the child's sensibility both above and below the threshold of consciousness. "Amuse" appears first, acting as a vanguard against the child's watchful garrison of consciousness. While the narratives and other consciously perceived aspects of song "amuse" the child in perceptible ways, they simultaneously operate below the threshold of consciousness through the mechanics of sensibility and "excite[ment]." They speak to the child's sensibility while also engaging her mind, shifting her consciousness from a state of wakefulness and "amuse[ment]" to sleep. The brink of consciousness created by the lullaby presents almost-sleep as a liminal space: the child becomes increasingly open to its powers until—and perhaps through—her complete loss of consciousness. This is no accident or coincidence; the songs have been "calculated" to achieve this goal. This term lends a kind of pseudo-scientific precision to a collection of old, and probably familiar, rhymes. The text promises sleep to parents and children alike, optimizing the success of its stated purpose by uniting the resources of nurses and their culture of orality with capabilities enabled by modern printing.

As the source of the songs and emblem of the collection's credibility, the nurse does not arouse the preface's author antipathy in the way she frequently does for the writers of medical texts. To the contrary, this anonymous author lauds nurses' significant role as the preserver of ancient oral traditions and the "first preceptors of the youth of this kingdom."[72] She is not associated with superstition and misinformation, but serves as a rich trove of venerated and authentic cultural treasures. There is much to be learned from this "antient

[72] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x.

maternity," argues the author,[73] because her wisdom is not limited to childcare techniques. The modern British culture of knowledge and learning—which includes physicians and authors—can trace its origins to these "great grandmothers of science and knowledge."[74] As the fount of British erudition, they should be deified, not met with scorn or spoken of "irreverently."[75] The nurse is not an object of suspicion, but the source of the text's (and, by extension, the author's) credibility, a theme that Ann Rowland has found "surprisingly resilient": "one finds the bardic status of the nurse evoked well into the twentieth century whenever the tenacity and homely comforts of oral tradition are defended."[76]

The discerning reader will realize the truth of this assertion by reflecting on his own educational experience, the preface enjoins. The fundamentals of the nursery rhyme "with great probability" underpin the child's ongoing literary and poetic formation, as, for instance, "the custom of making *Nonsense Verses* in our schools was borrowed from this practice among the old British nurses."[77] The "*Nonsense Verses*" the author refers to are an eighteenth-century school practice of composing "verses consisting of words arranged solely with reference to the metre and rhyme scheme, without regard to the sense."[78] Just as the lullaby and other early poetic and musical experiences structure and mediate the individual's relationship to and experience of poetry and music throughout life, the "namby-pamby" language and games of the nursery inform his education. This does not only occur on an indirect level, in the form of the student's early experience, because the form also is

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[73] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x.
[74] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x.
[75] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x.
[76] Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, 175-6.
[77] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x
[78] "nonsense verse, n.". OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:2048/view/Entry/257757?redirectedFrom=nonsense+verse (accessed September 18, 2018).

consciously "borrowed" or appropriated by educators from the nurses, the child's "first preceptors." If the child's experience of education owes its existence to this formative relationship, so does his "taste," preferences, and standards of judgment.[79] In this way, the lullaby forms the ways in which human culture and knowledge are produced and expressed from generation to generation.

For the author of the preface of *Mother Goose's Melody*, this cultural "nursing" is unabashedly British in character and style. The songs comprising the first half of the text's collection are part of the editor's antiquarian project, coming from an oral nurses' culture of "great antiquity."[80] These songs predate the composition of the preface almost certainly,[81] and the author argues that they can be traced back to the infancy of Britain itself. Without specifying to which songs he refers, he claims, "*Caractacus*, King of the *Britons*, was rocked in his cradle in the isle of *Mona*, now called *Anglesea*, and tuned to sleep by some of these soporiferous sonnets."[82] In doing so, he ties the lullabies to a heroic—and distinctly British—ancient past. The "custom" of singing these particular "songs and lullabies" discovers its roots in the "time of the ancient *Druids*."[83] Progressing from Caractacus, to the Druids, to Henry V, and up through modernity, the author contends that these songs have been used by generations of Britons and have themselves facilitated England's forward trajectory through history. Moreover, the mouths of nurses and minds of children have preserved them without the aid of written transcription. The preface's author does not claim that he has compiled this collection out of fear that this ancient culture would otherwise be lost; on the contrary, the

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[79] *Mother Goose's Melody*, x
[80] *Mother Goose's Melody*, v.
[81] Ryoji Tsurumi, "The Development of Mother Goose in Britain in the Nineteenth Century," *Folklore* 101, no. 1 (1990): 28–35, 28.
[82] *Mother Goose's Melody*, v.
[83] *Mother Goose's Melody*, v.

oral culture of cradle-songs and lullabies seems vital, pervasive, and even "celebrated." Collection and publication are then less a recuperative or protective act, but rather an attempt by the author and publisher to capitalize on the songs' enduring success. In the medical domain during this period, the push for "natural" parenting (i.e. the erasure or diminishment of the nurse's role as primary caregiver) and valorization of the mother were accompanied by an increase in self-help childcare literature.[84] One might regard the antiquarian children's project in a similar vein, as texts that would begin to displace nurses and their oral culture of the nursery. Collections like *Mother Goose's Melody* present parents with a sanitized and sentimentalized nurse through the treatment of a male editor/author. Ultimately, in the hands (and mouths) of parents, the nurse is safely contained through this new mode of print, assuaging the classist fears that she evokes.

Additionally, the preface's author offers parents another compelling literary nurse in Shakespeare, whose "Lullabies" (or various musical and poetic excerpts) comprise the collection's second half.[85] Poetical extractions from Shakespeare include Titania's lullaby from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as pieces that he did not clearly designate lullabies, such as the song "Tell me where is fancy bred," from *The Merchant of Venice*. The lullaby's flexibility as a genre stems from its utility: the OED defines lullaby both as "a song sung to children to soothe them to rest," and "*any* song which soothes to rest" (emphasis mine).[86] As part of his project to nationalize the nursery rhyme, the author of *Mother Goose's Melody* repurposes Shakespeare from a dramatic icon to a "Sweet Songster and Nurse of Wit

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[84] See Kukla, *Mass Hysteria*, chap. 1.
[85] *Mother Goose's Melody*, 75.
[86] "lullaby, int. and n.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:2048/view/Entry/111037?rskey=pVhZ6O&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed October 08, 2017).

and Humour." Shakespeare's songs do not possess the ancient, untraceable origins associated with oral culture; nevertheless, his works—and only his works—are elevated to the same status and thereby presented as having the same "soporiferous" powers. After all, the section is not an anthology of lullabies from various British canonical sources. The place of honor alongside the ancient nurse belongs to Shakespeare alone. To attain this status, he must first be feminized as a "nurse" himself, attending to the anthropomorphized and infantilized figures of "Wit" and "Humour." If this new nurse-text will become an early "preceptor" of the child's education and "taste," this taste will accord Shakespeare the highest distinction, seeking to instill in the child an enduring attachment to Shakespeare not simply as a literary icon but also as an early caretaker. But unlike with the nurse, the child's experience of Shakespeare will be mediated entirely by text. For as *Mother Goose's Melody* asserts, our affective attachments to texts, even (and perhaps especially) early on in life, render them both present and powerful through adult life.

The infant on the brink of consciousness is an especially receptive subject for this unconscious cultural acquisition. Perhaps anxiety about bodily receptivity leads the preface's author to digress to an initially puzzling (and fabricated) account of Henry V leveraging the power of music over his subjects. "When that great prince turned his arms against *France*," the author recounts, "he composed the following march to lead his troops into battle, well knowing that musick had often the power of inspiring courage, especially in the minds of good men."[87] Though making up the majority of an introduction to this collection of lullabies, the anecdote about Henry V is concerned with music's capacity to "inspire[e] courage," not sleep. This juxtaposition, immediately following the author's discussion of the

[87] *Mother Goose's Melody*, v-vi.

collection's origins in ancient Britain, thus presents the song alternately as rocking lullaby and rhythmic marching tune. This musical piece "inspir[es] courage" in Henry's men, and its context in relation to the lullaby highlights the connection between early family life and the state. The strength of familial affection serves as a potent motivation for fighting. Familial affection is further extended to love for the mother country and the paternal figure of the king. This means, however, that the king can use music to further his political agenda, even at the cost of his subjects' lives. The music might offer the soldiers "courage," but it cannot offer them safety. On the contrary, it speaks to their embodied unconscious while quelling their conscious (and rational) fears, marching them perhaps to victory, but also perhaps to death. Music and rhythm are a tool for imposing the will of the powerful on the vulnerable, not unlike the power dynamics at play in the mother-infant interaction implicit in the lullaby; that is, the mother who "forces" the infant to sleep through the power that music offers. The preface even includes a brief and wordless musical interlude so a reader with the ability to read and play music could recreate Henry's song for herself and her child.[88] By playing the song for the infant, the mother and infant enact the perpetual attachment to ancient songs and, by extension, the nation, that the preface imagines. But they may also stage the ultimately troubling (and potentially violent) implications of music's capacity to conquer both body and will.

According to the preface's author, Henry's wordless musical piece was quickly appropriated by his enemies and repurposed for political attacks against him. The story about Henry's song begins by warning readers that "the best things, however, may be made ill use

[88] *Mother Goose's Melody*, vi.

of" by those with the intent to harm or undermine authority and social order.[89] Though Henry's marching tune was effective in mobilizing men to war against a foreign nation (France), in the mouths of his own countrymen his song becomes a weapon turned against him. The connection between body and music poses great risks, and the lack of words in Henry's song leaves it open for "some of the malcontents" among the troops to claim it.[90] They develop accompanying lyrics portraying the king as "an old woman, engaged in a pursuit the most absurd and extravagant imaginable…sweep[ing] the cobwebs from the sky."[91] This message regarding the dangers of music is one whose "ancient resonances" in the Western imagination can be traced as far back as Plato's *Republic*: "if music has the capacity to encourage the obedience of citizens, then it also has the capacity to induce civil disobedience – to cause bodies to march for, or against, the state."[92] Henry's grip on political order is threatened from within his own ranks because his men shift the song's affective register from sentimental/patriotic to satirical/defiant. Instead of the song bringing them together in a rhythmic unity, it becomes not only the marker, but also the source, of their distrust and dissatisfaction in their king, now imagined as an "old woman tos'd in a blanket."[93] The woman's "absurd and extravagant" mission is a sharp critique of the king's expansionist agenda across the channel.

Once Henry proves his martial skill at the battle of Agincourt, however, "the very men who had ridiculed him before began to think nothing was too arduous for him to surmount, they therefore cancelled the former sonnet, which they were now ashamed of, and

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[89] *Mother Goose's Melody*, v.
[90] *Mother Goose's Melody*, vii.
[91] *Mother Goose's Melody*, vii.
[92] Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle, "Introduction: Somewhere Between Signifying and the Sublime," in *Sound, Music, Affect: Theorizing Sonic Experience*, edited by Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 1-25, 12.
[93] *Mother Goose's Melody*, vii.

substituted [a new song] in its stead, which you will please to observe goes to the same tune."[94] The song that follows celebrates Henry's "prowess,"[95] and the elasticity of Henry's music means that the same powerful and familiar tune once again can be repurposed, this time not to subvert his authority but to reinforce and pay tribute to it. Because the tune remains the same, it contains echoes of its prior uses through associations with Henry's power, the rebels' challenge to that power, and his ultimate reinscription of it. Henry's ideological triumph over the rebels is demonstrated when, ultimately, they must overwrite their message of resistance, while his tune remains intact. Words are not, it turns out, as flexible as music. In doing this, they acknowledge the sovereignty of his music over their words.

This shift in attitude is not a sincere recognition of Henry's worth as the head of state, but a desperate attempt to find sure footing on ever-shifting political sands. Henry's telling response portends trouble for his enemies: he "smilingly" responds "that knaves sometimes put on the garb of fools to promote in that disguise their own wicked designs."[96] Henry is not just a powerful king and political maneuverer; he will demonstrate himself to be a source of sage wisdom. Insisting that "the flattery in the last…is more insulting than the impudence of the first," Henry's final word about the events comes in the folk form of an "old proverb": "*If we do not flatter ourselves, the flattery of others will never hurt us*."[97] Henry's recourse to a common cultural saying gives the illusion of emotional distance from the situation: we receive insight into his mind, but mediated by the familiar sayings of the ages, which like the songs of nurses have lost their origins in the mists of time. There is a lesson to be learned

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[94] *Mother Goose's Melody*, viii.
[95] *Mother Goose's Melody*, viii.
[96] *Mother Goose's Melody*, ix.
[97] *Mother Goose's Melody*, ix.

from this situation, he implies, but it is a lesson that has been learned before and will need to be learned again. Through his relatively controlled response, Henry seems more in this moment a discerning wise man than an angry monarch. Nevertheless, his power is real, violent, and effective; after all, the rebels' change of heart occurs after he had "routed the whole French army at the battle of Agincourt, taking their king and the flower of their nobility prisoners, and with ten thousand men only made himself master of their kingdom."[98] Retaliation seems a possibility, as he uses epithets like "knaves," "fools," and he sneers at their "impudence" in attempting to delegitimize his power.[99] His conclusion of the exchange with a proverb reinforces the legitimacy of his political power by grounding it in familiar, colloquial wisdom. He has proven his sovereignty with impressive displays of martial prowess and popular support; by expressing his thought through the words of British popular culture, he appears to have the cultural weight of the British past, present, and future on his side.

Despite the text's emphasis on its valuable store of lullabies, most of the non-Shakespearean rhymes included in *Mother Goose's Melody* are not immediately identifiable as such because they do not thematize infant sleep, include the traditional themes of lullabies (blessing the child, warning, pleading with, or bribing the child to fall asleep), or include visuals that would suggest domestic sleep-scenes. The exception is "Hush-a-by baby" (probably more commonly known to modern readers as "Rockabye baby," and otherwise "Lullaby baby"), a song that is also included in *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*.[100]

Hush-a-by baby

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[98] *Mother Goose's Melody*, viii.
[99] *Mother Goose's Melody*, ix.
[100] See *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*, 22.

On the tree top,

When the wind blows

The cradle will rock;

When the bough breaks

The cradle will fall,

Down tumbles baby,

Cradle and all.[101]

Tucker and Warner have both addressed latent feelings of fear, aggression, and anxiety thematized in lullabies, cross-culturally.[102] Certainly the "fall" described at the end of the song denotes both the child's sliding into unconsciousness and the falling off of the mother's voice at the song's conclusion. *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book* includes the parental directive "*Encore*," encouraging the parent to continue singing the song (and, via the image in the woodcut, rocking the cradle) until the child has fallen asleep.[103] Unlike *Mother Goose's Melody*, which appends an ironic moral to the verse ("This may serve as a warning to the proud and ambitious, who climb so high that they generally fall at last") and "*Maxim*" ("Content turns all it touches into gold."), *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book* emphasizes the importance of the manner in which the parent sings a song, both in sound and emotion. This is perhaps because the anonymous writer of this preface, unlike the "scholar" of *Mother Goose's Melody*, styles himself as a satisfied father commending Nurse Lovechild's "diligence and tenderness" in raising his children.[104] Regardless that the songs in themselves

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[101] *Mother Goose's Melody*, 39.
[102] See Marina Warner, "'Hush-a-bye baby': Death and Violence in the Lullaby," *Raritan* 18, no. 1 (1998): 93-114; Tucker, "Lullabies," 40-46.
[103] *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*, 22.
[104] *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, 4.

are "very suitably compos'd for a Baby," the writer of *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*'s preface instructs his readers to "pray be careful, not to sing them too loud; lest you frighten the Child when you design to lull it to Sleep or divert it."[105] Not only then does this text encourage the singer to repeat the lullaby until the child has fallen asleep, but the song "Lulliby Baby Bunting" orients the singer's emotional tone toward "*Affetuoso*,"[106] or "tenderness."[107] It is the magical power of both "Word and Tunes" that, because they are "so fit for the Capacities of Infants," have the power to amuse and heal children, "lull[ing them] to Rest, when cross, and in great pain."[108] According to collections like *Mother Goose's Melody* and *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song-Book*, these songs, which have survived orally throughout centuries because of their incredible practical use, hold the power of healing and soothing children. By purchasing, consulting, and monitoring these texts, parents can tap into the knowledge and lore of nurses without necessarily having to expose their own children to the dangers that her person might represent. Though these children's texts valorize the nurse as the source of these songs, the consolidation and publication of texts like these make her actual presence less necessary. Similar to the medical texts that corrected and dispersed her knowledge of pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, these texts glean the useful and fond aspects of her oral cultural stores, while moving the day-to-day care of young children more firmly into the sphere of maternal influence. Rowland writes, "The problem with nurses is precisely the stories they tell and the ballads they sing; thus the image embraced by antiquarians as authenticating their literary relics is an image condemned by many educators

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[105] *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, 4.
[106] *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, 21.
[107] "affettuoso, adj., adv., and n.". OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:2048/view/Entry/3384?redirectedFrom=affetuoso (accessed September 18, 2018).
[108] *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, 4.

and philosophers of the period."[109] Like Wordsworth's language really spoken by men, which first requires purification, both medical and children's literature to varying degrees engage in appropriating and valorizing folk culture, while also displacing or overwriting the actual presence of those folk who evoke middle-class fears.

"No longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool*"

British Romantic-era authors are similarly aware that a text's rhythm operates directly on the body; however, they emphasize that this applies to the bodies of writers as well as of readers. Discussions of the power of rhythm frequently circle back to the infant, a pattern that suggests 1) the foundations for this phenomenon are either in-born or created in infantile experience, and 2) rhythm instills a regression into the self that leaves its subject in a vulnerable, infant-like state. Consider Hazlitt's *chaunt*: he claims that the talent Wordsworth and Coleridge demonstrate during poetic recitation stems from their ability to harness rhythm's expressive and affective power to charm their audience, placing them all in a kind of trance. As a result, the audience cannot think (or feel) clearly about the poetry's measure or significance. However, the poet is not exactly in control of this process either, nor is he particularly aware of the scope of its power. He likewise is deceived, and it is only through the distance of many years and from the vantage point of reflection that Hazlitt himself can accurately describe and evaluate the experience.

If this is how the rhythmic phenomenon works at the level of performance, Hazlitt concludes his discussion of *Peter Bell* by reflecting on how it operates during the process of composition, describing how both Coleridge and Wordsworth rely on speaking aloud and walking outside to write metrically. This rhythmic movement provided the poets with the

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[109] Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, 172.

structure necessary for achieving creative freedom. Two psychoanalytic concepts prove useful for explaining this idea. The first is D.W. Winnicott's "holding environment,"[110] which is created in infancy both through literal holding as well as other forms of maternal love, care, and security. This creates in the infant both an external environment and an internal resource of security, which becomes the basis of his sense of security through adulthood. "Holding" should not necessarily be thought of as static or motionless; after all, one of the most effective means of reassuring a distressed infant of love and safety is through rhythmic, repetitive movement. In this light, the pacing of Wordsworth and Coleridge provides a structural security that fosters their creativity, in the same way that a mother's rocking arms provide the infant with peace of mind. Perhaps the womb, the cradle, and poetic rhythms are related. Through this rhythmic connection, the adult can create in himself a sense of "holding" and thereby risk creativity either as a composing poet or as a reader allowing the rhythm of poetry to infiltrate his body and affect his emotions.[111]

Gaddini proposes that rhythm can function as a "*precursor*" to the transitional object,[112] an idea that Winnicott praised in a later edition of *Playing and Reality*,[113] comforting the infant in his mother's absence and reassuring him of her continued existence and eventual return. She explains, "*precursors* (of transitional objects) [are] those objects that

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[110] For an excellent explanation of Winnicott's "holding environment," see Thomas H. Ogden, "On Holding and Containing, Being and Dreaming," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 85 (2004): 1349-1364. Ogden too points out how important rhythms are for establishing and maintaining the sense of holding for the infant, which becomes internalized and facilitates through the child's use of transitional objects. See also Renata Gaddini, "The Concept of Transitional Object," *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 14, no. 4 (1975): 731-736.

[111] Ruderman, too, discusses poetic rhythm and poetry more generally as holding environments throughout his book; see Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*.

[112] Renata Gaddini and Eugenio Gaddini, "Transitional Objects and the Process of Individuation: A Study in Three Different Social Groups," *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 9, no. 2 (1970): 347-365.

[113] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, "Introduction."

have a unique capacity for consoling the child but are not discovered or invented by the child, but are administered by the mother, or are parts of the child's body, or of the mother's body."[114] Though the rhythm may come from the mother's body, it is a form that the child can recreate in her absence, "symbolically evoking a reunion" with her.[115] Winnicott too notes the special place of "rocking, both of the child's rhythmical movement of the body and the rocking that belongs to cradles and human holding" in the child's repertoire of self-soothing mechanisms.[116] But both Gaddini and Winnicott emphasize that rhythm poses a unique threat to the preservation of the child's sense of self: by tapping into rocking's powerful rhythmic force, he is in danger of "becom[ing] the rocking mother and los[ing] his identity."[117] The problem with rocking, then, is that it has the potential to allow the child to slip into complete identification with the (absent) mother, thereby losing his sense of his own subjective self.

If the rhythm in rocking has the power to endanger the integrity of the infant's identity, this phenomenon seems related to the child's love for music. In Book V of *The Prelude,* Wordsworth lays out the foundation of the formation of the individual in relation to the texts to which she is exposed in early childhood. In fact, part of Wordsworth's focus is on a kind of spell itself: he proclaims the importance of poetical figures, to "speak of them as Powers / For ever to be hallowed,"[118] in part as a protection for children who are "the monster birth / Engendered by these too industrious times" (V.292-293). Wordsworth does not lay responsibility for this corruption at the feet of the mother—maternal imagination is

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[114] Gaddini and Gaddini, "Transitional Objects and the Process of Individuation," 349.
[115] Gaddini and Gaddini, "Transitional Objects and the Process of Individuation," 348.
[116] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, "Introduction."
[117] Winnicott, qtd. in Gaddini and Gaddini, "Transitional Objects and the Process of Individuation," 353.
[118] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* V.219-220. References to line numbers from the 1805 *Prelude*, cited parenthetically hereafter, appear in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, edited by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

not to blame for this monstrous birth—but rather a lack of imagination encouraged in the "dwarf man" of the child over-burdened by unimaginative learning (V.295). Along with Nature, imaginative texts are foundational to countering this unfortunate tendency. They inform our understanding of the world and ourselves, but also our later love for other texts. Wordsworth emphasizes that this happens in infancy as a response to the musicality of language, even before the child understands words as symbols, a theme to which he returns in his defense of "The Thorn." Wordsworth's claims in this Book are significant in two respects: one, he depicts the "ballad-tunes" of popular culture as "food for the hungry ears of little Ones / And of old men who have survived their joy" (V.212-213). The songs are vital to children, who "hung[er]" for the sustenance they provide. Wordsworth's lines suggest that the power of these songs inheres in children's enthusiastic and unrestrained consumption of them. Children are born with this hunger; it is because of this need that infant consciousness is formed in relation to song. Rowland argues, "The image…evokes the idea of literary culture that understands literary genres as developing out of the primitive infant forms and later literature as working to return its reader to earlier, child-like states of emotional absorption."[119]

This primary "hung[er]" for texts accounts in part for why they have such a marked effect on readers and listeners. Key also is the impact that formal poetic components—for instance, rhythm (as meter) and repetition—have on the body of the reader and listener. Rhythm allows the poet to manipulate a reader's emotions on a conscious level, as well as on levels she may or may not be aware of: for instance, through affective intensities and her experience of time. A reader must not resist this process, however. Meter is only effective,

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[119] Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, 250.

Wordsworth argues in his note to "The Thorn," once a reader has "entered into the spirit of a poem,"[120] when it can have its intended effect. In the case of "The Thorn," he writes, "[i]t was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly,"[121] but that meter would help it to "appear to move quickly."[122] Wordsworth describes meter or poetic rhythm as part of a process that separates "reality" from "appear[ance]." Rhythm has the capacity to deceive a reader or listener, and a poet can use knowledge of this mechanism to create the aesthetic and emotional effect he desires. It becomes significant in its ability to evoke sensations that the semantic aspects of language cannot.

Wordsworth further argues that meter serves as a mechanism for affective regulation. When, for example, a poem's content is not emotionally intense or interesting enough, the pleasure afforded by meter stimulates the reader's interest, encouraging her to keep reading. Rhythm directly affects her arousal state, freeing the poet to develop his own rhythm of heightening and lessening excitement. On the other hand, if the poem's content would, in prose, be too upsetting or disturbing, rhythm provides the reader with reassuring structure and relief. Meter unconsciously reminds the reader that the poem is a made thing; because of its regulating effect, she will not become so carried away by the events and expressive language of the poet that the emotional experience offered by the poem becomes painful or unpleasant. Rhythm, structured formally as meter, functions as a sign that the poem is a product of artistic endeavor, not the unmediated experience of life. This is why meter becomes so integral to Wordsworth's poetic theory as laid out in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*: if the poet has abandoned the artificial vocabulary that readers otherwise associate

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[120] Wordsworth, "Note to 'The Thorn' (1800)," in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, 593-594, 593.
[121] Wordsworth, "Note to 'The Thorn' (1800)," 593.
[122] Wordsworth, "Note to 'The Thorn' (1800)," 593.

with poetry, and the word she uses are those of "the language really spoken by men," the ensuing poem is in danger of seeming too close to reality. Meter is then one of the only ways to convey to the reader that they are inhabiting a world of the poet's creation. This becomes vitally important when the poet seeks out subjects that he hopes will resonate with readers' intense emotions.

> [I]f the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion…[123]

According to Wordsworth, meter has the power to "divest language in a certain degree of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition."[124] Thus, "situations and sentiments" that would be too painful to be pleasurable for a reader to encounter in the language of prose, "may be endured in metrical composition."[125] The reader experiences intense feelings, but those feelings are, and yet are not quite, her own. Moreover, the meter of the poem is not just a reassurance of the poem's status as art object, but a reminder of the poet's presence as part of the experience. Wordsworth's "half consciousness of unsubstantial existence" operates similarly to Jessica

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[123] William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)," in *The Major* Works, 609.
[124] William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)," 609-610.
[125] William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)," 610.

Benjamin's concept of "the third in the one,"[126] whereby the mother must indicate to her distressed infant that she empathizes with the infant's distress, but also must convey (through a difference in tone, body language, or vitality modality) that her empathetic identification is not complete. The mother offers the infant empathy as well as stability, reassuring him that, while she will care for his needs and senses his pain, she does not feel the same pain. In this he finds structure and some relief from his distress because it now has boundaries. For Wordsworth, meter reminds the reader of the poet's presence as the constructor of her experience. The reader "half conscious[ly]" experiences the poet's presence as an "unsubstantial existence," who does not interfere with or intrude on her experience of the poem, but to whom she can look for security.

If on a readerly level rhythm regulates the emotions of the reader, it similarly reassures the poet of the "tranquility" he must channel when recollecting previously experienced emotions he wishes to convey through his poetry. Wordsworth emphasizes that for a poet to convey emotion convincingly, he must genuinely recreate it in himself during the process of composition. He cannot, however, become overly-absorbed in his emotions without risking a form of self-annihilation that would be both painful and antithetical to creativity.

> [W]hen he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and

[126] Jessica Benjamin, "Intersubjectivity, Thirdness, and Mutual Recognition," lecture, The Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, CA, 2007, 1-23.

> even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure.[127]

Because the description in poetry of prior felt emotions is necessarily weaker and more mechanical than actually feeling those emotions, he must try to identify with the feelings of the characters that he is describing in order to make feeling more vibrant. At the same time, he cannot collapse himself into that character. Wordsworth stipulates that the state of "entire delusion" cannot be maintained for too long, and not without the assurance that the emotions he attempts to evoke in himself are both his own and not his own. Though Winnicott may have feared that rhythm allows the infant to slip into complete identification with the mother, in Wordsworth's formulation, rhythm keeps the poet tethered to his poetic mission, and therefore, himself. Meter is one of his primary means of "modifying" the emotionally-charged language that would otherwise collapse his identity into those of his subject. It reminds the poet that "he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure." Wordsworth's wording is a bit dissociative because he does not attach "pleasure" to a subject, almost as if the thought of complete identification with his subject is so disturbing that he must push the reader's presence away as well. But the reader is the source of the poet's "purpose," her pleasure is the aim of his poetry; just as meter reminds the reader of the poet's presence, it reminds him of hers. In this way, it creates a "holding environment" that allows him to hold on to his sense of self even while he enters into the feeling and subjective consciousness of another human (albeit, fictional creation of his) mind. Rhythm does not collapse the boundaries between consciousnesses but, on the contrary, maintains them.

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[127] William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)," 604.

For Hazlitt, meter is a source of interest in poetry not simply because it is itself interesting or pleasurable, but because it embodies the author despite the limitations afforded by textual media. Defining poetry as "the ordinary use of language, combined with musical expression,"[128] Hazlitt's proposition begs the question: what does "musical[ity]" mean for a text? Notably, Hazlitt theorizes, like Wordsworth, that meter is offered to readers as compromise. "In ordinary speech we arrive at a certain harmony by the modulations of voice," he explains, "in poetry the same thing is done systematically by a regular collocation of syllables."[129] Written poetry cannot convey feeling through vocal intonation and must therefore rely on other musical dimensions to create corresponding emotions in the reader. Substituting meter for vocal tone, the text operates as a body-proxy for the poet, conveying his sensibility when the poet's body cannot. Perhaps this accounts for the acute power of the *chaunt*: vocalizing the emotional expression of their poetry, which in its textual form would be powerful enough to move readers, Wordsworth and Coleridge amplify their own influence, creating an overpowering magical stupor in their listeners. If, for Hazlitt, rhythm allows or, perhaps, compels, the mind to surrender to the poetical imagination, this influence seems too overpowering when embodied in the poet's own voice. Hazlitt further argues that passion for the subject about which one is speaking results in a natural, spontaneous eruption of poetry from the speaker: "It has been well observed, that every one who declaims warmly, or grows intent upon a subject, rises into a sort of blank verse or measured prose."[130] Rhythm is not then a marker of artificiality, but one of emotional authenticity universally shared and understood, which finds its source in the body.

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[128] William Hazlitt, *Lectures on English Poets. Delivered at the Surrey Institution* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1818), 22.
[129] Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, 25.
[130] Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, 25.

Before introducing readers to Wordsworth and Coleridge in "My First Acquaintance with Poets," Hazlitt describes with great nostalgia the idealistic outlook of his youth.

> In the outset of life (and particularly at this time I felt it so) our imagination has a body to it. We are in a state between sleeping and waking, and have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes, and there is always something to come better than what we see. As in our dreams the fullness of the blood gives warmth and reality to the coinage of the brain, so in youth our ideas are clothed, and fed, and pampered with our good spirits; we breath thick with thoughtless happiness, the weight of future years presses on the strong pulses of the heart, and we repose with undisturbed faith in truth and good. As we advance, we exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool*, lulled in Elysium.[131]

Hazlitt embodies youthful imagination to highlight its receptivity: on the brink of consciousness, perceiving "indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes," and feeling the "strong pulses of the heart." Though he describes "youth," not infancy, elements of Hazlitt's imagery recall the state of infancy: being "clothed, and fed, and pampered," and "wrapped in *lamb's-wool*, lulled in Elysium." Youth is a form of illusion, as "we breath thick with thoughtless happiness," and "remain undisturbed" despite the inevitability of "the weight of future years." Youthful ideas have as much currency as dreams, yet the mind endows them with the appearance of reality. Despite this melancholy note, Hazlitt's nostalgia is palpable and his description of youthful imagination foretells his own child-like receptivity to the magical spell of the poets and their poetry. For Hazlitt, meeting Coleridge is both a

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[131] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," 383-384.

dream and an awakening. He compares Coleridge to his own father,[132] suggesting the child-like state of wonder and admiration that the poet evokes in him.

Though he argues that both Wordsworth and Coleridge effectively use the *chaunt* to capture the imagination of their audiences, Hazlitt adds that their manner of exercising this skill differs dramatically. In fact, Hazlitt implies, their talents lie in practically opposite wheelhouses.

> Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copsewood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption.[133]

Hazlitt accounts for the stark different in the style or "manner" of the two poets in the designations of "dramatic" ("more full, animated, and varied") and "lyrical" ("equable, sustained, and internal"). Hazlitt doesn't specifically elucidate his meaning, but his usage is suggestive considering the compositional practices that he connects to their performance styles. If Coleridge's "dramatic" style is "more full, animated, and varied," it appears more akin to a theatrical performance than a poetic recitation. One can imagine Coleridge,

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[132] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with the Poets," 370.
[133] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with the Poets," 388. Andrew Bennett has written in great detail about the different terms that both William and Dorothy Wordsworth used to describe his writing process in order to interrogate the narratives surrounding Wordsworth's poetic practice (see Andrew Bennett, *Wordsworth Writing* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007]. For my purposes here, I am not interested in necessarily uncovering whether Hazlitt's doubly-mediated account is a full, accurate picture of how Wordsworth "composed," but rather to examine how Hazlitt's account of poetic performance and composition echo Wordsworth's thought about the effect of poetic rhythm on the bodies of poets/speakers and readers/listeners.

"walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copsewood," with the same dynamism, intensity, and spirit as he lends his poetic performances. Coleridge's progress through nature is figured as uneven, admitting impediment, unexpected, hacking. That Hazlitt ties performance to Coleridge's compositional practices implies that this energetic progression is built into the poetry itself; that one could "hear" the sound of Coleridge's wild rambles in the sounds and rhythms of his poetry. Coleridge sets his body into motion and the poem emerges from his encounters with the unanticipated in his changing environment. So organic is this impulse to his personality that it infuses and informs every aspect of his poetry, from composition to performance.

If Coleridge's "dramatic" style is characterized by variability, overt feeling, and dynamism, Wordsworth's "lyrical" approach is marked by regulation and control. The designation "lyrical" suggests that, in his poetic recitation, Wordsworth exercises stricter constraint over enacting the poem's emotions, maintaining a more constant affective register. If meter is expressive, poetry can, in a sense, speak for itself.[134] Wordsworth does not need to amplify the emotions the poem seeks to elicit by channeling them in as marked a way as Coleridge. Rather, there seems a remarkable level of trust in letting the mechanics of poetry accomplish this task through their own inherent properties. Hazlitt describes Wordsworth's approach as "equable, sustained, internal," suggesting that the poet takes the measure of his emotional expression from the "measure" of the poem's meter. Even the syllables in Hazlitt's series of adjectives are balanced (3-2-3), distributing the weight of its description evenly, almost metrically. This is not to say that Wordsworth is emotionless or wooden during his

[134] Ruderman similarly wonders if the power of the "*chaunt*" is "encoded into the very meter of the poems themselves" (Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, 159). I would emphasize that, while it is, it is further amplified by the sounding body that performs in a style that suits himself.

recitation: Hazlitt points out that, "whatever might be thought of [*Peter Bell*], 'his face was a book where men might read strange matters,' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones."[135] While Hazlitt seems to portray Coleridge charismatically, using voice and physical presence to convey vitality or liveliness (using the poet as an instrument of the poetry), Wordsworth seems more of a sheer vehicle for delivering the poem to the audience. Nevertheless, he exercises the power of the *chaunt* effectively. This is echoed in his preferred method of embodied poetic composition, as Wordsworth "always wrote (if he could)" on terrain depicted as circumscribed, flat, and cultivated, "a straight gravel-walk, or… some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption." According to Hazlitt, Wordsworth prefers a physical compositional space where he can control the environment and thus his body's reaction to it. If Coleridge's poetry emerges from the spontaneous encounter with the environment—in other words, the environment in some sense determines his poetry—Wordsworth's compositional method is one where poetry controls the environment. This means laying out a regular path marked by his repetitive process of progress and return. By removing "collateral interruption," Wordsworth creates a space of predictability and safety, one where rhythm's repetitive structure can deepen and sustain concentration. His poetry does not emerge organically from an unpredictable encounter with Nature, but reflects the conscious, brooding, and solitary figure of Hazlitt's Wordsworth. Hazlitt's recollection of the poetic *chaunt*, and indeed of the poets themselves, reflects how the feeling body is inextricably tied to the language of poetry. This occurs among auditors during recitation (and by extension, readers while reading), and in the ways in which both

[135] Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance With Poets," 387.

poets sought out physical activities that would create a rhythmic structure for their poetic language to come into being.

This chapter discussed how rhythm's effects on the body are focalized in the lullaby and in medical and children's literary discourses about it and its various lulling effects, as well as how these discussions affect, and underlie, adult poetic reflections on the non-semantic aspects of poetry. Furthermore, I have tried to demonstrate the links between the infant's "first acquaintance" with poetry (via song, lullaby, and the mother's voice) to Romantic ideas about the embodied encounters with poetry. The following chapter advances my argument about the infant body, rhythm, and the lullaby by examining lullabies from John Keats and Walter Scott. Working from Richardson's thesis about Romantic poets' fears about the maternal voice in relation to a masculine, poetic language, I study two poems where the lullaby is not generalized as lulling, humming, murmuring, non-semantic sound, but is fully articulated. When the infant body is made vulnerable to, and through, rhythm, what can the lullaby achieve, and what risks does it pose? How are these risks compounded when the infant body is gendered (in this case, the male infant and its attendant concerns about masculinity)? Looking at transhistorical, transcultural lullaby themes concerning magic, identity, and inheritance, I discuss how these two poets voice fantasies about the power and dangers of entering into the traditionally feminine space of the nursery to use the lullaby's power to form the male infant body (and mind) for the masculine inheritance of poetry and political authority they wish to bestow on him. To enter into the infant body and mind, however, they must first "feminize" themselves, donning the guise of either nurse or mother.

Chapter 3:

"Listen, and let your heart awake!": Formation, prophecy, and masculine inheritance in the Romantic lullaby

Writing to his brother and sister-in-law in October 1818, John Keats boldly and accurately predicts the triumph of his poetic legacy: "I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death."[1] Even in this figuration, however, his eventual ascendancy is predicated on his untimely demise. Keats's perception that public acclaim would be inevitably intertwined with his own death is part of the legend that has come to define his popular characterization as a tragic genius, underappreciated in life and indeed driven to death in part by his caustic critical reception. As Andrew Bennett writes, "Crucial to the figuration of Keats as Poet is an early death which is presciently inscribed within the poet's life and work — an early death which he *knows about*" (emphasis his).[2] In this formulation, poet is prophet; in death, prophet becomes Poet. However, in this same letter, which Keats composed over the better part of a month, he turns his taste for poetic divination from himself to his sister-in-law, then a few months pregnant with the couple's first child. Announcing his own "great mind to make a prophecy," which are said (he reminds them) to "work out their own fulfillment,"[3] Keats forms his "prophecy" as a lullaby to the expected infant. His hopes about this child's future, marked by poetic distinction, sound much like those for his own. "If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery," he

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[1] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818, in *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats, Cambridge Edition*, edited by Horace E. Scudder (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), 330.
[2] Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143.
[3] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818, in *Complete Poetical Works*, 332-33.

muses, "it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet."[4] As poem, prophecy, and prayer, Keats's lullaby to the "Little Child / O' the western wild" is not just a tribute from a great poet to his imagined heir,[5] it *is* the child's poetic inheritance. The child will grow up hearing and eventually reading its words—George indeed kept this poem and showed it to others[6]—and as such, his mind and identity would be shaped from birth by the ideas about himself that it contains. Keats's choice to bestow his prophecy on the child in the form of the lullaby is not incidental or merely sentimental; he astutely uses one of the first literary forms to reach an infant's ears to mold this child's mind so that it might receive the powerful poetic inheritance he imagines he is bestowing.

Keats is not the only Romantic author to use the lullaby to shape infant subjectivity. Walter Scott employs the form similarly in "Hush thee, babe,"[7] a wildly popular song he penned for Daniel Terry's 1816 theatrical adaptation of his celebrated second novel, *Guy Mannering*.[8] Both novel and play follow same basic narrative trajectory: Henry Bertram, an *enfant trouvé*, unknowingly finds himself back at his ancestral estate in Scotland, which has fallen under the control of Glossin, the conniving attorney who orchestrated Henry's kidnapping as a child. Though Henry has no distinct recollection of his childhood, his return introduces a series of vaguely familiar sights, sounds, and characters that collectively piece

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[4] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poetical Works*, 332.
[5] John Keats, "A Prophecy: To George Keats in America," in John Keats, *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, edited by Edward Hirsch (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 332-333, lines 49-50. All references to the poem in this chapter, cited parenthetically hereafter, are from this edition. In this chapter I will refer to this poem as Keats's lullaby, or by its title in the given edition, "To his Brother George in America." Scudder's collection takes liberties with correcting punctuation and capitalization that, while I believe they do not materially affect our readings of Keats's letter, do affect the poem more significantly. (This letter is not included in this edition of the poems, which accounts for my use of two different collections.)
[6] Denise Gigante, *The Keats Brothers: The Life of John and George* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 145.
[7] Alternately known as "Slumber! my darling," Scott would later revise this poem in his 1821 *Poetical Works* as "Lullaby of an Infant Chieftain" (this version will be discussed later in the chapter).
[8] When references are unclear, Scott's novel *Guy Mannering* (1815) and Terry's play *Guy Mannering* (1816) are differentiated throughout the chapter by their respective publication/production dates.

together his fragmentary memories. Ann Rowland has written thoroughly about how sounds, especially the poetically charged forms of rhymes and music, speak to Henry's infant unconscious in the novel.[9] In Terry's adaptation for the stage, however, the novel's various musical hints (the tune of local ballad, the rhyming sound of ancient family prophecy) are distilled into a single lullaby that would outlive Terry's play in popularity and continue to be anthologized in collections of lullabies today. Though Scott's lullaby does not appear in his novel—he insists in a letter to Terry that his book and song have "no connexion"[10]—it forms the musical crux of the play, its embodied familiarity preparing Henry's conscious mind to accept what might otherwise be unbelievable: that he has, unconsciously and unintentionally, returned to the home from which he was stolen. Moreover, it advocates for the violent course of action that Henry must take against those who have displaced him. Once Henry remembers his surname, his affectionate ties to childhood caretakers, and his long-repressed infant memories, he can reclaim his inheritance and his rightful place among Scottish nobility.

This chapter thus builds on my previous chapter's ideas about the lullaby and rhythm's irresistible capacity to permeate the body. Romantic literature is rife with images of women, mothers, nurses, or maternal figures lulling and murmuring children and adults alike to sleep. Alan Richardson argues convincingly that Romantic male writers (including Keats and Scott) struggled with powerful anxieties about the maternal voice, which often surface in

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[9] See Ann Wierda Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood,* chap. 6. In this chapter, Rowland examines how Scott's construction of "stadial" childhood memory allows Henry Bertram to recover his lost identity, and thus, inheritance. He does this, Rowland argues, in order to inject the lost-child literary trope with the "question of childhood so important to Romantic antiquarianism: what can we remember and preserve of a childhood both individually and culturally imagined" (226)?

[10] Walter Scott to Daniel Terry, Abbotsford, April 18, 1816, in John G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott: In Three Volumes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1837), 205.

representations of intoxicating, erotic female figures.[11] This hissing, humming woman is, Richardson contends, symptomatic of male Romantic poets' efforts to re-territorialize masculine domination over both poetry and language at a time when people were becoming increasingly concerned with the role women played in introducing language to infants.[12] "This role could most readily be acknowledged, the 'language strange' pattern suggests, under the sign of the witch, the demon, the fairy, or the lamia: the woman of powerful spells, seductive voice, maternal lulling, whose irresistible utterance can be countered only by the bards and priests of official male culture."[13]

Though my work is informed by Richardson's approach, it differs in its primary object of study. Rather than examining the dangerous, desired woman whose voice soothes the unwary to sleep or complacency (like *Christabel*'s Geraldine or "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"), or the frequently-discussed maternal sounds of nature (for example, the rushing Arve in *Frankenstein* or the murmuring river's "nurse's song" of Book I of the *Prelude*), I consider not general scenes of lulling, but two fully-articulated Romantic lullabies. Though the writers in both cases are male, their subject-position as nurse-singer of the lullaby allows them to freely fantasize about its powerful effects on the sleeping infant. In other words, in both lullabies, the male poet circumscribes the fearful maternal voice by ventriloquizing it. It is also not incidental that the infants in both lullabies are (with varying degrees of clarity) figured as boys.[14] The male infant body becomes a site on which the poet ruminates and onto which he confers his political/poetic authority. However, to do this, he must enter freely into

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[11] Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime,* chap. 7.
[12] See Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, 116-38.
[13] Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, 135.
[14] Though he does not specify the gender of the child in the lullaby, in the letter, Keats not only imagines, but actively "hope[s] [Georgiana] will have a Son" (John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poetical Works*, 335). Despite this wish, Georgiana gave birth to little Georgiana ("Georgy") in 1819. This dissonance will be addressed later in the chapter.

a traditionally feminine space (the nursery) and perform a traditionally feminine office (lulling the child to sleep).[15] In neither case does the poet take the subject position of mother, though both songs invoke the mother's peripheral presence. The power deployed in these lullabies resides not in a sentimental valorization of the mother-infant dyad, but in the ways the poet can use his craft and his nurse-persona to access the child's unconscious and fashion his masculine identity.

Masculine power and rights to inheritance thus play a crucial thematic role in both lullabies, even while, paradoxically, the poet-singer urges the infant to submit to the power of his song. Scott's lullaby encourages the infant heir to survey his estate, while also warning him that "war comes with manhood";[16] his power will be vast, but it will be violently contested and he must therefore embrace his martial identity. Keats's lullaby imagines the child's political authority to be a result of his poetic inheritance. He will be the "first" poet of America, in no small part because of the identity and powers conferred on him by the voice (and song) of his acclaimed English uncle. In both cases, the child's destiny is of the poet's making, and it is ultimately entwined with that of the nation. With the stakes of the song so high, the speaker-nurse sings a vision of the infant's destiny into reality as a form of protection, shaping his personal identity through the channel opened to the unconscious by song, rhythm, and affection. Marina Warner refers to this as part of the lullaby's "domestic magic."

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[15] The poet's ability to harness maternal (though not motherly) authority echoes the preface to *Mother Goose's Melody*, which figures Shakespeare, the preeminent poet of nature, as the "Nurse" of the anthropomorphized infants' "Wit and Humour."

[16] Daniel Terry, *Guy Mannering; or, The Gipsy's Prophecy.* […] (London: John Cumberland, n.d.), 2.1.28. Text references are to act, scene, and page of this edition.

> The songs deal with fear by confronting its possibilities, and these include the unknown destiny that lies ahead for the baby. Lullabies weave a protective web of words and sounds against raiders who come with the night, against marauders real and fantastic, and against the future and the dangers it holds. The singer keeps vigil at the same time as hushing the baby to sleep.[17]

While Warner maintains that the lullaby operates as a form of "protecti[on]," preoccupations with identifying dangers might also suggest fears associated with lulling's magical efficacy over the body.[18]

"A healthy and hardy race of men"

While the previous chapter established a broad range of worries about the effect of rhythm, lulling, and the cradle on all infants, gender intensifies physicians' concern, as male doctors fret about the ways in which silly, uninformed, and overly-emotional/emotionless women compromise the bodily resilience and integrity of England's newest generation. Romantic-era medical authorities champion "natural" parenting and consistently express fears about the effect of "unnatural" care on the infant. One of these frightening effects was its potential to permanently mar the infant body by rendering it weak and "effeminate." "Unnatural" care takes different forms for different physicians; as we have seen, this can include the prolonged or improper sleep patterns that lulling and rocking enable.[19]

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[17] Marina Warner, *No Go The Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling, and Making Mock* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 16.

[18] For more on the prevalence of recurring thematic concerns of lullabies, including magic, protection, and identity, seem to transcend cultural bounds, see also Warner, "'Hush-a-bye baby': Death and Violence in the Lullaby," 93-114; Tucker, "Lullabies," 40-46; Irene Watt, *An Ethnological Study of the Text, Performance, and Function of Lullabies*, Dissertation, 2012, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, chap. 7.

[19] Other shared concerns include administering unnecessary and dangerous medications like opiates, binding the infant body with swaddling bands or physically reshaping its head with the hands, and feeding approaches like employing a wet nurse when not medically necessary or raising the child "by hand" with pap.

Physicians' concerns about effeminacy applied to boys and girls alike, but to harm infant boys was to endanger the state, Buchan warns readers:

> Effeminacy ever will prove the ruin of any state where it prevails; and, when its foundations are laid in infancy, it can never afterwards be wholly eradicated. Parents who love their offspring, and wish well for their country, ought therefore, in the management of their children, to avoid everything that may have a tendency to make them weak or effeminate, and to take every method in their power to render their constitutions strong and hardy.[20]

Buchan opposes "[e]ffeminacy" to "natural" masculinity or hardiness, though even "strong and hardy" constitutions must be cultivated by parents and caretakers and are, in that sense, artificial. But in terms of lasting effects, the effeminate child poses perhaps the greatest risk to the nation because its threat passes from generation to generation in perpetuity. The parents' responsibility is not just to their child or to the present nation, but to any future population belonging to their country. The primary relationship between parent and child is of profound, even sacred, import because even if they are not remembered, infantile experiences and exposures comprise the foundation of the child's moral and bodily integrity. Buchan pushes the implications of his logic further in *Domestic Medicine*, arguing that because the childhood health of its citizenry is a matter of state concern, the state should financially invest in it through dedicated social programming funds. "I do not know any manner, in which humanity, charity, and patriotism can be more laudably exerted, or even part of the public revenue more usefully employed," he writes, "than in enabling mothers to bring up a healthy and hardy race of men, fit to earn their livelihood by useful employments,

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[20] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 36-7.

and to defend their country in the hour of danger."[21] For Buchan, moral and national good are likewise accomplished when mothers are financially empowered to raise healthier (and happier) families. Though he advocates for a progressive agenda here, Buchan's championship foretells the further shift of state surveillance in the name of national good into the homes and bodies of mothers that Foucault explores with more ambivalence in *The Birth of the Clinic*.[22] Preserving the nation means protecting masculinity by empowering, but also controlling, women.

"Sleep while you may"

Terry's play is not necessary for understanding and interpreting Scott's novel, but as an adaptation, his play is best understood in relation to its predecessor, especially when it deviates from the original or when Scott's text offers elucidation for moments that the play explains only briefly (or not at all). Apart from H. Phillip Bolton's rich and extensive compendium of theatrical adaptations of Scott's works,[23] which features a section dedicated to various adaptations of *Guy Mannering* extending beyond Terry's version, there has been only one recent analysis of Terry's play,[24] despite the substantial critical attention paid to Scott's novel. Even so, Bolton makes the intriguing claim that because of its popularity and the lesser expense of theater tickets compared to a three-volume novel, "surely…many early readers of Scott's novel had actually seen [Terry's] play first."[25] Scott's novel *Guy*

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[21] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 4-5.
[22] See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); also, Rebecca Kukla, *Mass Hysteria,* chap. 2.
[23] H. Philip Bolton, *Scott Dramatized* (London and New York: Mansell, 1992), 56-139.
[24] A recent article by Annika Bautz is dedicated to the reception of Terry's play on the Romantic stage. See Annika Bautz, "The 'universal favorite': Daniel Terry's *Guy Mannering; or, The Gipsey's Prophecy* (1816)," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 47 (2017): 36-57.
[25] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 56.

Mannering follows the homecoming of the "*enfant trouvé*":[26] after witnessing a murder, Henry Bertram is kidnapped as a young boy by the smuggler Dirk Hattaraick at the direction of the perfidious family attorney, Glossin. After a military career in India, where he meets the Mannerings and falls in love with Julia, he returns to Scotland without a distinct recollection of his time there. The main arc of the novel follows him as he encounters sights, sounds, and characters who frequently seem uncannily familiar. Henry must remember who he is in order to reclaim his lost estate, reverse his family's fortune, and revisit justice on those who displaced him. Terry retains this general framework in his play; however, due to the constraints of theatrical representation, he understandably makes notable changes to condense the narrative and fit it to a more recognizable and digestible dramatic structure. The two emendations most germane to analyzing the significance of the lullaby and its role in conferring masculine identity on the infant are revisions Terry made to the triggers for Henry's self-recognition. First, in the play, Henry's process of self-discovery is catalyzed when he hears the lullaby (just a general local ballad in the novel), along with the sound of his true surname, Bertram, whereas one of the first hints of Henry's true identity in the novel is preserved in the rhyme of the family prophecy. (The prophecy, while retained in the play, is not an ancestral saying but rather a display of the "gipsy" Meg Merrilies's supernatural powers.) Second, Terry expands the importance of Meg Merrilies to the Bertram familial circle, from a fiercely attached local character, to Henry's primary nurse and caretaker during his infancy. With these changes Henry and Meg's reunion in Terry's play takes on new significance within the narrative's emotional arc, where infant and nurse are reunited through their shared song in Henry's adulthood.

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[26] Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, edited by P.D. Garside with an introduction by Jane Millgate (London: Penguin, 2003), 311. All pages cited from Scott's novel appear in this edition.

Despite its general lack of contemporary critical attention, Terry's play was significant to the nineteenth-century stage. Capitalizing on the success of Scott's second novel, Terry quickly adapted it to the stage, a process that Scott affectionately referred to as "the art of *Terry-fying*."[27] Bolton argues that Terry's "widely popular" play "established a precedent to the vast theatrical fashion of the 'Waverly' novels dramatized."[28] But Terry's *Guy Mannering* was not simply the most popular of the theatrical adaptations of Scott; Bolton asserts that it was "undoubtedly one of the great hits of the nineteenth-century stage."[29] The melodrama opened at Covent Garden on March 12, 1816 and was performed in that venue alone at least 93 times by 1824; it enjoyed success throughout Great Britain during the better part of the nineteenth century, with performances continuing to be staged in Edinburgh "at least until 1885."[30] Bolton suggests that the reason for its success was "substantially due" to its music: "Sir Henry Bishop's overture to Guy Mannering was so much beloved that it was often played to introduce dramas other than this one, and sometimes offered as an "entr'acte" entertainment."[31] Bolton's claim is corroborated by an anonymous theater critic in 1873, who, while reviewing a revival of Terry's play, reminisces about the power of Bishop's score to "awaken[…] a host of old memories among the elder portion of the audience."[32] Its music continued to fascinate and "kept possession of the stage for more than half a century."[33] This testimony attests to the power of music to evoke audience members' childhood memories of the theater, which in turn formed their identities

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[27] Walter Scott to Daniel Terry, Abbotsford, April 18, 1816, in Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 204.
[28] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 56.
[29] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 56.
[30] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 56.
[31] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.
[32] Anon.,"Gaiety Theatre, May 10, 1873," *The Musical World* 51 (London: Duncan Davison & Co., 1873), 302.
[33] "Gaiety Theatre," 302.

as playgoers and consumers of literary culture. This is especially fitting for a play centrally concerned with the power of music over the mind: in both the novel and the play, Henry Bertam's childhood experiences are at least in part awakened by childhood music.

Within the action of the play, Scott's lullaby is undoubtedly the most significant song because it initiates Henry's recollection of Henry's forgotten infancy. However, Scott's authorship of this song in particular reveals the complicated negotiation of paternity concerning the construction of the musical itself. Terry's play opened long before Scott's identity as the author of the *Waverly* novels had been revealed, and in a congratulatory letter to Terry a little more than a month after the play's premier, Scott worries about rumors surrounding his authorship of Henry's lullaby.

> I am afraid that I am in a scrape about the [lullaby], and that of my own making, for as it never occurred to me that there was anything odd in my writing two or three verses for you, which have no connexion with the novel, I was at no pains to disown them… [William] Erskine and you may consider whether you should barely acknowledge an obligation to an unknown friend, or pass the matter altogether in silence. In my opinion, my *first* idea was preferable to both, because I cannot see what earthly connection there is between the song and the novel, or how acknowledging the one is fathering the other. On the contrary, it seems to me that acknowledgment tends to exclude the idea of farther obligation than to the extent specified.[34]

Scott worries that acknowledging his authorship of the lullaby may out him as the author of the Waverly novels, confirming his identity as "The Great Unknown." By claiming the

[34] Walter Scott to Daniel Terry, Abbotsford, April 18, 1816, in Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 205.

lullaby, he suspects he can deceive the curious public into believing that he has revealed the extent of his role in the play's (and, implicitly, the novel's) construction. His language of paternity, though a conventional writing metaphor, takes on a new valence in relation to the concerns expressed in the narrative. In both play and novel, Henry's paternity is written all over his face; his likeness to his deceased father alone may not be enough to legally entitle him to his estate at the end of the novel, but in both versions of the narrative, it, coupled with Meg Merrilies's endorsement, satisfies the local community about his identity as the long-missing heir. Scott's claim that he traces no resemblance between the play's lullaby and the novel overlooks its resonances with the songs of the novel that serve in similar capacities; namely, the local ballad that Henry half-remembers from his childhood, which he plays on the flageolet and hears echoed by a maid on his estate,[35] and the songs "of the auld barons and their bloody wars" that Meg Merrilies sang to him while "h[olding him] on [her] knee" when he was a child.[36] Also like his novel, Scott's lullaby was "a particular favorite" of the audience.[37] It was key to the play's commercial appeal, sold along with other songs "in the lobbies of some theaters," which playgoers could then take home as souvenirs and sing beyond the confines of the playhouses,[38] remembering the play through reenacting its musical score, and perhaps even singing the lullaby to their children to put them to sleep, as Meg did for the infant Henry.

Even accepting Scott's assertion that the lullaby specifically has no connection to the novel, both Scott and Terry portray Henry as having a special affinity for music. In the nineteenth-century theatrical world, the part of Henry Bertram became a highly sought-after

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[35] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 248.
[36] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 40.
[37] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.
[38] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.

role for male actors wishing to distinguish themselves as singers on the stage.[39] In the novel, Henry apologizes to a friend for his poor ability at sketching landscapes, jokingly acknowledging that he "must stick to the flageolet, for music is the only one of the fine arts which deigns to acknowledge me."[40] Henry's musicality literally becomes one of his identifying features, since both in Scott's novel and Terry's play Julia Mannering recognizes (or in the case of the novel, ponders the possibility of) her lover's return not upon seeing him, but when she hears him playing a familiar and beloved tune on his flageolet outside her window.[41] Ann Rowland points out that the contours of Henry's childhood are shaped by music as he recalls the sound of the rhyme of his family's motto before he can find the words. "Scott is very precisely locating Bertram's memories in the primitive stages of childhood," where, she argues, "words [are translated] back into sounds," and where the child thus has "a more primitive relationship to language based on sound, melody, rhyme, and repetition."[42] It is the relationship between the sounds of language and its retention in memory especially, Rowland rightly argues, that enables Henry to access the unconscious memories of his childhood.[43] Henry's incomplete memory of a local ballad, echoed by a maid on the estate who unconsciously sings along, is the moment in Henry's process of self-recovery at which Glossin realizes how close Henry's "slumbering train of association" is to awakening.[44] The novel's narrator furthermore describes Glossin's attempt to deceive Henry regarding the family name as "lull[ing]," as Glossin avoids uttering the name "Bertram" out

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[39] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.
[40] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 114.
[41] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 89; Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.30.
[42] Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, 231.
[43] See esp. Rowland, *Romanticism and Childhood*, 230-34.
[44] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 246.

of fear that it "might have awakened the recollections which he was anxious to lull to rest."[45] Glossin attempts to lull back to sleep Henry's memories now that the presence of familiar sights and sounds are beginning to awaken them. Perhaps Henry's affinity for music accounts for his retention of musical memories; in any case, Glossin realizes in this moment how dangerously evocative music can be.

In the play, Lucy Bertram's claim that the lullaby "from a very ancient period [has] been sung in our family to soothe the slumbers of the infant heir,"[46] touches on the interplay between ancient oral culture and Scott's modern attempt to recreate or mimic it. Because Scott composed the song upon Terry's request, his lullaby is not as old as his novel, rendering it not ancient at all. However, it is also not *exactly* new, as it shares striking similarities with "Rock-a-bye baby," a very old nursery rhyme published in Benjamin Tabart's 1805 *Songs for Nursery*.[47] Compare the opening lines of Scott's lullaby to those of "Rock-a-bye, baby": "Oh! slumber, my darling / Thy Sire is a knight / Thy Mother a lady / So lovely and bright" with "Rock-a-bye, baby, / thy cradle is green, / Father's a nobleman, / Mother's a queen."[48] Both Scott's and Tabart's lullabies are similarly structured, addressing the infant and establishing the song as a lullaby through the invocation of the cradle and sleep-scene. Both are also notably concerned with telling the infant who he is, establishing and then reinforcing his identity in further iterations. In both songs, the infant is assured of his great personal and social significance. He is loved within the family, but also said to be important to the political hierarchy and future stability of his native country. Furthermore, the

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[45] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 246.
[46] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.
[47] Anon., "Rock-a-bye-baby," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, edited by Iona and Peter Opie (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71. (I have listed this author as "anonymous" because, while Tabart collected the song, it is not thought to be of his own making.)
[48] "Rock-a-bye baby," *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, 71.

songs do not identify the singer as either the mother or the father of the infant; in fact, by telling him who his mother and father are without using a personal pronoun or a more familiar formulation than "your mother" or " your father," the song suggests that the singer is perhaps a nameless caretaker responsible for soothing the infant at night—in other words, the nurse. In Scott's lullaby, we know this to be the case because Meg Merrilies describes the lullaby as "the song I used to sing to Bertram's babe."[49] Scott's original contribution is thus modeled on an older item of British folk culture, tying it to the nurse's oral tradition it seeks to imitate. In this, it demonstrates the adaptability that makes folk culture so enduring: writers and singer alike can repurpose and revise material to suit changing needs, increasing the likelihood of its continued dissemination. Moreover, Scott's lullaby is included among songs that were both original contributions to the play (including a highly-praised song by Joanna Baillie, "Up Rouse Ye") and older Scottish folk songs. Bolton argues that Terry's play, along with other musical adaptations of Scott's novels, served as a means of preserving the oral culture of Scotland, especially the "old Scottish border ballads," like the ones Scott had collected in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802). Bolton contends that Scott, Terry, and others similarly employed in collecting and disseminating folk songs in new contexts "contributed to the modern popular and mass musical culture an appreciation of the ancient oral and rural literature of song."[50]

> The folk culture was in some degree clearly surviving in new form in the modern industrial era, even in the hearts and minds of men and women who did not read long, expensive novels, or Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The displaced highlanders in the newly burgeoning Glasgow slums

[49] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[50] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.

could have continued to hear ancestral music sung, albeit in a new commercial context.[51]

Situated among, and structured to imitate, Scottish and British folk music, the lullaby is in some ways perhaps as ancient as Lucy Bertram suggests.

Our introduction to the lullaby takes place in the play's second scene, when Lucy Bertram first performs it in Julia Mannering's bedroom, described as "decorated with Indian curiosities," including "horns," "skins of tygers, &c.," and "dresses of Indian tribes," as well as more traditional markers of bourgeois female refinement, like "book stands," "dressing and work tables," and a "harp."[52] Henry's sister Lucy entertains Julia and Colonel Guy Mannering in their home,[53] but she is a near stranger whom they have taken in as a charitable gesture honoring the memory of the late Lord Bertram, who, in Terry's play, assumes the role as Mannering's former protector. This setting of familiarity/estrangement, domestic/foreign, and past/present, amidst objects that act as signs of British colonial power, sets the tone for the audience's understanding of the character and significance of the lullaby.[54] Throughout the play and the novel, song is associated with magical possibility; so too are the landscapes of Scotland and India, in which both Henry and Colonel Mannering furthered their military careers and where Julia grew up. Characters associate music with magic through the transfixing hold it exercises over the imagination and emotions of attentive listeners. Music, magic, and superstition blur distinctions between Scotland and

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[51] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 57.
[52] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.27.
[53] In Terry's play, Colonel Mannering is Julia's brother, not her father, setting up neat romantic double-pairings between the families, with Julia/Henry and Lucy/Colonel Mannering. For more on how Terry adapted the novel to specifically suit the stage, see Bautz, "The 'universal favourite,'" 42-47, 52-56.
[54] Katie Trumpner addresses the novel's engagement with Romantic ideas about empire, memory, and displacement. See Katie Trumpner, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), chap. 4.

India, especially for Julia Mannering, who is characterized by her affinity for enchantment. In the play's next scene, upon hearing the song Henry plays on his flageolet and happily imagining it to be him, she exclaims, "I'm in the land of superstition, and begin to share in its influence, I think."[55] Music, as well as the mystique of Scotland, suggest the possibility that her long-lost lover might have pursued her across the far reaches of the British Empire, like a hero in a romance might. Julia's comments on her propensity for romantic imagination are further expanded in the novel, origins she playfully attributes to her infancy in India.

> I was born in the land of talisman and spell, and my childhood lulled by tales which you can only enjoy through the gauzy frippery of a French translation. …I wish you could have seen the dusky visages of my Indian attendants, bending in earnest devotion round the magic narrative, that flowed, half poetry, half prose, from the lips of the tale-teller! No wonder that European fiction sounds cold and meagre, after the wonderful effects which I have seen the romances of the East produce upon their hearers.[56]

According to Julia, her affective responses to Eastern and Occidental narratives are indebted to childhood experiences of hearing "magic narrative[s]" told by an Indian "tale-teller." The strength of this memory is chiefly derived from its Eastern associations. Story is powerful: though she implies that these tales were told to her, an English child, they are irresistible as well to her "Indian attendants." So powerful is the "magic narrative" that it defies categorization as either poetry or prose, which seems to "flo[w]" naturally from the storyteller. For Julia, this difference in the affective resonance of language and story divides Occidental from Oriental; while the "half poetry, half prose" of Indian stories evoke magical

[55] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.30.
[56] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 92.

reverence from listeners, Europe offers either "cold and meagre" fiction or translations that seem mere "gauzy frippery." This connection between India and Scotland proves important, since Scott's narrative frequently refers to the gypsies, including Meg Merrilies, as having ambiguously Eastern roots (either Egyptian/"gypsies" or Indian), "invoking the belief, widely held at the end of the eighteenth century, that the origins of the gypsies could be traced back to India."[57] Henry also demonstrates this propensity to link the two lands, as in the novel he "has frequent recourse to Indian analogies when seeking to articulate his own romantic response to the hills and picturesque ruins of southern Scotland."[58] Because readers are in a realm of superstition, and because the characters consider magical possibility in relation to the lands which they inhabit, we are also in the realm of romance, where a lost heir can return and restore himself to his rightful seat of power with the aid of friends. These possibilities are linked to the trope of the *enfant trouvé*. Among the Mannerings, the Bertrams, and the gypsies, as well as between India and Scotland, the exotic provides the opportunity for the fantastic to occur.

Though Terry's Colonel Mannering refers to the song as "a lovely air" and "a most beautiful thing! wild, yet so pathetic,"[59] Lucy's feelings about the lullaby are grounded in a deep and resonant sadness over her family's losses. She sings not of a long-lost time or long-lost place; on the contrary, the song clearly depicts the connection between her home environment and the identity of the Bertram infant heir: "The hills and the dales, / From the towers which we see, / They all shall belong, my dear infant, to thee."[60] Lucy performs this

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[57]Jane Millgate, "Introduction," in Scott, *Guy Mannering*, xviii.
[58] Millgate, "Introduction," in Scott, *Guy Mannering*, xvii. See also Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, chap. 1.
[59] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.
[60] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.

familiar familial song in an unfamiliar (though neighboring) environment, amplifying its pathos through its allusions to real, yet (seemingly) hopelessly irretrievable scenarios. The singer hushes the child, soothing his agitation through the sound of the song, her embrace, and her vision of his future establishment as a man of great political power. While that pattern of soothing and fulfillment has been carried out in the Ellangowan family from "a very ancient period," the rupture created by Henry's disappearance transforms the song from lullaby to elegy, not only for the lost heir but also for the unbroken chain of succession that the song represents. Lucy assures her listeners that the song itself is not inherently sad, but rather that "it has borrowed its tone of feeling…from the situation of the singer."[61] For Lucy, the lullaby is not abstractly romantic: her expulsion from her ancestral home makes it one of the last markers of the place and family she has lost. Furthermore, the principle of male inheritance that the song so celebrates is why the mood of Lucy's performance is one of lamentation. As Mrs. McCandlish explains in the play's opening scene, the estate has been lost to the family because "it was all so strictly settled on heirs male."[62] Though there is still a sister to mourn the loss of Ellangowan, the rules of inheritance preclude her from inheriting. If Lucy were male, the song, like the family home, would have passed from her missing older brother to herself; instead, through grief and ineptitude after Henry's disappearance, their father was unable to maintain the estate, leaving it open to Glossin's predatory machinations.[63] While lullaby itself celebrates masculine dominion, power, and inheritance, Lucy's performance reveals precariousness of those social forces, especially from the perspective of vulnerable women. Without the heir in his seat of power at

[61] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.
[62] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 1.1.14.
[63] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 1.1.14.

Ellangowan, Lucy is powerless, landless, a perpetual guest at the mercy of other families. Her social reality is in striking contrast to the intimacy and belonging celebrated in the song. Lucy has taken the lullaby, once as much a part of the heir's inheritance as the Ellangowan ancestral seat, with her into her exile, shifting its meaning in this context from celebratory lullaby to elegiac lament.

She also notes that, although the song accompanies her to a new, unfamiliar place, it nevertheless remains at her ancestral home in a different form: not as lullaby but as an anthem of resistance. The Bertram family may have been expelled from Ellangowan, but peasants still working on their estate constitute a remnant of their household. When Julia asks whether the lullaby "was really made for [Lucy's] own family," Lucy responds,

> Oh, yes,—and a hundred more such ditties! While my only brother, little Henry, was spared to my parents, it was sung to him every night, by an old gipsey nurse; and, I have heard tho' so young, he could sing it quite well. — There is not a milk maid on the estate once ours, but can chaunt it, and knows its history; and, I have heard—tho' it hardly deserves mentioning—that the person now in possession,—this Glossin, has, as far as he can, forbid them to sing it, which makes it doubly a favourite with me.[64]

Lucy's statement echoes aspects of the singing maid in Scott's novel who unconsciously assists Henry with recuperating his lost past. In this context, the Bertrams are not present to hear the song; yet, as the servants' work continues, so the song continues. The lullaby does not simply express the nurturing affection between heir and caretaker; it retains the missing child and lost home, both of which survive in a form that, through memory and performance,

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[64] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.

cannot be lost despite the indiscretions or exploitation of Lucy's and Henry's grieving, imprudent father. Moreover, its immateriality is linked to its efficacy as an instrument of resistance. Lucy specifically links the lullaby to women and children—the "old gipsey nurse," the child Henry, the "milk maid[s]," even herself—suggesting its affinity with the disenfranchised. Glossin's ban indicates the song's subversive power as well as the persistence of oral culture, despite attempts to silence it or the changing tides of family fortune. He proscribes the singing of the lullaby "as far as he can" but, like memory, song cannot be fully repressed, emerging spontaneously and unconsciously (as well as consciously) as the servants go about their work. Moreover, their voicing of its threat of violent struggle against usurpers is a threat of rebellion on behalf of the rightful heir.

> Oh! rest thee, my darling,
>
> The time it shall come,
>
> When thy sleep shall be broken
>
> By trumpet and drum.
>
> Then rest thee, my darling,
>
> Oh! sleep while you may;
>
> For War comes with manhood,
>
> As Light comes with Day.[65]

Not only is Ellangowan a place and a person, it is also a song—this lullaby, which expresses a continued struggle against those who threaten its integrity.

Despite the solidarity that seems to cross familial, as well as societal, lines, ultimately the song, which reinscribes political authority within the Bertram family, becomes part of

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[65] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.1.28.

their property as part of their inheritance. When Lucy declares that the lullaby, along with "a hundred more such ditties," was made for her family, she implies that these songs were composed by various peasant-figures over the centuries. Lucy asserts that the song was made "for" her family, not *by* her family, and that it is retained in the hearts and minds of the servants who remain there as the functioning part of the estate. However, she also states that it is sung "in" her family, representing her family as a space with an inside that variously includes and excludes the servants who currently are preserving the song on the estate. This inside/outside dynamic is illustrated in the lullaby in its treatment of the nurse (not yet substantiated in Meg Merrilies) depicted as the primary figure to the infant and yet largely invisible in the song. Though she sings the song from her own perspective, the nurse does not refer to herself except in relation to the infant, for example, by referencing "we," "my darling," and "My dear infant." Within the song, the nurse exerts some degree of ownership over the infant through her strong bond with him and his reliance on her nighttime care. But as she makes clear in the song, once he inherits the estate that they gaze down upon together, everything he sees will "belong" to him—even, to some extent, herself and other servants like her.

After Lucy's stirring rendition, the lullaby is repeated later in the play, this time for the ears of the now-grown Henry, its recurrence enacting for the audience the repetition that is crucial to Henry's awakening consciousness. Its reprise in the fourth scene of the second act of the play works to authenticate the identity of Meg Merrilies in her now more emotionally evocative role as Henry's old primary "gipsey" nurse.[66] In fact, Terry's amended

[66] Following both Terry's and Scott's precedent and to avoid confusion, I use the term "gipsey" throughout the chapter to describe Meg Merrilies and the others in her tribe, though Deborah Epstein Nord notes that the term "is a misnomer bestowed by non-Gypsies and has come to be understood as a term of opprobrium by many of

subtitle reflects this change: while Scott's novel is subtitled "The Astrologer," Terry's is "The Gipsy's Prophecy," highlighting Meg as the main attraction of the show, a savvy decision positively reflected in her favorable popular and critical reception.[67] In so doing, Terry also severs Colonel Mannering's connections to the occult, rendering prophecy and fate (and specifically, the fate of her infant charge, Henry Bertram) solely Meg's domain. In both versions of *Guy Mannering*, Meg is an important protective figure for Henry, but Terry's version explicitly positions her as Henry's primary childhood nurse and caregiver, which lends their eventual reunion a deeper degree of poignancy. In the novel, Meg "often contrived to waylay [Henry] in his walks, sing him a gipsy song, give him a ride upon her jackass, and thrust into his pocket a piece of gingerbread or a red-cheeked apple"[68]—acts of "affection," which the narrator attributes to an "ancient attachment to the family."[69] These gestures become a "matter of suspicion" to Henry's anxious and bedridden mother,[70] who, though falsely directed, rightly perceives the intensity of Meg's dedication toward Henry. Meg holds vigil when the child is ill, "chanting a rhyme which she believed sovereign as a febrifuge…till she was informed that the crisis was over."[71] Meg views her offices, marked by the magical power of words to effect material change in the world, as integral to Henry's

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the people it is used to describe." See Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, *1807-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 18. Nord's book provides a masterful analysis of the gypsy figure in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature. Drawing on similarities with the "Oriental" figures of the British imperial imagination, she distinguishes the Gypsy figure (like the Jewish figure) as "a domestic or an internal other [whose] proximity and visibility were crucial features in their deployment as literary or symbolic figures. Their familiarity lent them an exoticism that was, at the same time, indigenous and homely" (3).

[67] In fact, Terry's changes to the plot and subtitle of Scott's narrative render the title of the play as "Guy Mannering" quite vestigial, apart from the imperative to link the play directly back to Scott's novel. Terry's Colonel Mannering in no way commands the production among the cast of characters.

[68] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 40.

[69] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 40.

[70] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 40.

[71] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 40.

safety, but also as a general feminine duty.[72] Henry witnesses Meg's conviction in the power of song over the ailing body in adulthood, as well, when he observes her performing death rites for a mortally wounded smuggler: "She moistened his mouth from time to time with some liquid, and between whiles sung, in a low monotonous cadence, one of those prayers, or rather spells, which, in some parts of Scotland and the north of England, are used by the vulgar and ignorant to speed the passage of a parting spirit, like the tolling of the bell in catholic days."[73] Accompanying her death rite "with a slow rocking motion of her body to and fro, as if to keep time with her song,"[74] Meg's physical movement suggests the rocking of the infant in her arms implicit in the play's lullaby, her body channeling the power of this strange and mysterious music. The narrator's ambivalence about whether Meg's act is more a "prayer" or "spell" frames the process as an occult secular practice more closely resembling witchcraft than priesthood. Meg's musical magic is effective in Scott's novel, and from the reader's perspective, though Scott allows his reader a "near" transcription of her song,[75] her movement and mutterings suggest the powerful resonances of Richardson's Romantic "motherese." The above cases suggest that Meg's mystical singing traverses the boundary between life and death, and perhaps even has power over it: the young Henry's fever goes away, and the dying smuggler expires as the adult Henry walks through the entrance of Meg's cave.

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[72] Anna Fancett, who focuses her piece on the female characters of Scott's novel and who addresses Meg Merrilies, provides an excellent survey of scholars who have considered eighteenth-century and Romantic anxieties evoked by writing, orality, and maternity; see especially 56-63 in Anna Fancett, "The Mother's Word: Maternity and Writing in Walter Scott," *Scottish Literary Review* 8, no. 2 (2016): 55-72. For the vexed history of orality and the written word within the context of eighteenth-century and Romantic Scottish culture, see also Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture, and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Fielding associates the oral, "as the territory of the irrational and illegitimate," with "dangerously female" characters like Meg (27).

[73] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 144.

[74] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 144.

[75] Scott, *Guy Mannering,* 144.

With her power over the sung and spoken word, her arresting androgynous appearance, and her powerful connection to the occult, Meg's popularity with readers and her innate theatricality likely account for her expanded role in Terry's play. Both Scott's and Terry's depictions fueled the culture of "Meg Mania" that gripped the British literary public.[76] Meg, whom Terry's Dandie Dinmot describes as "the ruler and terror of [the gypsies] all,"[77] is strikingly androgynous, a trait established in Scott's novel (she is six feet tall, her voice is "too harsh to be called female, yet too shrill for a man"). Nord deems her a "hybrid figure,"[78] who "combines elements of feminine and masculine appearance and affect."[79] This holds true in Terry's play as well: while Sara Egerton played Meg at the play's debut, John Emery (ultimately cast as the earthy and masculine Dandie Dinmont) was reportedly slated for the part until he "refused positively" to play her.[80] Both male and female actors were alternately cast as Meg Merrilies throughout the play's staging, even outside of burlesque productions.[81] Scott's novel describes her as having a strength and stature beyond that of a woman, unnerving and fascinating male characters. Shaw writes of Meg's transfixing and sublime power as one of elemental femininity and that the same power that allows her to transcend the borderlines between gender also enables her to cross between the realms of the living and the dead: "Meg is somehow at the threshold between humanity and a realm beyond humanity, adding to our sense as a sacred, super-human gatekeeper."[82] Her sublimity is often alluded to in terms of the theater; even in the novel she seems made for the

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[76] Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, 26.
[77] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[78] Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, 14.
[79] Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, 13.
[80] "Sarah Egerton," *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XVII, edited by Leslie Stephen (New York: Macmillan and Co.; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1889), 159-60.
[81] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 58.
[82] Shaw, "Scott, Women, and History," *European Romantic Review* 13 (2002): 285-97, 290.

stage. Her emotional reaction upon seeing the site of the old gypsy encampment where she raised her children and sang songs to young Henry positions her in an actor's pose, a "study worthy of our Siddons herself," declaiming with a "mixture of insanity and wild pathos…with her right arm bare and extended, her left bent and shrouded beneath the dark red drapery of her mantle."[83] Her "stage presence" in the novel is not met unequivocally with reverence, however. Pleydell, the lawyer later summoned to determine the validity of Henry's claim to his estate, underscores the danger that Meg's posturing could be no more than a façade (or insanity): "This woman has played a part till she believes it; or, if she be a thorough-paced impostor, without a single grain of self-delusion to qualify her knavery, still she may think herself bound to act in character."[84] Though the novel, as Nord puts it, describes Meg ""as though Scott meant her for the subject of a picturesque tableau,"[85] strangely (or perhaps aptly) enough, the theatricality which is repeatedly associated with her sublimity did not effectively translate to the stage, as critics frequently remarked. Bautz points out that reviews of Terry's production emphasized the impossibility that even an actress of Sara Egerton's caliber could portray "the indefinable being, tinged with melancholy, clothed with fierce grandeur, and breathing prophecy,"[86] which defined their vision of Meg in Scott's novel. Paradoxically, it is Meg's sublime theatricality that renders her so impossible to portray onstage.

Yet despite her haggish and androgynous appearance, Scott's Meg is still markedly maternal both in her fierce protectiveness over Henry and in their profound, unspoken

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[83] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 328. For Nord's discussion of Meg's theatricality, see Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, chap. 1.
[84] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 299.
[85] Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination*, 26.
[86] *The Times*, March 13, 1816, qtd. in Bautz, "The 'universal favorite,'" 53.

emotional connection. Scott emphasizes Henry's powerful affective response upon seeing her: "he could not avoid repeatedly fixing his eyes on Meg Merrilies… At every gesture he made and every tone he uttered she seemed to give an almost imperceptible start. On his part, he was surprised to find that he could not look upon this singular figure without some emotion."[87] The intensity of their shared connection is reflected in the mingling of their perspectives. The narrator makes it clear that Henry "repeatedly fix[es] his eyes on her,"[88] and Meg looks back at him with a "steady gaze."[89] But Henry cannot see her eyes (her face is obscured by a large bonnet), implying that he can read (even feel) her attention based on her bodily rather than facial cues, as she "start[s]" with his "every gesture" and "tone." The intense attunement between the unknown maternal figure and lost child is heightened by Henry's uncertainty that what he imagines to be occurring is indeed taking place, reflected in the trebled qualifiers in the phrase "seemed to almost give an imperceptible start."[90] Wondering whether the woman he sees is a figure from his "dream[s]" or from his past in India, Henry decodes his embodied responses as they bubble up to the threshold of his consciousness. Without specifying which "emotion" he feels in their interactions—perhaps he cannot precisely say—he nevertheless finds the intensity of his unconscious, embodied response surprising.

When Terry alters the foundational relationship between Henry and Meg to that of infant and primary caretaker, he locates Meg even more centrally and intimately in Henry's unconscious childhood memories. In the first scene of the play, Mrs. McCandlish, a local landlady, perhaps suggests that Meg breastfed Henry, describing her as "an old gipsey-

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[87] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 123.
[88] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 123.
[89] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 123.
[90] Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 123.

woman, (that then lived on the estate, and used to nurse the infant)."[91] Lucy confirms this at the end of the play when she begs Colonel Mannering to listen to Meg's pleas that he come to Henry's aid: "Oh, Sir, slight her not! vagrant and gipsey though she is, she nursed my little brother, and was said to doat on him."[92] Though the term "nursed" may not strictly refer to breastfeeding in the early nineteenth century, its invocation at least suggests the possibility that Terry's Meg nurtured and sustained Henry from her own breast. Her maternal connection to Henry is further heightened by the absence of any mention of his mother in the play, apart from the distanced figure of the lullaby. Thus, Terry's Meg operates as an even more resonant maternal figure from Henry Bertram's past, as her shared personal connection to Henry through the lullaby intensifies the emotional import of both the song and their relationship. Lucy's affirmation that Meg sang the song to Henry every night and that, "tho' so young," he could sing it in return, condenses the emotional power of the song over Henry because it is not only a symbol of his family's legacy, but a shared nighttime ritual between himself and his nurse.

As such, during the second performance of the song by a gipsey girl, the audience's attention is especially primed for Henry's reaction: will he remember the song? Meg? Himself? Terry's Henry does not manifest the same uncanny response to the sight of Meg that Scott's protagonist does, initially considering her a fortune-telling stereotype to whom he attempts to give money and ask for his fortune.[93] In contrast, Meg instantly recognizes Henry, determining to "recall times, which [he] had long forgotten" with her "simple

[91] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 1.1.13.
[92] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 3.3.55.
[93] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.

spell":[94] the sound of his true surname and the lullaby. "Hear me, hear me, Henry—Henry Bertram!" she cries, drawing his attention by first uttering his preserved given name, "Henry," then combining it with his long-forgotten surname, "Bertram."[95] With the sound of her voice speaking his name hanging in the air, Meg evokes "the sound of other days"—the lullaby—instructing him to "[l]isten, and let [his] heart awake!"[96] In this context, the lullaby functions in an opposite way to its general intent: rather than lulling, the lullaby is meant to "awake[n]" Henry to his childhood attachments and his latent identity. When Meg asks the gipsey girl to sing "the song I used to sing to the infant Bertram,"[97] the girl only needs to complete the first verse before it evokes the uneasy emotional atmosphere needed to convince Henry that he is not who he thinks he is. "These words, do, indeed, thrill my bosom with strange emotions," he observes, amazed.[98] The song that Colonel Mannering found "beaut[iful]" and "pathetic," sung sadly by Lucy in a refined domestic space, is now characterized in stage directions as "the Air which Lucy sung, but much more wildly,"[99] reflecting the "wild" and "Romantic" atmosphere of the copse in which the reunion between Meg and Henry takes place.[100] This renders the song both strange and familiar to audiences, as Henry himself both is and feels. If long-lost memories re-emerge, they may result in positive eventualities, like restoring the lost heir, but they also may bring more sinister things to the surface.

The strange is strangely familiar as Henry retains an uncanny impression of the lullaby but cannot place it or account for its profound emotional and indeed embodied effect

[94] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[95] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[96] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[97] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[98] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.43.
[99] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.42.
[100] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.38.

on him. “Woman, speak more plainly, and tell me why these sounds thus agitate my inmost soul,—and what ideas they are, that thus darkly throng upon my mind at hearing them.”[101] His description of his emotional turmoil is filled with vague and unarticulated fears: like in the novel, the “sounds” of the song, not its words, affect him most profoundly, and he asks her to give articulate shape to the nebulous “ideas…that darkly throng upon [his] mind.” Meg’s answers Henry’s plea with the prophecy regarding “Bertam’s might,” but this prophecy is not characterized as his ancestral birthright (as it is in the novel) because the lullaby has come to fill this function.[102] Henry in fact seems so disturbed by the lullaby that he does not seem to register her pronouncement, rendering it a moment of revelation shared between Meg and the audience, not herself and Henry. Though hearing the song is not instantly clarifying for Henry, the degree of his unease convinces him that his unconscious familiarity with Meg is telling, enabling him to self-actualize and perhaps fulfill the destiny that the song envisions for him.

Since the gipsey girl’s rendition of Meg’s lullaby conveys only its first verse, there is limited space for variations of wording to occur. However, small changes become significant for understanding the function of the song in the present moment and when Meg sang it to Henry in infancy. “Oh! hark thee, young Henry,”[103] the girl begins the first verse, concluding with the lines, “They all shall belong / My dear Henry to thee.”[104] When Meg shifts the imperative “hush” to “hark,” she changes the song’s objective. In this light, Meg’s song was perhaps never meant simply to quiet the infant Henry so that he might fall asleep; she asks

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[101] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.43.
[102] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.43. Instead, the prophecy is Meg’s impromptu response to Henry’s question, evidence of her status as the supernatural figure of the gipsey seer.
[103] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.43.
[104] Terry, *Guy Mannering*, 2.3.43.

for his attention because she wants him to hear and retain her message regarding his future and that of his estate. Meg's lullaby reinforces its protective aim: not satisfied with merely naming threats to the infant, she incorporates into the song the sensory impressions that will safeguard him from fully forgetting who he is.

Both versions of the lullaby impress the heir with ideas about his future social, political, and martial power, but Meg's version emphasizes the importance of heeding the nurse's voice as the source of his latent identity. It also places the infant and the nurse on more even terrain despite the power imbalance inherent in their gender, age, and class differences. The nurse does not simply impose her will on the child by hushing him and by naming him "Henry," she reinforces a picture of the warmth and intimacy of their bond. Though the nurse does not share in the power that the infant will wield in manhood as a mother would, she delights in sharing with him the knowledge of his future inheritance. In this version, the lullaby functions as a personalized, implanted memory, hidden in his infant unconscious, forming Henry's unconscious ideas about himself, his inheritance, and the external forces that threaten him even through the present. But it is important to note that Meg's "gipsey" version of the lullaby is only a slight adaptation of its ancient form and that, like the cyclical natural process of night and day, the Ellangowan heir will continue through generations to struggle to protect his possessions. His infant seat of power, while celebrated and reinforced through the song, is always precarious. Meg's lullaby suggests that violent struggle is as fundamental a part of manhood as is possession and that it is a fight without resolution or lasting reprieve. The nurse reassures the heir that daylight will come; he can give into sleep because he will wake, morning after morning, into manhood, and that sleep and childhood are the only respites that life offers. From his vulnerable infancy in the arms of

a working-class woman, Henry is formed to assume the martial masculinity that comes with his immense inherited social privilege.

Though shaken after hearing Meg's lullaby, a scene which occurs about midway through the play, Henry still cannot place Meg, despite her very striking face, figure, and manner. Perhaps this is due to Meg's decision to have a "gipsey" girl sing the Bertram lullaby on her behalf, in which case Henry hears a familiar song through an unknown voice. Despite the significance of this moment in the play, Terry's Meg never explains her motives for not herself singing the lullaby to Henry once again (Bautz notes that Meg and Colonel Mannering are the only two main characters who do not sing).[105] Terry's decision not to stage this reprise of the nurse-infant scene of intimacy between Meg and Henry suggests that, while the songs of childhood past may haunt the present, they will never recur as they once did. Perhaps this is best; the lullaby shared by an adult man and cronish woman might not strike the same note of pathos that the image of the loving nurse and child might. By refusing to stage such a reenactment of Henry and Meg's song, Terry's play allows their genuine love and affection, imagined from the past, to remain their own. Instead, the noted youth of the singing actress (she is described as a gipsey "girl") suggests that a childlike voice presents Henry with an echo not of Meg Merrilies but of his repressed childhood self, singing the lullaby back to his beloved nurse. At the same time, it underscores the significance of Meg's role in Henry's infancy in that her call for the girl to sing "the song I used to sing to the infant Bertram," requires no other explanation and direction. Not only does the gipsey girl know the song by heart, but she knows it was the song Meg and Henry sang together.

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[105] Bautz, "The 'universal favourite,'" 47.

Scott revises and re-names a version of this poem "Lullaby of an Infant Chief" in his collected poetical works of 1821,[106] where it takes the shape in its final and most enduring form.[107] This version of the poem offers two changes worthwhile for examining the relationship between the lullaby form and the conferral of masculine inheritance. Scott's final lullaby envisions the infant as an orphan under the care of his nurse and various guardsmen: his father "was a knight" and his mother "was a lady" (1, 2), implying their absence. In this way, the now-fully anonymous nurse takes on a more significant role as not just the primary, but seemingly the only, loving caretaker in the infant chief's world, making him even more dependent on her care as she shapes his understanding of the world. Scott's new middle stanza increases the immediacy of threats to the infant's life, where violence is present rather than offset to the future.

> O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
>
> It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
>
> Their bows would be bended their blades would be red,
>
> Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
>
> (7-10)

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[106] Scott, "Lullaby of an Infant Chief," in *The Poetical Works of Walter Scott. Vol. V. Ballads and Miscellaneous Pieces* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1821), 270. All lines from this poem, cited parenthetically hereafter, are from this edition.

[107] Scott changes the tune of "Lullaby to an Infant Chief" to "a melody somewhat different from the original," "*Cadil gu lo*," a traditional Celtic lullaby and refrain Scott translates as meaning "[s]leep on till day" (Scott, "Lullaby of an Infant Chief," 270). His decision to change the melody serves two ends: first, despite Scott's acknowledgment of Terry's play in the poem's footnote, it further divorces the poem from its roots as a dramatic device by framing it as a self-contained work. Second, the incorporation of a traditional Celtic tune reinforces the text as an antiquarian hybrid of past and present, marrying Scott's original words to an ancient melody and antiquated imagery, a change which lends the lullaby the romantic air of bardic authenticity; an antiquarian agenda which, as Michael C. Gamer has argued, is significant to Scott's drive to reinscribe his work within the domain of "masculine antiquarian history" ("Marketing a Masculine Romance: Scott, Antiquarianism, and the Gothic," *Studies in Romanticism* 32, no. 4 [1993]: 523-49, 524.)

The nurse's emphasis on those who might attempt to murder him and those who would die to stop them indicates the child's importance to the realm now as well as in the future. By describing the child as an "Infant Chief," Scott at once elevates the infant's social position and situates him in Scotland's tribal past. Unlike Henry Bertram, who scuffles with his enemies but ultimately submits them to the rule of modern law, the infant chief inhabits a medieval world where the laws of inheritance mean that killing a politically significant child could be brutally advantageous.

This version of Scott's lullaby has been reprinted in collections of lullabies, children's poetry and literature anthologies, and reading and recitation primers throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.[108] Its wide dissemination suggests that, like Henry, Meg, Lucy and the gipsey girl of Terry's play, adults and children alike could continue to memorize, sing, and be enchanted by Scott's lullaby, rendering it enduring in a way that Terry's play was not. Bolton raises an interesting point when musing over the fate *Guy Mannering*. "Given the great popularity of the characters and themes of *Guy Mannering* on the nineteenth-century popular stage, it is a remarkable demonstration of the radical alteration of taste that this novel has never… inspired a film or television adaptation, and has only been adapted for a radio drama once by the Scottish Home Service in 1948."[109] What has remained popular is not Terry's play, but Scott's lullaby because it encapsulates, in short, sentimental, and resonant form, the nostalgic masculine national fantasy on which Scott's works often capitalize.

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[108] See, for example, *Lullabies and Poems for Children*, edited by Diana Secker Larson (New York: Everyman's Library, 2002); *The Lullaby Book; or, Mother's Love Songs*, compiled and arranged by Annie Blanche Shelby (New York: Duffield and Co., 1921); *Granger's Index to Poetry and Recitations* […], edited by Edith Granger, A. B. (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1918).

[109] Bolton, *Scott Dramatized*, 58.

"For a song and for a charm"

Traipsing through Scottish hills in the summer of 1818, Keats imagined Scott's old nurse amidst the wild and intractable setting. Referring to the region as "Meg Merrilies country" in letters to his brother Tom and sister Fanny,[110] he even finds himself inspired to compose a short ballad-like poem about the old gipsey, "of whom I suppose you have heard."[111] Later that year Keats became a "singer" of lullabies himself in the letter to George and Georgiana which opened this chapter. The young couple had recently moved to Kentucky to make their fortune and imagining them in boundless young nation seems to provide rich raw material for Keats's reflections on poetic inheritance. As poet, Keats dons the maternal trappings of nurse so he might form this child to assume his masculine—in this case, poetic—inheritance. For Keats, the lullaby literally is a mediating vehicle: navigating the gendered spaces of poetry and nursery, it embodies the magical charms of poetry suited to infant ears.

The infant poet Keats sings into being is, he imagines, the figure of cultural salvation that America desperately needs. In his letter, Keats explains that American culture requires this (that is, his) direct intervention because it has been tainted by a repulsive commercialism, part of what Denise Gigante terms the "prosaic American spirit."[112] Opinions on this matter

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[110] John Keats to Fanny Keats, July 2, 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 309.
[111] John Keats to Fanny Keats, July 2, 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 309; see also, John Keats to Tom Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 310. Keats had not read Scott's novel (nor does it seem he had seen Terry's play), and his Meg does not sing lullabies or care for children, but rather, much like an outcast from *Lyrical Ballads*, lives "alone with her great family" of "larchen trees" and "craggy hills" (10, 9) (Keats, "Meg Merrilies," in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 243).
[112] Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 144.

varied among his intellectual coterie,[113] but Keats understood America's heroic mythology to be symptomatic of its stunted moral imagination.

> Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectibility Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off — I differ there with him greatly — A country like the United States, whose greatest Men are Franklins and Washingtons will never do that. They are great Men doubtless, but how are they to be compared to those our countrymen Milton and the two Sidneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims, the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Americans are great but they are not sublime Men — the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime.[114]

Keats measures the chasm between American "great[ness]" and English "sublim[ity]" in terms of each country's political heroes. Franklin is no philosopher but a "philosophical Quaker," Keats's sardonic phrase caricaturing Franklin's proverbial profundity by emphasizing its commercial bent. His "mean and thrifty maxims" do not enlighten or ennoble readers, but teach them how better to pinch pennies; his works are not timeless meditations, but cheap self-help manuals. Washington, the fabled stoic general, has sold his credibility along with his faithful and courageous steed, his battle companion and brother-in-arms. No knight of Camelot *redivivus,* Washington's unsentimental money-grubbing is not merely mundane, it is sacrilegious. Unlike Sidney and Milton, "politicians with poetry in their

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[113] For more on how Keats, Leigh Hunt, and other Romantic contemporaries (dis)regarded the American literary imagination, see Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 143-46.
[114] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters,* 332.

souls,"[115] these so-called American revolutionaries do not possess the imaginative capacity that both is evidence of, and fosters, empathetic and natural affection in the form of honor and duty. For this reason, America is doomed to "never reach the sublime" because the political sensibilities of its heroes are not anchored in literary principles. Its politicians may not be corrupt, but they are compromised; they are not immoral, but they lack the imagination that would give their morality depth, resonance, and vitality.

Within this context of America's cultural impoverishment, Keats offers his brother and sister-in-law his playful and intriguing proposition that "one of your children should be the first American Poet." Their British roots, and undoubtedly their exchanges with himself, predispose George and Georgiana to be agents of great cultural change, capable of redeeming the narrow-minded, philistine Americans. "[Y]ou must endeavour to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the Settlement," Keats charges, "always with great caution, for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you may imagine."[116] With the nation still in its infancy, the Keatses would be nurse-like, "infus[ing]" American culture with a superior (and notably, foreign) "Spirit of another sort" by their own means as well as through the lullaby Keats offers them. Keats playfully enjoins George and Georgiana to act with "great caution," but his warning highlights the stakes of his proposal. To tamper with the ideas and ideals of the young is to enact change that will reverberate into the future population of America. However, administered correctly, the outcome would answer Keats's "prayer," a figuration that reflects the sanctity of his desire. As he states, this would be a miracle ranking only below that of saving his doomed younger brother, Tom.

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[115] Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 144. Gigante links this idea to one similarly expressed by Leigh Hunt, "that the Americans were Englishman with the poetry and romance taken out of them."
[116] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters,* 332.

Keats's tone in the formulation of "the first American Poet" suggests his complex feelings about this possibility, especially in relation to his previous declaration about his own literary status. On the one hand, he positions himself, along with his brother and sister-in-law, as British spiritual guardians of the child who represents America's cultural salvation. Because of its infant (perhaps even fetal) malleability, he and they can form the child from the beginning of its existence, and through poetry, to achieve its literary destiny—also, poetry. In this way, Keats acknowledges the radical potential of poetry, and specifically the lullaby, to form not only this infant but also American culture, also in its infancy. Keats's feelings about this outcome are not unalloyed for many reasons; as Gigante points out, he had reservations about his brother's entrepreneurial bent, which more closely reflected the American spirit he maligns than his own lofty artistic aspirations.[117] In this regard, the lullaby implicitly resists not only American culture but also potentially the child's father, whom Keats circumvents by speaking through the voice of the poet-nurse. Another site of Keats's ambivalence is reflected in the similar phrasing he uses to imagine each of their destinies: himself as "among the English Poets," and the child as "the first American Poet." Though England is undeniably America's cultural superior, Keats nevertheless finds himself one "among" many. The American stage is not nearly as crowded,[118] evidencing some of Keats's anxiety about being upstaged by his imagined peerless protégé. Ultimately he resolves the

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[117] Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 144.

[118] Gigante traces the progress of Keats's lullaby letter through the American frontier, stating that it caused American poet John Howard Payne "grief and humiliation." Payne wrote in reflection, "The writer does not seem to have known that we have had, and then possessed, many poets in America." Gigante elucidates, "…Payne suspected that what John meant by 'the first' was the '*greatest*.' Despite the 'obnoxious' remark that prefaced it, he greatly admired the lullaby-like prophecy of the little child of the Western Wild" (Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 145). Unfortunately for Payne, it seems unlikely that his optimism was justified. Keats wrote later that year of seeing one of his plays: "We went the other evening to see Brutus a new Tragedy by Howard Payne, an American—Kean was excellent—the play was very bad" (John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, December 24, 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 340). George, it seems, did not show Payne this letter.

situation by positioning himself as a poet-creator consciously conferring his powers on the imagined child. (As he teases Georgiana in a later letter, "I have a lively faith that yours is the very gem of all children. Ain't I its Unkle?"[119])

Keats does not direct the lullaby-prophecy to his brother's "son," but rather to "one of your Children"; likewise, the infant's gender is unspecified in the lullaby. However, the conclusion of Keats's letter makes it difficult to see ambiguity as an implied statement of gender equality: "I hope you will have a Son, and it is one of my first wishes to have him in my Arms — which I will do please God before he cuts one double tooth."[120] Though he frames the first clause of his sentence as a "hope," he subsequently genders the child male, and the placement of this sentence after the lullaby and near the letter's closing, as he wishes Georgiana peace and health in her pregnancy, seals the sentiment with a sense of finality. Furthermore, in a letter from December 24, 1818, he also inquires about the expected child by using ambiguous gender pronouns: "Will the little bairn have made his entrance before you have this? Kiss it for me, and when it can first know a Cheese from a caterpillar show it my picture twice a week."[121] His shiftiness in this respect demonstrates an openness or unwillingness to fully commit to figuring the child as male. At the same time, his preference seems clear.

It is likewise thorny (and perhaps disingenuous) to ignore Keats's explicit preference for a nephew in light of the other misogynistic comments he makes elsewhere in this letter. Responding to his brother and sister-in-law's inquiries about his disposition to marry, he expresses his famous "opinion" on "the generality of women — who appear to me as

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[119] Gigante, *The Keats Brothers*, 327.
[120] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 335.
[121] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, December 24, 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 340.

children to whom I would rather give a sugar Plum than my time."[122] Keats thinks that a wife and children would be intrusions upon the "sublim[ity]" he finds in solitude,[123] the antithesis and a direct impediment to his solitary genius. The poet needs solitude because his porous boundaries dispose him towards "giv[ing] into [others'] feelings as though I were refraining from irritating a little child."[124] While this porosity may be useful to poetic composition, it renders his social relationships (especially those with women and children, who are both childish and demanding) exasperating and cumbersome. "Pleasure in solitude" makes Keats feel empowered as a man;[125] in contrast, "commerce with the world" turns him into "a child."[126] Even social interactions with his "most intimate acquaintance" register as transactional and impersonal, making him feel helpless and hapless.[127] His comments here imply that poetry is a distinctly a mature masculine domain, a man speaking (as it were) to men. Homans points out that Keats often figures poetry as a woman to be courted and he the male suitor,[128] and recounts a conversation where Keats insisted that he "wrote for men."[129] "Keats," she writes, "equates his imaginative project… with male sexual potency but also with the masculine appropriation of the feminine."[130] Wolfson cautions against taking a

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[122] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 335.
[123] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 334.
[124] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 335.
[125] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 334
[126] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 334.
[127] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 334.
[128] Margaret Homans, "Keats Reading Women, Women Reading Keats," *Studies in Romanticism* 29, no. 3 (1990): 341-70, 343.
[129] Homans, "Keats Reading Women," 347. Later in her article, Homans offers the full context of this conversation with Richard Woodhouse, which was aroused by comments about Byron's female readership, the modesty of "ladies," and the "sexual boldness" of Keats's revisions to *The Eve of St. Agnes* ("Keats Reading Women," 361-64).
[130] Homans, "Keats Reading Women," 344. She adds that the stakes of Keats's desire to "assert his own masculine authority" over both "real and imagined women" follows a common narrative within the Western literary tradition: "By invoking an exclusively male readership, by writing only for men, he makes of his poetry a masculine preserve, and in so doing he elects himself a member of the male club that poets in the classical

simplistic or comprehensive view of Keats's ideas about gender generally: "Keats expresses divided investments—by turns, speculative, anxious, risky—in a variety of masculinities and their proximity to a 'feminine' differential. About women, he is (also by turns) adoring, sympathetic, defensive, and hostile, especially about their claims as readers, writers, and social arbiters over his personal and professional self-definition."[131] Wolfson's "especially" is telling; while Keats's attitude about women and femininity is far from black and white, the convergence of women with his professional domain often seems triggering. Elsewhere in his lullaby letter Keats insists to Georgiana that poetry, not marriage, is his vocation.

> The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness — an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate as a part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart.[132]

Even an idealized vision of domestic bliss offers Keats only a fragment of poetry's pleasure. Homans comments on this passage, "Although he declares that it is his idea of Beauty that would stifle 'domestic happiness,' his hyperbole suggests his fear that it is rather the idea of real sympathy in domestic life with a woman that threatens his power as a poet."[133] The "amiable wife and sweet Children" are unsatisfying, and the "sugar plum" woman-child and "irrit[able]" children are downright obnoxious. Such expressions of indifference (if not disdain) for both women and children color Keats's lullaby with marked ambivalence

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tradition, and especially the high romantics, have always claimed literature to be, but which it is not" (Homans, "Keats Reading Women," 368).

[131] Susan Wolfson, "Keats and the Manhood of the Poet," *European Romantic Review* 6, no. 1 (1995): 1-37, 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/10509589508569998. See also Wolfson, *Borderlines: The Shiftings of Gender in British Romanticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), chaps. 7-8.

[132] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818, in *Complete Poems and Letters*, 334.

[133] Homans, "Keats Reading Women," 346.

(though it should be noted that his letters often reflect a playful and attentive uncle). The strength of his attachment, it seems, requires distance so that the scenes of domestic happiness he writes both for and about can remain imaginary, unvarnished. It also means that the poet-child should be a boy, and that this boy must quickly become a "man"—that is, a Poet. It is with this context in mind that we can consider how the poetic inheritance Keats seeks to bestow on the child through his lullaby is distinctly masculine.

Keats opens his lullaby not by addressing the infant but preparing the natural world for the arrival of the not-yet infant, as "the Rushes that will make / Its cradle still are in the lake." (18-19). The rhyme of "make" and "lake" call attention to poet's backwards movement in time from the endpoint (the infant's cradle) to its origins (the rushes, not even yet gathered). The poet can thus sing into being that which will be—both cradle and child—demonstrating the power of his vision and words. The raw materials he invokes are simultaneously his audience and the elements from which the child's material comforts will soon be created. "Rushes" (18) "cotton" (21) and "wo[ol]" (22), still exist in nature as sites of potential, awaiting the arrival of the infant so they may fulfill their destiny as his "cradle" (19), "swathe" (21), and "warm[th]" (23). Nature awaits its cue from the poet before actualizing its potential in the infant's service. Thus, even before its birth, the child is received into nature because the poet has, oddly, prepared Nature for the child. He does so by identifying its various components as resources for the child's consumption: though nature's existence precedes the child's, the poet's lullaby frames it as always-already part of the child's dominion. By naming these aspects of nature as part of the child's future property, the poet acts as prophet, predicting the child's future and thereby creating the illusion of control over it. Despite his distance from the child, both in space (across the Atlantic Ocean) and

time (into the future), the poet writes himself into the child's future as the mediator between the infant and the rich and raw materials of nature and poetry.

In response, Nature must tune into his song. The poet repeats his entreaties that it "listen" (4, 5, 15), "hear" (9), and "hearken" (11, 12), depicting Nature as actively listening and emotionally responding to him "for a song and for a charm" (6). By separating "song" from "charm," the poet illustrates that the "song" is the cause whose effect is a "charm," much like the lullaby, which magically disposes the infant to sleep. The poet asks for hearkening from various celestial bodies—the "Stars" (3, 11), "Moon" (3, 8), "eternal Sky" (12), and "Spheres" (11)—embodying them by depicting their sensory perception, creating a receptive audience for his song. "And the Stars they glisten, glisten" (3), he writes, "Seeming with bright eyes to listen" (4). The "glisten[ing]" of the stars' "bright eyes" reveals a mental and emotional activity behind their "listen[ing]," a connection reinforced by the perfect rhyme between the lines. They seem to sparkle with interest and vitality, like the eyes of an attentive child, an interest that builds to an almost unbearable intensity in the heightened repetition of the later refrain, "Listen, listen, listen, listen / Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten" (15-16). In its position as the auditor of the poet's song—indeed, through its desire to listen to the song—Nature is the infant's precursor. Nature inherits the song before the child can; the child will inherit the naturalized song in his turn, displacing it through his own mastery. Once the child is born, the song will be his, making it as much a part of his inheritance as Nature will be.

The affective responses of these various celestial bodies are more ambivalent than the first six lines of the poem suggest, signaling that the arrival of the child is not a purely joyous occasion. This unease is introduced by the unexpected rhyme of "charm" and "alarm" (6, 7),

as if the celestial bodies overlooking the natural world (soon to be the property of the child) worry about the kinds of power the child will wield. The quiet natural scene of the poem is doubled; perhaps both child and lullaby are not as idealized as they at first seem. The image of the moon "wax[ing] warm" evokes the felt-glow of feelings like love and security (8), but also perhaps suggests the flush of panic or anxiety. The "alarm" of the stars might be their own affective response to the narrative unfolding on Earth (7), or their wordless way of telegraphing that danger to the rest of nature—sounding the "alarm," as it were, to the dangerous authority and power the child will wield. In this light, the poet's repetitive insistence that these bodies "listen," "hear," and "hearken" suggests that he is forcibly imposing his own will on them, that it is more command than request. Nature will be called forth to give up its materials to provide for the infant, and the poetic project of the little bard is inevitably tied to conquering nature. As implied in the moniker "Little child / O' the Western wild" (49-50), the child's identity as a poet is defined by his environment, both his emergence from and dominion over it. After all, the role of American poet—emphatically a poet of the western wild—had, in Keats's view, never been fulfilled. This enculturing of America, both on the "wild" frontier and in the literary sphere, is, like the rapid project of western expansion, one of power and (the threat of) violence.

The child's sudden emergence almost halfway through the lullaby, focalizes the energetic charge of the environment in the voice of the poet as he exclaims, "Child! I see thee! Child I've found thee" (27)! That this moment of discovery is mediated through the poet's naming him (he does not first describe the child, but names/addresses him), creates the impression that the child has sprung, fully formed, from the poet's mind. Furthermore, his insistence on his own role in this narrative ("I see thee," "I've found thee") reinforces the

poet's own control of the powerful infant poet his song seeks to create. By placing himself in the subject-position, he reinforces the narrative that his machinations will set into motion the actualization of the infant poet. Moreover, he bestows on himself the power to declare the child not only a "poet evermore" (32), but a "[c]hild no more" (31). In so doing, he determines that the categories of "child" and "poet" are mutually exclusive. The infant's status as poet is not natural or in-born, but neither is it predicated on the child's poetic production. It is, instead, through the direct intervention of the poet who, through song, confers this title and its attendant powers on the resting child. He creates the poet, but also negates the child.

The "Infant's lullaby" that focused on preparing nature for the child's arrival then focuses entirely on the child himself (13), leaving the celestial bodies outside as it enters the interior domestic scene of mother and infant. Inside, we see that prophecy has been fulfilled: along with the child as cradled and swaddled, nature has been domesticated as it fulfills its purpose as the infant's comforting possessions. Even the celestial fire has been domesticated, transposed from the heavens into the home as the elemental power on which the child's self-realization depends. The poet insists that the fire holds the key to unlocking the child's poetic identity: "See, See the Lyre, the lyre, / In a flame of fire / Upon the little cradle's top / Flaring, flaring flaring" (33-36). Hovering over the infant's cradle, it marks him as the poet's apostle, but this sign is not itself enough; action is required, and poet gives the child his first task in his quest for self-actualization. The child must "see if it can keep / Its eyes upon the blaze" (39-40), while the poet directs his attention to the lyre which he must seize for a song of his own making. The poet's frantically repetitive rhymes emphasize the tension building as the spectator watching the scene wonders whether the child will act.

It stares, it stares, it stares

It dares what no one dares

It lifts its little hand into the flame

Unharm'd, and on the strings

Paddles a little tune and sings

With dumb endeavour sweetly!

(42-47)

The poet does not link concretely either child, spectator, or himself to the feelings of "amaze[ment]" he describes. The suspended verb effectively links the child with the fire itself; just as the child is amazed by the "blaze" of the fire, the spectator and poet alike are amazed at the scene playing out before them, of the prodigy poet child who "dares what no one"—including the poet— "dares."

The poet imagines the infant's poetic power confirmed, paradoxically, before the child acquires the powers of language. Although the child can "[p]addle a little tune," his "sweet" "sing[ing]" is a "dumb endeavour." The infant's skill is confirmed not through its mastery of poetic language (as the infant cannot yet speak), but through music and feeling. The latter are not promises of a skill to come but the fulfillment of the poet's initial vision. "Bard art thou completely!" he rapturously exclaims (51). Other than infant and poet, the only other human figure acknowledged in the lullaby is the child's "sweet" mother, whom the poet envisions as "nigh" (30). Both her proximity and her sweetness create a scene of security, one in which the child can take risks, play, and thereby become a poet. In the parlance of John Bowlby, she provides his secure base from which he can explore the

world.[134] The poet figures the mother in relation to the child, never specifically addressing her, but rather speaking to the child about "thy mother." Perhaps she is the one who begins the process of the child's transformation by rousing the child to consciousness—the syntax of the lines is renders it ambiguous whether it is the mother, the fire, or his song whom the poet orders to "awake [the infant] from its sleep" (38). Apart from this possibility, she remains a tangential figure, with the child more explicitly connected to the mind of the poet. She is there merely to convey an atmosphere of loving adoration, fleshing out the scene of domestic tranquility in which the child will become the ideal American poet. The child's actual powers, meanwhile, are the domain of Keats's poet-nurse alone.

In both Keats's and Scott's lullabies, the poet envisions the male infant as the recipient of masculine political or poetic authority. By singing a lullaby and thereby acting as a nurse figure, the poet uses the articulated lullaby to speak to the infant while also relegating the mother to a peripheral role in the child's formation. In Scott's lullaby, she is a mere reference point for the nurse who traces the child's origins, a comforting presence who remains on the margins of his identity. In Keats's lullaby, the mother is likewise relegated to a symbolic role, perhaps even more starkly because the power of his song is imagined as immediate, and his presence as the nurse-poet is even more removed. This articulation distinguishes these lullabies from other indirect depictions of mother-infant lulling in Romantic poetry, just as their form as lullabies distinguishes them from paternal lyrical addresses to sleeping infants; for instance, Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" and John Thelwall's "To the Infant Hampden" (1797). In this way, Keats and Scott mobilize the seemingly magical powers of the lullaby to form male infant consciousness. However, their

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[134] John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (London: Routledge, 1988), 11.

preoccupation with the dangers surrounding the infant, as well as the elegiac undertones that scholars of the lullaby frequently associate with the form, lends their theme of infant sleep an ominous undertone. In "Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples" (1818), following the death of his infant Clara (who would in turn be followed into the grave by her brother, William), Percy Shelley imagines his own death as infant sleep: "I could lie down like a tired child, / And weep away the life of care / Which I have borne and yet must bear."[135] Shelley's link between the sleeping infant child and the specter of death addresses issues of mourning and identification in the Shelleys' work on the infant that will be explored in the following chapter.

[135] Percy Shelley, "Stanzas Written in Dejection at Naples," lines 30-32. In Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Poems of Shelley*, vol. 2, edited by Kelvin Everest and Geoffrey Matthews (Essex: Pearson Publication Limited, 2000), 447-451, lines 30-32.

Chapter 4:

"One"/ "We": Mourning the Shelleys' infant companion(s)

After fifteen years spent collecting, copying, and editing her husband's profuse and scattered work, Mary Shelley published the first complete edition of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poems in 1839. In this volume were a few whole and fragmentary verses addressed to their son William, who died at three years old in 1819 after a short and feverish struggle with malaria. "The hopes of my life are bound up in him,"[1] Mary wrote to a friend during William's illness; after his death, though pregnant with Percy Florence (her only child who would survive to adulthood),[2] she describes herself as "childless & forever miserable."[3] Though she left several of Percy's fragments unnamed, one she titled "To William Shelley" poignantly expresses the couple's shared grief, recalling the child's "mingled look of love and glee / When we returned to gaze on thee."[4] In the aftermath of William's death, the "little footsteps on the sands" now seemed to lead only to the grave.[5] William had been preceded in death only a few months earlier by his younger sister, Clara, and Percy would follow in 1822. Mary would have eagerly embraced death alongside her eldest child, writing with bitter regret to Leigh Hunt, "The world will never be to me again as it was…in fact I ought to have

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[1] Mary Shelley to Maria Gisborne, Rome, June 5, 1819, in *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* vol. 1, edited by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 99.
[2] That, in 1822, Mary would write, "My little Percy is well—not so beautiful as William—though there is some resemblance" (Mary Shelley to Amelia Curran, Pisa, July 26, 1822, in *Letters*, 241), indicates that Mary measured her surviving son by the standard of the one she lost.
[3] Mary Shelley to Marianne Hunt, Leghorn, June 29, 1819, in *Letters*, 101.
[4] Percy Shelley, "To William Shelley" ("Thy little footsteps on the sands"), in *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 4, edited by Mrs. Shelley (London: E. Moxon, 1839), 182, lines 5-6. In order to avoid confusion, I will cite the printed version of this poem in the footnotes, and lines from the manuscript parenthetically (citation information for the manuscript will appear when the manuscript is first referred to).
[5] Percy Shelley, "To William Shelley" ("Thy little footsteps on the sands"), line 1.

died on the 7th of June last—."[6] Like Percy, William would haunt her to the end of her life: Lady Shelley reflected in 1851, "[She] never got over that child's death...and even spoke of him just before her [own] death."[7]

William was the particular object of Mary's intense attachment because she saw him not just as her child but also as a "companion" to herself and to Percy.[8] As the Shelleys' infant companion, William shared in and was formed in relation to the pair's unconventional roving family life; he provided Mary with friendship and camaraderie and she delighted in seeing the world through his infant eyes. In the months prior to his death, Mary writes with pleasure of his joy in Rome—a city she would always afterward associate with his memory as well as his loss: "He speaks more Italian than English—when he sees anything he likes he cries O Dio che bella—."[9] While the boy lived, Percy depicted him as a source of great potential whose "growing spirit" Percy might "mould" into a fellow "patriot."[10] Percy wrote two poems explicitly to William after the boy's death, both of which were published in Mary's 1839 Moxon collection of Percy's poetical works. The longer poem "To William Shelley" ("My lost William, thou in whom") acknowledges Shelley's grief, seeking comfort in imagining the dead William's heightened state of infant potentiality.[11] The shorter fragment "To William" ("Thy little footsteps on the sands"), partially quoted above,

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[6] Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt, Leghorn, September 24, 1819, in *Letters*, 108.
[7] Stephen Hebron and Elizabeth C. Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2010), 56.
[8] Mary Shelley, "The Choice," line 70. All references to this poem come from *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844,* Vol. 2: 1822–1844, edited by Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Oxford Scholarly Editions Online, 2015), 490-94. All references to lines in this poem, cited parenthetically hereafter, are from this edition.
[9] Mary Shelley to Marianne Hunt, March 12, 1819, in *Letters*, 89.
[10] Percy Shelley, "The billows on the beach are leaping around it," in *The Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, edited by Kelvin Everest and Geoffrey Matthews (London: Longman, 1989), 579-581, lines 49-50, 52. All references to lines in this poem, which are taken from this edition, will be cited parenthetically hereafter.
[11] Percy Shelley, "To William Shelley" ("My Lost William, thou in whom), in *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 194. All references to lines in this poem, which are taken from this edition, will be cited parenthetically hereafter.

remembers the living boy; while its incomplete form offers little context for the intimate family moment it depicts, it nevertheless emphasizes the integrality of William to their family unit and their travels.

> Thy little footsteps on the sands
> Of a remote and lonely shore;
> The twinkling of thine infant hands
> Where now the worm will feed no more;
> Thy mingled look of love and glee
> When we returned to gaze on thee.[12]

The length and circumstances of the separation preceding this reunion, the location of the "remote and lonely shore," and the strange and striking image of the infant's "twinkling hands" render the poem as elusive as it is poignant. Also heightening its sense of foreignness and alienation is the poem's fragmentary form, which conveys the brevity of the child's life and the transience of the Shelleys' family happiness. By declaring this fragment "To William," Mary crystalizes it as an outpouring of Percy's grief over their infant companion, a glimpse of a moment from a life together now lost.

However, after decades of accepting Mary Shelley's title without question, critics began questioning whether the "little footsteps in the sand" belonged to William Shelley, as it seemed they might be those of a more (in)famous Romantic infant: Mary's illegitimate older half-sister, Fanny Imlay.[13] Like William, Fanny was her mother's infant companion,

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[12] Percy Shelley, "Thy little footsteps on the sands," in *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, lines 1-6.
[13] See G.M. Matthews, "Whose Little Footsteps? Three Shelley Poems Re-addressed," in *The Evidence of the Imagination: Studies of Interactions Between Life and Art in English Romantic Literature*, edited by Donald H. Reiman, Michael C. Jaye, and Betty T. Bennett (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 254-60; echoed

accompanying Mary Wollstonecraft from France to England and Scandinavia. When in 1796 Wollstonecraft published her much-loved *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, she offered a tender portrayal of her 13-month old "little cherub."[14] Re-examining "Thy little footsteps in the sands" in 1978, G.M. Matthews deduced that "William" was likely Fanny for two reasons: first, the fragment resides on the same manuscript page as "Her voice did quiver as we parted," a poem widely accepted to depict Shelley's last encounter with Fanny before her suicide in 1816 and which Mary herself designated in his collected works "On F.G[odwin]."[15] Second, as Matthews observed, Percy directly transplants language and imagery about the embodied maternal experience of infant love and longing from Wollstonecraft's *Letters* and *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman*, texts autobiographically (in)formed by Wollstonecraft's experience with her own child.

In light of this compelling evidence, Percy's six-line poem and these two intertwined infant companions, William and Fanny, raise several important questions about the figure of the infant in Mary's and Percy's works. Why in this poem did Mary substitute one dead baby for another, and what effect does this have on our understanding of this text in relation to both Percy's and Mary's other texts on infants, dead or alive? Why does the body of the dead infant create such anxiety about naming (and thus claiming) it or, conversely, the failure to do so? What is at stake when representing the beloved (dead) infant in literary works? And

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also in Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens: Fanny Wollstonecraft and the Shelley Circle* (Sydney: Bloomsbury Reader, 2013), chap. 33.

[14] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (London: J. Johnson, 1796), 127.

[15] See G.M. Matthews, "Whose little footsteps?," 257; Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chapter 33; James Bieri, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Biography: Exile of Unfulfilled Renown, 1816-1822* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 15-16.

finally, what do these questions reveal about the Shelleys' converging and diverging thoughts about parental attachment, memory and mourning, writing and responsibility?[16]

The tangled history behind the fragment "To William" demonstrates effectively the complex forces at work in the Shelleys' texts on infancy and parenthood, especially texts that represent or are informed by the actual children in their lives. As such the claims of this chapter must be separated into two different, though interwoven, argumentative strands. The first concerns how Percy and Mary consider parental love, mourning, and the stakes of representing the (dead) infant. Critics have long associated Percy's representations of children with unsubstantiated potentiality and vitality.[17] While Percy highly valued children for this characteristic, accentuating it makes his infant seem more symbolic or ideational than real and personal. The Shelleys' grief in the wake of William's death shows how greatly they differed in characterizing the(ir) child: the same period during which Percy penned the lines, "The babe is at peace in the womb / The corpse is at rest in the tomb,"[18] Mary reflected on herself as "childless… for 5 hateful months."[19] Percy mourns his infant quite differently from his wife, imagining death as not foreclosing but heightening infant potentiality. However, if Percy is wont to figure the infant as a bundle of potential, then infants are in danger of being in some sense interchangeable or replaceable, valued for the transformative imaginative

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[16] Both Esther Schor and Laurence Lerner have underscored the importance of Princess Charlotte's 1817 death in childbirth to the early nineteenth century British cultural imagination—a topic upon which Percy famously scorned. See Esther Schor, "A Nation's Sorrows, A People's Tears: The Politics of Mourning Princess Charlotte," in *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 196-229, and Laurence Lerner, *Angels and Absences: Child Deaths in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville and London: Vanderbilt University Press, 1997), introduction,

[17] See Julie Carlson's discussion of the potentiality Percy associated with infants, the elemental imagination, and death; Julie Carlson, "Like Love: Shelley's Similes," in *Romanticism and the Emotions,* edited by Joe Faflak and Richard C. Sha (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 81-85.

[18] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The babe is at peace in the womb," in *The Poems of Shelley*, vol. 2, 711, lines 1-2. Percy would unmake and re-make these lines in "The Cloud": "Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb, / I arise and unbuild it again," in *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 239-242, lines 71-72.

[19] Mary Shelley to Marianne Hunt, Florence, November 25, 1819, in *Letters*, 114.

power that they represent rather than as uniquely individuated beings. William Godwin touches on the interchangeability of the infant in his notoriously callous letter to Mary following William's death: "[Y]ou have lost a child; and all the rest of the world, all that is beautiful, and all that has a claim upon your kindness, is nothing, because a child of three years old is dead!"[20] Literary representation further amplifies this apprehension because the infant is left vulnerable to appropriation by readers (or editors), compromising his or her singularity, as Mary's appropriation of Percy's infant Fanny demonstrates. If Percy's characterization of the infant is largely concerned with the unsubstantiated, Mary's is viscerally embodied and frequently painful, reflective of the close ties between William's material body and her own. Mary furthermore seeks to safeguard William's singularity by enshrining him in Percy's and her own literary works. She uses the very openness of Percy's depiction of Fanny in "Thy little footsteps" to claim the unnamed child as William, and returns herself to the excruciating scene of his death in *The Last Man*, a passage which borrows language from Percy's "To My Lost William" but derives a more nihilistic and tortured conclusion from the child's loss.

The second argumentative strand concerns the status of control in the processes of writing and editing, an issue heightened by their biographical situation as two famous writers and editors of one another's work, who were married, shared children, and whose writings often drew on their life experiences.[21] Because she outlived Percy and fashioned herself as

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[20] William Godwin to Mary Shelley, October 13, 1816, from Bodleian Library, "Godwin's draft letter to Mary after her son's death," *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family*, online exhibit, accessed September 5, 2018, http://shelleysghost.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/godwins-draft-letter-to-mary-after-her-sons-death - Transcript.

[21] As both Carlson and Janet Todd have argued, the Shelleys' texts are particularly usefully considered as "life/works" (Carlson's term): texts that are fundamentally informed by, reflect, and self-consciously engage with these authors' lives. See Julie Carlson, *England's First Family: Wollstonecraft, Godwin, Shelley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 6, and Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 1. The works I

the preeminent reader, and therefore medium, of his works,[22] she shaped his readers' reception of his legacy and understanding of their shared lives as she deemed best.[23] Her editorial choices were not merely calculating and self-serving: editing Percy's poems and writing about her own grief were difficult for Mary, who found herself perpetually in the company of the dead. As some scholars have argued, as his editor, Mary could be viewed as a secondary facilitator of Percy's work. However, increasingly critics like Wolfson, Favret, Carlson, and Gladden have argued that Mary's role as editor of her husband's work and the biographical framer of his texts positions her labor was also a co-creative act of agency positioning herself (and William, I will argue) at the center of Shelley's textual production.[24] Mary saw preservation as the primary aim of her editorial labor: keeping alive Percy's work and, through it, his and William's memories, was for her a loving and aggressive act. Although publicizing Percy's and her private feelings, especially regarding his extramarital affections and failings as a father, often filled her with anxiety, ultimately she concluded that memorializing their shared lives must take precedence. Besides, her unique status as both wife and posthumous editor meant that she was in the best position to (re)write the narrative of their all-too-brief family life.

In this way, this chapter contributes to a long history of critical work on the relationship between the Shelleys' lives and their texts, as well as on parents and children, by

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am generally concerned with in this study are ones that especially encourage this way of reading because they explicitly depict the people and events of Mary's and Percy's lives.

[22] See Susan Wolfson, "Editorial Privilege: Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley's Audiences," in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, edited by Audrey Fisch, et. al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39-72; Mary Favret, "Mary Shelley's Sympathy and Irony: The Editor and Her Corpus," in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, 17-38; Julie Carlson, *England's First Family of Writers*, 194-196.

[23] She nevertheless was held to certain standards of acceptability, as demonstrated by Leigh Hunt's and Thomas Love Peacock's objections about removing the dedicatory verse of *Queen Mab* to Harriet Westbrook, Shelley's first wife. See Wolfson, "Editorial Privilege," 69.

[24] See Samuel Lyndon Gladden, "Mary Shelley's Editions of 'The Collected Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley': The Editor as Subject," *Studies in Romanticism* 44, no. 2 (2005): 181-205.

examining closely the specter of the beloved infant companion as it haunts the margins of their work. I focus on "Her voice did quiver"/"Thy little footsteps in the sand" as a whole work because it has been curiously understudied and it brings together so many strands of the Wollstonecraft-Shelley biography. Now that the Shelleys' manuscript archives are available online, readers can more easily trace the dialogue between Percy's texts and Mary's editorial decisions as well as with their forbearers' texts. Tracking the latter conversation is especially important for considering this poem in its totality, since it shows Percy exploring a more embodied and personal model of infancy than usual, thanks to his incorporation of Wollstonecraft's loving, though often viscerally painful, language of maternal experience. In contrast to his usual characterization of infant potential, enlisting Wollstonecraft's imagery and precedent enable him to explore the radical embodied aspects of the maternal-infant connection that surface more frequently in Mary's work. Additionally, tracing Mary's editorial changes to Percy's conversation with Wollstonecraft uncovers more disturbing interventions. Her decision to split the poem into two separate fragments and to substitute "we" for "one" secures William's place as the lost infant companion by erasing infant Fanny from the record.

This poem comprises the heart of this chapter, but it is useful to consider it alongside other of their texts about infants that they knew and loved, and who frequently died young. For Percy, this means tracing some of his ideas about infancy more generally throughout his work to discuss why he valued the infant and how those values shaped the way he represented and mourned the dead and alive, companionate and distanced children from his life in his texts. Within Mary's work, I examine her autobiographical commentary about William and other children in Percy's poetic collection, as well as his role in her

autobiographical elegiac poem "The Choice" and as an inspiration for her 1826 novel *The Last Man*.

"[T]remblingly alive"

The embodied maternal-infant connection that features in Mary Shelley's and Wollstonecraft's texts resonate with contemporaneous medical thinking about the power of maternal "tenderness."[25] William Buchan offers readers an extensive overview of the benefits and drawbacks of this intense mother-infant connection, describing mother-infant sympathy as embodied, vital, and preverbal, a phenomenon operating both above and below the threshold of consciousness. The mother's strong, instinctive attachment is Nature's method of providing for an otherwise helpless creature.

> A child comes into the world, chiefly dependent on the mother's care for the preservation of its being. She is tremblingly alive to all its wants. Every tender office she performs increases her fond solicitude, till at length it gains the full possession of her affections, and her sole wish is to make it happy.[26]

For Buchan, the mother's "fond solicitude" attends the child's arrival into the world and it is not only reinforced, but "increase[d]," through her acts of care. Care operates in this passage as both an "office" the mother carries out and her emotional orientation toward the child: the more she cares *for* the infant, the more she will care *about* him. This feedback loop recurs on the borderline of maternal agency and her unconscious drives, as her acts of love amplify her desire to make the infant "happy," which ultimately becomes her "sole wish." The mother

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[25] Both Barbara Gelpi and Julie Kipp have addressed the importance of social and medical discourses of maternal tenderness are to understanding the writings and psychologies of the Shelleys. Gelpi provides an extended psychoanalytical, historical, and biographical account of Percy Shelley's interest in the mother-infant dyad (see *Shelley's Goddess: Maternity, Language, Subjectivity*.). Kipp applies a similar logic about "maternal sympathy" her examination of Mary's grief over the death of William and Percy's concurrent composition of *The Cenci* (see Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic*, chap. 5).

[26] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 266-267.

yields up her independence without complaint, and the infant's "possession of her affections" seems less of a tyrannical oppression than a loving, mutual (re)absorption. Perhaps most striking is Buchan's description of the mother as being "tremblingly alive to [her infant's] wants," a phrase that emphasizes the intense embodied dynamic of their shared connection. Buchan's focus is on the maternal experience of infant attunement:[27] the child's arrival constitutes a fixation that is appropriate to a heightened female sensibility (when constrained by reason). Just as the infant is physically dependent on his mother for survival, so her experience of their relationship is characterized as a bodily need. Buchan's language suggests how vulnerable this need renders any mother who is "tremblingly alive to all [her infant's] wants." She does not seem able to consciously block or filter the child's desires; on the contrary, the mother seems sensitive to the slightest stimuli, potentially laying her body open to great pain if unable to anticipate, provide for, or satisfy the infant's desires. In this way, Buchan's mother is likewise defenseless, revealing the double-sidedness of tenderness: the evocative vulnerability of the infant likewise creates vulnerability in her mother, creating a powerful bond of attachment that lays both open to great love and sympathy, as well as great pain.

Though Buchan uses this image of intense mother-infant attunement to extol the virtues of maternal feeling, this passage appears as part of a larger argument against what he

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[27] By "attunement," I am not referring to Daniel Stern's technical and expressive understanding of "affect attunement," which describes "the performance of behaviors that express the quality of feeling of a shared affect state without imitating the exact behavioral expression of the inner state" (Stern, *Interpersonal World of the Infant*, 142). My use rather designates the way the maternal mind and body emotionally resonate with the infant body both above and below the threshold of consciousness. Stern's description of "empathy" also does not serve my purpose, because he rightly points out that empathy involves "the mediation of cognitive processes." My "attunement" is more akin to Stern's idea of "emotional resonance" or the Romantic idea of poetic "attunement" (frequently figured by the poet's body as an Aeolian lyre), which is a radical awareness that creates in its observer intense emotional and sympathetic response that culminates in both empathy and, frequently, creative expression.

deems the "[b]aneful effects of parental tenderness, or of what may be called an extremely delicate and enervating education."[28] If "maternal love," which Buchan describes as "the most amiable of all passions," is indulged too greatly, both parent and child are compromised. He recounts a story of a lost patient whose overly-solicitous parents who, through their suffocating concern for their son's heath, not only caused his early demise, but also died soon after him because "*their lives were bound up in that of the lad*."[29] "When this passion is carried beyond the proper bounds, it ceases to be love," Buchan warns. "[I]t becomes a sort of blind infatuation, always injures, and often destroys the object of its regard."[30] Buchan considers parental solicitude to the whims and imagined threats to the infant equally as harmful to a child's well-being as the uncaring and monstrous nurses that have appeared in previous chapters of this dissertation. "In giving way to the strong impulses of natural affection, they commonly go too far, and do as much mischief to their offspring by misguided tenderness, as by total insensibility."[31] Mothers are particularly susceptible to this indulgence because of their overactive imaginations and sensibilities. The truly responsible parent will not pamper but instead "harden" the tender infant body, strengthening it for the inevitable trials of later life. Regarded in this light, infancy is not a time of imminent danger, but rather the ideal time to expose children to elements that would not be so easily endured by an adult.

> [Rousseau] very justly observes that, "before the body has acquired a settled habit, we may give it any we please, without danger; though, when it is once arrived at full growth and consistence every alteration is hazardous. A child

[28] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 264.
[29] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 280.
[30] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 266.
[31] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 265.

> will bear those vicissitudes, which to a man would be insupportable. The soft and pliant fibres of the former readily yield to impression: those of the latter are more rigid and are reduced only by violence to recede from the forms they have assumed."[32]

Buchan refigures infant vulnerability as an asset by characterizing it as plasticity: the body of the infant yields readily to parental pressures and external hardship that will ultimately form it into a sounder structure. His depiction reveals latent fears about what even loving parents can do to an infant, how they might harm or even kill their beloved child through misguided love. Buchan's insights reveal the maternal-infant connection as intensely embodied and as such a source of deeply-felt love and pain to both parties that the bond that must be held in check by rational thinking if both are to survive it. The Shelleys depict this connection and the vulnerability it signifies in opposite ways. The shared and unspoken vulnerability that passes between infant and parent in Mary's and her mother's works surfaces as tremendous, aching, and embodied attachment, whereas Percy's is generally more idealized and diffuse.

"Into their hues and scents may pass / A portion"

D.B. Ruderman argues that, in contrast to the isolated Wordsworthian child, the child of Percy's writings is always relational. "Shelley increasingly sees infancy as the prime example of this interaffective sphere, and the body of the infant as the preeminent site of these affecting and affected powers, where imagination, history, and death make and leave their respective marks."[33] The primary relationship between mother and child is for Percy the basis of all noble human endeavor as it structures and informs sympathy, creativity, and

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[32] Buchan, *Advice to Mothers*, 270-71.
[33] Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century Poetry*, 153.

connection.[34] This animating principle of the world is love, an active impulse toward sympathetic communion with others.

> [Love] is that powerful attraction towards all we conceive or fear or hope beyond ourselves when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void and seek to awaken in all things that are a community with what we experience within ourselves. If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's; if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own, that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood. This is Love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists. We are born into the world, and there is something within us which from the instant that we live more and more thirsts after its likeness. It is probably in correspondence with this law that the infant drains milk from the bosom of its mother. This propensity develops itself with the development of our nature.[35]

An individual's loving extension towards another need not be restricted to other people, but can include "everything that exists." Person, animal, element of nature; the living, the dead, the fictional—anything that compels one to reach out toward "all we conceive, or fear, or

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[34] Andrew Bennett has argued that Shelley's writing is haunted by his preoccupation his own poetic afterlife and figures poetry itself as a species of haunting. See Andrew Bennett, "Shelley's Ghosts," in *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*, 158-78.

[35] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "On Love," in *The Major Works*, edited by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 631-632.

hope beyond ourselves." Love is that which encourages an individual to confront the "void" within himself by acknowledging its presence, and finding "community" for our experiences with others. Percy lists different idealized modes of sympathetic resonance in different experiential modes of being: "reason" finds "understanding," "imaginat[ation]" engenders the same "airy children" in another mind, and shared feeling thrums along calibrated nerves of another differentiated body. Percy envisions love as a vital, active force, the universal driving force behind noble human endeavor. He offers the maternal-infant bond as not just one of many emblems of this, but as a way of literalizing this drive by locating it within the (infant) body. However, he does not focus on the maternal experience of this infant-mother exchange and, through this neglect, his infant's pursuit of "likeness" seems far more solipsistic than it would had he framed it as "likemindedness." The mother is a mere vessel for providing the infant's bodily needs, not a loving mind through which the infant locates his own. Love may be sympathy, but it is one that, as Carlson points out, potentially drains the (M)other.[36] Because Percy isolates the infant mind in order to argue for the individual origins of sympathy, this Percyan infant seems less relational than Ruderman suggests. Though Percy highlights the fundamentally embodied nature of the maternal-infant relationship in this passage, he does not explore the dynamics of minded mutuality or exchange between mother and infant: the child's love is about seeking (and finding) its own likeness via the (mother's) body.

This is why, for Carlson, Percy's infant's potentiality is so important: "Sensing wonder and vacancy together helps to keep the draining nature of the Percyan infant from

[36] Carlson, "Like Love," 83.

being simply a drain on others or wholly self-negating."[37] Citing the Percyan infant in works like *Queen Mab*, *Julian and Maddalo*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, Carlson argues that the infant's unsubstantiated potentiality embodies Percy's ideals of mutability, resistance to traditional institutions and relationships of dominance and power, and meaning (un)making. "Portraying children as like the elements… and lacking in standard human sentiments situates the value of a child less in singularity than elemental potentiality, which means mutability and attraction to alterity – at once desiring and being other to what coheres as 'self' by means of language and social convention."[38] The tremendous ideological power of Percy's infant stems from its resistance to fixation; however, as a "not-one" who "thirsts for attachment and is yet unattached to specific objects and habits of being,"[39] it is also difficult to attach to or emotionally invest in the Percyan infant as a fully developed and unique person.

For Percy, the potentiality of the infant mind is the source of its great power because it experiences the external world as an extension of, rather than differentiated from, itself. This dissolves the subject-object distinction that, as the child grows older, increasingly structures and stratifies its knowledge and sensory perception. This inherent sense of oneness allows the idealized child to perceive the fundamental truth that reality is only ever accessed from a particular point of view.

> Let us recollect our sensations as children. What a distinct and intense apprehension had we of the world and of ourselves. …We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt from ourselves. They seemed as it were

[37] Carlson, "Like Love," 83.
[38] Carlson, "Like Love," 84.
[39] Carlson, "Like Love," 84.

> to constitute one mass. There are some persons who in this respect are always children. Those who are subject to the state called reverie feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction. And these are states which precede or accompany or follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension of life.[40]

This mode of perception is available to the child, but also to the "always children" (through reverie), as well as his reader (who can attempt to "recollect" her past embodied impressions by calling to mind familiar, though perhaps forgotten, childhood "sensations"). For Percy, the child's mind does not distinguish things in the way that the adult mind does because it has not been taught to differentiate them; "habitual" differentiation is the hallmark of adulthood. However, the difference between the child's perception of the world and that of the adult capable of reverie is that the adult is conscious that his perception of existence as unitary is transitory and revelatory. If this state of mind is reserved for elect adults who either possess a natural propensity for accessing it or actively seek its cultivation, it is, in contrast, common to all children. Children may be valued among mankind for possessing this faculty, but a particular child is not special among children for having it, rendering children somewhat interchangeable.

William was in some ways a substitute or recompense for the lost children from Percy's first marriage to Harriet Westbrook, Ianthe and Charles, but he was also exceptional as the actual child that Percy presented as his spiritual companion and heir.[41] Percy wrote the

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[40] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "On Life," in *The Major Works*, 635.
[41] Though Percy depicts the infant Ianthe in *Queen Mab*, Mary's removal of the dedicatory verse "To Harriet****" from its position at the beginning of the poem positions the Ianthe of the poem less as his actual

poem "The billows on the beach are leaping around it" in response to the Chancery's practically unprecedented decision to deny him paternal custody following Harriet's suicide, a decision that outraged Percy, who "naively" planned with Mary to raise his first children alongside their own.[42] As Percy's son by Mary, William is depicted in the poem as a target of his ideologically compromised half-siblings' resentment: "they will curse my name and thee," he warns the boy, "[b]ecause we fearless are and free" (15-16). As Percy's poetic addressee and infant companion, William is both his father's confidant and a form of potential to be molded into his ideal (male) companion and spiritual heir. Envisioning the Shelley family as they abandon their English homeland (and thus the possibility of recovering William's half-siblings), the Percyan narrator reassures William:

> Sometime this hour will live in thee
>
> A dream of days forgotten long;
>
> We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
>
> Of serene and golden Italy,
>
> Or Greece, the mother of the free,
>
> And I will teach thine infant tongue
>
> To call upon those heroes old
>
> In their own language—and will mould
>
> Thy growing spirit in the flame

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child (her parents are not present in the poem) and more as an idealized infant-figure. Her experiences in the poem, as well, seem more allegorical because in her dream she has simultaneously shed her actual infant body and acquired speech. This paints quite a different portrait than the (actual) "William" poems, which seem to refer to real or realistically presented events from the context of their shared lives: for instance, in "The billows on the beach are leaping around it," Shelley refers worries about the possibility that William would be seized from their family, while "My lost William" takes place in the burying ground into which William had been interred.

[42] Bieri, *Exile of Unfulfilled Renown,* 8.

Of Grecian lore, that by such name

A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim.

(42-52)

Both Mary ("thy sweet mother" [19]) and Clara ("the dearest playmate" [24]) appear as sympathetic companions in the poem, but Percy focuses on William both as the object of his alarm and as his potential acolyte. Italy and Greece offer this pair (and apparently only them) an environment that will actuate their mutual ideological and spiritual emancipation. Percy does not abandon the political sphere entirely, but exchanges corrupted English politics for the purer and historically-transcendent ideals of the Classical world. Along with England, the half-brother and sister whom William will never know fade into unreality, no longer actual children but a "dream" of hazy recollection—Ianthe, not a real sister but a name from the pages of his father's early poetic works. While it bothers the speaker, the decision to leave behind his older children is depicted as motivated by fear of similarly losing the younger ones.[43] At the same time, the decision attests to the interchangeability of these very young children. Neither parent acts as if they owed these abandoned infants protection and responsibility, whatever challenges they might have to face in doing so. Instead, the poem aligns their "polluted souls" with the tyrannical power of England,[44] even though they were both under the age of five and hardly responsible for the law that the speaker seeks to defy.

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[43] For additional biographical context, see Matthews' and Everest's note to the poem, in *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 578.

[44] This line, which also refers to his lost children, appears in "To the Lord Chancellor," in *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 558-562, line 56.

In short, the speaker vilifies his own children for what is in considerable part the consequence of his own neglect.[45]

Though in many ways Percy's and Mary's infant elect, William was not unscathed by Percy's way of conceiving of his children.[46] While the poet sat vigil over his son's sickbed and mourned William's death, his expression of grief was also informed by his association of infancy with potentiality, a conviction that offered a way of finding meaning in the child's loss. To Percy, William's death was preferable to the fates of his older children because William's soul was untainted by corrupt institutional and societal power: "he is rendered immortal by his love as his memory is by death…I envy death the body far less than the oppressor the minds of those whom they have torn from me," he wrote bitterly. "The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections."[47] The concrete power of law had, by his estimation, irreparably crushed Percy's older children, but in death, William's infant potentiality was preserved through the enduring vitality of his earthly love. Death did not snuff out William's potentiality, but amplified it, releasing the child from his bodily constraints. Percy explores this idea in the longer elegiac fragment "To William," in which he consigns the infant body to decay while extolling the continuation of its universal, energetic vitality.

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[45] The official reason why the courts did not award Shelley custody and instead awarded Charles and Ianthe to the family of a clergyman was on the grounds that he was an atheist; however, Shelley had long abandoned these children to the care of the Westbrook family and his attempt to recover them following Harriet's suicide was relatively feeble.

[46] His death came only months after Clara's, for which Mary blamed Percy after he had heedlessly instructed them to move the very young child during a serious illness.

[47] See Irving Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's 'Poetical Works (1839): Some Manuscript Sources," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 16 (1967): 29-38, 35. Intriguingly, Massey notes the "startling" disjuncture between this paragraph, composed by Percy in script, with the block lettering he wrote beneath it on the page: "YET I HATE."

My lost William, thou in whom

Some bright spirit lived, and did

That decaying robe consume

Which its lustre faintly hid,

Here its ashes find a tomb,

But beneath this pyramid[48]

Thou art not—if a thing divine

Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine

Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child?

Let me think thy spirit feeds,

With its life intense and mild,

The love of living leaves and weeds,

Among these tombs and ruins wild;–

Let me think that through low seeds

Of sweet flowers and sunny grass

Into their hues and scents may pass

A portion–[49]

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[48] This pyramid monument was planned but never materialized. In fact, when Mary attempted to disinter William's body from his grave and re-bury him along with Percy, the only remains present were those of an unknown adult.

[49] Percy Shelley, "To William Shelley" ("My lost William, thou in whom…"), in *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3., 194.

Ruderman writes that though many critics have associated the poem's abrupt ending with profound, unspeakable grief, he locates in the "openness" and "diffuseness" of its fragmentary form "a purposeful refusal of closure and solidity," which enacts the protean resistance of which Percy's infant is emblematic.[50] On a thematic level, Percy struggles to reconcile the metaphysical with the material as his poem introduces the spiritual hierarchy that elegy as a genre typically reinforces. Describing William's body as a "decaying robe" "consume[d]" by a "bright spirit," Percy extols the sheer power of his child's "divin[ity]." However, his characterization of William in this way creates two problems for grounding Percy's grief in the child himself. First, it finds meaning in William's death by presenting it as if it were meant to be: if William's body was simply a decaying robe overcome by the fiery intensity of a "lustr[ous]" spirit, his death was not only inevitable but also evidence of the boy's overwhelming ethereality. The second issue is encapsulated in his question, "Where art thou, my gentle child?": it is equally difficult for the reader to locate "William" in this poem as it seems to be for the grieving father. "William" is not simply the "decaying robe" of the body, but neither is he the "bright spirit"; he is rather "thou *in whom* / Some bright spirit lived" (emphasis mine). If it is difficult for both Percy and the reader to locate William,[51] it is also then difficult to assess what (or whom) Percy values and mourns: is it the bright spirit, the boy-body that this metaphysical energy lived in, or some ineffable other? While these unresolved questions evoke the answerless sadness of a mourning parent, they seem at times an exercise in spiritual meditation, in part because they contrast so greatly with

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[50] Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, 152. Ruderman here provides an excellent reading of the notebook draft of the poem, linking it to ideas of materiality and bodily dissolve.
[51] Ruderman, *The Idea of Infancy in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, 152. He identifies this question of William's location in Percy's refrain, "Let me think." where William's spiritual essence seems both a portion of nature, and nature, a portion of the boy (152-153).

the raw and anguished expressions of Mary's grief for the same boy. This is what makes "Thy little footsteps" such a significant poem for reconsidering Percy's depiction of grief for the lost infant. Read in relation to Mary's title, the "twinkling" "infant hands" of "William" reinforce the Percyan child's strange, inhuman, and unreal materiality. Read as a tribute to Fanny, we catch Percy's engagement with the maternal, embodied language of Wollstonecraft and witness how he wrestles with the infant (and infant-mother dyad) in its realistic complexities.

"The twinkling of thine infant hands"

Though it has not been frequently analyzed as a whole poem and its critical commentary has been largely focused on the poem's autobiographical context,[52] "Her voice did quiver" / "Thy little footsteps" portrays an infant-mother relationship that provides interesting contrast to Percy's other poetic infants. It also offers insight into Mary's own process of mourning her son, sister, and mother, and the work that she expends negotiating her own and her husband's shared but differentiated grief. In "Thy little footsteps," both Percy's infant and his poem are unnamed before Mary's editorial intervention. While highly allusive to Mary Wollstonecraft's depictions of the infant Fanny,[53] Percy names neither mother nor daughter explicitly and positions their loving scene of reunion on the threshold between life and death, past and present, and textual representation and reality. Percy's stylistic choice allows him to acknowledge Fanny's loss while also conforming to Godwin's

[52] See Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 33.
[53] Though this chapter focuses on literary representations of Fanny, her voice as correspondent and reader within the "kinship coterie" of the Shelley circle should not be overlooked; see Sharon Joffe, "'My Unhappy Life': The Letters of Fanny Imlay," in *Kinship Coterie and the Literary Endeavors of the Women of the Shelley Circle* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), 93-110.

plea following her suicide to "Disturb not the silent dead."[54] One could see the two parts of the poem as proffering an ethical form of mourning for Fanny, acknowledging his failure to sympathize with her distress in their final exchange before her suicide in "Her voice did quiver," while also staging a loving and sympathetic moment (though itself suffused with loss) from her infant experience with her mother in "Thy little footsteps." For Mary, as both editor and grieving mother/wife, however, the unnamed infant is a body to recognize and claim as her own. Mary uses the very unsubstantiated potentiality left open in Percy's poem to name the child "William," claiming him as her son and the speaker's grief as her husband's paternal grief. Once she names the child, its identity is no longer open to interpretation; Mary forecloses the possibility that it could be both William *and* the infant Fanny (by being neither specifically), rupturing the structure of Percy's poem as recompense for his failed sympathy and relegating the infant's strange "twinkling" materiality to the unsubstantiated by removing her from her mother's physical, as well as textual, body. Mary's reaction demonstrates that the infant she saw and wanted others subsequently to see when reading the poem was not her sister, but her own lost child. With its malleable and emotionally evocative presence, in addition to its general substitutability, the infant is a blank slate on which a grieving parent like Mary can write her own child's name; however, this means that while one infant (William) is claimed, the other (Fanny) is irrevocably lost.

To fully understand this poem and the significance of Mary's editorial changes, one must begin by considering Percy's original manuscript, a page currently available through the Bodleian Library's online exhibit *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary*

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[54] Letter from William Godwin to Percy Shelley, October 13, 1816, in Bodleian Library, "Letter from Godwin to Shelley following Fanny Imlay's suicide," in *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family*, online exhibit, accessed September 5, 2018, http://shelleysghost.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/?location_id=52 - Transcript.

Family.[55] Percy's notebook manuscripts resist straightforward readings, further complicating the work of interpretation. Different poetic drafts, doodles, calculations, and private musings meld into, reinforce, and challenge one another in the space of a shared page. For this draft particularly, these elements heighten the poem's atmosphere of spectrality, regret, and mourning. The reverse side of the poetic page features sketches of various forms of vegetal life and steps leading to an "idealized" tomb;[56] they also give voice to Percy's candid and guilty despondence ("When said I so?," "miserable," "It is not my fault—it is not to be attributed to me," "These cannot be forgotten—years / May flow," "Breaking thine indissoluable sleep").[57] Even transcription inclusive of Percy's own editorial variations does not convey the same picture as the manuscript because it lacks the poem's telling paratextual elements: its spacing on the page, the degree to which a cancelled line is scratched out, the drawings that frame it, and so forth. Though not part of the "text" proper, these elements inform the poem's feeling and meaning both in terms of its compositional context and the intensity of certain elements. The manuscript thus makes visible the choices that Percy made when composing; because he did not prepare a finalized version for publication, it seems a pure(r) reflection of his authorial process than Mary's final version, which is split in two, cleaned up, and given over to William. The manuscript and the published version showcase Mary's editorial will, revealing the dead infant body as part of the contested ground between writer and editor.

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[55] Bodleian Library, "Shelley's jottings and doodlings," in *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family*, online exhibit, accessed September 5, 2018, http://shelleysghost.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/?location_id=53 - Description. The alternate side of this page, with the draft of the poem, is also available to view here. The Bodleian Library shelfmark for this page is MS. Shelley adds. c. 4, fol. 68r-v.

[56] Bieri, *Exile of Unfulfilled Renown*, 15. Fanny was in reality buried in an unmarked pauper's grave in order to conceal her identity and suicide.

[57] Todd comments on Percy's marginal comments, as well as explores Shelley's, Mary's, and Godwin's feelings about Fanny's suicide; see Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 33.

Working from the transcriptions of Shelley's editors, in conjunction with the Bodleian's online manuscript holograph, the entirety of the legible text on the compositional page reads:

~~No [In?] Sympathy~~

~~Friend had I known thy secret grief~~

~~Should we have parted so~~

Her voice did quiver as we parted—

Yet knew I not ~~that~~ {the} heart was broken

From which it came—& I departed

Heeding not the words then spoken—

Misery—oh misery

This world is all too wide for thee!

Some secret ~~griefs~~ {woes} had been mine own.—

And they had taught me that, the good

The free [pure?]

And that for those who are lone & weary

The road of life is long & dreary

~~Yet~~

~~I heeded~~ Some hopes were buried in my ~~heart~~ heart

Whose spectres haunted me with sadness

one

~~I~~

There was a

Thy little footsteps on the sands

Of a ~~some~~ remote & lonely ~~sea~~shore—

The twinkling of thine infant hands

~~Upon thy~~ Where now the worm will feed no more.

Thy look of ~~love, thy laugh of glee~~ mingled love & glee

When <u>one</u> returned to gaze on thee—

~~I know that~~

[And she] These footsteps on the sands are fled,

Thine eyes are dark—thy hands are still <u>[cold]</u>,

And she is dead—& thou art dead—

~~[And we remain to know how old [?]~~[58]

And the

[58] This transcription of the manuscript, which is largely legible but contains some difficult-to-decipher lines, was made by myself in conjunction with Massey's transcription, Matthews and Everest's version, but primarily by consulting the image of the manuscript available online through the Bodleian Library's *Shelley's Ghost* exhibit. See Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's Poetical Works," 34; Matthews and Everest, in Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 550-553; Stephen Hebron and Elizabeth C. Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2010), 106-107. There are some legible words that Matthews and Everest have not included in their transcription, but which I offer here. This also accounts for the difference in my numbered lineation and theirs, which does not, for one example, include ~~"No [In?] Sympathy~~," despite their assertion that Percy did not intend this phrase as the poem's title. (Some features of the manuscript page are also additionally more easily visible when exposure and color settings of the image are adjusted.)

Mary pushed the break in the poem too far by splitting the sections off entirely from one another, but the poem is comprised of two distinct parts, the first recounting Percy's final meeting with Fanny (what I will refer to as 1-20) and second, the vision of Fanny's infancy and death (21-32).[59] Most critics have noted that the second fragment seems a product of Percy's return to the manuscript, perhaps near the anniversary of Fanny's death.[60] This notion of return is supported both by the care with which he fits the poem into a small corner of the page and his notes on a drawing on the reverse side of the page. "I drew this flowerpot in 1816," he privately muses, "and it is now 1817." With all the uncertainty evoked by this manuscript page, "[w]hat is clear is that Shelley has returned to one of his manuscripts after a year, and found in the palpability of its paper and ink an evocative reminder of past thoughts and feelings."[61] I would argue further that the poem's structure reflects a shift in Percy's attempt to process guilt for recognizing but failing to empathize with Fanny's despair. When the poem is read in its entirety, the "On F.G." section remains a representation of his failure of sympathy, while the section "Thy little footsteps on the sands" offers a vision of loving empathy and recognition from Mary Wollstonecraft's writings, which are nevertheless imbued with maternal guilt and sorrow. Unlike Percy's speaker in "On F.G.," the Wollstonecraftian maternal figure of "Thy little footsteps" (simply designated as "one") responds not to Fanny's misery, but to her infant joy. The speaker then occupies a peripheral role as witness to this shared love between the infant Fanny and her mother, whose reunion takes place not in an idealized afterlife, but in the pages of Wollstonecraft's lovingly written

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[59] Using my own transcription, I will cite the poem parenthetically hereafter.
[60] See Matthews' and Everest's note to the poem for more biographical context, in Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 551; Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 33; Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family*, 106-107.
[61] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost*, 110.

reflections. Percy's representation of this scene, however, is ultimately laden with the sadness associated with the demise of both women and the recognition of Wollstonecraft's own "abandonment" of Fanny through her two suicide attempts.[62]

The ambiguity contained in the heavily scratched out first line ~~"No [In?] Sympathy"~~ calls into question the purpose of the poem: does it focus on the speaker's failure to extend sympathy to the "~~Friend~~" ("~~No~~"), or is it his attempt to do so after death has rendered her beyond his reach ("~~In~~") (1)? Though Matthews and Everest argue that "[t]he cancelled words 'No (or 'In') sympathy' above the lines do not seem to have been intended as a title,"[63] its placement at the opening of the poem creates a framework for thinking about the poem as at the crux of sympathy and its breakdown, which accounts for my inclusion of it within the poem. Both options seem plausible. If the line reads, "~~No Sympathy~~," Percy characterizes the speaker's rejection and abandonment of his suffering "~~Friend~~" as an unredeemable failure (2), a reading supported by Mary Shelley's original published form of "On F.G." This is not to say that the speaker lacks sympathy for the ~~Friend~~: the poem's tone is painfully regretful and his exclamatory repetition of "misery—oh misery!" ruptures his narrative account of their last meeting (and also, intriguingly, links it to the abandoned Martha Ray of Wordsworth's "The Thorn") (8). Unable to articulate her fate following his abandonment of her, the speaker does not specify to whose "misery" he refers, and it is with this morose sentiment that Mary Shelley closes the poem "On F.G." If the line, however, is "~~In Sympathy~~," the poem is a proffered gesture of sympathy (too late, perhaps) either to the lost ~~Friend~~ or to the bereaved, among whom the speaker counts himself. Whatever the true transcription of this line, its illegibility—an act of the poet's own hand, lines recorded and

[62] Fanny also committed suicide on the anniversary of one of her mother's attempts.
[63] Matthews and Everest, in Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 550.

then thoroughly and violently scratched out—encapsulates the speaker's anxiety about whether and how he can mourn a death for which he feels in some part responsible. Would the poem be a gesture of genuine sympathy, or yet another failure because it cannot reach the ~~Friend~~ and alleviate her pain? Worse yet, would he be appropriating her pain by representing it as something they ultimately shared, asking for the reader's sympathy for himself when he failed to extend it to the ~~Friend~~ during her moment of crisis?

Percy represents his speaker's failure of sympathy as a lack of embodied attunement: though he recognized the signs of her emotional state, he did not "heed[…]" them (6). Crossing out his initial apostrophe "~~Friend had I known thy secret grief / Should we have parted so~~" (2-3), he reinscribes the narrative within their final personal encounter. At the same time, he shifts his representation of the ~~Friend~~ from a second- to a third-person address. The effect of this change is doubled: on the one hand, it further distances the ~~Friend~~ because she is no longer the addressee of his poem, but rather a character in its narrative. The emergent poem does not directly address the ~~Friend~~ to explain his seeming indifference, but orients itself toward a third party to whom he justifies his actions. The emergent opening lines, "Her voice did quiver as we parted— / Yet knew I not the heart was broken / From which it came" (4-6), then seem an answer to an implicit question: was there any sign of the ~~Friend~~'s desperation? The speaker ruefully remembers the "quiver" in the ~~Friend~~'s voice as the paraverbal indication of her despair; while he registered this embodied marker of emotional vulnerability, he understands its import only in retrospect. Percy's shift from a second- to a third-person address can also be imagined not as a deficiency but as a gesture of self-awareness, even humility. In this light, the speaker seems to recognize the impossibility of directly addressing the ~~Friend~~ because she now only exists as he has interiorized her.

Addressing the dead ~~Friend~~ is a narcissistic fantasy because the speaker is only addressing himself; thus, by refusing to structure his poem as an intimate exchange with the dead ~~Friend~~ now beyond his reach, Percy's speaker acknowledges that his belated apology is no real comfort or service to her.

Though the speaker's belated recognition of the ~~Friend~~'s misery, made possible by recalling her paraverbal cues as well as actual "words then spoken" (7), provides no service to the dead ~~Friend~~, Percy's return to the manuscript imagines a moment when the ~~Friend~~, now figured as an infant, was recognized, sympathized with, and cherished by her mother, an exemplar of successful attunement. By depicting this moment of recognition from the ~~Friend~~'s infancy, he removes himself from the encounter and is only a spectator to a touching scene of maternal-infant love. The mother, figured as the "<u>one</u>" (26), seems to be Mary Wollstonecraft,[64] not only because this infant appears on the same page as the poem to Fanny, but also because both the scene and its striking imagery are lifted directly from Wollstonecraft's writing about Fanny's infancy. As Matthews has uncovered, the "remote and lonely shore" of Gothenburg, Sweden, where Mary Wollstonecraft briefly left behind Fanny during her travels,[65] appears in a passage from her *Letters* where Wollstonecraft dreams of her return.

> Light slumbers produced dreams, where Paradise was before me. My little cherub was again hiding her face in my bosom. I heard her sweet cooing beat on my heart from the cliffs, and saw her tiny footsteps in the sands. New-born

[64] Matthews, "Whose Little Footsteps?," 258.
[65] Wollstonecraft had to leave Fanny behind with her nurse, Marguerite Fournée, for a couple of weeks while she journeyed through part of country that would be difficult to traverse with an infant.

> hopes seemed, like the rainbow, to appear in the clouds of sorrow, faint, yet sufficient to amuse away despair.[66]

In Percy's poem, the speaker bears witness to this intimate scene of maternal-infant love and reunion, figuring it as a moment from the past rather than Wollstonecraft's dream. Blurring the lines not only between text and life, but between dream and reality, Percy's speaker echoes Wollstonecraft's statement that this was, indeed, "Paradise," because both parent and child experience "Paradise" in each other's loving presence. The second verse originally counterbalances the ~~Friend~~'s despondent "quiver[ing]" voice with the infant's "laugh of glee" (25); Percy ultimately concentrates this phrase into "thy mingled look of love and glee," silencing the sound of the infant's laughter, but locating its affect, glee, in her eyes and expression. The joyful exchange between mother and daughter is a foil for the disconnect between the ~~Friend~~ and the speaker, who only in retrospect understands and shares in her emotions. Percy's underlined designation of "<u>one</u>" marks the mother's primacy and singularity as the one who fully connected with the ~~Friend~~ in her infancy. By invoking her presence, the speaker gains access to this scene of intense empathetic connection, and his role as witness and reader appropriately relegate him to the periphery of this intimate moment of parent-child bliss.

Both Wollstonecraft and (consequently) Percy represent the infant body as strangely ephemeral, affectively potent, and exceeding the bounds of containment or even expression. In Wollstonecraft's passage, the infant Fanny "hides [her] face in [Wollstonecraft's] bosom," obscuring her face in the moment of mother-infant intimacy. The reader cannot read the infant's face but imagines hearing, as well as physically feeling, her joyful "coo[ing]" along

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[66] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, qtd. in Matthews's and Everest's note, in Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 552.

her mother's breast. Without providing an extensive description of the following scene, Wollstonecraft "s[ees]" not her child's feet, but her "tiny footsteps in the sands," the very phrase that Percy incorporates into the opening of the infant section of his poem (21). The mother's dream obscures the scene's narrative structure: are Fanny's footsteps leading toward, or away from, her mother? Wollstonecraft does not elaborate, but the infant's footsteps are themselves as fleeting as the maternal dream, traces that will wash away with the rising tide. By using this scene to structure the second part of his lament for Fanny (now the ~~Friend~~), Percy reunites the pair, once so happy in life. However, there is unreality in his portrayal of this moment as a scene from the past, as Wollstonecraft describes it as a mother's dream, longing for the infant from whom she is separated.

Perhaps the most striking image Percy adopts from Wollstonecraft comes from her unfinished novel *Maria* which, although a work of fiction, was informed by Wollstonecraft's experience as a mother. The infant's "twinkling hands" conveys a strange sense of the infant's body as immaterial or unsubstantiated (23), perhaps heavenly, when reading the poem as "To William." However, in the context of Wollstonecraft's writings about Fanny (or Fanny-like infants), its effect is poignant, as Maria, wrongfully imprisoned, also longs for her child's presence.

> Her infant's image was continually floating on Maria's sight, and the first smile of intelligence remembered, as none but a mother, an unhappy mother, can conceive. She heard her half speaking half cooing, and felt the little

> twinkling fingers on her burning bosom—a bosom bursting with the nutriment for which this cherished child might now be pining in vain.[67]

Maria literally aches for her child, her breasts straining under the pressure of her own milk. The law of nature, which powers the maternal-infant connection, materializes as an embodied outcry against the unjust laws of patriarchal society that have given the child over to her unfeeling father. This physical pain is indivisible from the emotional pain Maria experiences when imagining the likelihood that her child is likewise suffering. Like Fanny in Wollstonecraft's *Letters*, Maria's infant vocalizes her semi-articulate love for her mother, "half speaking half cooing" while clutching to her mother's breast. The "twinkling fingers" (Wollstonecraft) or "hands" (Percy) depict not a surreal image of the child's shimmering materiality, but the sensation the mother feels as her child's fingers play along her chest—its small, repeated, and delicate touch. Wollstonecraft and Percy describe the maternal pleasure in this sensation synaesthetically, melding the visual with the haptic, because it exceeds both direct description and sensory distinctions. Shelley's echoic lamentation that the ~~Friend~~/infant's hands are now "still" or "cold" reinforces the idea that "twinkling" describes an affective response to felt movement (29). The visual memory to which Maria returns is her infant's expressed love and recognition, her daughter's "first smile of intelligence." Maria knows that her child recognizes her and from this infers that the infant is likely missing her during their separation as well. Maria yearns for her infant's recognition, and her consequent "unhapp[iness]" both strengthens her emotional bond to her child and sharpens the keenness of her memory, rendering the embodied imprint that the child has left on her mother painfully present in the child's absence.

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[67] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*, qtd. in Matthews's and Everest's note, in *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 552.

The sadness and longing that suffuse Wollstonecraft's writing are visible even in moments of maternal-infant love and connection.[68] In the most complete ending Wollstonecraft developed for her novel, Maria attempts suicide by overdosing on laudanum but is interrupted when Jemima, her madhouse attendant turned confidant, presents her with her daughter, whom Maria had thought dead. "The conflict is over!" Maria exclaims, resolved not to abandon her daughter to endure the hardship that undoubtedly awaited motherless girls. "I will live for my child!"[69] Wollstonecraft too had attempted suicide by laudanum in 1795 (and would again try by drowning herself in the Thames), and finally (unwillingly) "abandoned" both of her daughters when she died unexpectedly in childbirth with Mary. Both Wollstonecraft's and Percy's texts engage with the darkness that clouds over even happy depictions of mother-infant connection, losses in moments of connection that trouble these moments of joyous intimacy.

Percy's second half of the poem stages the paradisiacal reunion between mother and daughter in life as well as in death, but his account is by no means sentimentally self-assured about the promise of the afterlife. Even in life, the loving mother-daughter reunion at the "lonely shore" was a fictional projection of Mary Wollstonecraft's unconscious, yearning mind (22). Percy does not conclude his poem by imagining the pair's idealized reunion in the afterlife. To do so would be to figure the ~~Friend~~'s tragic and avoidable death as a happy ending: though the ~~Friend's~~ despair drove her to suicide, her unbearable pain ultimately reunited her with her beloved dead mother. The "Paradise" that Wollstonecraft wrote of in life would be the eternal reality that the two would share, and the speaker's rejection of the

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[68] I especially have Julie Carlson to thank for the continued development of my thoughts about Wollstonecraft, Fanny, and care.

[69] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*, edited by Anne K. Mellor and Noelle Chao (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 357.

~~Friend~~ would have meaning. Percy instead emphasizes the material facts of the death and decay of the ~~Friend~~/infant and the "one." By echoing the language and structure of the Wollstonecraft's dream of the happy mother-infant reunion, he highlights the pathos of the realization that the only thing uniting these two intimates is their shared state of death. The ~~Friend~~/infant can no longer rest on her mother's "bosom" because that bosom has deteriorated beyond recognition. It is no longer named as such, merely a "where" that retains the trace of the infant's spectrally "twinkling" hands." In death, the ~~Friend~~/infant's "twinkling hands" have been "still[ed]" and her eyes, which in the presence of her mother expressed her "mingled look of love and glee," are now "dark[ened]" (29).

Neither the parent's nor child's grief can be assuaged by empty promises of spiritual immortality. It therefore falls to texts to preserve and transmit parental love and grief to their children, as Wollstonecraft's writings did for Fanny and Mary, and Percy's and Mary's poetry and fiction might have for their children. Percy's vision of reunion commingles the fact of material decay with faith in these figures' enduring literary preservation. His poem does not evade the horrors of death, but finds for the ~~Friend~~ love and some degree of redemption in her shared past with her loving mother. The manner of Fanny's death—she was dressed in her mother's engraved "MW" stays, her laudanum overdose on the anniversary of one of her mother's attempts[70]—is a tragic performance of unification with her mother, a fact that could not have been lost on Percy. After the speaker has failed the ~~Friend~~, he can only read, remember, and give voice to the tender words written by her mother in her infancy—words that would have been familiar to Fanny and Mary alike.

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[70] Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 1. If Fanny enacted this unification with her mother through her suicide, as we will see later in this chapter, Mary enacted a kind of unification with Wollstonecraft through mothering.

Most pressingly, Fanny's infant's eyes—represented in the poem indirectly through her "look"—assume great significance in the context of Wollstonecraft's, Percy's, and Mary's thoughts about infants. For if Mary Wollstonecraft for both Percy and Mary epitomized the enlightened and feeling mother,[71] then Fanny, as the object of her maternal love, informed how they read, understood, and felt about the infant. Daniel Stern argues that the visual sense is incredibly important for the development of infant's "social feel" to others:[72] it is a vital source of bonding not only for the infant but also for the mother. Once an infant starts to "smile responsively, gaze into the parent's eyes, and coo,"[73] the mother sees and feels that she is a part of the infant's internal world, taking renewed joy in caring for her child much like Buchan's tenderly devoted mother. This resonates with Mary Wollstonecraft's account of her growing love for Fanny.

> She indeed rewards me, for she is a sweet little creature; for, setting aside a mother's fondness (which, by the bye, is growing on me, her little intelligent smiles sinking into my heart), she has an astonishing degree of sensibility and observation… She is all life and motion.[74]

She notes Fanny's eyes again, in a later letter to Imlay: "Her eyes follow me every where, and by affection I have the most despotic power over her."[75] If Percy returned to his manuscript of "On F.G." near the first anniversary of Fanny's death to write "Thy little footsteps," he was not the only Shelley thinking about Fanny's infant eyes. Just a few days

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[71] Nora Crook argues, "[T]he profoundest influence [on Percy] of all [women] was undoubtedly that of Wollstonecraft, for him an avatar of Venus, Antigone, and Intellectual Beauty all in one." Nora Crook, "Shelley and Women," in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Michael O'Neil and Anthony Howe, with the assistance of Madeleine Callaghan (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 81.
[72] Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant,* 8.
[73] Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant,* 8.
[74] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, vol. 3 (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 67.
[75] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, vol. 3, 78.

before that anniversary, Mary wrote to Percy, urging him to "come see [his] sweet babes."[76] Spending her days caring for William, Clara, and Allegra (Claire Claremont's daughter by Byron), Mary's observations were shaped by the accounts her mother had written about her half-sister before her own birth.

> [C]ome and see your sweet babes and the little commodore [Allegra] who is lively and an uncommonly interesting child—I never see her without thinking of the expressions in my mother's letters concerning Fanny—If a mother's eyes were not partial she seems like this Alba—she mentions her intelligent eyes & great vivacity. But this is a melancholy subject–[77]

The implications of this letter are notable: if Percy composed his poem around the anniversary of Fanny's death, then either 1) Mary and Percy both separately thought of Fanny's infancy in relation to her death, or 2) Mary's letter, or a conversation between them, inspired Percy to construct the second part of his poem as a return to Fanny's infancy through the eyes of her mother.[78] Only a few days later, Mary again bestows these lively infant eyes, this time on her own daughter (who, unlike Allegra, was Fanny's kin), but makes no mention of Fanny: "Clara's eyes begin to emulate the pretty commodore's."[79] Wollstonecraft's ideas about motherhood and infancy shaped her daughter's texts; indeed, they were the only way Mary knew her. It is understandable that this young mother, whose birth had left her without her mother's presence, would view her own maternal experiences through her mother's eyes, especially given that her mother's writing about her own first child had such an emotional

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[76] Mary Shelley to Percy Shelley, October 5, 1817, in *Letters*, 51-52.
[77] Mary Shelley to Percy Shelley, October 5, 1817, in *Letters*, 51-52.
[78] Todd speculates, "Possibly [Mary] and [Percy] had again been relating the dead Fanny to this always haunting—overwhelming—book [Wollstonecraft's *Letters*]" (Todd, *Death*, chap.33). She further notes that Percy was re-reading *Letters* at this time, perhaps in preparation of the anniversary of Fanny's death.
[79] Mary Shelley to Percy Shelley, Oct. 14, 1817, in *Letters*, 54-55.

sway over both Percy and Mary, a text through which, as parents, they connected to both her memory and each other. This blurred the distinctions between the children surrounding Mary and the infant sister from her mother's works. Their timely exchange about Fanny's infancy and death also makes it more implausible that Mary inadvertently construed Percy's poetic infant as William.

As editor of Percy's posthumous works, Mary named the poem's anonymous (though highly allusive) infant "William"; in doing so, she claims the child as her own, rewriting history by erasing the infant Fanny. Mary read in the poem's wistful and elegiac tone her husband's companionable grief. Percy's editors argue that her sorrow, the scattered state of Percy's works, and the passage of time accounts for this oversight.[80] "[S]he had evidently not seen these fragments before finding them after Shelley's death, and in her initial transcription she had noted beside the first: 'I think on F.G. written before Italy' and beside the second: 'before Italy'…Mary must have forgotten this note when preparing the poems for *1839*."[81] Percy did, after all, compose poems across scattered pages, blurring the delineation of one poem to the next.[82] Others classify it without speculation, continuing to assign it to William (as Mary does),[83] or Fanny (as Percy's manuscript seems to strongly suggest).[84] Some merely note its inconsistencies but leave it suspended as an unresolved critical debate.[85] Despite the manuscript's strong associations with Fanny, if Mary had left it an unnamed fragment, she could have left readers to interpret the infant's identity. The unnamed infant could have

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[80] Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 550.
[81] Percy Shelley, *Poems of Shelley*, vol. 1, 550.
[82] For more on how Percy's intermingled notebook verse suggests fascinating, if tangled, insights into both his psyche and creative process, see Steven E. Jones, "Material Intertextuality: The Case of Shelley's Rough-Draft Notebooks," *Text* 8 (1995): 239-47.
[83] See Lerner, *Angels and Absences*, 65.
[84] See Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 33; Matthews, "Whose Little Footsteps?," 257-260.
[85] See Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's 'Poetical Works' (1839)," 32-35.

(possibly) been both William and Fanny by being neither particularly. After all, these two figures shared blood ties as well as their status as highly-treasured infant companions who inspired great literature from their parents.

However, one of Mary's editorial changes reflects intention and cannot adequately be accounted for as a transcription error. Percy's designation of the mother as "one," in "When one returned to gaze on thee," maps neatly onto the dream-reunion passage from Wollstonecraft's source material. Looking at the manuscript, the underlined word is legible and insistent, as Percy is emphasizing that, despite his own deficiencies, one did, in the ~~Friend's~~ infancy, "gaze" on her lovingly. It also suggests the preeminence of Wollstonecraft in Percy's imagination. Yet at some point in Mary's transcription process, Mary changed Percy's "one" to her own "we."[86] Irving Massey admits that he "has no clue to the riddle that Mary elided under the innocent 'we' of line 6,"[87] but the new figures implied in Mary's version of the poem seem to be Percy, Mary, and William, a family unit emphasized throughout Mary's biographical commentary on Percy's poetical work. This new pronoun shifts the poem's understanding significantly. First, as Massey points out, the stanza's syntax becomes disjointed: whereas the "one" and the "infant" are reflected in the later line's pronouns, "And she is dead—and thou are dead," Mary's collective "we" then calls into question who "she" might then be.[88] The change has effects beyond mere syntax, as it centralizes the speaker not as a witness of the loving parental gaze, but as its giver. The fragment is then not a continuation of the previous lamentation for the adult ~~Friend~~, wherein

[86] See Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's 'Poetical Works' (1839)," 33, who traces the process of these changes in Mary's various fair-copy transcriptions. A copy of the page in question can be seen online http://shelleysghost.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/marys-copies-of-shelleys-poems?item=220 - Description. See also Percy Shelley, Fair-copy of Mary Shelley's transcription of the fragment. "IV.–To William Shelley." MS. Shelley adds. d. 9, p.49. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
[87] Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's 'Poetical Works' (1839)," 34.
[88] Massey, "The First Edition of Shelley's 'Poetical Works' (1839)," 33-34.

the poet stages his recognition of his own failure as a counterpoint to the successful (though melancholic) recognition of her lost parent. Its new form, "To William Shelley," is messier, more ruptured, and raises more questions than it answers.

It also, unfortunately, follows a pattern: despite the popularity of her mother's book and her own infant fame, Fanny has been frequently unclaimed or otherwise written out of the Shelley/Wollstonecraft/Godwin family narrative, a precedent initiated by Godwin and Mary.[89] Mary expressed regret that "[her] poor dear Fanny" had not lived to come reside with her family following her own marriage to Percy, and Todd writes that "there must have been pain" for Mary at her sister's death, but that ultimately "[t]he effect of Fanny's death on Mary is hard to gauge."[90] Mary omitted Fanny as the recipient of her collection of travel letters, erased her from her biographical note to Godwin's life in a posthumous edition of *Caleb Williams*, and led Edward Trelawny (one of Percy's early biographers and a sometime family friend) to believe she was Wollstonecraft's only child.[91]

So why did Mary claim the infant as her William at Fanny's expense? Social stigma surrounding Fanny's suicide seems possible: perhaps if the poem was published intact the famous infant from Wollstonecraft's writings would suggest the identity (and fate) of "F.G.". However, (as I will argue) in light of Mary's marginal commentary on Percy's poetry and her deep, abiding preoccupation with William's singularity and death, her editorial choice also seems a further attempt to secure his place as the preeminent lost infant companion. Changing the word "one" to "we," and the infant Fanny to William, allows the poem to fit

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[89] Most recently, despite her fame and centrality to Mary Shelley's young life, Fanny is does not appear as a character in Haifa Al-Mansour's 2018 Mary Shelley biopic, which seems to re-create the narrative that Mary in some degree fashioned for herself, that she was Wollstonecraft's only daughter (see Todd, *Death and the Maidens*, chap. 33).
[90] Todd, *Death and the Maidens,* chap. 33.
[91] Todd, *Death and the Maidens,* chap. 33.

more neatly into Mary's narrative of their familial happiness when William and Percy were still alive. Furthermore, the (textual) relationships among Mary, Fanny and their mother were complicated by their asymmetry: Mary was the daughter of two iconic thinkers, but it was on Fanny whom Wollstonecraft doted because she did not live long enough to do so on Mary. Both Mary and Fanny knew their mother's love through Wollstonecraft's maternal reflections, but Mary had to imagine this love through Fanny's avatar.[92] Though Mary undoubtedly mourned Fanny's death, as Todd suggests, her need to heighten William's presence within the Shelley family biography may not be the full story. Possibly her desire to replace her sister as the object of her mother's love, or her over-identification with herself as mother-figure and William as lost child, prompted her to use the openness of Percy's infant to secure the poem for her son and their family.

"[T]hat fair blue-eyed child / Who was the lodestar of your life"

After his death, as the medium of Percy's texts, Mary Shelley had two major aims: to 1) vindicate Percy's character and establish his place in the pantheon of poetic genius, and 2) demonstrate the legitimacy of her claim to this role by underscoring her (and William's) centrality to Percy's poetic production. As the editor of Percy's works, Mary faced difficult questions about publicizing their private life, embarrassments, and profound griefs.[93] These were exacerbated by Sir Timothy's dictate that she not write an account of Percy's life.[94] Mary circumvented this injunction by providing extensive notes to the poetry collection that he gave his permission for her to publish, arguing that if a reader had no access to the poet's

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[92] Mary was taught to read using *Lessons*, a reading primer Wollstonecraft wrote for Fanny which depicted the child alongside her anticipated sibling "William"/Mary.
[93] As others have noted, Mary's reservations about the danger of making her family's private (and unconventional) life public was undoubtedly informed by Godwin's ill-advised memoir of her mother, which ruined Wollstonecraft's reputation for decades.
[94] See Carlson, *England's First Family*, 195.

feelings and preoccupations during a particular period of composition, she could not fully appreciate the "passions" that "inspired his poetry."[95] Percy's children were a sensitive topic, but one that was unavoidable as the collection included poetry about losing custody of his older children and about William's death and because some stories already circulated rather publicly. Classifying Shelley's works as either "purely imaginative" or "those which sprung from the emotions of his heart,"[96] Mary included autobiographical poems in the latter category and therefore felt justified in discussing Percy's feelings about his children by way of vindicating his reputation as a responsible and caring father. Mary's notes emphasize Percy's pervasive feelings of loss, grief, and outrage, while also portraying him as motivated by profound paternal tenderness. Furthermore, since Mary characterized him as a poet of "extreme sensibility," natural feeling, and sympathetic impulse, she needed to demonstrate his inborn sense of parental love and duty.[97] "His heart, attuned to every kindly affection, was full of burning love for his offspring," she insists.[98] Mary's biographical note to Percy's 1819 works describes the circumstances and aftermath of William's death that year, a topic that leads Mary to account for Percy's abandonment of his children with Harriet. "To the Lord Chancellor" and "To William Shelley" ("The billows on the beach are leaping around it"), angry poems written upon losing those children, "were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public" but were rather "the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the

[95] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 1, vii.
[96] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 1, viii.
[97] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 1, xi.
[98] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 207.

uncontrollable emotions of his heart."[99] The poet's fatherly guise was hardly Wordsworthian in its recollected tranquility. Paternal passion animated his verse with "all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences."[100] Even his abandonment of his children with Harriet attested to his attachment to William (and Clara). The fact of their loss indicated that others could be taken from him, and thus Percy "did not hesitate to resolve" to "abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child."[101]

William's shaping presence as a source of his father's poetic inspiration extends beyond the poems addressed specifically to him. In her note on *The Cenci*, which she points out was composed immediately before and after William's death, Mary highlights similarities between its description of a deceased child and William.[102] She excerpts the following passage in her notes to demonstrate how much the dead William "haunted" Percy as he composed the play:[103]

> '…that fair blue-eyed child
> Who was the lodestar of your life:'— and say —
> All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
> That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
> And all the things hoped for or done therein

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[99] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 209. (Notably, Mary here removes references to Shelley's previous children from her excerpt of "The billows [on the beach] are leaping around it," as well as greatly tempers "To The Lord Chancellor.")
[100] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 208.
[101] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 3, 209.
[102] Though Julie Kipp does not specifically address this particular passage about William's likeness to the Camillo boy from Mary's note to *The Cenci*, she argues that the play itself "explor[es] the potentially devastating effects of physical/mental fusion with an 'other,'" which, she argues, in part suggests Percy's reaction to Mary's overwhelming devastation and depression following William's death. See Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic,* 155-82.
[103] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, 275.

Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.'[104]

The note does not mention the passage's context as a description of Cardinal Camillo's nephew, but only instances it as a portrait of their child and the depth of their world-changing grief. Within the play, however, the Cardinal's recollection of the appearance and memory of his beloved nephew fosters human connection in what is otherwise an impasse of sympathy. Spoken by Beatrice, the lines undergird her argument against testimony elicited through torture.

BEATRICE: …Speak now
The thing you surely know, which is, that you,
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,
And you were told, 'Confess that you did poison
Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the lodestar of your life;' and though
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein,
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
Yet you would say, 'I confess anything,'
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
The refuge of dishonorable death.
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
My innocence.

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[104] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, 275.

CAMILLO (*much moved*)

What shall we think, my Lords?

Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen

Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul

That she is guiltless.

JUDGE

Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO

I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew

(If he now lived, he would be just her age;

His hair, too, was her color, and his eyes

Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)

As that most perfect image of God's love

That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.

She is as pure as speechless infancy![105]

According to Beatrice, the physical pain of torture compels its victim to confess things that are not only untrue, but would be otherwise fundamentally repulsive and indeed unimaginable—like killing a beloved child. The memory of the dead child and the horror associated with the thought of killing him stir up Camillo's familial grief and thereby open him to her pleas for compassion. She figures this child as the "lodestar," or guiding light, in

[105] Percy Shelley, *The Cenci*, in Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, 141-271, 5.1.249-250. Citations to the play refer to act, scene, and page number for this edition.

the Cardinal's moral navigation, both in the past and now in her moment of crisis. To his surprise, the memory of this dead child thaws the Cardinal's "frozen" heart, making it impossible for him to assent to the justice of her torture. Even in death, the beloved child is a powerful moral agent, and his invocation compels the cardinal to not only recall him but also identify him in others (specifically, in Beatrice and in Jesus). The Cardinal, "*much moved*," sees his nephew in Beatrice's age, hair, and eyes. Because his nephew's infant potentiality was preserved and heightened in death, he becomes others and others become him, allowing the Cardinal to forge sympathetic connections beyond the individual child he loved and lost. This is not just because Beatrice, a more empathic person, has invoked his nephew's name and evoked his appearance, but because she begins her speech by acknowledging the Cardinal's personal loss and the physical pain that the child's death still creates. The memory of the dead infant, temporarily embodied by Beatrice's speech and within her person, becomes the site where the Cardinal can consider the horror of his complicity in the torture of other people. Pronouncing her "as pure as speechless infancy," the Cardinal rejects an immoral deed he was otherwise willing to approve. While this moment does not prevent Beatrice's tragic fate, the infant's emblematic purity, vulnerability, and call to humanity signal a moral triumph that rings true to an empathic audience. The "speechless[ness]" of infancy and death form a stark contrast to the false testimony elicited by tortured confession or the heartless pronouncement of state- and church-sanctioned injustice, positioning children like Camillo's nephew and William, the child on whom Mary claims he was modeled, as symbols of a world order modeled on social justice and human compassion.

Several passages in Mary's own work reinforce her depiction in these biographical notes of William as the infant elect and his father's spiritual heir. But hers insist on William's

concrete and unique identity, drawing on particulars from their life and grounding his presence in a body that is both proximate and at times excruciatingly attached to her own. "William was so good so beautiful so entirely attached to me," she writes despairingly.[106] Her poem "The Choice," recorded in her "Journal of Sorrow," describes her existence as an isolated survivor reflecting on the devastating personal losses she sustained in Italy and her resolve to continue, despite her grief, to protect her husband's legacy.[107] She uses the word "companion" three times in the poem, twice in reference to Percy and once to William, reinforcing the connection between the two dead beloveds as well as the genuine intimacy she shared with them. Referring to William as "my eldest born, loveliest, dearest- / Clung to my side - most joyful when nearest" (65-66), Mary emphasizes her and her boy's desire to be physically close to one another. For a poem chiefly lamenting the loss of her husband,[108] Mary devotes many lines to detailing William's adventurous spirit and recounting her experience as a mother, lines that reflect William's central role as the infant companion in their roving lives.

> Then our companion o'er the swift-passed seas
> Had dwelt beside the Alps - or gently slept,
> Rocked by the waves, o'er which our vessel swept,
> Beside his father - nurst upon my breast,

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[106] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft & Mary Shelley* (New York: Random House, 2015), 303.
[107] Graham Allen deconstructs the idea of "return" and the form of the elegy in "The Choice" (Graham Allen, "Mary Shelley as Elegaiac Poet: The Return and 'The Choice,'" *Romanticism* 13, no. 3 (2007): 219-232. Constance Walker argues that, though Mary's decision to write in verse is an attempt to "keep P. B. Shelley alive by incorporating him and becoming a poet herself" (143), she ultimately turns to prose, in Evelyn's death scene in *The Last Man*, in order to adequately express her profound and jarring grief (139); see Constance Walker, "Kindertotenlieder: Mary Shelley and the Art of Losing," in *Mary Shelley in Her Times*, edited by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 134-146.
[108] Mary's "choice" in the poem refers both to Percy as her choice of life-companion as well as her choice to continue living after his death.

While Leman's waters ~~shook~~ tost with fierce unrest

His fairest limbs had bathed in Serchio's ~~ste~~ stream;

His eyes had watch[ed] Italian lightnings gleam;

His childish voice had with its loudest call,

The echoes waked of Este's Castle wall;

Had paced Pompeii's Roman market Place

Had gazed with infant wonder on the grace

Of stone wrought deities and pictured saints

In Rome's high palaces…

(70-82)

Intermingling the newness of infancy with ancient ruins and timeless phenomena of the natural world, William seems even in life the "infant immortal" that Mary deems him after his death (91). William, though a child, has been given access to these recognizable cultural images about which others— many of Mary's readers among them—would only ever read. Though they are culturally resonant to the reader, Mary emphasizes their material importance to her and her son through the traces of his bodily presence. William's "eyes" and "gaze," "voice" and "limbs" have encountered the elements of Mary's litany of marvel (76, 77, 80, 75), and his mother sees with "infant wonder" through his eyes. In contrast to Wordsworth's or Coleridge's wandering child of solitude, William's exposure to the ancient and natural sublime occurs alongside (and because of) his parents. This is what distinguishes the Shelleys' infant companion, embodied in William but established by Fanny, from other Romantic infant figures: the child's encounter with the wider world is shared with his/her parent(s), reinforcing the strength of their powerful affective bonds to one another.

Because the poem is written from her perspective, Mary's loving maternal gaze in the poem is palpable even when her physical presence fades into the background. Her focus remains fixed on William's joy and wonder as she recounts his experiences far more than her own. She does not venture into his interiority, but this does not seem to imply skepticism about its depth. Rather, William's body is itself eminently readable through its interaction with his environment, his settings a sounding-board for his infant mind. Her catalog of William's experiences refers to private memories that can be chronicled, but not fully conveyed. William seems not to dart from place to place, but to transcend the material constraints of his small body and short lifespan by somehow being in England, France, Switzerland, and across Italy all at once. His ability to explore the wonders of the world are made possible by the unconventional (even scandalous) lifestyle of his parents, but his placement between the two, "Beside his father - nurst upon my breast" (73), indicates the secure base that their love and companionship provides. The long list of culturally significant sites and sights is not only an account of the important and formative experiences of William's very young life. It is also a lament for how much more he would have seen, heard, and interacted with, had he lived longer. The opening couplet of the passage, finds her a "happy Mother first I saw its sun- / Beneath her sky my race of joy was run" (60-62), marking it as a period of joy that she sorrowfully seeks to relive through her poetry for as long as she can sustain its fantasy of return.[109]

"The Choice" offers an autobiographical poetic account of Mary's grief over William, but she also incorporated spritely, blue-eyed, William-like children into her works of fiction.

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[109] See Allen, "Mary Shelley as Elegaiac Poet," 224.

Acknowledging the boy's reflection in the murdered "William" of *Frankenstein*,[110] Constance Walker argues that Mary's 1826 novel *The Last Man* most keenly depicts Mary's maternal grief through the animated and effervescent toddler Evelyn.[111] The post-apocalyptic story follows the tribulations of a politically-significant family during a catastrophic plague. As Lionel Verney journeys with his family to try to avoid the disease,[112] order deteriorates, threatening the social bonds of the nation, friendship, and the family. Verney's very young son, Evelyn, reflects William in his physical appearance, his chattering joy, his parents' devoted love, and the scene, cause, and location of his death, which occurs in the novel's penultimate chapter. The death scene of Evelyn, the world's last child, sounds strikingly like Mary's personal accounts of William's death.[113]

> I have heard that the sight of the dead has confirmed materialists in their belief. I ever felt otherwise. Was that my child — that moveless decaying inanimation? My child was enraptured by my caresses; his dear voice cloathed with meaning articulations his thoughts, otherwise inaccessible; his smile was a ray of the soul, and the same soul sat upon its throne in his eyes. I turn from this mockery of what he was. Take, O earth, thy debt! freely and for ever I consign to thee the garb thou didst afford. But thou, sweet child, amiable and

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[110] *Frankenstein* was of course published before William's death, though Betty T. Bennett argues that the boys' shared name suggests that William's death because it was the worst thing Mary could conceive. See Bennett, "*Frankenstein* and the Uses of Biography," in *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*, edited by Stephen C. Behrendt (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990).
[111] Interestingly, Percy appears in the novel's "unearthed manuscript" frame story, which, due to its timing of December 8, 1818, Mary situates following Clara's death, but before William's.
[112] Verney has widely been identified as a proximate character for Mary in a novel whose characters draw distinct similarities with Mary's circle of intimates (including Adrian as Percy and Lord Raymond as Byron).
[113] Both Walker ("Kindertotenlieder," 256) and Jane Blumberg and Nora Crook (Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, Vol. 4 of *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*, edited by Jane Blumberg with Nora Crook [London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996], 272/5) observe this similarity.

> beloved boy, either thy spirit has sought a fitter dwelling, or, shrined in my heart, thou livest while it lives.[114]

Immediately after William's death, Mary wrote to Leigh Hunt's wife, "I never know one moments ease from the wretchedness & despair that possesses me—May you my dear Marianne never know what it is to loose (sic) two only & lovely children—to watch their dying moments—& then at last to be left childless & forever miserable."[115] Though he has witnessed the deaths of countless beloved others around him, Verney finds himself unable to confront the material reality of his child's corpse. Constance Walker has argued that, unlike other noted child death scenes of nineteenth-century literature and unlike the elegiac genre more broadly, Mary does not depict Evelyn's death as meaningful or as an ultimate protection and encapsulation of Evelyn's purity.[116] In this way, while Mary's language echoes Percy's in "My Lost William," her question ("Was that my child?") differs distinctly from Percy's ("Where art thou?"). Verney refuses to seek comfort in finding significance in his son's death. Instead of portraying Evelyn's death as peaceful or innocent, Verney bitterly calls his son's corpse a "mockery of what he was." Though Verney's reflection on the body of his son ultimately echoes Percy's poetic passage, both the visceral embodied closeness he describes when thinking of his son while still living, as well his abject horror upon seeing him suddenly dead, renders the tone of the passage far more painful and poignant that Percy's poetic ruminations.

Verney experiences the unfathomable horror of a parent actively seeking the mutual parent-infant gaze, so vital to that relationship, in the face and body of an unresponsive dead

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[114] Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, 272/5-275/8.
[115] Mary Shelley to Marianne Hunt, June 29, 1819, in *Letters*, 101.
[116] Walker, "Kindertotenlieder," 134-42.

child. The embodied exchange was both natural, unconscious, and actively pleasurable to both: Evelyn's "enraptured" response to Verney's physical affection, the paralinguistic "meaning articulations" of his infant "dear voice" which Verney could decipher, the light of love that shone in the boy's eyes and smile. Without the surging vitality that characterized and animated his son, Verney finds Evelyn unrecognizable. Intersubjective exchange, though reached for, is impossible: death has robbed the boy of his subjecthood, rendering him an object of "moveless decaying inanimation." Verney's pained, "Was that my child—," reveals the aporia of a father whose deep and unabiding love has suddenly lost its object.[117] The intensity and immediacy of Verney's sensory impressions of his child sound much like Buchan's "tremblingly alive" mother, attuned to every unarticulated (and inarticulate) thought and need of his child. Indeed, it is notable that Mary describes this scene from the perspective of a father rather than a mother, as if to demonstrate that the viscerally embodied connection between parent and child was not physiologically rooted in a "special" maternal body. Verney's pain is that of a parent reaching out for the now-lost presence of the child, the intersubjective reach, once a source of joy and comfort, resulting in raw agony. Evelyn's death is not the final death of the novel, but it is the death of hope.[118] Like Mary in 1826, Verney is the sole survivor, a "wanderer" after all his "companions" have died away.

Mary's echo of Percy's lamentation suggests that she found comfort in the memory of their shared grief, admiration in Percy's turn of phrase, and the strength of their shared conviction. Verney's resolution that Evelyn, "shrined in [his] heart… livest while it lives"

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[117] This passage strikes an interesting contrast with the animation scene of *Frankenstein*, where Victor's horror is not due to the blank eyes of a beloved dead child, but the "dull yellow eye" of a "child" whose loving gaze is one of the primary causes for his rejection. The infant's gaze reveals not an abstract ethical duty to the other, but a deeply-felt and mourned reciprocity.

[118] Walker adds, and I would concur, that Evelyn's death is "the worst death in *The Last Man*" (Walker, "Kindertotenlieder," 256).

echoes Percy's lines, "thy funeral shrine / Is thy mother's grief and mine." (8-9). Percy's "My Lost William" was in fact the only poem he wrote to William regarding his death, and Mary again returns to this poem in "The Choice," writing, "the airs & plants received the mortal part, / His spirit beats within his mother's heart!" (89-90). Compare this with the passage from "My Lost William," where William's spirit "feeds / With its life intense and mild, / The love of living leaves and weeds" (11-13), and its enduring force of some unnamed essence "that through low seeds / Of sweet flowers and sunny grass / Into their hues and scents may pass / A portion—" (15-18).[119] While Percy imagines William's spirit integrated into the vital and energetic force within the material world, the "spirit" of Mary's "infant immortal" has, in "The Choice," been fully incorporated back into Mary's own body (90-91). Mary's return to Percy's poetic lamentation demonstrates her desire to portray their shared parental grief as reverberating through one another's work. However, rather than mimicking Percy's poetry, she varies its form, wording, and ideas to show that their grief, though commonly felt, was differentiated and, thus, different.

As (lost) infant companions, Fanny and William both together and individually offer a way to consider how the Shelleys' explorations infancy and the relationships between their texts and their children differ substantially from other Romantic writers. While the figure of the "infant companion" evokes some of the enduring tenets of the Romantic infant—potentiality, imagination, and sympathy—the term acknowledges the ways in which this idealized figure was not a solitary figure of inspiration or contemplation, but a friend and fellow traveler whose shared experience with her parent(s) made her/him a close and beloved

[119] Though Walker argues that Mary's decision to write in verse in "The Choice" reflects her desire to keep Percy alive by engaging in a poetic medium, she does not specifically mention the similarities of Percy's "My lost William" poem with this passage from *The Last Man* (Walker, "Kindertotenlieder").

intimate. Fanny became the preeminent infant companion after the publication of Wollstonecraft's *Letters*, but William continued this role in his parents' own travels, a role that would be especially meaningful to Mary who, as a mother, could identify with her own mother's maternal writings.[120] The specter of death, however, never ventured far from the Shelleys, and with so many dead mothers and children, even moments of happy intimacy between parent and child are suffused with grief, pain, and loss. By recognizing this loss as encapsulated in the infant figures of Fanny and William, we can revolutionize our readings of lesser-read texts by the Shelleys (for instance, "Her voice did quiver" / "Thy little footsteps in the sand"), as well as their texts more frequently discussed in relation to parents and children.

We might worry that the figure of the dead child challenges my overarching argument that the malleability of infants evoked enduring Romantic anxieties about unconscious influence. After all, the consciousness of a dead child is no longer subject to being molded. But this only shifts the focus back to the enduring question of Romantic consciousness, for in death, the unconscious child is made and remade in the minds of those who knew him or who encounter his legacy in literature. Moreover, anxieties evoked by infant malleability transform into dread over a lost, forgotten, or ever-replaceable infant. In his poem about the infant Fanny, Percy attempts to address her adult feelings of despair and abandonment by reuniting her with her beloved mother, while still recognizing that Wollstonecraft's attempts on her own life (now shockingly fulfilled by Fanny's suicide) were in some way

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[120] Walker and Bennett both have argued that Mary's sense of herself as a good mother was an act of self-forgiveness for the death of her own mother; thus, Walker points out that, through the deaths of her children, Mary "would…re-experience[e] the loss of the mother" (see Walker's endnote 26, "Kindertotenlieder"). It is worth emphasizing (as Mary does) that this is furthermore a loss of herself—that is, her cherished sense of self as a loving mother—doubly regretted for the guilt and anger she feels about facilitating (or at least enabling) her childrens' deaths.

irreconcilable with her image as an ideal mother. Mary's overzealous protection of William's place as the uncontested infant companion spurred her to not only replace the infant Fanny with William, but to reinforce the idea (initiated by Percy) that William was morally superior to Percy's first children. Once again, the openness that the infant embodies is its great source of power, while also figuring as its greatest point of weakness.

The powerfully embodied experience of maternal tenderness that marks Mary Shelley's writing about William in many ways reverberates through the different medical and literary discourses this dissertation has addressed. The connection between mother (or caretaker) and infant lays both parties open to great vulnerability and danger, while also being the framework for future love, attachment, and security. The body of the infant compels us to think of ourselves too, as infants once, and to consider the myriad ways in which our minds and bodies have shaped by infantile experience, the unseen forces of the past. This, too, was a great Romantic preoccupation within both literary and medical discourses, with concerns spanning from how the maternal body communicates with and responds to the fetus and later the infant, and how the rhythms and songs of infancy remain embedded in the embodied unconscious into adulthood. Theories of attachment, affect, and intersubjectivity offer compelling vocabularies and frameworks for understanding how minds and bodies speak, feel, and make meaning, and are particularly useful for considering the mother-infant dyad, where the paralinguistic features of speech, as well as other sonic, haptic, and proprioceptive modalities are amplified. Regarded through this lens, the Romantic infant, in all of its medical and literary representations, can be seen—and felt—anew.

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