

Chapter One: Introduction

I. The Looks of Wordsworth

By the 1830s, Wordsworth had become a national icon. In 1832, Henry William Pickersgill, at the request of St. John's College, Cambridge, painted the first well-known portraiture of Wordsworth. In this picture, Wordsworth, then 62 years old, is placed sitting beside a rock, with Rydal mountain, sky, and sea as backdrop. With a pen and paper in his left hand, Wordsworth in the picture is turning his head right and projecting his eyes towards the left-center part of the picture, creating an effect of harmony from the left/right balance. Months later after the completion of this picture and its exhibition in St. John's College, the reviewer for *The Athenæum* expressed his disappointment with this portrait:

[W]e demand for Wordsworth, not a look equal to the management of the stamp revenue for Westmorland alone, but something of that dignity of intellect which dictated his truly noble poems; we want a little inspiration; we desire such expression as will induce the spectator to say, "that is the look of a poet." (no. 342 [17 May 1834], qtd. in Rovee)

Another commentator on this portrait, Henry Crabb Robinson, thought that the portrait did not catch the disposition of Wordsworth's eyes: "[t]he picture wants an oculist" (qtd. from Rovee 154). Onto his representation of his public image, Wordsworth at first passed only a brief judgment: "[w]e all like it exceedingly" (*Later Years*, 2: 554), but in 1840, however, his attitude changed, seeming to have also detected the problem with the eyes, as had Robinson. He hoped for a chance to have another picture from Pickersgill: "If I go to London in the Spring, and my eyes should be in as good order as they are at present, the picture shall meet me there and I will get P. to retouch it" (*Later Years*, 4:120). If the eyes in this portrait expressed

feelings of indifference suited only for a stamp collector,¹ the second well-known Wordsworth portrait, engraved by W. H. Watt in 1835 and used as frontispiece to the 1836 *Poems*, showed too much femininity. Compared with Pickersgill's, here Wordsworth's eyes show excess of tenderness, with the lower lip protruding to create an introverted image. Wordsworth was very dissatisfied with this portrait, thinking that the picture distorted him, or, at least, the public image he wanted to convey. The picture carries "an air of feebleness" and "a weakness of expression about the upper lip" (*Later Years*, 3: 304). In a letter to his nephew, Christopher Wordsworth, this picture was further criticized as carrying with it an "air of decrepitude, and the maudlin expression about the upper lip" (*Later Years*, 3: 343-44). If Pickersgill's portrait lacks tenderness, Watt's lacks the masculine, even powerful image Wordsworth had in mind. Wordsworth's ideal self-image was realized in Benjamin Robert Haydon's portrait *Wordsworth on Helvellyn* in 1842. In this portraiture, Wordsworth is in a pensive mood, with his hands folded and head lowered in front of Helvellyn. Rather than using nature as backdrop, as in Pickersgill's, Wordsworth is standing in front, creating a huge sublime figure of solitude and imagination dwarfing the mountain and sky in back. On seeing Haydon's picture, Wordsworth's daughter Dora called it "perfection" (qtd. in Rovee 170).

If pensiveness and masculine power were the ideal attributes of his public image for Wordsworth, William Hazlitt's description of Wordsworth also attests to the trueness of Haydon's picture. In Hazlitt's personal observation from his meeting with the poet, Wordsworth "lives in the busy solitude of his own heart; in the deep silence of thought," a brooding figure of "heroic proportions" (qtd. in Rovee 169). "[S]olitude," "thought," "heroic" epitomize the stereo typical image of Wordsworth. In his effort to create the image of the "dignity of intellect" in his "noble poems,"

¹ In 1813 Wordsworth received the official position of the Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland.

Wordsworth has successfully created a unified public image. For almost two hundred years, Wordsworth has been recognized as a disembodied poet, his mind an epitome of the masculine power of the imagination. The process of constructing a unified inner self out of the “body” of the text has long been manipulated in Wordsworth’s collected poems, those published since 1815, in which the chronological order was replaced with the aim to regroup them according to thematic subject. Zachary Leader notes the intention of this editorial manipulation: “Wordsworth’s insistence on a mostly thematic rather than chronological ordering of his poems in collected editions---[is] another manifestation of his sense of the self as single and unified” (665).

The image of a single and unified self stems from a preference in the mind than the body. In addition to the portraits, descriptions from Wordsworth’s contemporaries also helped to promote the image of a unified self. It was first hinted in Thomas De Quincey’s physiognomic observation of Wordsworth:

The nose, a little arched, and large; which, by the way... has always been accounted an unequivocal expression of animal appetites organically strong.

And that expressed the simple truth: Wordsworth’s intellectual passions were fervent and strong. (qtd. in Hagstrum 144)

The linkage between “a little arched, and large” nose with “an unequivocal expression of animal appetites” is a typical physiognomic diagnosis prevalent in the eighteenth century, but the “intellectual passions” detected from the same nose reveals De Quincey’s presupposition of Wordsworth as a strong poet. The relation between the shape of nose and the size of the animal appetites seemed clear since they both belong to the category of corporeal organs, but De Quincey transmuted the signs of animal passions into those of intellectual power. Dorothy Wordsworth once said that Wordsworth possessed: “a sort of violence of Affections... which demonstrates itself

every moment of the Day when the objects of his affection are present with him” (*Letters: Early Years* 83). The problem is: why do these affections and animal energies resist being transmuted from the portraits of Wordsworth, whether full-length picture or facial descriptions to his poetry? If De Quincey’s observation shows the unavoidable interpretation of Wordsworth’s looks, from the outside to the inside, from animal appetites to intellectual passions, then another Wordsworth contemporary, William Hazlitt, relentlessly pointed out the self-image created from Wordsworth’s poems: “One would suppose, from the tenor of his subjects, that on this earth there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage” (qtd. in Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 143). In “neither marrying nor giving in marriage,” Hazlitt is referring to the absence of the sexual body in Wordsworth’s poetry. The avoidance of sex created the image, to use the words of M. H. Abrams, of an “asexual” and “ascetic” poet (ibid). Even when Wordsworth uses the word “wed,” “consummation,” they are used metaphorically to designate the wedding of the mind and the external world: “the discerning intellect of Man/When wedded to this goodly universe/In love and holy passion” (*Poems* II, 52-58). Of course, during his lifetime, it cannot be said that Wordsworth forewent sexual relationships with women: e.g. his wife, Mary Hutchinson and his French lover Annette Vallon,² not to mention his “dear, dear Friend” Dorothy Wordsworth. The Wordsworth family hid the story of Annette Vallon for more than one hundred years, preserving the image of an ascetic, sublime nature poet, as created in Robert Haydon’s painting.

2 “In 1916 it was at last revealed publicly (scholarly insiders had known for some time) that Wordsworth had fathered a daughter on a French Royalist sympathizer when he was twenty-two years old. To some it was a relief to learn that Wordsworth had been like Keats and Shelley and Byron, a man with flesh and blood appetites, and not just a solitary visionary communing with Nature and the Universe, which is the figure most of the late portraits, busts, and statues conveyed. For others, though, the news had a more exciting meaning. Now one could see why Wordsworth’s early poetry is peopled with abandoned women and destitute figures and haunted guilty men. The haunted, guilty one was the poet himself. Further speculation about Wordsworth’s relation with his sister, Dorothy, added to the sense that the poetry up to, say, 1803 was the produce of a tormented spirit” (Stephen Gill “Introduction,” 2).

The avoidance of referring to Wordsworth's body, especially the sexual body, results in a one-dimensional, uni-faceted image of Wordsworth. The legacy of the sublime, disembodied poet continues well into the twentieth century and dominates the circle of Wordsworth criticism. However, the sublime look of the poet is gradually revealed its different facets as Wordsworth criticism changed its methodology. Wordsworth criticism since the 1960s has generally proceeded in three main directions: the Yale School rhetorical criticism since the 1960s, (New) Historicist political criticism since the 1970s, and ecological criticism since the 1990s. The Yale School, represented by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Harold Bloom, directs their critical interest to the Romantic "vision." Seeing nature and imagination as two forces fighting for Wordsworth's soul, Hartman argues that "Wordsworth set out with less between himself and his imagination than perhaps any poet before him; he is somehow more vulnerable to apocalyptic starts and self-recognition" (101). In his *The Visionary Company*, Bloom emphasizes the power of imagination that enables Wordsworth to "blend" man and nature "into an apocalyptic unity" (127). This "apocalyptic unity," from the perspective of the (New) Historicists, is contaminated with an historical engagement that betrays a hidden history of Wordsworth. From an early proponent of the French Revolution to a silent convert after the England-France War, this political conversion, according to the (New) Historicists, is deeply rooted, and metamorphosed into Wordsworth's nature poetry. Historical readings of Romanticism began from David Erdman, E. P. Thompson and Carl Woodring, whose emphasis on the effect of state power and political institutions explains Romantic creativity as an outcome of revolutionary conflict. This Marxist reading is later extended by the New Historicists. In Jerome McGann's *The Romantic Ideology* and Marjorie Levinson's *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, the transcendental tone manifested in *Tintern Abbey* (written on July 13, nine years after

the fall of the Bastille), as Marjorie Levinson suggests, originates “in a will to preserve something Wordsworth knows is already lost,” and “while the narrator of ‘Tintern Abbey’ can transcend his subject, it is clear that he cannot redeem it” (37). What Wordsworth cannot redeem, for Levinson, is not so much the changed feeling for natural scenery over the “five years” as the pro-revolutionary spirit now lost. Noting the difference between two versions of *The Prelude*, James Chandler points out that the inserted stanza on Edmund Burke (a mouthpiece for the anti-French Revolution) in the *1850 Prelude* reveals the “second nature” of the post-Revolutionary Wordsworth. It is in the 1850 version, typified in Wordsworth’s praise of Burke as a “presiding genius,” that Wordsworth expresses that “for a long time [he] was unable to make any acknowledgment of his early adult thought” (11). Dissatisfied both with the ahistorical reading of transcendental vision in the Yale School and the sometime distorted political reading (typified in Alan Liu’s interpretation of the Snowdon episode in *The Prelude* as invested with Napoleon’s image) of the New Historicists, Jonathan Bate, in his *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) initiates the eco-criticism of Wordsworth. He includes Wordsworth first in the line of modern green activists and promotes Wordsworth to a pioneer ecologist of the nineteenth century. Focusing on local landscape description in Wordsworth’s nature poetry and his attitude towards preservation of the Lake District (exemplified in Wordsworth’s objection to railroad construction in the letters published in *Morning Post* in 1844), Bate attributes the establishment of the National Trust and the National Park in the Lake District to Wordsworth’s influence, one that extends into the twentieth century.

These three mainstream Wordsworthian critical schools since the 1960s, though embracing different critical stances, all circle around Wordsworth’s aesthetic ideas of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. However, very few Wordsworth

critics are capable of providing a comprehensive picture of the three aesthetic ideas in Wordsworth's poetry, but it is the sublimity of Wordsworth that most aroused critical interests from the aspect of phenomenology, deconstruction, New-historicism, and ecology. Criticism centered on these aesthetic ideas of Wordsworth include Albert O. Wlecke's *Wordsworth and the Sublime* (1973), David B. Pirie's *William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and of Tenderness* (1982), Matthew Brennan's *Wordsworth, Turner, and Romantic Landscape: A Study of the Traditions of the Picturesque and the Sublime* (1987).³ Among the three aesthetic discourses, the Wordsworthian sublime is the topic most frequently discussed and debated. While critics mostly focused on the sublimity of the "great poems," dating from 1798 to 1805, Wordsworth's involvement with the other two aesthetic topics is usually cast aside as irrelevant or unimportant. The beautiful is usually seen as an aesthetic foil to the sublime and rarely deemed a topic independently worthy of discussion. As for the picturesque, though early investigated by Walter J. Hipple and Christopher Hussey, it is only during the last several decades that it has gained critical attention with the rise of Post-colonialism. While Esther Moir's *The Discovery of Britain: The English Tourists: 1540 to 1840* (1964) and J. R. Watson's *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry* (1970) early on detected possibilities in the study of the picturesque, it was not until Malcolm Andrews' *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism* (1989) that there emerged another wave, as consolidated in

³ Systematic investigation into the three aesthetic ideas current in the nineteenth century England include Walter J. Hipple's *The Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1957), Samuel H. Monk's *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* (Michigan : The University of Michigan Press, 1960), Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), Christopher Hussey's *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London:Cass, 1983). It should be added that "the sublime" is a dominant aesthetic idea not only in nineteenth century but also in twentieth century critical circles. Almost all the well-known Romantic poets have been studied under the topic of the sublime, thus: Albert O. Wlecke's *Wordsworth and the Sublime* (1973), Stuart A. Ende's *Keats and the Sublime* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1976), and Angela Leighton's *Shelley and the Sublime: An Interpretation of the Major Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

the Stephen Copley and Peter Garside edited *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and aesthetics since 1770* (1994). As an aesthetic fashion in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the picturesque style of painting and writing coincided with the age of sensibility popular in the late half of the eighteenth century. It is in this milieu that Wordsworth first started his literary circle, and the cultivation of passionate tenderness in this period became a major feature of Wordsworth's poems in the later period. While Haydon's picture of a pensive Wordsworth best matched Wordsworth's self-image and the look he hoped to offer for public recognition, the other two pictures are not just the painters' misrecognition or lack of skill. Instead, they coincidentally dug into the other facets of Wordsworth that he did not recognize or was unwilling to accept. Tenderness, pensiveness, and coldness are three major characteristics to which the three aesthetic ideas practiced in Wordsworth's literary stages testify. From the first publication of *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* in 1793 to the final revisions of his *Poetical Works* in 1849, Wordsworth turned from a young pro-revolutionary into a Tory stamp collector and then a poet laureate. These published works, together with his political identity, incorporated the characteristics of the picturesque, the sublime, and the beautiful that constitute the different faces of Wordsworth that he could not graft into one harmonious picture of himself.

II. Body Criticism

Representing their respective historical horizons, the three mainstream Wordsworth critical school lack one critical strategy to include the three aesthetic stages Wordsworth traversed. Yale School critics generally followed empiricist tradition and focused on the (de)construction of an ahistorical vision; the New Historicists spared no effort to reveal the political escapism in Wordsworth's poetry; Eco-critics lapsed back into the privileges of the mind when treating Wordsworth's

love of nature. This dissertation, based on a revisionist materialist tradition, suggests that the body should be given more critical attention when aesthetics and politics are considered in this “disembodied” poet. As Herbert Reed questions: “What if we do discover that the greatness of poetry is grounded in animal passions? What if we do discover that the basis of all art is a certain measure of sensuality?” (17). As the ground of one’s irreducible material existence, the body is the origin of both aesthetic appreciation and political behaviors. It is a basic unit of human communication, and a site where different discourses converge, conflict, and mutually control. To underestimate the place of the body in Wordsworth is not just to treat him as a disembodied and desexualized poet; it totally negates the foundation on which aesthetic appreciation is made possible.

As a newly-fledged critical approach, body criticism provides one way to discover another aspect of Wordsworth and establish a link between the three aesthetic stages. This distorted image of Wordsworth as a disembodied nature poet reveals the problem of methodology in literary criticism. For centuries, the field of literary criticism has been dominated by the mind/body dualism in modern Western philosophy as consolidated by René Descartes. In his famous “I think, therefore I am” statement, the thinking mind is seen as an immaterial substance that precedes all other material existence. Only with the recognition of mind can a man prove his own existence in the world. The heritage of Descartes has led to the assertion of an immaterial mind that exists independently from the material, mortal body. Nevertheless, the body is the medium through which the subject interacts with the outer world in everyday life. The negligence of it has resulted in conclusions of “a highly paradoxical nature,” in that “[w]hile in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence” (Leder 1). This type of “metaphysics of presence,” to use Derrida’s phrase, effaces

and hides the presence of the body which lies at the heart of the progress toward greater recognition of our subjectivity. Under the sway of the Cartesian paradigm, human knowledge is constructed at the expense of lived experience, which is the major source of knowledge. This dominance of mind over body was critically challenged by Friedrich Nietzsche.⁴ In his “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,” Nietzsche sees knowledge as an invented enterprise that serves the need for self-preservation. To tap his “will power,” man designates a “thing in itself” with names, and calls this seemingly coincident result “truth.” Nietzsche argues that from the nerve stimulus of sensation to the image transported to the mind, and finally to the sound identifying the image, there are two levels of metaphors that cannot be deduced. That is to say, truth is never identical with the thing itself, for it is “a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms,” which “after long use seem[s] firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people” (42-47). Civilization is actually based on the movement of the body (nerve stimulus of sensation) and the satisfaction of bodily needs (self-preservation, nutrition, sexuality), and in the development of civilization, man’s will to power is being transvalued. Nietzsche not only reverses this mind/body hierarchy, but also points to a critical problem in Western philosophy: while all knowledge derives from the contact between the body and its other, bodily

⁴ Nietzsche’s critique of Cartesian dualism represents a line of body criticism different from what about the body mainstream Western philosophy is willing to accept. This line of body criticism, according to Bryan S. Turner, was first systematically developed in anthropology in the nineteenth century, and it progressed to cover four related fields of research: first, the body is seen as the guarantee of the “universals in human origins,” as in Lewis Henry Morgan’s study of ancient society; second, humans are understood as a species between “nature and culture,” as in Sigmund Freud’s research into totem and taboo; third, the body is viewed “simultaneously as constraint and potential,” as in Konrad Lorenz’s study of animal aggression and Alfred L. Kroeber’s focus on the cultural constitution of the human; fourth, the body is analyzed as a site of “public symbolism,” as in the study of decoration, tattooing and scarification of R. Brain and T. Polhemus (1-6). The study of the body in anthropology points to, and paves the way for the further development of body criticism. When sociological interest in the body starts to take root, it develops an anthropological component and falls into three distinct categories: “the physical/individual body, the social body, and the body politic” (Meira Weiss 10). In the latter half of the twentieth century, the focus has shifted from debates on universality and the nature of humans to the social construction of the body under the influences of different discourses.

senses that provide the sources of knowledge are always soon subjugated and debased once the truth of knowledge is established and consolidated.

One prominent figure in the investigation of the history of the body is Michel Foucault. In his early *Discipline and Punish* as well as his late *History of Sexuality*, he attempts to map out the hidden history of the body. As he explains the main focus of genealogical study, Foucault makes explicit that “[g]enealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body” (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* 148). The body is destroyed in the way that it is “directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (*Discipline* 25). Note also as the target for discipline and punishment, as in the body of the criminal, patient, and soldier, the body itself can be seen as a political entity, a part of the body politic associated with “a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes, and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (*Discipline and Punish* 175-76). Following Nietzsche, Foucault believes that the creation of values has its origin in the body. In the development of civilization, the body has been inscribed with different discourses, religious, political, and economical. His analysis of the power/knowledge dyad shows that the body is understood as a site through which power affects the knowledge produced. This practice of discourse, in Foucault’s study, is prevalent in all areas of a society, from the monastery, to the military school, to the clinic. Through discursive practice, the body is disciplined and normalized.

Nietzsche and Foucault provide two basis molds of body criticism that should be

compromised. The individual extension of the body (including the higher molds of the mind) as the practice of the will to power is unavoidable under the influence of discursive power. That is to say, when the body wills, its autonomy is constrained to a certain degree. However, the problem with Nietzsche and Foucault is that they portray a neutral image of the body, ignoring the female body and the classed body which are the general sufferers in society. In her elaboration of Nietzsche's idea of becoming and Foucauldian body politics, Judith Butler brought the issue of the body into the realm of gender. For Butler, the female body, compared with the male body, is doubly constrained and culturally inscribed. It is distinguished by the mind/body as well as the man/woman category. In these series of categorizations, the female body is trapped in the distinctions of normal/abnormal, masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual, and so on. The imperative for the "ideal regulatory" of sex functioning in patriarchal society further complicates the sexual discrimination into the distinction between culture/nature, thereby naturalizing the power-relation. From this perspective, Eco-feminists argue that the mind/body distinction is closely related to other binary oppositions such as culture/nature and man/woman in a patriarchal society. These dichotomies always favor one relata of the two over the other, and it is through these biased distinctions that man exerts his power over woman and nature. As Karen J. Warren points out: "Oppressive and patriarchal conceptual frameworks are characterized not only by value dualisms and value hierarchies, but also by "power-over" conceptions of power and relationships of domination and by a "logic of domination" (xii).⁵ The function of dualism is to

5 This central belief and reading strategy is shared by eco-feminist critics: "[M]odern civilization is based on a cosmology and anthropology that structurally dichotomizes reality, and hierarchically opposes the two parts to each=other; the one always considered superior, always thriving and progressing at the expense of the other. Thus, nature is subordinated to man; woman to man, consumption to production and the local to the global, and so on" (Mies and Shiva 5). Conversely, Ecofeminism "challenges the mechanistic, patriarchal view of the universe and nature, which defines everything in terms of inanimate matter that can be ruthlessly manipulated and exploited in the interests

empower the preferred relate in a series of categorizations. The body, as a debased identity in Western philosophy, helps to reveal the operation of these dualist male-power processes because “[these] core dichotomies of man/woman, public/private, and nature/culture all combine to place the body in opposition to the rational mind” (Jamilah Ahmed and Helen Thomas” 3). Body criticism aims to reveal the operation of these interrelated dichotomies and the traces left by the privileged, and the process in which the underprivileged (body/woman/nature) are sacrificed. Moreover, it investigates “opposition between the inside and the outside, the public and the private, the self and other, and all the other binary pairs associated with mind/body opposition” (Grosz 21). Wordsworth’s image as a disembodied poet is always embedded in these series of binary oppositions, and his preference for the mind/masculine/culture is in fact the result of ladder-climbing, the imagined dominance of the body/woman/nature. As Anna Mellor points out: “to achieve coherence and endurance, this self or subjectivity must transcend the body and become pure mind, become a consciousness that exists only in language... it is crucial to see the soul or self he constructs is bodiless” (*Romanticism and Gender* 148). Formation of the subjectivity and immateriality of the mind both have their basis in the body, therefore identifying the position of the body among the three aesthetics becomes the first step toward unraveling the operation of the whole binary matrix.

III. Wordsworth’s Aesthetics of Body

Starting from the last decade of the twentieth century, research on the history of the body has been shifted to Romantic studies. In this way, disembodied images of the Romantic poets are gradually demystified.⁶ This “turn to the body” aims not

of science” (Diesel 74).

⁶ As Alan Richardson summarizes regarding this critical tendency: “Romantic scholarship in the last decade of the twentieth century effectively transformed the object of study... certain leading descriptions of the older canon, dominated by poetry and a handful of male writers, remained current, especially the notion that Romantic poetry sought transcendence and an ideal realm at the price of

only to disclose the operation of social discourse on the body, but further, to return the body to the different realms from which it was expropriated. Often seen as a neutral realm, natural science in the Romantic period was often ignored as unimportant or even considered irrelevant in the Romantic studies. While “[m]ost work on the Romantic mind continues to be informed by a disembodied version of associationism, by psychoanalysis, or by epistemological issues,” Alan Richardson argues, “[t]he Romantic brain, however, has been left almost wholly out of account” (*British Romanticism*, 1). Investigation into the disposition of the body in Romantic literature should of course take into account the function of medical science, the basic blueprint for the contemporaries in their configuration of the body. In “Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility,” G. S. Rousseau locates a paradigm shift in European accounts of the mind--- i.e., a “revolution in sensibility” set in motion by the work of the seventeenth-century physiologist Thomas Willis, the “first scientist clearly and loudly to posit that the seat of the soul is strictly limited to the brain, nowhere else” (144). This “brain-nerve revolution,” with its daring reduction of the “totality of human feeling” to the “motion in nerves,” led, via the sensationalism of Locke (Willis’s student at Oxford) and an ensuing succession of “cults of sensibility,” at last to “the most puzzling of modern enigmas, Romanticism,” now to be reconsidered in terms of its “specific neurological legacy” (145, 154-55, 157). This tendency to study medical discourse provides the possibility to study the specificity of the body not from the application of abstract theory construction but from the perspectives of contemporary discourse. The body has its own history, and from the eighteenth century on the Romantic writers have registered in increasingly dramatic ways the “stakes involved in overturning the traditional understanding of the relations of mind and body” (Jerome McGann *The Poetics of Sensibility* 18). The

denying the body and material nature” (“Romanticism and Body” 1).

basic premise of this dissertation suggests that medical discourse and socio-political discourse shape the frame of reference for the disciplined body and self-regulation in the body's extension of its desire, or will to power. As the famous medical historian Roy Porter points out, the body is never what it is; instead, it is always and already the "body *in*." In the three stages of aesthetic focus, Wordsworth applied these contemporary discourses to shape different body aesthetics.

From Wordsworth's early works (1793-1798) to the works of the nineteenth century, the body is involved and positioned in three different aesthetic discourses, the picturesque, the sublime, and the beautiful. Interestingly, in the relatively later stages, Wordsworth rejects his relation with the early ones. He derided the picturesque aesthetic he had once applied, and later claims the aesthetic of the beautiful more accords with human nature than his once favored sublimity. That is to say, Wordsworth's disposition of the body is always in the process of becoming. To use the phrases of Deleuze, the body is a desiring machine connecting with others to let flow its energy, and this series of assemblages, in its process of development, results in three self-disciplined faces: the sentimental figure, disembodied sublime poet, and normative healthy poet. Deleuze's theory of the body provides the basic theoretical framework of this dissertation. In his configuration of the body, Deleuze treats it as a desiring machine that is capable of channeling and redrawing its flow of energy. However, the flow of energy relating to other machines is not usually free and uninterrupted. Deleuze points out an ideal state of energy flow compared with the experience we have in every day life:

What would be required is a pure fluid in a free state, flowing without interruption, streaming over the surface of a full body. Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this

way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all.

(Anti-Oedipus 8)

The body is not free, and is always within the matrix of power-relations. Interrupted energy flow, through the disciplining power of discourse, organizes and stratifies the body (the basic mode of which is the dualist body/mind). Deleuze envisions a status of the body (Body-without-Organ) that resists the flow of energy, active or reactive, to shape the body into a hierarchical organism. The schizophrenic body and masochistic body are two typical bodies whose engagement with others resists the possibility of stratification. Two poles of body disposition therefore stand between a desiring machine: the BWO, for which energy flows without stop and leaves no trace, or incision on the body; the highly developed body, a stratified organism with each part of the body trained to function. The body, a machine that is constantly becoming, swings between these two extreme possibilities.

The premise, therefore the limit of my research, is to examine the three aesthetic concepts, the picturesque, the sublime, and the beautiful, as founded on three basic modes of body relation (as opposed to “mind” relation) which presuppose type of energy flow. The picturesque is a middle-class to low-class body; the sublime is the middle-class body to a disembodied image; the beautiful is a balanced (in its energy flow) body demanding other balanced bodies. The possible flow of energy direction prescribed by aesthetics are further complicated by any other discourses involved but mainly the medical and political. Medical discourse, in the name of science, describes the normal flow of energy in different situations either to other bodies or to oneself. Political discourse, mostly acting as the voice of a disciplinary power, prescribes the politically acceptable flow of energy. In contrast to medicine and politics, the sexual is a force from inside the body, primordial energy that waxes and wanes in its never-ending conflict and cooperation with all other forces. An

extended map of the body in Wordsworth's poetry is contoured from the four axes: aesthetics, the medical, the political, and the sexual.

Chapter Two explores Wordsworth's early stage of the picturesque. In his theory of the picturesque, William Gilpin defines "roughness" and "ruggedness" as traits of the picturesque, with natural scenery such as shaggy mountains and broken trees, artificial buildings and construction such as ruins and wheel tracks, marginal figures such as gypsies, bandits, and beggars being the main elements that lead to an ideal picturesque painting. It is suggested that natural scenery, artificial buildings, and marginal figures in Gilpin's picturesque categorization have an identical historical background: the Industrial Revolution. Enclosure and urbanization in eighteenth century England were main causes of the "roughness" of this social picture. As a source of aesthetic pleasure, the marginal's body provides the middle-class (William Gilpin is the best example) with a satisfying sense of social superiority, but at the same time it carries a revolutionary element that questions the political. Therefore, picturesque theorists hid the historical truth of these marginal figures, though clumsily, by stating that the function of these figures was to orient or "mark" the position of other objects in picture. The painful truth that picturesque objects are only beautiful in pictures but unpleasant in reality captures the ideology of this aesthetic.

Feelings for the marginal's body were theorized first in philosophical discourse in the seventeenth century. Showing sympathy for another's pain was deemed proper moral behaviors by Earl of Shaftsbury and Adam Smith. In medicine, the nineteenth century physiologists, Thomas Willis, John Hunter, and Robert Whytt provided scientific explanations of nerve stimulation when one was in pain and when one was feeling others' pain. How one's nervous system operated, and how one's nerves corresponded to another's pain and directed his/her sympathy were explained to endorse moral philosophy. The blueprint of sympathy in neuro-science mapped out

the route of energy flow, and it was in the age of sensibility that the poets completed laying the position between the sympathizer and the sympathized. “Man of feeling,” usually referring to male readers who showed pity to ward female sufferers, was a subject position achieved through mobilization of the whole nervous system, the brain, the heart, and the vein.

This stratification of the nervous system in the body was appropriated by Wordsworth in his early stage. In the 1780s, he followed the trend of sensibility to explore the picture of pain, and indulged in descriptions of this pain to shape himself as a sentimental poet. In the early 1790s, he combined Gilpin’s concept of the picturesque and those of sensibility to explore the pain of others in society. No longer satisfied with mere portraits of the marginal’s body, Wordsworth exploited the female gypsy’s body to connect it with the political discourse of the French Revolution. Fueled by his affair with Annette Vallon, the political discourse was empowered by the sexual. Wordsworth’s experience in France was on the surface political, but the hidden history of his love affair and his early support for the French Revolution explained the prevalence of the image of the female gypsy in his 1790s poems. Because of the engagement of the sexual, the female sufferer’s body was always complicated by the male perverse gaze. Taking pleasure in the suffering of the female, this sadomasochistic voyeurism exposed the ideology of male dominance behind Burkean beauty.

Chapter Three explores Wordsworth’s disengagement from the aesthetics of the picturesque to pursue images of sublimity. The sublime was believed to be related to the faculty of the mind, and men were endowed with more potential than women (who were more related to the body) to savor and appreciate the supernatural powers behind nature. The fear and awe in the sublime, with the suggestion of religious and political authority, paves the way for man toward his elevation of status in the social

instead of leaving him to face real death. As the faculty grasping the sublime experience, the mind in the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century became the battlefield for its biological interpretation. In the debates on the essence of the mind, whether material or immaterial, the anti-jacobins and the reformers used it as starting point to contest the necessity of revolution and political change. On the pro-revolutionary side, the theories of David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, John Thelwall, and Erasmus Darwin threatened the political status quo upheld by the belief in immateriality and the immortality of the mind and the pro-revolutionaries based their demand for domestic change and support for the French Revolution on their new theories. Different from the traditional separation of mind and body, this new theory restored the mind to the material and therefore provided a new model of the Deleuzian machine.

Wordsworth's sublimity, with its emphasis on the mind, transforms sensual pleasure in nature into the values pertaining to the sexual/philosophical (male-poet-prophet) and the political (anti-revolutionary). His dissatisfaction with the picturesque involves not just the politics of taste, but politics per se.⁷ By rejecting the materiality of mind, Wordsworth embraced the ideology of the anti-revolutionary. In his rejection of the picturesque in the early nineteenth century, Wordsworth shapes a "disembodied" mind that interacts with nature. However, his early works, such as *Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk*, discussed in Chapter Two, are permeated with picturesque views. Wordsworth's drastic turn toward the sublime is witnessed in *Tintern Abbey* and the *1805 Prelude*, in which the visionary

⁷ In his study of the relation between social class and aesthetic taste, Pierre Bourdieu argues that: "Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, *embodied*, helps to shape the class body. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically. It follows that the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste" (190). Class taste in a bourgeois society, according to Bourdieu's observation, usually distinguishes the higher "disembodied" taste that resorts to the mind from the lower "embodied" taste that appeals to the sensual.

mind transcends and conquers the material world. Contradiction lies in the fact that the bodily senses, treated as the foundation of the imagination, are debased and sacrificed in the struggle between mind and nature. To achieve visionary autonomy and independence from the material world, Wordsworth's "egoistical sublime" sees that the escape from the "unintelligible world" means being "asleep/ In body, and become a living soul" (*Tintern Abbey*, line 40, 45-46). The body not only functions as the empirical basis, but also metamorphoses as one transcends the material world. As Herbert Reed criticizes: "By apostrophizing the mind, he [Wordsworth] hoped to conceal the significance of the body" (13). The body concealed included not just his sensual body, but also Dorothy's body as consolidated by Wordsworth's mind.⁸ In this typical dichotomized matrix, Wordsworth's mind is sublimated through a series of effacements: of his sensual body which provides the empirical basis, of Dorothy's body which reduplicates the superiority of man over woman, of nature which he overcomes through the powers of mind.

While *Tintern Abbey* provides a basic mode of Wordsworth's sublimity, it does not fully explain the whole progress of sublimity. Tracing Wordsworth's writing on himself from *There Was a Boy*, we can discern a strong death instinct involved in this story pertaining to sublimity. At the beginning, the natural sublime functions as an interpellation of the symbolic order, the boy's death announcing entrance into the symbolic order, in which the body is stratified and the mind isolated. Later in "spots of time" in *The Prelude*, the death instinct provides not so much a warning call of the symbolic as a harassing of the system, showing a will to return to the autonomous status of the body, the Deleuzian BWO. Between the Lacanian symbolic death and natural death, Wordsworth's journey to sublimity temporarily escapes from the control

⁸ Interestingly, though an important companion to Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth is always silenced in Wordsworth's poetry and described as a phantasmal figure.

of the symbolic (symbolic death), by his description of involvement in the French Revolution, his “juvenile errors,” before his return to accept the symbolic. Instead of undergoing a Deleuzian/Nietzschean eternal return, Wordsworthian sublimity is Kantian, with the ego recognizing the almighty power of the human mind. The desire for an autonomous body, through the death instinct, deterritorializes the body and turns it into a highly developed machine of the autonomous mind, the mind that “[is] lord and master, and [whose] outward sense / Is but the obedient servant of her will.” First imitating natural sublimity, Wordsworth’s sublime mind conquers nature, woman, and body.

Chapter Four investigates the idea of health and its linkage with Wordsworthian beauty. In Edmund Burke’s second definition of the beautiful, dominance of the woman’s body (first definition) is extended into a harmonious picture of society, from one’s body to the social body. This definition accords with the contemporary idea of “concordia discord,” as per Francis Hutcheson’s theory of the beautiful. To see society as “multiplicity in unity,” one needs a standard measure to discipline the social body, and it is in this sense that the idea of health in contemporary medicine and its political implications (namely, social health) are closely related with the aesthetic of beauty. John Brown’s idea of health prescribes stimulus of excitement in nervous system be balanced to avoid either too much of or too scanty a flow of energy, and Wordsworth adopts this Brunonian system in his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* to affirm the function of good poetry in its preservation of national health. The political undertone beneath the concept of medical health prevalent in the rhetoric of the anti-revolutionary of the late eighteenth century, and Wordsworth’s imagining of himself as a “poet-physician,” were manifested in the poetry and prose of his later stage.

This poet-physician first started to discipline his own body. His marriage with

Mary Hutchinson provides a “measure” by which his love for Annette Vallon and Dorothy can be either silenced or tempered. In *Vaudracour and Julia*, Wordsworth detaches himself from the mad lover Vaudracour, in this way hiding his love affair and envisioning himself as a mature, healthy poet. In the first part of *Home at Grasmere*, Dorothy is turned into an invisible existence that helps the poet to see (or to consolidate his mature mind) but is no longer allowed the role of lover (as implied in the death of the two swan lovers). After the completion of his course of self-discipline, Wordsworth turns his attention to social health. In the second part of *Home at Grasmere*, he subtly declares his intention to combine the material world with his mind. As it turns out, in Book the First of *Home at Grasmere* this “marriage” of mind and world requires the silencing of suffering and erasure of bodily pain. Placing his focus on the “flesh and blood” of ordinary life, Wordsworth actually envisions an ideal society wherein discord is silenced in an effort by his imagination to attain harmonious wholeness. His *A Guide through the District of the Lakes* pictures a harmonious society in which the sublime center reaches into its peripheries, while the earth is composed of different elements united into a whole. This national picture changed Wordsworth’s attitude towards the marginals, for after he, with the help of the Lord of Lonsdale, was offered and accepted the position of government official (Stamp Collector of Westmorland), Wordsworth became intolerant of the marginals. Disciplinary power shifted in its focus to the marginals, with the gypsies being despised for their laziness, and low-class people hectored to stay in their original position in the social hierarchy. Wordsworth’s ambition to “record the praises, making verse/Deal boldly with substantial things” became a discipline for the minorities, in this way seeking to maintain the health of the nation.

Chapter Two: On the Picturesque— The Politics of Pain

In *The Prelude* (1805), Wordsworth denounces the picturesque as “a strong infection of the age,” because in this aesthetic style, “the eye was master of the heart,” only “giving way / To a comparison of scene with scene, / Bent overmuch on superficial things” (XI, 156-171).⁹ For Wordsworth, the picturesque “[w]as never much my habit” (157), but his simple denial can not be taken at face value. Wordsworth’s inheritance from the picturesque¹⁰ can be discerned from various perspectives, ranging from his deployment of natural scenery to literary prosody (Stephen J. Spector 1977, Matthew Brennan 1987, Alan Liu 1989). His early writings in the 1790s show that in this period of time he was deeply under the influence of the picturesque. The major difference between the dominant Gilpinian style and his appropriation of the picturesque is that in the 1780s, Wordsworth was following the trend of sentimental literature, the style of which demanded both the self-expression of exaggerated feeling and sympathy for others’ pain. When this literary style was mixed with the picturesque in the 1790s, the body in pain emerged from the picturesque scenery in Wordsworth’s poetry.

William Gilpin’s picturesque aesthetic offers decayed nature and the marginal body as a source of aesthetic pleasure. As the direct result of the exploitation of land and labor after the Industrial Revolution, the viewing of ruins casts doubt on the validity of the representation of the picturesque. In its ambivalence towards the value of picturesque objects, the Gilpinian picturesque veils the tension between

9 Quotations of *The Prelude* are from *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Context and Reception, Recent Critical Essays*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. (New York: Norton, 1979).

10 As early as in Christopher Hussey’s *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (1927), the picturesque is viewed as a stage, an “interregnum” between the “Classic” and “Romantic” periods in the history of literature, and recently, the picturesque has been reassessed and counted as one facet of “pre-Romanticism,” together with the Gothic, the Sentimental, and other styles and modes of late eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse (Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, “Introduction” 2).

historical truth and aesthetic pleasure. This tension, the line between life and art, is unraveled in Wordsworth's poetry in the 1790s, when decayed nature and the marginal body were brought back to their real aspect in a historical context. In the representation of the historical, Wordsworth highlights the implied message of the picturesque objects, especially the female sufferers, pushing the marginal to the foreground to produce sympathy in the reader. Sympathy for the pain of the picturesque figure was theorized in contemporary philosophical and medical discourses, which not only regulated the immediate corporeal response of the viewer, but also justified its manipulated strategy, the generation of enthusiasm for the French Revolution and the reformation in England. The body therefore became political and medical. Wordsworth's love affair in France in 1792 further added a sexual dimension to the marginal's body, with Annette Vallon and himself being represented as a dyadic body in pain.

I. The Picturesque Aesthetic¹¹

In his theory of the picturesque, William Gilpin suggests two important elements of the picturesque: "roughness" and "irregularity" (*Three Essays* 6). Natural scenery such as shaggy mountains and broken trees, artificial buildings and construction such as ruins and wheel tracks, marginal figures such as gypsies, bandits, and beggars are the main elements that lead to an ideal picturesque painting, that create the final effect of beauty in harmony. This designation of certain groups in painting concludes the rustic landscape painting that started with Thomas Gainsborough in the early eighteenth century. Famous not only for his figure portraits but also his depiction of rustic landscapes and country people (such as *Peasants Returning from Market*

¹¹ In *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*, Alan Liu maps out three overlapping phases in which the aesthetic of the picturesque developed in the eighteenth century: the first phase, from the 1710s to the 1760s, when the broad conceptions of picturesque started to take root in England and affected landscape painting and gardening; the second phase of the "high Picturesque" from the 1770s, when domestic tours and picturesque ideas were mutually promoted; the third phase from the 1790s to 1810s, when tourism reached its apex and the picturesque was systematically theorized (533-534).

[c.1767-1768], *The Woodcutter's Return*, and *Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher* [1785]), Thomas Gainsborough substituted contemporary country figures for the traditional allegorical figures. This new branch of painting included painters such as Gainsborough, George Morland, George Stubbs, and Thomas Rowlandson, who like their counterparts in poetry (Oliver Goldsmith, George Crabbe, and John Clare), all directed their focus on the depiction of rural life after the Industrial Revolution, especially the view after the effects of enclosure. This historical connection between life and art has been noted by Ann Bermingham:

[t]he emergence of rustic landscape painting as a major genre in England at the end of the eighteenth century coincided with the accelerated enclosure of the English countryside.... the parallelism of these events is not an accident but rather a manifestation of profound social change. (1)

Enclosure is a legal process by which common land was taken into fully private ownership. Those who had the traditional right to use the land were divested of that right, and under the system of enclosure they could only provide their labor for wages. This social-economic change following the enclosure, as E. P. Thompson suggests in his *Making of the English Working Class*, transformed the rural cottagers from tenants into industrial proletarians.

Seen from this aspect, the “rough” and “irregular” that designate rural figures are not the result of a natural outcome. They carry political/economical undertones, and betray Gilpin’s real intention to be his insistence on the distinction between art and nature. Marginal figures such as gypsies and beggars are truly living figures that attest to the economic situation in the eighteenth century, and to insist they are art per se, by confining them to the realm of art, elides and hides their historical aspect. As to the function of these figures on canvas, Gilpin believes that “[t]heir chief use is, to mark a road— to break a piece of foreground— to point out the horizon in a

sea-view” (*Three Essays* 77). Elsewhere in *Remarks on Forest Scenery*, he notes that for the “picturesque eye,” “it is not its business to consider matters of utility. It has nothing to do with the affairs of the plough, and the spade; but merely examines the face of nature as a beautiful object” (298). Gilpin insists on the creation of beauty and ignores the implications of this “plough” and “spade,” noting “the Picturesque deployment of motifs for aesthetic effect... [which] in other circumstances are the indicators of poverty or social deprivation” (Stephen Copley and Peter Garside 6). The grouping of marginal figures and rough nature is not so much random selection as a historical phenomenon, with economical growth as the cause. The function of a picturesque object to create beauty on canvas actually aestheticizes the misery of reality. Gilpin’s endeavor to prevent marginal figures from standing out to deliver a historical message ironically at the same time evokes the ever-lasting conflict between art and life, depicting a tableau of contemporary England. As Stephen Copley states:

it [the picturesque] leaves the claims of aesthetics at odds with the claims of morality whenever the benefits of cultivation, improvement and economic progress, and the moral value of industry, come into conflict with the aesthetic pleasures of the spectacle of wildness or decay.” (“William Gilpin and the Black-Lead Mine” 50)

That human misery should become a source of aesthetic pleasure makes the relationship between middle-class and the poor stand out. In his picture of ideal painting, Gilpin reshaped a contemporary England in which the body in misery holds a place, while being ignored: “picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects” (*Three Essays* 19). The inclusion of the poor in this map of the oxymoronic “concordia discord,” either in the shape of shaggy mountains or wind-blown trees,

reveals the self-contentment of the middle class. Having the poor in mind, middle class viewers recognize their political hierarchy in the nation, but avoid any negative intrusion into their middle-class morality, thus these picturesque objects are ambiguously confined to the realm of art to deliver an implied message.

II. The Age of Sensibility: Pleasure in Pain

A. Philosophical and Medical “Sympathy”

William Gilpin’s ambivalence toward the marginal figure lies in sharp contrast to sentimental literature, which, instead of refraining from showing feelings, encourages sympathetic expression. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, interest in and concern for moral philosophy and medical discourse converge in the idea of pain. Moral Sentiment philosophers from the Earl of Shaftsbury to Adam Smith held the belief that the origin of vice derived from the incurring of pain, the elimination of which is a symbol of virtue; meanwhile, contemporary neurologists, from Thomas Willis to John Hunter, identified the mechanism of the nervous system as based in pain, implying not only the pain of oneself but also the pain of others. The two seemingly parallel discourses were current in the age of sensibility in the second half of the eighteenth century, laying the theoretical framework for literary works to further explore and describe the bodily responses towards pain.

Whether one can really feel another’s pain or not represents two opposed ontological premises concerning the nature of human beings. In the tradition of the social contract, philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes believed that men were born to fight for the possession of property, and the possibility of endless fighting until human extinction required the formation of the social contract to protect individual’s property from wayward, endless robbery. In Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, human beings are described as animals waging endless war to satisfy their needs; therefore, a powerful, awe-inspiring government, or the Leviathan, is required for.

As Nancy Yousef notes, the moral sentiment of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Bishop Butler, David Hume is directly opposed to that of Thomas Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* “represented human beings as naturally egoistic and hostile towards one another” (206). The concept of the malignant nature of human beings was strongly opposed by the Earl of Shaftesbury¹², who held a totally different view. In his moral philosophy, human beings are animals of affection, benevolence and sympathy. As John Locke’s tutored student, though, Shaftesbury rejected the agnostic implication in Lockean empiricism and believed in the possibility of knowing others, including their pain.¹³ For him, virtue and moral sense are innate and transcendent. The “sense of right and wrong,” he argues, “[is] as natural to us as natural affection itself” (179). This innate moral sense is the foundation of “fellowship” and “love,” which are no less natural than the “sense of right and wrong”: “If eating and drinking be natural, herding is so too. If any appetite or sense be natural, the sense of fellowship is the same” (51). This comparing of moral sense to biological functions are prevalent in his writings: the “affection of a creature towards the good of the species is as proper and natural to him as it is to any organ, part, or member of an animal body... to work in its own known course.... It is not more natural for the stomach to digest, the lungs to breathe” (192). The “sense of fellowship,” or “affection of a creature towards the good of the species,” for Shaftesbury, requires no empirical process from experience to the formation of ideas as its foundation. Rather, it is as innate a human trait as parental care for offspring.

Shaftesbury’s argument is dogmatic in the sense that he avoids empirical reasoning to justify the legitimacy of fellowship. Lockean empiricism, based on the

12 Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

13 Both a trusted friend and doctor of the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, John Locke kept a long-term friendship with the Ashley family and was entrusted with the supervision of the education of the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

operation of sensation and the formation of ideas in the self, fails to prove and ensure the reality of another's objective existence, which could be real as well as a dreamlike illusion. In this sense, the other's pain is not able to cross this subject/object boundary and constitute stable knowledge. That is why Adam Smith, another eighteenth century moral philosopher, wavered between the dilemma of the necessity of moral sentiment and the self-question of validity of knowledge. In *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, he affirms that the knowledge of another's sorrow is always matter-of-fact and needs no proof: "By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him" (9).

Though the difficulty of imagining or knowing another's pain is never resolved by the Moral Sentiment philosophers, that being indifferent to another's pain indicates the absence of morality was commonly accepted in the eighteenth century. "Sympathy" was believed to be the cornerstone upon which a society binds itself together. When Edmund Burke explicates the factors for social consolidation, "sympathy" is deemed to be the first requirement. In his acceptance of Shaftesbury's "fellowship" as opposed to Hobbesian "indifferent spectators," Burke further elaborates moral philosophy and solves the empirical dilemma with the physiological knowledge prevalent in *A Philosophical Enquiry*. Through imagination, man recollects his experience of pain to mimic those who suffered before him. In his physiological explanation and personal experience, medical or physical pain causes correspondence through the whole body: "a man in great pain has his teeth set, his eye-brows violently contracted, his forehead is wrinkled" (119).¹⁴ This

14 Edmund Burke's physiological knowledge may possibly derive from his father-in-law, the Bath physician, Christopher Nugent (1698-1775). Aris Sarafianos suggests that the composition of *A Philosophical Enquiry* coincides with Burke's period of convalescence under the medical supervision of Christopher Nugent (61).

correspondence between organs shows that the nerves in our body are interconnected, therefore one contraction due to either sublime feeling or corporeal pain leads to agitation of the whole body.

When Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry* was published in 1757, medical science had undergone a drastic change in physiology. The burgeoning of neurology, a term coined and practiced by Thomas Willis, had gradually unmasked the mystery of soul and mind, which for centuries had been under the sway of religious interpretation. In his *Cerebri anatomi* of 1664 and *Pathologicae cerebri, et nervosi generis specimen* of 1667, Thomas Willis uncovers the nervous system of the human body and the pathology and neurophysiology of the brain. The newly discovered information challenged the mind-body dualism of Christianity, because under Willis' study, the mind (or soul) has its material embodiment in the brain, acting as the center of the nervous system to command the movements of nerves. In the eyes of G. S. Rousseau, Willis is the "first scientist clearly and loudly to posit that the seat of the soul is strictly limited to the brain, nowhere else" (qtd. in Alan Richardson *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* 8).

After Thomas Willis, Robert Whytt further challenged the authority of Descartes and explained "pain" and "sympathy" in neurological terms. Before the 1750s, nervous movement was generally understood through the model provided by René Descartes, for whom the pain is a purely reflex action from the site of injury to the brain and back to the injured part. In Descartes' dualistic separation between soul and body, the soul is an immaterial substance that is in contact with the body through the pineal gland at the base of the brain, the material agent for the soul. When the body is injured, the nerves transmit signals to the brain, where animal spirits are channeled back to the part of the body hurt to command movement away from the danger. According to this scheme, a reflex is a uni-directional movement between

special parts of the body and brain. In 1751, Robert Whytt challenged both this immaterial/material dichotomy of soul/body as well as the mechanic reflex of Descartes. In his *Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals*, Whytt hypothesizes a different physiological picture of the human body: the soul is not isolated from the body and situated in the ambiguous “pineal gland” to control the brain; rather, the soul extends from the brain down the spinal column, connecting all parts of the body through the nerve endings. While this “coextension” materializes the mysterious soul (with the implication that the soul in the brain is material), the “sentient principle” of the nervous system connects all parts of the body: “Nerves are endued with feeling, and ... there is a general sympathy which prevails through the whole system; so there is a particular and very remarkable *consent* between various parts of the body” (qtd. in Steven Bruhm, 11). This “general sympathy” drags down the soul unto the discernible material space, and also wakes visible the unseen and the inner part of the body. For Whytt, “sympathy” is not just a physiological function working in a single body because “there is a still more wonderful sympathy between the nervous systems of different persons, whence various motions and morbid symptoms are often transferred from one another, without any corporeal contact” (ibid, 14). These hypotheses of bodily sympathy and inter-personal sympathy were later endorsed by John Hunter at the end of the eighteenth century. As Hermione de Almeida notes about the clinical experiment, John Hunter’s teachings on the “sympathy” between organs and parts commonly observed by clinicians in the hospitals of England led him in 1794 to address a parallel “sympathy of the mind” vital to the study of life by the creative artist and physician:

One of its [sympathy’s] chief uses is to excite an active interest in favour of the distressed, the mind of the spectator taking on nearly the same action with that of the sufferers, and disposing them to give relief or consolation: it is

therefore one of the first of the social feelings. (35)

Robert Whytt's hypothesis of "sympathy between the nervous systems of different persons" provides Moral Sentiment philosophy with a persuasive argument from the field of medicine. If moral imperative resorts to a non-empirical sense of virtue and vice, medical discourse in the latter half of the eighteenth century fills in the gap between obscure human nature and empirical science. Sympathy therefore gains its momentum from the hypothesis of an inner movement of the nervous system and becomes a facticity.¹⁵ This double confirmation of corporeal feeling for another's pain from the philosophical and medical fields works together to help us envision a society in which man cares about not only his status of "self-preservation" but also that of others.

This imperative for sympathy, dispersed across the field of philosophy and medicine, constitutes the paradigm of object-relatedness. However, sympathy for human nature is not without its problems, even if one does not adopt a Hobbesian stance. In his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume believes that sympathy is not always universal; rather, sympathy is confined to the familiar. One is always more caring for his/her family and friends:

[E]very particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and 'tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. (10)

The degree of sympathy, or partial favor, is the real fact of human nature, according to Hume. The idea of universalism of passion or sympathy not only distorts human

15 This hypothesis on imaginative suffering is further developed in the late twentieth century. Neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti at the University of Parma in 1996 discovered mirror neurons, the function of which is to stimulate the action observed in the brain. According to this discovery, the possible result of sympathy derives from the observation of another's pain.

nature, but also exposes more conflicts and contradiction. As Gilles Deleuze summarizes Hume's idea, sympathy "does not transcend the particular interest or passion" (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* 38). Transcendence of sympathy demands the sacrifice of personal interest for the harmony of society and consolidation of social order, which goes largely against human nature. Sympathy is not arbitrary, but select. The reason why sympathy becomes orthodox resides in its historical context. "Since the deposing of James II," Rick Incurvati points out, "authority could no longer be represented unproblematically as issuing from a central source," and sympathy "became useful to represent deference as immanent within the relationships that constituted the social order" (2). Sympathy in the eighteenth century took on the duty of interrelating social members through the detection of others' pain and expressing emotion to keep the sufferer from leaping out of the social chain. By showing pity to others, one fashions himself as a man of morality, a subject position endorsed by medico-philosophical discourse.

B. The Age of Sensibility and the Fashionable Melancholic

Speaking for another in pain became fashionable in the age of sensibility. The "Age of Sensibility," as it is known in today's literary history, spans from the early 18th century to the early 19th century. Famous figures include Helen Maria Williams, Anna Seward, William Bowles, Vicesmus Knox, Hannah More, Charlotte Smith, and Ann Yearsley. The keyword "sensibility," as Michèle Plaisant points out, "came into fashion in the 1750s," and "meant the power of sensation or perception and was closely related to Locke's tenet that sense perception is the 'inlet of all knowledge in our minds'" (243). With the philosophical and medical basis as summarized in the previous section, writers of sensibility applied the aestheticized medical term to explore their own melancholic mood or reaction toward others' suffering. James H. Averill sums up this trend: "A contemporary heroine feels her compassionate heart

soften, melt, or dissolve with tenderness, enthusiastic sentiments, or sensibility indiscriminately at the sight of a ruin, a waterfall, or an appropriate representative of suffering humanity” (23).

One good example of the virtue of sensibility is Helen Maria Williams’ “An Ode on the Peace,” a metanarrative describing Anna Seward’s lamentations over the death of Major André in her “Monody on Major André”:

While Seward sweeps her plaintive strings,
While pensive round his sable shrine,
A radiant zone she graceful flings,
Where full emblaz’d his virtues shine;
The mournful loves that tremble nigh
Shall catch her warm melodious sigh;
The mournful loves shall drink the tears that flow
From Pity’s hov’ring soul, dissolv’d in woe. (18)

The description of one’s lament over the other functions as an ideal chain of sympathy. Anna Seward’s sorrow over the death of Major André, the “plaintive strings,” ennobles the virtues of Major André. The tears of pity shed by the imagined Anna Seward and expected by the reader are the symbol of the virtue that is elicited by the other. In its exaggerated emotional expression “mournful loves,” “melodious sigh,” “dissolv’d in woe,” sympathy highlights bodily sensation to designate the virtue of the sympathizer.

Wordsworth’s first published work, *Sonnet, on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress*, was published anonymously in the *European Magazine* 11 in 1787. In this poem, Wordsworth shows the strong influence of poems of sensibility. Helen Maria Williams became the imagined persona, and the imagined scene of seeing Williams weeping reveals Wordsworth’s literary ambition

when he was in his seventeenth year. Not only do the style and diction follow the current trend, the popular writer is imagined to be the observed viewed by her potential literary successor:

She wept. —Life's *purple stream* began to flow
In languid streams through every thrilling *vein*;
Dim were my swimming *eyes*— my pulse beat slow,
And my full heart was swelled to dear delicious pain.
Life left my loaded *heart*, and closing eye;
A sigh recalled the wanderer to my *breast*;
Dear was the pause of life, and dear the *sigh*
That called the wanderer home, and home to rest.
That *tear* proclaims— in thee each *virtue* dwells,
And bright will shine in misery's midnight hour;
As the soft star of dewy evening tells
What radiant fires were drowned by day's malignant power,
That only wait the darkness of the night
To cheer the wandering *wretch* with hospitable light. (*Poems* I, 47; my
italics)

In this Shakespearean sonnet, Wordsworth envisions a scene wherein he sees Williams weeping at a “tale of Distress,” presumably a Richardsonian tale. This double frame, one seeing the other seeing, imitates William’s “An Ode on the Peace.” Three works of sensibility are presented: the first level, the Richardsonian tale; the second, Williams’ sentimental response, possibly to result in another sentimental literary work; the third, Wordsworth’s response to that of Williams. The metalanguage suggests Wordsworth’s literary heritage and his attempt to fashion himself as a writer of sensibility. His use of fashionable diction derives directly

from popular phrases of contemporary works of sensibility. As Averill states, “Purple flood” is [Helen Maria Williams’] favorite epithet for blood, and “delicious tears” are her characteristic way of describing the response to “aching pleasure.” “The soft star of dewy evening” could be straight out of a poetess whose descriptions continually dissolve into talk of things “soft,” “tender,” “mild,” “gentle,” “sweet,” and “melting.” (34)

Such usage of conventional jargon provides a picture of Wordsworth in 1786. The delineation of an exaggerated corporeal response, “an elaborate, highly artificial, and conventional literary system camouflaging itself in the guise of nature and spontaneous feeling” (Averill 30), explores the somatic possibilities that result in aesthetic pleasure, at the same time presenting the persona as “man of feeling.” These bodily terms, “purple stream” flowing “through every thrilling vein,” “swimming eyes,” “pulse beat slow,” “heart was swelled,” are all aestheticized to create the effect of “dear delicious pain.” The envisioned pain of a “wandering wretch” at “misery’s midnight hour” in a double literary frame, is not the real pain of human suffering but a fabricated, exaggerated misery from reading a sentimental work. This aesthetics of “dear delicious pain” sounds the keynote of this sentimental work.

Exaggerated a sentimental gesture though it is, the poem is quite an exemplar of the practice of “sympathy” in philosophical and medical discourses in the eighteenth century. The reading of suffering in a Richardsonian tale arouses a sympathetic somatic response in the imagined Helen Williams, with her blood’s gradual suspension of flow symbolizing the thrilling shock a story of suffering brings. In the implications of Robert Whytt’s “sentient principle,” heart and eye combine to create the somatic possibility of sorrowful expression. In turn, Helen Williams’ piteous figure engenders sympathy from the persona, whose tearing eyes and aching heart

show both an individual organic resonance and sympathetic feeling of pain for Williams. The personified life, itself the symbol of sympathy, is named the place where “each *virtue* dwells,” a catchy word Moral Sentiment Philosophers attach to sympathy and the motivation to alleviate the pain of others.

Another of Wordsworth’s contemporary works, *Written in Very Early Youth*, composed in 1788, also fashions the persona as a “man of feeling” in its exploration of the aesthetic effects of pain. The speaker passes through an unknown farmland, seeing “[t]he kine” “couched upon the dewy grass” and “[t]he horse” “[is] cropping audibly his later meal.” The dark night (“Dark is the ground”) echoes the idea of the best sentimental hour being “the darkness of the night” as in *Sonnet, on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress*:

Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, come to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My friends! Restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel

The officious touch that makes me droop again. (*Poems* I, 88)

Though a peaceful mind seems, on the surface, the goal that drives the speaker home, it is the desire to show a melancholic gesture that dominates the poem. The “grief,” for which “the senses still supply/[f]resh food,” suggests in an oxymoronic way that this grief is deemed as not noxious but as pleasurable. It has its origin in sensory perception, culminating in the “pain” (12) that the speaker endeavors to relieve. Like the “misery” in “Sonnet,” this “pain” is not so much a real pain in the body but the imagined pain evoked by sentimental poet. However, that this pleasurable pain

arouses somatic resonance throughout the whole body testifies to the influence of medical discourse.

This sentimental gesture depicts Wordsworth's literary heritage and his first step onto the literary scene. If the mature Wordsworth pictures himself as a sublime masculine poet, his early phase is deeply remarked by sentimentalism, with a literary jargon describing the bodily reactions of "grief" and "pain." This sentimental picture is what Wordsworth sees in his world in the 1780s, best attested to in his *Lines Written While Sailing in a Boat at Evening* (1788). Upon seeing the beautiful view of Thames, where "richly glows the water's breast" that is "tinged with evening hues," the speaker thinks of the uncertainty of life:

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb,
— And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come tomorrow? (*Poems* I, 89-90)

As Wordsworth makes clear in "Fenwick Note," this poem was originally combined with part of another now independently named *Remembrance of Collins Composed upon the Thames near Richmond* (*Poems* I, 929). The "youthful Bard" designates not only the speaker, Wordsworth himself, but also William Collins, the bard just passed away. The reference to the death of Collins intensifies the melancholic mood and the "grief and pain" in the poem. Whether the pain is real or fictitious, the emphasis on and exploration of pain constitutes the core of culture of sensibility in the latter eighteenth century that Wordsworth was situated in. Propped up by

philosophical and medical discourse, the body is used as the expression of sorrow and pain to arouse a sympathetic response from readers. When commenting on the use of the body as part of an “elocutionary discourse” that maintains social relations in bourgeois culture and the public sphere in the eighteenth century, Paul Goring notes the social meanings of the body:

Bodies or fictional bodies exhibiting notably refined signs of the passions—including those clichés of sentimentalism: single tears, delicate sighs, gentle swoons—functioned within eighteenth-century culture in part as ‘natural symbols’ of ‘politeness.’ (20)

This “politeness” is defined in mid-century by Smollett as “the art of making one’s self agreeable... an art that necessarily implies a sense of decorum, and a delicacy of sentiment,” which “allowed members of the middling classes to present a public image of civilised gentility” (qtd. in Goring 22). In other words, the self-fashioning of the melancholic was part of bourgeois culture in the eighteenth century. With the performance of somatic action/reaction, the identity of a gentleman/ gentlewoman was attained. It occluded the possibility of Hobbesian indifference or Humean partiality, laying an endless chain of sympathy in tears and pain in circulation. For writers of sensibility, the identity of the melancholic needed to be reiterated in poems to create a stable image, and the subject position relies on more cultural practice to achieve fame and the fashionable. However, the self-fashioning of “men of feeling,” unlike the unchecked expression of feeling of the female writers, posed a threat to the identity issue. Eric Daffron suggests that “[t]he culture of sensibility put this definition of masculinity at risk, urging men to express their emotions in ways conventionally associated with women. For that reason, men of feeling could— and sometimes were—accused of being sodomites” (76). As a means of shaping oneself as a man of virtue, the expression of feeling for male writers was a

double-edged sword that was able to raise or sink their fame. In the following section, I will explain how Wordsworth in the 1790s avoided the identity issue of boundary crossing by identifying the target of the sympathized as a female beggar and therefore associates the masculine gaze with political discourse.

III. Perverse Gaze and the Political Body

In the three poems mentioned above, we see Wordsworth's imitation of sentimental poets in the 1780s. This imitation is generally a description of one's pain and sorrow with reasons not clearly defined or explicated. In the 1790s, Wordsworth extended the focus of pain from himself to the pain of others, with a more concrete social background and identifiable context. This change carries not just a thematic significance: moral philosophy and medical sciences in the eighteenth century constructed discourses that validate our ability to feel another's pain, and when the historical background is shifted to the 1790s, pain becomes the center of the political arena.

A. *An Evening Walk*: the Wordsworthian Picturesque

In 1793, Wordsworth self-published two poems that followed the trend of picturesque tours: *An Evening Walk Addressed to a Young Lady*¹⁶ and *Descriptive Sketches Taken During a Pedestrian Tour Among the Alps* (composed in 1791-1792). Though the two literary works did not win him fame as Wordsworth had hoped, they represent Wordsworth's attempt to win a place in literary circles after the publication of *Sonnet, on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress*. This publication marked a drastic turn for Wordsworth, in that he shifted from the theme of sensibility per se to the depiction of a picturesque tour. If the narrowly-defined works of sensibility focused on one's sympathy for another, picturesque prose/poetry

¹⁶ *An Evening Walk* was "begun most probably in autumn 1788 and essentially completed before Wordsworth left Cambridge" (Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 42).

drew the attention of the reader to the depiction of natural scenery. Thomas Gray's *Journal in the Lakes* (1769) and Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* (1780) signaled the first wave of the picturesque tour and helped promote an aesthetic appreciation of specific "stations" in England, while William Gilpin's works in the 1790s consolidated the status of the picturesque and further promoted the domestic tour. When Wordsworth attempted this genre of picturesque poem, elements of sensibility were mixed into the poems. Picturesque scenery was littered with personal feelings, and picturesque objects, instead of providing the decorative function in Gilpin, stood out and led to a new theme for him in the following years. This mixture of genre had an unexpected result: poems of sensibility found a new vehicle in orthodox picturesque travel, while picturesque objects went beyond their original purpose of merely serving an aesthetic function to become a possible center for sympathy.

An Evening Walk begins the tour in Cockermouth and Keswick, "where hoary Derwent takes / Thro' crags, and forest glooms, and opening lakes, / Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar / That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore" (3-6), proceeds to Grasmere and Windemere, "Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander peeps / 'Mid clust'ring isles, and holly-sprinkl'd steeps" (13-14), and finally ends in Hawkshead, "Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore, / And memory of departed pleasures, more" (15-16).¹⁷ As Wordsworth in his Fenwick Notes states, the description of scenery is never meant to provide a real depiction of a specific place during a particular walk, which shows his "unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance." Therefore, "[t]he country is idealized rather than described in any one of its local aspects" (*Poems* I, 926). This explanation may be so misleading as to be mistaken as another version of the

¹⁷ Like many of Wordsworth's poems, *An Evening Walk* was revised many times in Wordsworth's lifetime. Here the text of *An Evening Walk* was taken from the 1793 version in the Thomas Hutchinson edited *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*. (London: Oxford UP, 1936). 462-469.

Gilpinian picturesque, in that empirical data are pieced together from the observation of different places to compose an ideal landscape, “to discover ideal scenes in existence” (Christopher Hussey 83). Actually, though Wordsworth generally follows the picturesque style of landscape depiction, seeing the landscape within the scope of a picture with foreground, middle-ground, and background, *An Evening Walk* still shows a difference from the picturesque tradition. First, Wordsworth avoids the wayward replacement of real scenery to accord to picturesque requirements, as exemplified in Gilpin’s imagined Tintern Abbey.¹⁸ These idealized landscapes are localized, bearing the name of real places, and are based on the memory of one who was born in the Lake District. When commenting on the difference between Wordsworth’s *An Evening Walk* and James Beattie’s *Minstrel* (1771-74) from the pastoral tradition of landscape poetry, John Williams points out: “What most markedly distinguishes the opening lines of *An Evening Walk* from the passage by Beattie, however, is Wordsworth’s obsession with an identifiable, *real* landscape” (20-21). This depiction of a real landscape to some degree, gradually enables the poet to jettison the traditional demand for locomotive landscape poetry, especially in the Gilpinian style. This immediacy of real landscape carries traits of each place name at the beginning of the poem: “Lodore,” “Grasmere,” “Winander.” Second, the influence of poems of sensibility enables Wordsworth to further explore the picturesque object left silent in Gilpin. In certain parts of the poems, figures such as “woodman” (107), “peasant” (111), and quarryman (141) serve the function of completing the picturesque landscape, but the image of a female beggar stands out in that she breaks through the picturesque rule. With the progress of the poem, the personal feeling of melancholy, a typical trait to anticipate the depiction of pain, leads

¹⁸ In his *Observations on the River Wye*, William Gilpin, on seeing Tintern Abbey where “a number of gabel-ends hurt the eye with their regularity; and disgust it by the vulgarity of their shape,” proposes the scene be changed with “[a] mallet judiciously used” to fit his picturesque style (33).

to the detailed description of the pain of the marginal in society.

The melancholic gesture of a lonely wanderer begins from his departure from “my dearest Friend” (1), presumably Dorothy Wordsworth (Mahoney 29). After sketching the route of the walk, Wordsworth retraces his feelings for the scenes in childhood in contrast to his contemporary melancholic mood. The happy memories of childhood constitute a parallel and contrast with the pain of adulthood, the disparate feelings anticipating *Tintern Abbey* in 1798:

Fair scenes! with other eyes, than once, I gaze,
The ever-varying charm your round displays,
Than when, erewhile, I taught, ‘a happy child,’
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild. (17-20)

The memory of happiness in childhood, when “no ebb of cheerfulness [sic] demand / Sad tides of joy from Melancholy’s hand” (21-22), intensifies the “april tear” of the melancholic wanderer when he reflects on all “the tedious year” (29-30). In short, “pain” now is recognized through the years in “the idle tale of man” (32; 37).

In the landscape description, personal feelings dominate the mood of the poem. The pain of a sentimental poet, imitated by Wordsworth in the 1780s, now takes the shape of a melancholic wanderer. This predisposed character of his persona fully deviates from Gilpin’s objective tourist, who, with “picturesque eye,” searches for his targeted pictured scenery with no personal feelings involved. When the element of sensibility mixes with the picturesque style of landscape description, this combination results in a decidedly different picturesque landscape. As the poem follows, the description of the picturesque scene is usually accompanied with an exuberance of personal feeling, or, in few words, gaiety and pain. After his departing from a brook, the picturesque description soon forms a picture:

While, near the midway cliff, the silver’d kite

In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
 Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds, a-pace
 Travel along the precipice's base;
 Cheering its naked waste of scatter'd stone,
 By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'er-grown. (89-94)

Wordsworth's viewpoint here is a lower station near a brook, a typical picturesque position¹⁹ that enables him to gain a "picture-like" view from horizon to a distant venue. The "silvered kite" that dives through the cloud to "the precipice's base" forms a diagonal line from the background of the skyline to the foreground of the picture: the cliff whence the kite departs fixes the background point, while the lowest point the kite travels through constitutes the foreground where "waste of scattered stone, / By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'er-grown." The "scattered stone," a picturesque object of roughness, is well placed in the foreground to contrast with the sublimity of the cliff. This scenery leads as the description proceeds, to the middle-ground ("the birches' stems all golden light, / That lit the dark slant woods with silvery white!" [99-100]) and screens ("The skiffs with naked masts at anchor

19 In the second-half of the 18th century, the domestic tour had become a popular leisure activity among the middle-class. "To make the Tour of the Lakes, to speak in fashionable terms, is the tone of the present hour," it was attested in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1778 (qtd. in Moir 139). Two of the trailblazers rousing aesthetic interest for the domestic tour are Thomas Gray and Thomas West. Thomas Gray's *Journal in the Lakes*, published in 1769, together with Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* in 1780, promoted the domestic tour and directed readers' aesthetic appreciation to specific "stations." In both Gray's and West's articles, seeing the landscape with a "foreground, middle-distance" and "side-screens," in a word, "like a picture," is common. Besides, The circulation of travel literature implies circulation of aesthetic ideas. When Thomas Gray passed the park by the river Lune, he described the view as "the most picturesque part of the way" (274, my italics). Years later, Ann Radcliff, having Gray in mind ("a view as much distinguished by the notice of Mr. Gray"), endorsed Gray's observation: "the gracefully falling line of a mountain, on the left, forms, with the wooded heights, on the right, a kind of frame for the distant picture" (381, my italics). These highlighted spots on map were discovered with aesthetic terms, which are best exemplified in Ann Radcliff's comparison of the three lakes: "Windermere: Diffusiveness, stately beauty....Ulls-water: Severe grandeur and sublimity.... Derwentwater: Fantastic wildness and romantic beauty" (477). In this way, the picturesque travel encouraged the traveler to these marked places, comparing their observations with that of the travel writers', and passing more judgments on these places with aesthetic phrases they acquired either from travel writers or aesthetic theorists. The observation of and the description from the travel writers presupposed the traveler's responses, and waited to be judged by the traveler's own observation.

laid, / Before the boat-house peeping thro' the shade" [105-106]). After the shade there follows the picturesque object Gilpin demands for a complete picture, the "woodman's echo'd stroke" and the "cottage smoke" "curling from the trees" (107-108). Generally following the picturesque tradition, Wordsworth silences the marginal voices and even aestheticizes the view in front: the quarrymen are described as "pigmies" from a distant view. As with certain other picturesque objects, these marginal figures are treated as "functional" decorating the scenery and being seen from a distance. The placing of marginal figures precludes the immediacy of contact that might arouse sympathy, a rule of thumb implicitly advocated by Gilpin.

However, as the prospect shifts towards another view, where "the solemn evening Shadows sail, / On red slow-waving pinions down the vale" (191-192), some items of the picturesque object are gradually zoomed out. With the vale as background and while the "oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage twines" as a screen "fronting the bright west in stronger lines" (193-194), the middle-part of the picture presents a "wild meand'ring shore" where "the winding swan" "swells his lifted chest, and backward flings / His bridling neck between his tow'ring wings" (200-202). This picturesque view, depicting a swan family, contains Burkean sublimity and beauty: The majesty of the male swan, with its "tow'ring wings" and "varying arch," is gradually replaced by the "tender Cares and mild domestic Loves" (206-207) he shows to the female swan, who "with a meeker charm succeeds" (209):

She in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
 Forgets, unwear'd watching every side,
 She calls them near, and with affection sweet
 Alternately relieves their weary feet;
 Alternately they mount her back, and rest
 Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest. (203-208)

An epitome of Burkean beauty, the female swan is portrayed as “charm,” “affection sweet.” The image of the female swan and her baby swans, through their movement, correspond to the beauty of the “meand’ring shore” As Gilpin demands the required picturesque object to add color to the dullness of the beauty of smoothness, an image of “roughness” is soon presented to parallel the peace and harmony of the swan family:

Fair Swan! by all a mother’s joys caress’d,
Haply some *wretch* has ey’d, and call’d thee bless’d;
Who faint, and beat by summer’s breathless ray,
Hath dragg’d her babes along this weary way. (241-244, my italics)

Different from the Gilpinian picturesque, in this section the picturesque object no longer stays and serves the “function” of decorating the scene. Instead, the “wretch” is gradually taking the leading place in the foreground. Here the Wordsworthian and Gilpinian diverge: the picturesque object does not silhouette the beautiful or mark the direction of the road ahead. As a counterpart to the beauty of the swan, the female beggar carries a series of images that are in stark contrast to those of the swan: the “straw-built shed” (258) in comparison to the “mead’ring shore,” the “wretch” in contrast to “the bless’d.” The “domestic love” of the swan family, with its ideal members of father, mother, and children, is absent in the family of the female beggar. Like the mother swan, the female beggar leads her babies to enjoy the beauty of the scene: “Oft has she taught them on her lap to play / Delighted, with the glow-worm’s harmless ray / Toss’d light from hand to hand” (275-277); unlike the joy of the swans, the female beggar has to take care of the infants alone, suffering the pain the wayward weather brings:

Her seat scarce left, she strives, alas! in vain,
To teach their limbs along the burning road

A few short steps to totter with their load,
Shakes her numb arm that slumbers with its weight,
And eyes through tears the mountain's shadeless height;
And bids her soldier come her woes to share,
Asleep on Bunker's charnel hill afar. (248-254)

To have an image of a female sufferer as a source of pity and aesthetic pleasure is part of the tradition of sentimentalism. As Claudia Johnson and Adela Pinch have demonstrated, in the sentimental literature that dominated the period, female suffering was a condition necessary to draw forth the pity of the male protagonist in English fiction during the last third of the eighteenth century. In Wordsworth's "Sonnet, on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress," Helen Maria Williams is appropriated as an object of pity. If "men of feeling" risked being effeminate, then by pitying the female, man retrieves his masculine dominance. As Deborah Weiss points out, female suffering served to:

demonstrate not just the superior humanity of the observing male protagonist, but also to allow the readers to share in his emotional responses. In this way, by pitying female suffering en masse, the national audience was able to participate in a process that ultimately served to reinforce a sense of English cultural advancement. (200)

Stereotyped as delicate and tender, the female was usually taken as an object for pity, as well as a sexual object to satisfy man's will to power. This "English cultural advancement," named as the virtue of "men of feeling," replicates and consolidates the dominance of men over women and deploys women as a source of sadomasochistic pleasure. The depiction of female suffering is through imaginative torture, always through the arrangement of Gothic elements to express an unconscious tyrannical desire to wield power over the female. By showing woman in pain, this

representation duplicates and inculcates the inferiority of woman.

Compared with images of the middle-class female, females from the lower-class arouse more pity because they are both female and marginal. However, the invitation to a “national audience” to express pity for the doubly marginal carries more a political undertone than an expression of sexual desire, and the female sufferer’s body therefore becomes a source of aesthetic pleasure and an inscription of political discourse at the same time.

The true identity of the female beggar is implicit in the mentioning of “her soldier” “[a]sleep on Bunker’s charnel hill.” As it was written between 1788 and 1791, the image of a soldier’s widow in this poem “indicates that Wordsworth had the American war in mind” (Watson 44). Therefore, the pain of the sufferer carries political overtones and imbues the sympathized with “elocutionary discourse” throughout her body. The female beggar’s “feverish groans” result from “summer’s breathless ray” and the “arrowy fire” of the sun, traditional symbols of the crown. The war initiated by the English tore the family apart and caused the death of a husband “[a]sleep on Bunker’s charnel hill afar.” The “o’er-labour’d bones,” “lock’d joints,” “step of pain” of the wife/mother are the direct consequences of the broken family. In other words, each bodily gesture showing the female beggar’s pain constitutes a charge against the war. The war brings about the separation of the family, leading the mother and her children, homeless, to bear the torture of the wayward climate:

Oh! when the bitter showers her path assail,
And roars between the hills the torrent gale,
— No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
Scarce heard, their chattering lips her shoulder chill,

And her cold back their colder bosoms thrill;
All blind she wilders o'er the lightless heath,
Led by Fear's cold wet hand, and dogg'd by Death. (279-286)

Like the mother swan, the female beggar holds her babies in her arms, but the scanty protection the female beggar provides does not prevent the cold weather from hurting both her and her babies. Through the gesture's of a mother's endeavors at protection, warming the babies' cold fingers, frozen arms, chattering lips, and colder bosoms, Wordsworth not only shows this mother's love towards her babies but also devised a strong anti-war discourse. Symbolically, the weather, as in the hot sun's rays that "[s]hot stinging through her stark o'er labour'd bones," denotes not just the literal weather itself but the government policy that results in the "fear" of the female beggar and the tragedy of death:

Death, as she turns her neck the kiss to seek,
Breaks off the dreadful kiss with angry shriek.
Snatch'd from her shoulder with despairing moan,
She clasps them at that dim-seen roofless stone. (287-290)

Personified as death, the cold weather seeks its victims, who are hopelessly hiding under the "roofless stone." The "angry shriek" and "despairing moan" are a description of the sublime power that threatens human life. Without hope, the female beggar can only await the death of her babies:

Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy head
His torch, and shew them slumbering in their bed,
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in thine arms! (295-300)

Living in a “straw-built shed” (258), the female beggar and her infants suffer the coldness the weather brings. As the protector of “two babes,” the mother no longer can “shield” her children from “the bitter showers.” The “dying heart,” literally and metaphorically, with “fears” and “tears” waits for the death of both herself and her infants. The “dying heart,” “fears,” and “tears” are products of Wordsworth in the 1780s, the period when he imitates the sensuality of sentimental poetry. When this result is mixed with the Gilpinian picturesque, the outcome is the zooming out of picturesque objects, which on many occasions is emphasized in Gilpin’s theory as being beautiful only on canvas. Breaking out of the barrier Gilpin creates between the real and the imaginative, the narrator feels the pain of the sufferer he “sees” and “eyes.” The feeling over pain over others and the implication of death is totally different from the “loaded heart” and “[d]ear was the pause of life” in his 1787 work, *Sonnet, on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress*: the imagination of Helen Williams’ pain and his expression of his own both have their roots in the imaginary, with Helen William reading a sentimental novel and Wordsworth reading Helen William. The character and the character within were after all created, i.e., invented. However, the female beggar here is a real social existence resulting from poverty and war. While Wordsworth rewrites Gilpin’s picturesque requirement of a static “rough” and “irregular” object, at the same time he reshapes his sentimentalism in the 1780s by basing his sensuality on the real. The implication of the death of the suffered, from this perspective, unmasks both the hypocrisy of “polite” culture in the poems of sensibility and that of the Gilpinian picturesque. Premature death, the unavoidable result of extreme pain, destabilizes the line between aesthetics and life set by Gilpin and the “pleasure in pain” by poets of sensibility. It unveils the truth of pain, which one would avoid out of the instinct of self-preservation, precluding the enjoyment of its representation when it is depicted

in imaginary literature. If the detailed picture of “death-bed” and “coffin” challenges the Gilpinian tradition, it as well negates the possibility of poems of sensibility in that the image of a real sufferer may awaken not just polite sympathy but conscience.

B. *Descriptive Sketches*: The Political Body

If the picturesque object constitutes only a part of *Evening Walk*, then in *Descriptive Sketches Taken During a Pedestrian Tour Among the Alps*, the picturesque object is configured as part of the political discourse. Wordsworth termed this poem a “picturesque work,” and himself a “sentimental traveler.” This double reference shows a combination of the picturesque tradition with sentimental convention. With this mixture of the exaggerated self-pity of the 1780s’ work and the picturesque tradition, *Descriptive* projects a sensibility towards the picturesque object that differs from the historical disengagement in Gilpin’s journal. In *Evening Walk*, the image of the widow only implies a political aspect, with most of the description of the female beggar arousing pity from the reader; in *Descriptive*, the lives of the picturesque is directly linked to the political discourse of anti-war, attributing the cause of the suffering to slavery, which should be destroyed by revolution.

In the fourth year of his study at Cambridge in 1790, Wordsworth, along with Robert Jones, his fellow of St. John’s College, enjoyed the tradition of The Great Tour through France and the Alps. With limited financial support, he and Robert Jones took two months to successfully complete the tour.²⁰ Though the tour was on the surface one of pure sight-seeing, the historical background carries an undertone. France in 1790 presented a totally different picture than before: in 1789 the Bastille was stormed and the ideal of a French Republic was in the air. This possible realization of a republican country forms a model for those enthusiasts of the French

²⁰ “They [Wordsworth and Jones] lived economically— in September Wordsworth boasted of having spent not more than twelve pounds from a budget of twenty— and traveled light, ‘bearing our bundles — upon our heads, with each an oak stick in our hands’ ” (Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 45).

Revolution. The Alps, the symbol of sublimity in contemporary Europe, was transformed from a realm of aesthetic discourse into one of political sublimity designating the power and success of the French Revolution. The anticipation of viewing the aesthetic/political sublime has suffused the sentimental wanderer, who is leaving his country to seek “a spot of holy ground, / By pain and her sad family unfound” (1-2),²¹ hoping the power of “pitying Nature” will “shower / Soft on his wounded heart her healing power” (13-14), implying not just the beauty of the landscape but also the promise the republic brings.

The scenery in France is arranged as a series of Gilpinian pictures. At the Lake of Como:

The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or, led by distant warbling notes.... (92-96)

In the foreground of “the sail,” the middle-ground of “fair dark-eyed maids,” and the background “led by distant warbling notes,” Wordsworth shows his adroitness in exploiting the possibilities of picturesque arrangement; or the picture can be reversely depicted, from background to the foreground:

From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire
Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire,
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,

²¹ References to *Descriptive Sketches* are from the 1793 version in the Thomas Hutchinson edited *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*. 469-482.

And steals into the shade the lazy oar. (108-113)

The sentimental traveler soon finds a “hermit,” a “hoary-headed sire / [who] Touched with his withered hand an aged lyre” by “silent cottage-doors” (166-176). The Gilpinian phrases are applied to portray the picturesque object of old peasant, and the search for the picturesque object soon brings the focus on another picturesque object, a female gypsy, to modulate the feelings of the sentimental traveler. At first, the sentimental traveler lapses into the sentimental self-pity over “life’s long deserts with its charge of woe,” and “a mighty caravan of pain,” but this self-pity is soon extended into sympathy for others as the poet sees life as a mixture of the “[h]ope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,” that “[f]reshen [...] the wilderness with shades and springs” (197-198). The metaphorical use of “shades and springs” to denote “social suffering” and “hope” soon finds its embodiment in the female gypsy, a character that Wordsworth finds, best illustrates the “social suffering” mentioned early in the *Evening Walk*:

She solitary through the desert drear
Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear.
.....
On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows;
The torrent, traversed by the luster broad,
Starts like a horse beside the flashing road. (199-208)

As the metaphorical “On the high summits Darkness comes and goes” implies, the scenery depiction is not so much description of landscape. The “fiery clouds,” “the torrent,” direct our attention not only to real climate change but also the cause of suffering in the political domain. In other words, from personal sentimentalism Wordsworth starts to explore, though in metaphorical language, the cause of human

suffering. This breakthrough is what makes *Descriptive Sketches* differ from *Evening Walk*, in which the cause of the female beggar's suffering is only implied but never fully explained.

If the "social suffering" is caused by the "fiery clouds" and "the torrent," the traditional masculine sadomachistic gaze over women now transformed into a naturalistic depiction of tyranny, the scenery of the Alps symbolizes a new sublime power to replace the older one:

But human vices have provoked the rod

Of angry Nature to avenge her God.

.....

Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts

Joy only given to uncorrupted hearts. (486-491)

The "human vices," tyranny that causes suffering, is now to be replaced by a more sublime nature that promises to bring "[j]oy only given to uncorrupted hearts." The imagining of the French Revolution is metaphorically described first in the image of a mountain, a Burkean image for the sublime: "'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows; / *More high*, the snowy peaks with hues of rose," and sunlight "[f]ar-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills, / A mighty waste of mist the valley fills," symbolizing the power of liberty spreading through the entire region (492-495, my italics). Besides, there is the power of the republic symbolized by the sunlight, by the sea,

A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide

And bottomless, divides the midway tide.

.....

Loud through that midway gulf ascending, sound

Unnumbered streams with roar profound. (498-505)

The ascending gulf, like the sunlight glows “[m]ore high,” representing the sublime power of the republic now seizing governmental power. A profound sea and high mountains are exemplary of Burkean sublimity, and this political sublimity influences the whole region:

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blessed as free— for he was Nature’s child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining and by none restrained,
Confessed no law but what his reason taught. (520-524)

Wordsworth celebrates the freedom he now sees in France, and he goes into the political discourse of Rousseau, the “primeval Man,” “[t]he slave of none, of beasts alone the lord” (529; 533). As a realization of the political discourse of Rousseau, French people now enjoy a new freedom.

If the Gilpinian picturesque demands the political stasis of the sublime, the Wordsworthian picturesque calls for change of focus on the marginal, the ideal life of which is embodied in the French Revolution. In this imagined republic, everyone is born free and unrestrained, therefore no tyranny will pose a threat or cause “social suffering.” This new body politic eases the pain of the marginal. From *An Evening Walk* to *Descriptive Sketches*, the gesture of the melancholic is gradually replaced by a strong political tone. In *An Evening Walk*, the suffering body of the female vagrant is mainly a target of sympathy; in *Descriptive Sketches*, political discourse is no longer merely implicit in the description of the sufferer. The dominance of political discourse re-signifies both the identity of the speaker and the function of the body. In his interpretation of the cause of bodily pain, Wordsworth includes the sufferer’s body in his political discourse, at the same time fashioning himself as a political enthusiast. After further exploration the possibility of sentimental literature, the pain

of the body, the melancholic's as well as that of the sympathized, is transformed into political language. Earlier, the male gaze predominated, with the typical male writer depicting paternalistically and perhaps even condescendingly female suffering, but here the gaze is overshadowed by political discourse. Wordsworth's subjective position as a French enthusiast, was a popular stance in the early years of the French Revolution, at a time when many Englishmen welcomed the overthrow of the French Kingdom and anticipated a similar realization in England.

C. The Republic

That the politically sublime in France will bring about a redress of human suffering and a new world of harmony and peace is the logic in *Descriptive Sketches*. To eighteenth century Moral Sentiment philosophers as well as physicians, the power of sympathy is the drive that holds a society together, while antipathy causes disharmony, even bloody revolution, as tested in France. The neglect of the body in pain, as in William Gilpin's amoral silencing of the picturesque voice, may result in the overthrow of those in power. In *Descriptive Sketches*, therefore, the body of the female gypsy functions as a synecdoche for France: the pain of others refers to the problem of nation. Thus, in the *1805 Prelude*, Beaupty, a French general Wordsworth knew, points to the hungry girl and says: "'Tis against that / Which we are fighting" (IX. 519-520). If *Descriptive Sketches* justifies the cause of the French Revolution, then the image of the suffering poor in *Evening Walks* refers to a demand for, if not a revolution, but at least political reform at home. In the early 1790s, after the French Revolution, many French Revolution enthusiasts believed that the Revolution was not just an isolated historical event: it marked a successful demand for human rights and freedoms after the 1698 Glorious Revolution and an impetus to further English

Reform, which included freedom of religion (Test Acts), speech, and suffrage.²² The most active two political groups in the 1790s were the London Revolution Society and London Corresponding Society (which included at least forty parliamentary reform organizations formed in London and provincial cities). In 1788, the London Revolution Society was founded to commemorate the centenary of the Glorious Revolution. In a report presented to a commemorative meeting on 4 November, the Earl of Stanhope asserted the principles and guidelines of the Society: all civil and political authority is derived from the people; the abuse of power justifies resistance; and the right of private judgment, liberty of conscience, trial by jury, freedom of the press, and freedom of elections should be sacred and inviolable (Martin Fitzpatrick 587). After the French Revolution, the London Revolution Society played the role of a non-official group corresponding with that of leading French figures and the National Assembly.

The Pamphlet War in the early 1790s was ushered in by Richard Price's *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country, Delivered at the Meeting House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain* in 1789. Generally following the Earl of Stanhope's report on the value of freedom and liberty, Price sees the French Revolution as an embodiment of the principles of the Glorious Revolution. The two revolutions upheld a common ideal, that the power of the king derived from the power of the public. Therefore, the subservience of people to the king and the king's superiority over the people now, he detects, deviates from the enlightenment ideal, because "[the king's] sacredness is the sacredness of the community," and the king's majesty is nothing "but the MAJESTY of the PEOPLE"

22 The Test Acts of 1673 and 1678 kept Roman Catholics from holding office under the Crown or sitting in parliament. Protestants who refused to conform to the Church of England were similarly affected with respect to office-holding but were not barred from parliament, while the Corporation Act of 1661 excluded both Catholics and Nonconformists from municipal corporations, unless they qualified by taking communion in an Anglican church (R. K. Webb 93).

(6-7, original capitalization). After summarizing three principles of the revolution in the Earl of Stanhope's report ("[t]he right to liberty of conscience in religious matters," "[t]he right to resist power when abused," and "[t]he right to chose our own governors" [14]), Price directs himself to the concrete problems of the "Test Laws" and "Inequality of representation." Since the power of government derives from the power of the people, according to Price's logic, the right to serve in public offices should not be confined to certain religion believers. With protestant dissenters in mind, Price challenges the validity of the "Test Laws" that entitles only Anglicans to serve in public office. Based on the same logic, a legitimate government should have an equal and fair representation in the House of Commons, otherwise this government is "nothing but an usurpation," "a semblance of liberty" (19; 20).

Price's eloquence soon aroused a challenge from Edmund Burke. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event*, Burke presents a different picture of the French Revolution in 1790: Richard Price and other radicals' belief in the liberty and freedom of the people, when realized in France, has now led to a bloody revolution that threatens the kingdom. The French princes' "unlimited confidence in their people" only brings out "subverters of their thrones" and "traitors who aim at their destruction" (55). For Burke, these radical beliefs are nothing but "untried policy" and an "abstract plan" that neglect the treasure of custom based on "provisions, preparations, and precautions." Flouting the prudence of custom,

they have seen the medicine of the state corrupted into its poison. They have seen the French rebel against a mild and lawful monarch, with more fury, outrage, and insult, than ever any people has been known to rift against the most *illegal* usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant.... This was *unnatural*.

(28)

What distinguishes Richard Price from Burke is his definition of nature. For Burke, the natural, or what James Chandler terms “second nature,” derives from the “practice of their ancestors, the fundamental laws of their country, the fixed form of a constitution, whose merits are confirmed by the solid test of long experience, and an increasing public strength and national prosperity” (85-86).

The pamphlet war continued, after Richard Price and Edmund Burke initiated the first wave of debate that separated the British into two groups asserting the pros or cons of the French Revolution. After the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, Richard Watson added an anti-revolutionary speech to his sermon of 1785 and published it in 1793. Similar in temperament with Burke’s *Reflections*, Watson criticizes the French Revolution for both its images of slaughter and the possible effect made on England. Once a pro-revolutionary during the early phase of the French Revolution, Watson, in his new opinion, in fact represents the turn of political ideas after the execution of Louis XVI. The drastic change of politics in France, accompanied with the tension between England and France that intimated the outbreak of war, caused many English enthusiasts either to convert their political beliefs or be forced into silence as the British government started moving high-handedly against the pro-revolutionaries and reform at home.

It is in this political climate that Wordsworth joined the pamphlet war in the early 1790s. In his first visit to France in the 1790s, he witnessed the possibility of liberty and freedom the French Revolution might bring, as described in *Descriptive Sketches*; in his second visit in 1791, he had access to the lectures in the National Assembly and befriended a Girondin, General Michael Beaupuy, as described in *The Prelude*. These direct French experiences further consolidated Wordsworth’s enthusiasm. In his stay in London in early 1793, he met other young radicals who manifested the same faith in the Revolution. After graduation from Cambridge in 1791,

Wordsworth rejected the arrangements for a career made by his uncle Cookson
Wordsworth, as a priest. The anticipation of becoming a poet awaited readers’
responses to *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, published in January. It seems
that Wordsworth naturally received the interpellations of the revolutionary discourse
to ground his subjective position as a republican.

As mentioned above, the milieu of the second stage of the pamphlet war was
quite different from that before the execution of Louis XVI and the changed political
climate: the fervor to debate waned as the news spread through England and gradually
held back, or utterly extinguished, the faith of enthusiasts. Besides, the charge of
sedition against Thomas Paine for his second version of *Rights of Man* in 1792 sent
the signal that the English government would no longer be tolerant of any suggestion
of democratic reformation at home, which further silenced the voices of the
enthusiasts. Wordsworth had to seek to validate the execution of the French King to
win a seat in the debate. In February 1793, Wordsworth wrote *A Letter to the Bishop
of Llandaff* to justify the course of the French Revolution. At the very beginning,
Wordsworth lays charges against Watson for his conversion of political beliefs.
Using the metaphor of crossing a bridge, Wordsworth disparages Watson’s
disappearance from among the authors of tracts of liberal belief. By questioning
Watson’s political conversion, Wordsworth, with this metaphor, declared his status as
a successor, a man with “a republic spirit” (*Prose* I, 31). To further assert his identity,
many times in *Letter* Wordsworth mentions Edmund Burke as his second target of
denunciation (35; 48; 49). Since Burke was viewed as the most vigilant defender of
the English system, Wordsworth’s double charge has the function of promoting his
own status.

In his validation of the execution of the French King and the blood shed during
the Revolutionary period, Wordsworth believed that Watson “attach[ed] so much

importance to the personal sufferings of the late royal martyr” (*Prose* I, 32). As for the death of the French King, Wordsworth recommended that Watson carefully scan the history of France to see how “the blind fondness of his people had placed a human being in that monstrous situation which rendered him unaccountable before a human tribunal” (32). Playing the role of the Shakespearean Antony in *Julius Caesar*, Wordsworth quoted an imaginary scene from M. Grégoire’s lecture in the national convention, where the body of Louis XVI is confronted with the body of a murdered Frenchman: “there was not a citizen on the tenth of august [sic], who, if he could have dragged before the eyes of Louis the corpse [sic] of one of his murdered brothers, might not have exclaimed to him, Tyran, voilà ton ouvrage” (32). Being sympathetic to the death of the French King is a normal expression of feelings, nevertheless, the passion of pity should be delimited from abuse of feeling, “under the influence of reason,” and “regulated by the disproportion of the pain suffered to the guilt incurred.” All the feelings for the French King should be checked at this point, and “[a]ny other sorrow for the death of Louis is irrational and weak” (32-33). In other words, the guilt of Louis XVI, symbolized by the murdered bodies, arouses more pain compared with the pain the French King suffered. In his extension of the revolutionary discourse, Wordsworth at the same time exposes the arbitrariness of and possible conflict generated by sympathy. In Watson’s argument, having sympathy for the French King is natural; for Wordsworth, this sympathy should be confined, because a reasonable amount of sympathy should be reserved towards the sufferers whose pain was inflicted upon them by Louis XVI. Different objects of sympathy may arouse conflict, as David Hume states in *Understanding of Human Nature*. Philosophical discourse of sympathy, when applied to the realm of politics, generates two disparate objects of sympathy in conflict. The targets of sympathy, when in conflict, can be reconciled only with political manipulation.

As to the blood shed in France, the country “stained with the blood of the aged, of the innocent, of the defenceless sex,” Wordsworth believes the process of revolution must be in essence violent, “borrow[ing] the very arms of despotism to overthrow,” and “in order to reign in peace must establish herself by violence” (*Prose* I, 33). The extension of the pro-revolutionary discourse in the second stage needed to justify the violence occurring in France, and Wordsworth sees it as an interregnum, a revolutionary “convulsion from which is to spring a fairer order of things” (34). In other words, violence is necessary for the future peace of freedom and equality.

Wordsworth’s argument generally followed the political discourse in the early 1790s: the true liberty, equality, and freedom envisioned by representative election and the abolition of the aristocratic system. Like other radicals, he suggests that the power of the King should be annulled and the system of aristocrats abolished, in that “much of human misery, that the great evils which desolate states, proceed from the governor’s having an interest distinct from that of the governed” (*Prose* I, 36-37). While the argument of the anti-jacobin carries expresses disbelief in the worth of “the lower orders of the community” (31), Wordsworth believes that only “universal representation” (38) and general education can solve the repetition of human misery. Turning his argument on the domestic issues of parliamentary reformation, Wordsworth targets the unjustness of “hereditary monarchy” and “hereditary authority” (41; 42), an institution whose survival is secure so long as many people in England “are taught from infancy that we were born in a state of inferiority to our oppressors” (36). Having first-hand experience with the difficulty caused by aristocrats, Wordsworth himself has experienced the inequality of this system. When his father died in 1783, Sir James Lonsdale, whom Wordsworth’s father had worked for, refused to give over the money owed to Wordsworth’s father. This made Wordsworth understand the problems inequality brought.

For the two sides of the pamphlet war, what the French Revolution envisioned was a power re-distribution and reshuffling, though radicals like Wordsworth never explicitly specified how big an extent this “universal election” should cover.

However, the misery that inequality brought constitutes Wordsworth’s main argument:

For my part, I am more enthusiastic: the sorrow I feel from the contemplation of this melancholy picture is not unconsoled by a comfortable hope that the class of wretches called mendicants will not much longer shock the feelings of humanity; that the miseries entailed upon the marriage of those who are not rich will no longer tempt the bulk of mankind to fly to that promiscuous intercourse to which they are impelled by the instincts of nature, and the dreadful satisfaction of escaping the prospect of infants, sad fruit of such intercourse, whom they are unable to support. (43)

The image of the beggars and vagrants, as described in *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, becomes a useful weapon to charge with tyranny the monarch and the aristocrats. However, the image of “the miseries entailed upon the marriage of those who are not rich,” and the “escaping the prospect of infants” from “promiscuous intercourse” seems odd here, but it implicitly directs us to Wordsworth’s experience. On his second visit to France in 1792, he met a French woman called Annette Vallon, and their immediate passionate love resulted in Vallon’s pregnancy. Out of financial problems and political tension between France and England, at the end of 1792 Wordsworth left for England before his daughter Anne Caroline Wordsworth was born. This, together with the issue with James Lonsdale, shows Wordsworth himself to be a victim of the aristocratic system, and his voice for the poor, actually contained his discontent and anger in the year of 1793. As F. W. Bateson comments: “Wordsworth would probably not have become an active political revolutionary, if the barriers of his passivity had not been previously overthrown by sexual passion. Beaupuy [the

young French officer who had guided Wordsworth into radical thought] was only an effect, the cause was Annette” (88).

IV. “The Poor are the subject”

A. Sympathy and Guilt

In the 1790s, the image of beggars and gypsies filled many parts of Wordsworth’s poems. The voice of the marginal figures was a common strategy. By showing the pain of the marginals, Wordsworth manipulated the image of the body to facilitate political discourse. In its attack on the Jacobin Poet in the second issue of 27 November 1797, the *Anti-Jacobin* had criticized the political use of sensibility “by many authors... in sonnets and elegies without end,” giving an outline of the standard poetic techniques used by the writers of such verse:

A human being, in the lowest state of penury and distress, is a treasure to a reasoner of this cast. He contemplates... with a view of extracting from the variety of his wretchedness new topics of invective against the pride of property. He indeed (if he is a true Jacobin), refrains from *relieving* the object of his compassionate contemplation; as well knowing, that every diminution from the general mass of human misery, must proportionally diminish the force of his argument. (qtd. in Bainbridge 89)

To cast the misery of the marginal into relief and describe their pain, arousing pity from the reader, was to use the body of the oppressed to challenge the unjustness of the political system. As a synecdoche for the body politic, the body of the indigent is symptomatic of the disease of the country. Peter Brooks argues that the execution of Louis XVI ends the divine-right monarchy transferring sovereignty to the nation (36-38). From the divinely appointed political authority of the King to the body-politic that made up the population of the country, the dead body of the king represented the disclosure of the mystery of the King’s body as well as its

disappearance. In the mundane version of the body-politic, everyone's suffering and pain must be valued. It is in the progressive development of the modern thought that the basis of the nation was changed. In this new picture of the nation, the relationship between mother and son were seen as not only the basis of the family, but also as a synecdoche of the nation. To discipline the behavior of the mother, as Julie Kipp explains in her *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic*, was the duty of the country, because the mother's care of her children influenced the power of the nation. That explains why among the oppositional poems of the late eighteenth century, the depiction of the suffering mother and her infants became the most sentimental and powerful charge against the inequality in the nation. As Julie Kipp suggests, "writers of the period appealed to the mother-child bond as a means of naturalizing other forms of social interaction, maintaining and sometimes challenging dominant relationships of power" (6). Because the relationship between mother and child is, no doubt, the most intimate and instinctive of human relation, the separation of this relation is the symptom of the problem of the nation:

the mother-child bond is often figured as savage, primal, unenlightened— all of which tropes were standard fare for Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment writers, particularly those employing maternal metaphors as a means to explore questions concerning legitimate and illegitimate national bonds and loyalties. (Kipp 10)

These figures in Wordsworth's poems of the 1790s are prevalent: besides, those in *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, *The Thorn*, *The Female Vagrant*, *The Ruined Cottage*, *The Complaint of an Indian Woman* all have the mother/infants as victims of political institutions, be it war or the economy.

In his *The Thorn* (1798), Wordsworth depicts the story of a mad woman suffering from the pain of having killed her infant. After being deserted, she killed her

illegitimate infant near a thorn bush. The rest of her life is engrossed in pain and mourning. As a common phenomena in the second half of the eighteenth century, infanticide in Wordsworth's depiction highlights the issue of poverty. In his *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith focuses on environments which produce the infanticidal criminal, arguing that in nations which are "miserably poor," the urgency of "mere want" reduces people to destroying or exposing infants, the aged, or diseased "to perish with hunger, or be devoured by wild beasts" (qtd. in Kipp 132). Besides, Thomas Malthus, in the 1803 edition of *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, stresses the "extreme pain which [parents] must feel, in making such a sacrifice, even when the distress arising from excessive poverty may be supposed to have deadened in great measure their sensibility," for the "permission of infanticide is bad enough, and cannot but have a bad effect on the moral sensibility of a nation" (ibid, 133-34).

Among the opposition poems of Wordsworth, female vagrants are always the main characters drawn into relief. As Kenneth Johnston comments, "the story of an abandoned woman [...] is Wordsworth's plot throughout the 1790s" (511). When we take into account Wordsworth's love affair with Annette Vallon, the depiction of the mother and infant is not simply a charge of national injustice by a poet of sensibility. Emile Legouis notes that Wordsworth's distress over leaving a mother and his own child in revolutionary, war-torn France, bore poetic fruit in the many "affecting stories of seduced maidens, forsaken wives, or simply of wretched women whose lives has been wrecked by the war" (59). The poet's heart was "tormented by remembrance and remorse" (59). These poems have a similar structure: the absent father, the forsaken mother, and the nursling baby. Through displacement and relocation, Wordsworth releases his "remembrance and remorse" through these poems, compounding his sympathy with his guilt for the forsaken, Annette Vallon and Anne

Caroline Wordsworth.

In *The Mad Mother* (1798), the main character is a mad forsaken mother with her baby in her arms. The voice of the third-person narrator is mixed with the voice of the forsaken mother, but these voices contain what Wordsworth attempted to forget but displaced. The setting is shifted to England, the baby is legitimate, and the baby in the mother's arms is a boy, in contrast with Wordsworth's hidden history (his illegitimate French daughter). Seemingly redundant, the narrator explains that the song the forsaken mother sings to her baby "was in the English tongue" (10).²³ The replacement of French with English first reveals Wordsworth's hidden guilt, as well as his "perverse strategy."²⁴ The mother is mad, because she is forsaken, and the fact of the absence of the baby's father arouses suspicion about the legitimacy of the baby. The forsaken mother tells her baby,

Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty. (71-74)

The figures of Vallon and his daughter subject to the taunts of other people are in view. The vision of his marriage with Vallon in the poem removes them from the threat of such taunts, thanks to Wordsworth's imaginary compensation. Without the engagement of political discourse, the poem becomes Wordsworth's hidden confession, mixed with the guilt of an absent father and lust of a wayward husband. The depiction of the pain of the mother, "A fire was once within my brain; / And in my head a dull, dull pain" (21-22), is now attributed to the father. The self-reproach

²³ Quotations of *The Mad Mother* are from *The Poems*. 2 vols. Ed. John O. Hayden. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981). 277-280.

²⁴ A term used by Louise Kaplan to designate a circuitous method by which a psychoanalytic subject generates an effect different than its psychological origin would otherwise suggest.

of irresponsibility, “If his sweet boy he could forsake, / With me he never would have stayed” (71-72), is mixed with desire, soon to be disappointed, for the lost object, a masculine gaze on the female’s body: “Thy father cares not for my breasts” (61). From the baby’s suckling of his mother’s breast to the implied scene of sexual interaction, self-reproach is embedded with revelations of sexuality to satisfy male desire.

B. *Salisbury Plain: The Poor Are Subject*

When this “remembrance and remorse” were brought into *Salisbury Plain*, written in 1793 and 1794, the complicated feelings towards the sufferers were amplified to include the charge against the nation. In the Advertisement to *Guilt and Sorrow*, the third version of *Salisbury Plain* published in 1842, Wordsworth explains the theme of this poem:

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. (*Poems* I, 118-119)

For the Wordsworth of 1793, the poor included himself, a young twenty-three year old man who had not yet found his direction in life, and who had a lover and daughter in other country that now was banned from his reach. The political climate was obviously against the pro-revolutionary, and his critical charges against England, *The Letter to Llandaff*, were not published after due consideration of the publisher, Thomas Johnson. All these discontentments were mixed as the series of charges in the poem, the “most impressive protest poem of its time” (Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Lyrical Ballad 1798*, 148). In the broader scope, it is “a record of Wordsworth’s earlier turbulent feelings... about the war with France and the condition

of England” (Stephen Gill, *The Salisbury Plain Poems*, 215). In the narrow sense, it reveals Wordsworth’s sense of guilt toward the mother and infant from whom he was forced to be apart once he left France. This double relation transformed Wordsworth into a melancholic traveler, one who was to meet a vagrant whose husband and children died in the war with America. No longer was Wordsworth an outsider exploiting the body of the sufferer either to satisfy an aesthetic itch or to launch into a political discourse. Rather, to use the phrase of Arthur Frank, Wordsworth presents the “dyadic body” (320), himself and Vallon, two bodies that share the same pain. Different from the social/medical emotion of sympathy, the feeling for the other’s pain in this dyadic body does not derive from the imagination but from the identical pain they suffer.

The change from an outsider to a sufferer himself leads to harsher criticism of the government. At the beginning of the poem, people under tyranny are seen as “hungry savage[s]” surrounded by a malignant atmosphere:

Hard is the life when naked and unhoused [sic]
And wasted by the long day’s fruitless pains,
The hungry savage, ’mid deep forests, roused
By storms, lies down at night on unknown plains. (1-4)²⁵

As the prevalent motif in the Wordsworth 1790s poems, “pains” here refer to the universal state of human beings as now embodied in the hungry savage, who “lifts his head in fear,” because at the darkness of the night, he is under the threat of not only the “storms,” but also the “famished trains / Of boars [that] along the crashing forests prowl,” while “bears contending growl / And round his fenceless bed gaunt wolves in armies howl” (5-6; 8-9). The weather and the animals threatening his life represent

25 The quotation of *Salisbury Plain* is from the Stephen Gill edited *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY, and Hassocks, Sussex: Cornell UP, 1975).

the metamorphosis of the tyrannical, and he is savage because the civility of the nation has been corrupted to its original state. In most of the 1790s poems Wordsworth uses the female body to inscribe his aesthetic/political discourse, combining sadomasochistic pleasure with pro-revolutionary statement; here the experience of the savage directs the charge against the dominant power. His pain is intensified as he reflects “on the state / Of those who on the couch of Affluence rest / By laughing Fortune’s sparkling cup elate” (23-25).

The atmosphere of bleakness in Salisbury Plain, since “[no] shade was there, no meads of pleasant green” in the “wildly plain” and “wasted strain” (46-47; 53-54), is a microscopic picture of England. When the traveler (Wordsworth’s imagined self) first appears in “Sarum’s plain,” where “[t]he troubled west was red with stormy fire,” he “with a sigh / Measured each painful step” (37-39), providing a picture of Wordsworth in late 1792 as he passed Salisbury Plain after leaving Vallon. The sense of loss, attributed to a nation, is symbolized in the disappearance of the Gothic spire. When he turned “his backward eye” to “the distant spire,” the Gothic church, the view “[w]as lost” “in the blank sky” (39-41). The importance of this Gothic church is that it was deemed a national icon, the spirit of liberty and freedom for the English. As Tom Dugget points out, this Cathedral symbolized social order, the spirit of English liberty, because it was the best location for preserving the four remaining original documents of the Magna Carta (1215), the extension of which includes the Petition of Right (1628), the Habeas Corpus Act (1679) (suspended by the Pitt government in April 1794, the Bill of Rights (1689), and the Act of Settlement (1701) (171). The dire situation of English people evokes a sense of loss without this national icon to pay tribute to and revere.

The spirit of liberty lost is further aggravated in the vision of Stonehenge. Mistaking Druids as “antique castle,” the Traveler reaches a place of which he says,

“[h]oary and naked are its walls and raise / Their brow sublime; while to those walls
he hied / A voice as from a tomb in hollow accents cried” (79-81). In addition to the
Gothic cathedral, the image of Stonehenge constitutes another English tradition. But
this tradition symbolizes the facet of cruelty and violence:

For oft at dead of night, when dreadful fire
Reveals that powerful circle’s reddening stones,
’Mid priests and specters grim and idols dire,
Far heard the great flame utters human moans,
Then all is hushed. (91-95)

Stonehenge is a place where “huge wickers paled with circling fire” make “[t]o
Demon-Gods a human sacrifice” (424; 427). The history of the Druids is interpreted
as a time when superstition dominated and men were victims of sacrifice.²⁶ With
this understanding of history in view, Stonehenge serves to “bring the ancient
sacrificial murders of Stonehenge’s rituals into the narrative present (the corpse is
‘newly murdered’)” (Fosso 165-66), reminding us of not only sacrifice in pre-history
but also the victims of the high-handed English government, together with the
possible slaughter in the upcoming English-French war. As J. R. Watson has it, that
the poem “is not just an anti-war polemic, but an expression of a deeply-felt fear of
violence and slaughter” (45). The vision of the Druids, together with the loss of the
symbol of the democratic spirit in the Gothic cathedral, resulted in Wordsworth’s
“political uncanniness,” making estranged a “long familiar England” (Janowitz 103).
The traveler’s loss of direction in the Salisbury Plain suggests that he is “figuratively
lost within the historical field that runs from the ancient Britain of Stonehenge to the

²⁶ In his *The Famous Druids*, A. L. Owen makes an important point, that in the eighteenth century, there were debates on the essence of the Druids: the image of the wise Druid being contrasted to the cruel Druid, which respectively represent “oppositional” and “governmental” patriotism (see Janowitz 99).

‘Gothic’ England of Salisbury” (Dugget 170). The envisioned Druid is the prevalent image throughout the poem, an image of the nation that would “drink / The dregs of wretchedness, for empire strain, / And crushed by their own fetters helpless sink, / Move their galled limbs in fear and eye each silent link,” bringing only “murder, pain, and tears,” and “endless war” (447-50; 508-509).

The place in which the Traveler and the gypsy choose to stay to escape from the storm of the night, the “ruin,” “the Virgin built / A lonely Spital” (122-123) has another layer of symbolic meaning. In Malcolm Andrews’ distinction, the ruin in the eighteenth and nineteenth century usually drew five types of sometime overlapping responses: sentimental response, antiquarian response, aesthetic response, moral response, and political response (45-46). Here the ruin the traveler and the gypsy stay in has both sentimental and political meanings: it is the representation of the dire situation of the marginal, which, in large scope, represents the status of the nation. In the rising social and political tensions, as Gertrude Himmelfarb observes, changes in technology, economics, politics, demography, and ideology made England’s “poverty more conspicuous, more controversial, and in a sense less ‘natural’ than it had ever been before” (18). Returning to nature is to level civilization to ruins, and man into a decayed condition. In other words, men would become “human ruins” that “invoke a sense of dread, the dread of regression to pre-consciousness and a world without speech” (Janowitz 108). Cultures are destroyed at the pre-historical stage of violence and massacre, and men are cast into a life-threatening status.

Nevertheless, the pained traveler and female beggar’s experiences differ. While the pain of the traveler directs itself to the change in political injustice, that of the female beggar is mixed with Wordsworth’s guilt and desire. In her *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (1971), Helen Block Lewis distinguishes shame from guilt: “The experience of shame is directly about the *self*, which is the focus of evaluation. In

guilt, [however], the self is not the central object of negative evaluation, but rather the thing done is the focus” (qtd. in Tangney and Dearing 18, original italics). The “thing done” for Wordsworth was the forsaking of Vallon, and in *Salisbury Plain* the guilt is compensated by the meeting of the traveler and the female gypsy. Rather than mutual support between the two characters, this meeting is generally focused on the alleviation of the pain of the female gypsy through her enunciation of her story. It is the traveler who “[with] sober sympathy and tranquil mind / Gently the Woman gan [sic] her wounds unbind” (202-203), helping the gypsy ease her pain, instead of the other way round. In other words, through the sympathy of the dyadic body, Wordsworth relieves his sense of guilt by comforting Vallon figured in the gypsy. As Kurt Fosso notes, “[t]he traveler’s and female vagrant’s shared ‘Night Journey’ of death and rebirth depends upon the transformative powers of such mourning and its conversations of loss— powers framed by *Salisbury Plain*’s romance form” (167). It is Wordsworth’s mourning,²⁷ rather than Vallon’s, and in it the substituted female gypsy recovers from her sorrow in order to relieve Wordsworth’s guilt.

Gender bias toward the masculine endurance of pain (“Yet is he strong to suffer, and his mind / Encounters all his evils unsubdued” [10-11]) and feminine delicacy (“Might Beauty charm the canker worm of pain / The rose on her sweet cheek had ne’er declined” [204-205]) predetermines the focus of sympathy: the traveler’s pain is only briefly described in the third-person at the beginning, but the story of the female gypsy, placed in the middle part of the poem, is narrated by the female gypsy herself. The place where the traveler comes from is never specified, and the sense of loss he suffers is historical more than material; on the other hand, the female gypsy is geographically lost, and her story is inscribed more in her decayed body. Her body

²⁷ Freud, in “Mourning and Melancholia,” distinguishes between melancholia, in which the sufferer refuses any substitutes for the lost object, and mourning, where the subject, by accepting substitutes, achieves an end to this process.

therefore becomes a synecdoche for her story.

Her body is political and sexual, revolutionary as well as sadomasochistic. The narration of her story is to draw sympathy from the male/pro-revolutionary for her “Beauty,” in which “the canker worm of pain” is mixed with “rose on her sweet cheek.” Beauty is more beautiful when delicacy is shown, according to Edmund Burke (*A Philosophical Enquiry* 105), and male sympathy derives its largest pleasure from desire for the weak, suffering beauty. As Laura Hinton suggests, “sadomasochistic desire underlies the experience of sympathy, through the perverse spectator who creates and reflects sentimental image-making” (3). The hint of the sexual is almost implied at the beginning of the gypsy’s story. In her youth, she was like a swan, swimming while “[raising] her sister breasts of snow” amid “Derwent’s water-lillies [sic]” (*Salisbury Plain* 210-211).

The story of the female gypsy, like that of *The Indian Woman*, is a distortion of Wordsworth’s love affair with Vallon. The background is moved to England; through displacement Wordsworth is able to harshly criticize a domestic policy that leads to the degradation of a family. By the side of Derwent River, her “father’s cottage stood,” where “[a] little flock” for the gypsy’s father is “more than mines of gold” (226-229). She led a “thoughtful joy” until the governmental policy of enclosure and famine, “by cruel chance and willful wrong,” not only did the land “[a]ll into decay” but also, as to her father, “[o]ppression trampled on his tresses grey” (257). Even the death of her father did not end the tragedy, because due to the war with America, her husband was forced to join the army. With her husband and their three children, the female gypsy experienced the savagery “at the heels of War,” and the “very nourishment” from “their brother’s blood” (313; 315). Finally her husband and their children died, causing the great pain of the female gypsy:

“The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,

Disease and Famine, Agony and Fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would thy brain unsettle even to hear.
All perished, all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children one by one, by sword
And scourge of fiery fever.” (316-322)

Her story almost had come to its end, but it was interrupted by the parallel of the nightly sights and the face of the female gypsy. The Traveler encourages the female gypsy to “come after weary night / So ruinous far other scene to view / So forth she came and eastward look’d. The sight / O’er her moist eyes meek dawn of gladness threw / That tinged with faint red smile her faded hue” (335-338). The male traveler now becomes the male voyeuristic observer, gazing at the gypsy as she “eastward look’d.” All sufferings embodied in her only makes her more beautiful, “meek” and “faint” being an example of ideal “sentimental image-making” suggesting “sodomasochistic desire.”

In the 1780s Wordsworth shaped himself as a melancholic, sentimental poet; in the early 1790s his melancholy was transformed into sympathy towards the suffering marginal. In the depiction of picturesque landscapes, the image of sufferers looms forth to protest social injustice. His love affair with Annette Vallon allows him to further explore the possibilities of the body of the marginal: with a sense of guilt, desire, and political enthusiasm, the body of the female sufferer carries a pro-revolutionary discourse, sodomasochistic desire, and resentment against a deserting husband. In the next chapter, we will see Wordsworth’s transition from the aesthetic of the picturesque to the sublime, in which Wordsworth shifts the focus from the sufferer’s “brain” to the poet’s “mind,” delving into the infinity of an imagination that is intertwined with traces of the medical, political, philosophical and sexual body.

Chapter Three: On the Sublime— The Politics of Mind

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Foucault suggests, an irruption in epistemology led to the concept of a modern subject with a new form of self-consciousness. In this process of change, literature became a critical discourse to construct this new subject from its reflection and confession in text, delving into the origin and growth of the self to justify the imaginary powers at work in the text. Metalanguage of self-reflection and self-expectation worked together to delineate and confirm a coherent self-image of the present. As a progressive version of the Cartesian ego, this self-conscious ego extended “I think, therefore I am” into “I reflect, therefore I am.” This new subject demands a further development of body disposition, a more intricate machine of an organism that stratifies and modulates the relations between each part of the body. The flow of libido needs to transmute us and introduce to a newly intensified zone, addressing a new relationship in and out of the body. Nevertheless, while a new image of the subject is formed, traces of limitation and sacrifice that constitute each step of joint and disjoint become the remnants and sediment reject to be sublimated. The more the poet congratulated himself on his sublime power of imagination and reason, the more hidden traces were left unresolved to obstruct the newly-formed machine. As Robert Burns Neveline suggests, this text of self-consciousness

becomes a record of the limit faced in the void; it becomes, in Deleuzoguattarian terms, an abstract machine, formed of assembled parts, themselves the superficially desultory or dilatory offcasts of the excesses involved in obsessive rivalry, sexual pursuit, scientific hubris, and death.
(Bodies at Risk 5)

Both autobiography and the explanatory notes annexed to their works, romantic poets

figured out a way to create the machine from the assemblage of materials that directed us toward a unified self. However, this compulsory stratum, with the sublime mind on top, is hidden within a body inscribed with sexual impulses, and a drive toward literary competition, and political adaptation. In his pursuit of sublimity, Wordsworth conceals and effaces these impulses under the guise of the interaction between man and nature. This new form of assertion of imaginary power, the mind that recognizes itself, is in fact the result of a series of flight trajectories from the trespassed boundary of incest, the death drive, and political myopia.

In the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the biological interpretation of mind became the battlefield on which the anti-jacobins and the reformers contested the necessity of revolution and political change. From Joseph Priestley to Erasmus Darwin, the scientific discovery of the mind signified another sign of the progress of the enlightenment, and this progress, in turn, demanded a change in the politics of the status quo. The deterritorialization of the original body configuration for a new one, the hypothesis of a corporeal mind and its active internal functioning challenged the orthodox view of an immaterial and passive mind, the view that served the political and religious requirement for an obedient subject.²⁸ The challenge against the old stifling body-machine theory was a challenge against the authority whose stabilization depended on and whose interest was invested in this form of organism. The discovery of this other aspect of nature endowed the natural philosophers with the power to debate from another position against the politics of the status quo. Situated in this political climate, William Wordsworth' works in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century

²⁸ As Alan Richardson points out: "Sociological approaches to the history of brain science have only intensified interest in the period, detailing how widely disseminated, politically charged, and ideologically suspect were the new materialist and naturalistic models of mind in a period of revolution and reaction, when to challenge orthodox notions of the mind and soul meant implicitly to challenge the social order" (*British Romanticism 2*).

were presented as a response to these natural philosophers in the post-revolutionary period. This dialogue, centered on the idea of the sublime, reveals the inter-connection between aesthetics, medicine, and politics. In his period of the picturesque centered on the “brain” of the sufferers, in this stage Wordsworth shifted his focus to the mind.

I. The Burkean Sublime²⁹

Edmund Burke was one of the most influential aesthetic theorists of the eighteenth century. His aesthetic theory has its philosophical basis in Lockean empiricism and the newly-burgeoned sciences of physiology and anatomy. Revising Addison’s trinity of the “great,” “uncommon,” and “beautiful” into the binary opposition of the sublime and the beautiful, he also elaborates Addison’s natural appreciation to the full.³⁰ Burke locates the origin of the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful in the “leading passions” of “self-preservation” and “society” (*A Philosophical Enquiry* 35, 37). The sublime arouses fear and pain, with the implication of a danger of death (though distance is to be maintained to ensure the delight of the viewer), while the beautiful causes feelings of attraction and love. The instinct of “self-preservation” concerns not just the preservation of one’s life, but “the

²⁹ The sublime is a time-honored aesthetic category that has early caught the attention of literary theorists since ancient Greece and has proliferated with accumulated meanings alongside heated debates. Its theory is founded in Cassius Longinus’ *On the Sublime*, in which this Greek critic summarizes the ancient rhetoric tradition from Aristotle to Quintilian. Longinus’ influence is long-standing, in that the system of rules he sets up incorporates what Roman Jakobson terms the communication chain of “addresser---text---addressee,” in this way he maps out all possible directions for later theorists to develop: the focus on the text (literary technique) prefigures the idea of the “rhetorical sublime” in Neo-Classicism; the innate power of the poet (addresser) evolves into both the “natural sublime” (Nature as the first addresser to the poet-addressee) and Wordsworth’s “egotistical sublime.” Besides, the philosophical development of empiricism and idealism gives birth to two aesthetic discourses, on the “empirical sublime” and the “idealist sublime” (Trott 78), typified respectively in the theories of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant.

³⁰ Joseph Addison, an important figure in the history of the sublime in the Neoclassicist Period, differentiates to posit a tripartite aesthetic category of “great,” “uncommon,” and “beautiful,” which prefigures the dichotomy of the sublime/beautiful in both Burke and Kant. The importance of Addison is that instead of having a literary text as the only reference for his aesthetic theory, he also included natural scenery as a frame of reference. This change of attitude towards natural scenery, mountains especially, marks the turn from the rhetorical sublime to the natural sublime.

multiplication of the species”; the passion of “society” designates not just the relationship between men and other men, but most important of all, the “society of *the sexes*” (37). The two “leading passions” of “self-preservation” and “society of the sexes” posit the importance of the human body as a subject of aesthetic appreciation, whose limitations and extensions are determined by the aesthetic basis: every “body” is doomed to decline and decay, and the generation of another “body” through sexual relation is one way human beings see the extension of their lives. The two sides of “body,” the body limited by death and the sexual body leading to life, “the multiplication of the species,” are the ontology of the sublime and the beautiful. With his emphasis on the function of body, Burke lays the ground for a secular exposition of the aesthetic.

As Burke starts to define the traits of the beautiful, the body that is imbued with a sexual connotation gradually obtains a gendered identity. He objects to the contemporary theory of the beautiful that relates beauty either to the faculty of understanding or that sees it as possessing some kind of metaphysical undertone, designating that the elements of beauty can be found in the object itself before further meditation:

By beauty I mean, that quality or those qualities in *bodies* by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it. I confine this definition to the *merely sensible qualities of things*, for the sake of preserving the utmost simplicity in a subject which must always distract us, whenever we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any persons or things from *secondary considerations*, and not from the direct force which they have merely on *being viewed*. (83; my italics)

His objection to “proportion” (93) and “fitness” (95) as sufficient causes of beauty, two theories of beauty represented respectively by Francis Hutcheson in *An Inquiry*

into the *Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* and David Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, shifts the critical focus from abstract idealization and utilitarian interest to empirical observation of “those qualities in *bodies* by which they cause love.” That is to say, the aesthetic experience is from the very beginning a relation between two bodies, one observing and the other observed. However, the position of the viewing/viewed bodies are rather fixed rather than exchangeable, in that the observed is presupposed to be possessed of feminine traits as crystallized in the female body. According to Burke, qualities of the beautiful include “smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, and delicacy” (102-105). These traits can be found in material nature, such as “smooth streams in the landscape,” “delicate myrtle” (104, 105) as well as the female body. The fact that the female body arouses not only a feeling of “love” as other beautiful sceneries the but also satisfies the human need of “the multiplication of the species” reveals the primacy of the female body in the category of the beautiful. All these traits of the beautiful combine to form an ideal image of the female body:

Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix, or whither it is carried. (105)

The “gendered vocabulary of its social evaluations (the praise of women’s ‘delicacy’ and ‘innocence’; the stigma of a woman’s being called ‘masculine’)” (Wolfson 388) betrays the ideology of a male-dominated society: the male is the observer, the yardstick of the standard of beauty of the female body. While man is capable of objective reasoning, the female is a passive character, one to be viewed because women were not born animals of reason. Woman’s body is disciplined through an

aesthetic discourse tainted with male power: the shape of the ideal female that would invite man's "love" and his willingness to have a relationship with her in order to make possible "the multiplication of the species." The fact that "[h]undreds of upper- and middle-class women in England in the Romantic era aspired to become the languorous, melting beauty that Burke envisioned" (Mellor 109) testifies to the power of aesthetic discourse to shape the female body. It is therefore understandable that in Burke's aesthetic theory the subject of aesthetic appreciation is presupposed to be the male, as testified by the sexual object being woman, the main focus of "society" that produces next generation. The demand for the ideal beauty of women is not limited to the outer shape, but also extends to the quality of mind: the ideal beauty reveals in an image of "weakness...enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it" (106). Women were said to have a weak mind and an indulgent sensibility, or bodily sensation, while men were more animals of reason.

This gendered mind/body distinction is further consolidated in the category of the sublime. While in the beautiful a clear image of the female body is presented together with nature, in the sublime the human body is absent from any reference to the idea of the sublime. According to Burke, there are two sources that arouse the feeling of terror: one is visible— vast, great, and rugged objects, such as high mountains, buildings, the vast ocean; the other is invisible— a dark, mysterious, and solitary atmosphere. The vast ocean, according to Burke, is more capable of arousing the idea of the sublime than a level plain, because the ocean is unknown and unpredictable. As exemplified in the high mountains, the pleasure deriving from the sublime is not so much the possible danger that causes pain in the body (since this danger must be distant) but the elevation of mind through observing their infinite

power over man.³¹ High mountains and the vast ocean, in contrast to smooth streams and rivers, are more likely to arouse the feeling of the infinite. The symbolic power of the sublime in nature is what a man endeavors to attain instead of a woman. In this sense, the pleasure from the sublime is not so much the pure appreciation of natural scenery but the confidence in masculine reason, which is best described by Kant.³²

II. The Challenge of Mind

In the previous section, we discussed the Burkean distinction between sublimity and beauty and the implied binary oppositions relating to them, including mind/body, man/woman, and gazing/gazed upon. These sets of distinction operate based on the prestige of the masculine sublime mind, and its domination over woman by the aestheticization of the beautiful female body. Sublimity and mind seemed male attributes, while beauty and body were ideal attributes of woman. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the new medical field of neuroscience challenged

³¹ Jaqueline M. Labbe explains Joseph Addison's idea of the difference between observing the vast and the confined. Early in the century, Addison valorized a "wide and undetermined Prospect... [as] pleasing to the Fancy, as the Speculation of Eternity or Infinitude are to the Understanding," over "Restraint," elaborating that the "Mind of Man... is apt to fancy itself under a sort of Confinement, when the Sight is pent up in a narrow Compass, and shortened on every side by the Neighborhood of Walls or Mountains" (ix).

³² Kant's aesthetic theory pushes the empirical sublime toward the extreme of the idealistic sublime. In Kant's philosophical system, the beautiful is based on the object apprehended by the imagination, while the sublime has its origin in the mind: "The sublime is [just] that, the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense" (98). This faculty is the reason. In viewing objects of overwhelming size, the imagination, with the presented sense-data accumulating to the infinite, finds itself incapable of apprehending under its category, while it is reason that demands "totality" for this formless and boundless object, in this way justifying the hypothesis of the illimitable capacity of the human mind. In other words, the very failure of the imagination paves the way to the success of the reason. It is the object of magnitude and infinity that testifies to, or guarantees, the mind's capacity for the sublime. Kant's emphasis on the power of the mind is quite similar to that of Longinus: both credit nature as the springboard testifying to the grandeur of the mind. Nature is not sublime in itself; the sublime belongs to the subject. The Kantian sublime marks the boundary of scope in terms of object and subject. For English empiricists, who believe that knowledge is based on the senses, the idea of the sublime has its foundation in the object, whether the object be a natural one, the "natural sublime" (mountain, ocean, sky) or a cultural one, the "rhetorical sublime" (the poetry of Homer, Virgil, Milton). The response from the subject has its basis in the object, and the object relies on the perceiver to reveal its sublimity. Kant changes this mutual relation: the faculty of reason is itself sublime, and the object only functions as a reminder of its transcendental power. The Kantian sublime not only anticipates Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime" but also provides a reading of the Romantic imagination.

the long-standing separation of mind and body. The religious/political distinctions that justified the dominance of the powerful and the male were threatened by the hypothesis that the mind, instead of carrying an immaterial essence, is part of our bodily organization.

A. Materiality and Vitality

In Descartes' *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, the body and the mind are deployed as two discrete substances. The body, a channel between mind and the material world, is responsible for the transmission of information through the communication of sensory organs with the outer world, serving the function of extension. The immaterial mind, the function of which is thought, is independent of and isolated from the contagion of the material body.³³ Capable of imagining and reasoning, the mind both interacts with the body and works on its own terms. In the performance of the imagination, the mind receives unorganized sense data from the body and processes them into meaningful ideas through understanding; in the activity of reasoning, the intellectual mind operates to judge abstract ideas. "I think, therefore I am," and it is the operation of the mind that identifies a single thinking subject that knows how to doubt and question, a unified self that tells the real from the illusory. Because of this, it is just the thinking self that justifies its own existence, and this thinking "I" is "a substance the whole essence or nature of which is simply to think, and which, in order to exist, has no need of any place nor depends on any material thing" (19). In Descartes' dualist logic of thinking, the body is "as a kind of mechanism" (100), operating according to the rules of the body;³⁴ the mind, in contrast, is like a "ghost in the machine" (Hatfield 304),

³³ In Descartes' scheme of the body, the brain does not equal the mind. The brain is the name for the human organ, while the mind has an immaterial substance independent from the brain, though Descartes once defined the place of the mind in the pineal gland.

³⁴ The body, according to Descartes, can still "exhibit all the same motions" even if the mind does not exist in it.

with no corporeal existence in the body. This dichotomy presupposes the superiority of the mind over the body, and, through its guarantee as a concomitant of the divine, ensures the immortality of the self. Therefore, Descartes' arguments reaffirm Scholasticism and consolidate the separation of the body and the mind in Western thought and culture. It is the immateriality of mind that religion and politics inscribe, explain, in order to set up the cornerstone for the integrity of the social order. In the discourse of the "body politic" popular in the Renaissance period, for instance, the power of the King derived from the immaterial aspect of a body (sic, the mind) ordained by God. It is this immateriality that guarantees the King's governance.

In addition to the immateriality of the mind, Isaac Newton's theory of gravity has another important effect on the eighteenth century's configuration of the mind. In his picture of the world, the world is constituted by inept particles that require God's initiative to move around. Universal gravitation, as well as the three laws of motion, according to Newton, is governed by the same set of natural laws that make possible the motions of objects on Earth and of celestial bodies. Although gravity explains the motions of the planets, it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. Newton never identified the power behind motions, but since his tentative explanation was that God governs all things and knows their nature, the natural laws would inevitably be attributed to the creation of God. This religious explanation behind Newton's view of physics and cosmology configures a passive/initiative model that consolidates the legitimacy of the governing and the established order.

Newton's postulation of inept particles and such a world picture was soon applied to other areas of study, especially biological psychology. This passive view of the worldly object was exploited in David Hartley's pattern of the body, in that he saw the body as a machine passively sending perceived representations to the mind. Following empiricists such as John Locke, he believed that the human brain was a

blank sheet (tabula rasa), but further explained the motion of the body in nervous terms. Like Hobbes, Descartes, and others, Hartley had attempted to connect his system of mind to the system of human anatomy. He found the intellectual mechanism existed chiefly in the so-called “white medullary substance” of the brain, and along the various nerve avenues. Sensations arrived in these workshop areas from all parts of the body, and were handled by these mechanisms according to the laws of association. Accepting Newton’s idea of a subtle elastic ether as the most minute particles, Hartley explained sensation as the result of a vibration of the minute particles of the medullary substance of the nerves. According to him, the elastic ether is rare in the interstices of solid bodies and in their close neighborhood, and denser as it recedes from them. This helps him to explain pleasure and pain in physiological terms: pleasure is the result of moderate vibrations, pain of vibrations so violent as to break the continuity of the nerves. These vibrations leave behind them in the brain a tendency to fainter vibrations or “vibratiuncles” of a similar kind, which correspond to “ideas of sensation.” This accounts for memory. This material process of “vibrations” in the brain and nerves undergirded the workings of association and provided a physiological explanation for psychological phenomena. “Motions” from the external environment bombard the senses in such a way as to cause vibrations, which run along the “medullary substance” of the nerves, solid but porous cords with “infinitesimally small particles” of Newtonian ether diffused throughout (qtd. in Richardson *British Romanticism* 10). Although Hartley’s theory of the mind is materialist through and through, his mechanical view of the mind/body follows the orthodoxy of a passive mind.³⁵

³⁵ As Roy Porter summarizes Hartley’s rationalization and vindication of materialism: “Hartley piously framed his materialist physiological psychology in terms of the grand Christian narrative.... For it had been the Christian God who had endowed matter with all its active powers and potentialities in the first place. The necessarianism entailed by materialism was, indeed, the perfect guarantee of the universal operation of cause and effect, hence of the uniformity of nature, and so of the boundless

Immateriality of mind and passivity of body envisioned a relation of master/slave that rationalized governmental power, endowing with the powerful initiative and demanding a docile body of the powerless. In the process of the development of natural philosophy in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, natural philosophers were no longer satisfied with either the vacuity of the immaterial mind distanced from the material brain or the political undertone of the passive mind that relied on the vital power of God/King to make a move. This challenge to an orthodox science of mind was always accompanied with a challenge to authority, in that the right to interpret the mind was being kept in the hands of the English Church.

Though Thomas Willis's ideas of the nervous system strongly suggested the identification of the mind with the brain, most followers of natural philosophers from John Locke to David Hartley overlooked it as another bit of convenient reasoning like Descartes's statement that the mind is situated in the pineal gland. In Thomas Willis' medical configuration, the traditional "animal spirit" is still preserved, and relegated to serving as the agent of the animal soul, which inhabits both the blood and nerves to channel biological energy. Though Willis' neurology reshapes Galenic humoral models and, in its combination with Harvey's discovery of blood, maps out an interior dimension of the body, he nevertheless postulated the existence of two souls: the animal soul and intellectual soul, and therefore lapses into the dualistic dichotomy of body/mind, materiality/immateriality. That the animal soul functions as a center for the sensory organs and the intellectual soul as a presiding agent once again replicates Descartes. The development from Willis to Hartley in neuroscience to some extent shaped the embodiment of mind and included the operation of mind in the realm of material configurations.³⁶

power and wisdom of the Creator" (350).

³⁶ Commenting on the impact of contemporary neuroscience, Roy Porter notes that: "Reason and intelligibility--- in other words, the Hartleyan anti-mystification test--- required that one should believe

A systematic challenge to the orthodox idea of mind started with Joseph Priestley's interpretation of David Hartley in the mid-eighteenth century. Early in 1775 in his expositions of Hartley's thought, he believed thought to be a "property of the nervous system, or rather of the brain" (qtd. in Richardson *British Romanticism* 10). This totally rejects the immaterial quality of the intellectual mind of Descartes. This thought was commonly shared by dissenters/physicians in the late eighteenth century, as attested by John Thelwall's lecture on "The Origin of Sensation" in 1793, which purports that the "phenomena of mind" is based "upon principles purely physical" (ibid, 10). Underlying this seemingly scientific statement is a challenge to the institutions of orthodox natural philosophy, represented by the Royal Society, and the political institutions that relied on religious and philosophical support. Joseph Priestley believed his experiment with electricity following Benjamin Franklin would help discover the real face of nature that was now hidden from English superstition: "the English hierarchy (if there is anything unsound in its constitution) has equal reason to tremble even at an air pump, or an electrical machine" (qtd. in Schaffer "States of Mind" 243). The chemical and electrical experiments Joseph conducted not only presupposed Hartley's materialism but tried to solve the problem left by Hartley: if the mind is corporeal and identified with the brain, the problem that the mind now needed to practice both the functions of the animal soul and the intellectual soul was left unsolved. For the dualist figuration of the passive body and active mind, when adapted into this material scheme, invited an agent to run the body. If matter is totally passive, this monistic body would be a Cartesian machine. Therefore, Priestley postulated that matter was active as well as passive, it could

that God had created only one substance, which was matter or body. Corporeal matter was clear tangible, concrete; why postulate two sorts of created stuff when one would do perfectly well? By contrast, traditional Platonic-cum-Cartesian dualism... created no end of philosophical confusion, not least the conundrum as to how those two poles would ever meet (the pineal gland problem)" (365).

expand and contract, and human consciousness was generated from these qualities of matter when they were properly organized. The materialist version of mind, in Priestley's interpretation, is one that wills and judges, replacing the immaterial mind and practicing the same functions. This materialist doctrine of mind was "a view regarded by his many orthodox foes as dangerously radical, subversive and flatly anti-Christian" (Porter 366).³⁷

Another famous figure that proposed both a corporeal mind and vitality in the revolutionary period was John Thelwall. An activist like Joseph Priestley, Thelwall was a leader in the London Corresponding Group. From 1792 to 1793 he attended the anatomical and medical lectures given at the Physical Society at Guy's Hospital and he gave a series of lectures on "animal vitality." The focus of the "animal vitality" advocates was to find the active power in the purely physiological nervous system so as to argue the materialist essence of the mind. These lectures questioned whether life is to be identified with the soul or is just the result of material organization responding to the stimuli from the outside world in order to keep up the production and sustainment of life. In a word, the principle of vitality tried to find the initiative in the bodily mind itself:

But what is this something--- this vivifying principle?--- Is it atmospheric air itself?--- Certainly not. The coats of the arteries, and the membranous lining of the cells of the lungs, forbid the access of such an element; besides, it has been proved by experiment, that in the arteries of the living body there is no air. Something, however, it must be that is contained in the atmosphere, and something of a powerful and exquisitely subtile nature. (qtd. in Nicholas Roe

³⁷ John Robinson argued in 1796 that a real danger lurked behind this "silent" campaign. In his *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religious and Governments of Europe*, he believes that, as Schaffer paraphrases, "materialism bred arrogance among the intellectuals and abasement among their followers" ("States of Mind" 244).

“Atmospheric Air Itself” 187)

After the discovery of electricity by Benjamin Franklin, natural philosophers (Joseph Priestley and Erasmus Darwin) tended to postulate what was “contained in the atmosphere” was a kind of electrical fluid. This vivifying principle rejected Thomas Willis’ postulation of a sulphurous and a nitrous substance as well as the residue of the immateriality of the intellectual mind in Willis’ system. Mind is material for Thelwall, and the substance he sought to replace the immaterial with is material through and through. Thelwall’s principle of “vitality” broke down the dualism of mind and body, intellectual soul and animal soul, reducing them to a material monism.

Erasmus Darwin had the last word in the early nineteenth century in the journey of the materialism of neuroscience. In his *Zoonomia*, Erasmus Darwin sees the mind as fundamentally embodied, a “sensorium” denoting “not only the medullary part of the brain, spinal marrow, nerves, organs of sense, and the muscles; but also at the same time that living principle, or spirit of animation, which resides throughout the body, without being cognizable to our sense, except by its effects” (*Zoonomia* 110). This “spirit of animation” is made not of transcendental mind-stuff but of “matter of a finer kind” that we “possess in common with brutes” (ibid, 109). Indivisible from the sensorium through which it flows, the spirit of animation is a bodily energy expressed in the four primary “sensorial powers” of irritation, sensation, volition, and association” (qtd. in Richardson *British Romanticism* 13).

Priestley’s position as a religious dissenter, political activist (a close friend of Richard Price), and an enlightened natural philosopher became suspicious after the French Revolution. In the Church and King riots of 1791, part of a “loyalist” mob invaded Priestley’s home and destroyed his scientific equipment. This event demonstrated “a connection even in the popular mind between political radicalism and unorthodox science at the very beginning of the period of anti-jacobin reaction”

(Richardson *British Romanticism* 15). New discoveries and experiments that were not made or recognized by the Royal Society were not just an attempt to rewrite the history of science; they threatened the authority shared and consolidated by science/religion/politics. After Priestley, in 1794 Thelwall was sent to prison on the charge of treason. It was not only because both Joseph Priestley and John Thelwall were involved with pro-revolutionary activities that they incurred danger; the academic activities they participated in were sufficient reason to charge them with treason. As Christopher Lawrence explains this connection:

During the first two decades of the new century any account of life or mind which so much as hinted that they were merely the products of corporeal organization was condemned as atheistical and politically subversive, which usually meant French-inspired. (223)

The implication of materialism and atheism in the French anti-dualist tradition exemplified by Diderot, La Mettrie, and the Montparnasse physicians was seen as affecting the English physicists and dissenters. Anti-dualist thinking in France rejected the separation of mind from body, therefore posing a threat to the political power that relied on traditional interpretations of the origin of power. Schaffer summarizes the stereotypical attitudes the anti-Jacobins held on the relation between contemporary intellectual life and politics:

First, there were identifiable bands of self-styled enlightened philosophers whose sinister associations masked silent plots to subvert established order. Second, these associations promoted a materialist doctrine of mind... Last, the exaggeration of the powers of reason was no better than a revamped enthusiasm.” (“States of Mind” 244)

The confidence derived from scientific experiment or hypothesis made the natural philosophers believe that they were discovering a new field of knowledge that was

capable of challenging the power of the status quo. This new form of knowledge advocated the material essence of mind, thereby cutting the bond between the immaterial mind and its linkage with God, abating the power of God's advocacy in the world. Moreover, the transfer of vital power from God to the bodily mind further envisions an independent mind that no longer passively requires the initiative from a divine/mundane authority.

B. *Tintern Abbey*

From 1798 to 1805, Wordsworth started to explore the issue of sublimity in his poems about himself. The portrayal of his sublime experience that cultivated his poetic spirit helped to discover the transcendental mind. This exploration engaged Wordsworth in the debate in the mind in the post-revolutionary period. Rather than directly responding to these debates, Wordsworth's sublime mind, with its strong belief in historical engagement, answered the problems of the corporeal mind and vital body. Distinct from the pre-revolutionary Wordsworth, who had focused on the description of the body of the sufferer; in this period Wordsworth shifted his focus to the formation of his poetic mind. This poetic mind is described as an active power that imagines, but this initiative, rather than revolutionary in the political sense, is based on a denunciation of the body. This initiative takes its root from the mind's separation from the corporeal body and its engagement with the sublime aspect of nature. The hypothesis of mind/body dualism and the mutability between man and nature imply not just his change of aesthetic style but also political inclination disguised in the aesthetic and philosophical.

Written on July 13, 1798, *Tintern Abbey* belongs to the genre of revisit poems (Cox 42). The record of a revisit functions as a watershed to assert a new state of mind and identity drastically distinct from those of the last time he visited five years ago. Underlying this nature poem is to be found the more complex interconnection

of personal history, change of aesthetic taste, and political inclination. All these asserted changes are attested in the high level of sublime mind Wordsworth now believes he has reached.

The full title of *Tintern Abbey* is *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798*. The precise recording of the tour date and place follows a custom of picturesque writing in descriptions of “stations” since Thomas Gray. That is to say, the record of place and date in *Tintern Abbey* aims to follow the traditions of picturesque writing. As he starts to delineate the scenery of the view, he arranges it according to the Gilpinian picturesque:

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.--- Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

.....

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, unripe fruits,

Are clad in one green hue, and lost themselves

‘Mid groves and copses. (*Poems* I, 3-14)

According to David S. Miall’s field study at the river Wye, the place where Wordsworth was situated was named “New-Weir,” and the “steep and lofty cliffs” at the beginning of the poem is a little mountain called “Symonds Yat” (8). The angle of vision of this place is exactly the view described in William Gilpin’s *Observation on the River Wye*. That is to say, the view described in the first few lines was a popular “station” that a picturesque traveler would tour. In *Observation on the River*

Wye, Gilpin sees “a towering promontory of rock” that “forms the side-screen on the left,” and it, “like mane round the lion’s head,” “give[s] a more savage air to these wild exhibitions of nature” (38). This “towering promontory of rock” becomes the “steep and lofty cliffs” of Tintern Abbey. If one stands at the “station” of the New-Weir, he/she sees the river meandering from south of Symonds Yat to the East before it finally goes out of view from the northwest of a valley. The front of this valley is precisely the “plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts” Wordsworth describes when he paints the background view of this picturesque scenery.

In addition to the picturesque disposition, the marginal figure required by William Gilpin can also be found in *Tintern Abbey*:

wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone. (17-22)

The figures causing the “wreaths of smoke,” whether “vagrant dwellers” or a “Hermit,” are required elements of “roughness” in the Gilpinian picturesque. However, this seemingly orthodox picturesque writing is distinctly different from Wordsworth’s early poems in the transformed picturesque style, such as *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches Taken During a Pedestrian Tour Among the Alps*, published in 1793. This aesthetic transition, with its accompanying political implications, is embedded in the crucial time span of “five years” between 1793 and 1798.

This crucial “Five years have past; five summers, with the length / Of five long winters!” (1-2) are the key to unraveling the personal history that resulted in the

difference in style. The beginning of this five years dates back to the end of July, 1793, when Wordsworth went past Tintern Abbey on the route north to Salisbury Plain, the experience of which became the source of the first version of *Salisbury Plain*. The image of the female vagrant, as discussed in the previous chapter, suggests Wordsworth's lover, Annette Vallon. The theme and tone in *Salisbury Plain* represent the historical background of revolutionary fervor complicated by personal love. Besides, the "republican" *Letter to Llandaff* was written in 1793, with the charge of injustice against the English system. Together with the publication of *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, in which the picturesque figures stand out to reveal the poet's sensibility and his concern for marginal figures, 1793 for Wordsworth indeed marks a year of revolutionary fervor mixed with personal love.

In 1797, when living in Alfoxden, Wordsworth was spied on by a government agent, James Walsh, for his habitual nocturnal walk and observation of scenery, especially rivers, activities seen as constituting a possible investigation of local geography for the enemy country. In a government report, it was documented that John Thelwall, the onetime leader of the pro-revolutionary London Corresponding Society once arrested in 1794, was a visitor to Wordsworth and Coleridge (Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 127). That is to say, in the eyes of the English government, Wordsworth and Coleridge were labeled enthusiasts.³⁸ A few days before the composition of *Tintern Abbey*, July 9, the ministerial paper the *Anti-Jacobin*³⁹ published a poem deriding the pro-revolutionary's support of

³⁸ James Walsh's detection and the rumor spread in Alfoxden finally caused Wordsworth to lose the renewal of his lease in September, 1797 and forced him and Dorothy to move out of Alfoxden (Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 128). The "evil tongues," "rash judgements," "sneers of selfish men," "[n]or greetings," "no kindness" (128-130) in *Tintern Abbey* in a rounded way expressed Wordsworth's resentment of this event.

³⁹ *The Anti-Jacobin* was a Ministerial paper, with Pitt [Prime Minister William Pitt] himself contributing important articles on finance, especially concerning the crucial issue of how his Government was to raise more money through new taxes to support the continuance of the war against France. With *The Anti-Jacobin*, Canning and his friends [writers of 'New Morality'] were engaged in warfare against those forces at home... all labeled 'Jacobin,' which Pitt's administration believed were

Napoleon:

“ERE long, perhaps, to this astonished Isle,
Fresh from the Shores of subjugated *Nile*,
Shall BUONAPARTE’s victor Fleet protect
The genuine THEO-PHILANTHROPIC Sect---
The Sect of MARAT, MIRABEAU, VOLTAIRE,

.....

“And ye five other wandering Bards that move

“In sweet accord of harmony and love,

“C[OLERI]DGE and S[OU]TH[EY], L[LOY]D, and L[AM]BE AND Co.

“Tune all your mystic harps to praise LEPAUX!” (qtd. in Barfoot 8)

Was that ‘and Co.’ intended as an oblique reference to Wordsworth, who was, because of his relationship with Coleridge and Thelwall, on the verge of becoming a political target? Jonathan Wordsworth is sure that this “Co.” refers to Wordsworth, who would establish himself as a “leveling muse” (qtd. in Barfoot 9).⁴⁰ Like Coleridge’s, however, the public image of Wordsworth was now gradually inconsistent with the new identity he endeavored to shape for himself.

From 1793 to 1798, according to critics such as Jerome McGann, Marjorie Levinson, Nicolas Roe, and Kenneth R. Johnston, Wordsworth gradually changed his political belief from pro-revolutionary to anti-Jacobian. In fact, many contemporary enthusiasts and reformists were forced to make a choice between a French republican and a British patriot: internationally, in 1793 England declared war against France

interfering with the country’s determined effort to defeat the French and the Revolutionary principles that threatened its safety” (Barfoot 4).

⁴⁰ The phrase of “leveling muse” was originally from Hazlitt’s praise for Wordsworth: “It [Wordsworth’s poetry] is one of the innovations of the time. It partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age: the political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. His Muse (it cannot be denied, and without this we cannot explain its character at all) is a leveling one. It proceeds on a principle of equality, and strives to reduce all things to the same standard” (Hazlitt, *The Complete Works*, VI, 183).

(due to colonial interests); nationally, in 1794 Habeas Corpus was suspended, and in 1795 the Seditious Meetings and Treasonable Practices acts were issued. The repressive measures the British Government took aimed to temper enthusiasm for the French revolution and fervor for British political reform, two things during that period of time that were little different. As Nicholas Roe points out, in a letter to Sir George and Lady Beaumont of 1 October 1803, Coleridge denounced the reformist groups as fostering “wicked Conspiracies,” and denied any connection with these groups (*Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years*, 3). In fact, however, he was involved in a reformist journal *The Friend* and wrote an essay “Enthusiasm for an Ideal World.” Yet, the distance Coleridge endeavored to keep from the popular reform movement was “a position no one would have thought to challenge in 1803” (ibid 3). It is in this sense that a political reading of *Tintern Abbey* falls flat and, instead, registers the change from belief in the political sublime to an internalized natural sublime. As the political climate in England became worse, the voice of the pro-revolutionary was gradually silenced.

As the last poem in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, the theme and tone of *Tintern Abbey* is distinctly different from the rest of the poems featuring, as they do, concern for the marginal of the “leveling muse.” In contrast, these marginal figures are manipulated as a “function” of the Gilpinian picturesque. The vagrants and hermits are distanced to subdue “the human details of landscape in a remote perspective,” to avoid any associations that these details might awaken, and either to “camouflage or suppress: human suffering and history” (Roe *The Politics of Nature*, 160; 165).⁴¹

That the wreaths of smoke offer “uncertain notice, as might seem, / Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,” as Levinson argues, hypostasizes these uncertain

⁴¹ “The reference to vagrant dwellers and hermits,” with its historical implication, “conjures other itinerant victims of oppression, a hedge-school of the borders, including of course John Thelwall, a former inmate of Newgate and the Tower of London” (Gravil 45).

vagrants out of existence. This “uncertain notice” and “as might seem” present Wordsworth’s shifted focus, his unwillingness to continue his emphasis on the marginal, who are now obscured to create aesthetic appreciation.

In addition to the obscurity of the marginal figures, the symbol of industrialization, the Gilpinian picturesque object, is obscured to enhance the aesthetic effect. The “hedge-rows” that confine the lands to result in the misery encountered in “Michael,” are now aestheticized: “These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild” (15-16). These picturesque objects that formerly caught the attention of Wordsworth are now placed in their aesthetic space to keep, as per the suggestion of Gilpin, the historical association in place. Like Thelwall’s “Lines Written at Bridgwater” in July 1797 and Coleridge’s conversation poems, as Kenneth R. Johnston notes, Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey* presents “a peaceful retreat,” “the final turn by which the revolutionary hopes and actions of the 1790s turned inward to the form of culture we call Romanticism” (389). This historical disengagement marks the major difference between 1793 and 1798.

Wordsworth’s “peaceful retreat” in politics, as is embedded in the transformations of his picturesque style, is further consolidated in the attitudes toward nature that he claims. The first time he came to this place, the “colors” and “forms” of nature were to him like “[an] appetite,” and his love for nature was borrowed “from the eye” (79-83):

like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. (67-76)

The pleasures of animal instinct in seeing nature as “all in all” posit a bodily aesthetics that derives its pleasure purely from interaction between body and nature. This aesthetics catches the spirit of the period of sensibility that Wordsworth was involved in during the 1790s, together with his love affair in France, both of them having the sensual body, the “animal movements,” as their basis. This personal history is here displaced as a preliminary philosophical stage to be crossed in order to achieve a higher state of mind:

I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man. (88-99)

The “harsh” and “grating” of the pro-revolutionary voice being silenced, the suffering of marginals has receded into the “sad music of humanity,” only to be heard but not told. What has replaced the body in pain in the social sphere is the mind at peace in the natural. The political conversion implicitly expressed in the changed attitude

toward nature reaches its climax in the belief in his sublimity. As Albert O. Wlecke notes, “the ‘sense sublime’ refers to an activity of the esemplastic power of the imagination during which consciousness becomes reflexively aware of itself as an interfusing energy dwelling within the phenomena of nature” (8). Therefore, nature for Wordsworth is “both what they half create, / And what perceive” (106-107). This sublime differs from the Burkean sublime, which resorts to vast oceans or great mountains as a touchstone for the sublime idea; on the contrary, this “sense sublime” of “something far more deeply interfused” is a sublime “not dependent on physical vastness, roughness, darkness, loudness, or violence” (Carl Woodring 17).

The spiritual level of 1798 is one that has discarded the pleasure of bodily sensation and recognizes its own sublime power of mind. Thereby, Wordsworth lapses into the dualist separation of mind/body. In his description of his memory of the river Wye that brought such joy, the “sensations sweet” that were “[f]elt in the blood, and felt along the heart” are finally “passing even into my purer mind” (27-30). This physiological description “felt in the blood,” is notably Hartleyean, but the following passage of sensation into “purer mind” distinguishes the corporeal body from the intellectual mind.⁴² This distinction of material body and immaterial mind becomes the philosophical basis in this poem, with body seen as burden, a metaphor for the hidden history involved with politics and love. When he was under “the heavy and the weary weight / Of all this unintelligible world,” the “blessed mood” of his purer mind helped him overcome the “burthen of the mystery”:

that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,--

⁴² Alan Grob suggests that “Almost all of the general tenets of the sensationalist theory set forth by Hartley, could, with very little modification, be subscribed to by Wordsworth” (137). However, though to pinpoint the exact similarity between Wordsworth and Hartley is not an easy task, John Hayden notes one feasible critical direction: “The question [of endless comparison] for Wordsworth narrows down to whether the mind is passive (sensationalist) or active (transcendental)” (98).

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things. (37-49)

While “the sleep of body, rise of soul” is against Priestley and other non-conformist’s materialism centered in the nerve system and the brain, the “heavy and the weary weight” of the “unintelligible world,” as the body, is seen as a material burden that harasses the poet. The suspension of the body, or the historical disengagement, paves the way for the harmony of the immaterial soul.⁴³ This seemingly philosophical stage of bodily sensation enables him to view condescendingly Dorothy’s response to nature:

in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! (116-121)

Jacqueline M. Labbe notes that “the feminine eye that he outgrows finds its correlating body in Dorothy Wordsworth, united with the landscape around Tintern Abbey and personifying Wordsworth’s ‘former pleasure.’” (xvi). The former pleasure embodied in Dorothy is an aesthetic response finding expression in “voice,”

⁴³ As Jerome McGann notes of the inclination to negate history and assert mental independence in Romanticism, “The idea that poetry, or even consciousness, can set one free of the ruins of history and culture in general is the grand illusion of every Romantic poet” (*The Romantic Ideology*, 91).

“heart,” “wild eyes,” in sharp contrast to the “hearing” of the “still, sad music.”

Wordsworth’s comparison of Dorothy’s response to that of his own narrower self represents the hierarchy of man/woman and mind/body discussed in the first part. As John Barrell suggests, that the “Uses of Dorothy” reveals how the poet’s sister is aligned with a feminised “language of the sense” (109) as opposed of the more properly “masculine” language of “reflection” which is able to move away from immediate sensory experience and achieve the insights of abstract rational thought. Dorothy’s lesser status is crucial for the poet’s awareness of himself. As Robert Burns Nevelandine points out, that “She [Dorothy] is fixed by the poet throughout the narrative yet addressed only toward the end.... [and] must notwithstanding accept the responsibility of retaining the poet’s present feelings for later tranquil recollection... for future exploitation” (“Wordsworth’s ‘Nutting’ and the Violent End of Reading” 663). Confining Dorothy to an earlier stage of development grounds not only the progress of Wordsworth’s philosophical mind, but also his distance from his younger life.⁴⁴ Philip Cox points out that in *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth “attempt[s] to come to terms with his own radical past,” and “his earlier self within the poem is seen as ‘feminised’ and provided with a concrete feminine presence in the form of Dorothy whose youthful wildness, registered in her ‘wild eyes’ (120; 149) and ‘wild ecstasies’ (139), must be tempered by the poet’s achieved ‘masculine’ maturity” (47). In his answer to the debate on the essence of mind, Wordsworth opted for the interpretation of political correctness. Unlike body, the mind is “a living soul” not confined in any “corporeal frame.” Thelwall and Priestley’s vivifying principle of material essence is transformed into the immaterial residing in the “light of setting suns,” “the round

⁴⁴ Underlying the praise of Dorothy’s ability to feel is distrust of woman’s reason. As John Barrell points out, “women are generally represented in the period as incapable of generalizing to any important degree... [I]n the matter of political authority, legitimated [by the ability to abstract], women were almost entirely out of the question, and the issue to be decided was which men could pass the test of taste” (19). The passage from sensibility to reason was traversed by men only.

ocean,” “the living air,” “the blue sky,” and “the mind of man.” In a word, the immaterial and everything approaching it. The recognition of his sublimity to “see into the life of things” is pantheist in tone but politically underscored, in that this sublime initiative is first of all tamed by the “power of harmony” of the status quo.

III. Two Types of Death: Denial of Body

After *Tintern Abbey*, recollections of childhood became a method for Wordsworth to establish his mature subject. The distinction between the past self and the present one relies on the disparate interactions with nature: the boy interacts with nature following his instincts and bodily experience; the adult experiences nature with the mind. The designation of bodily interaction, as seen in *Tintern Abbey*, has two major functions: in the notification of Dorothy’s state of mind as corporeal, Wordsworth draws the line between different states of mind to consolidate his status; in his declaration of sublime mind, the body is metaphorically rejected as the representative of the material world. The sublimation of the body is the force both for the demarcation of mind/body and the denunciation of socio-historical reality. In 1799, the animal spirit of the boy and the bodily sensation of the girl were transformed into two types of narratives that circled around death, the decease of the body. While the symbolic death of the boy leads to transcendence of mind and announces the end of the period of bodily sensation, the death of the girl only replicates the idea of male-dominance, leaving no room for any possibility of transcendence.

Later incorporated in *The Prelude* (1805), *There Was a Boy* functions as one archetypal story of a boy who later grows into a mature man. The boy is depicted as one who freely interacts with nature through his animal instinct. Every day “when the earliest stars began/ To move along the edges of the hills,” he would “stand alone,/ Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake” (*Poems* I, 3-6). The instinct for nature

is reciprocal and self sustaining, and the boy's interaction with nature is mainly through his body language:

with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. (7-11)

The whistling, with no artificial "instrument," hypothesizes a basic form of communication between man and nature. With no immediacy or intervention of culture, the boy's imitation of the voice of owls represents the prototype of one's unity with nature. Nature in turn welcomes and affirms his calling, as the "silent owls" would shout,

Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, --- with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled. (12-15)

Instead of being subsumed into the realm of culture, the response of the owls is an endorsement of the male child's similarity through mimicry. It is through mimicry that the male child, with his instinct, identifies himself with natural creatures. This transformation arouses sympathy as seen not only in the "long halloos" of the owls, but also, the "echoes" of nature, of which the sound "[r]edoubled and redoubled" again and again, sending the message of her endorsement. However, the seeming infinity of communication between the boy and nature is suddenly interrupted by the silent pause along with the gradual disappearance of the echoes, which, when the boy carefully listens, come as "a gentle shock of mild surprise" that "carried far into his heart the voice / Of mountain-torrents" (19-21). The silence, one type of Longinian

rhetoric of silence, erupts into the no less sublime “visible scene” that “enters unawares into his mind / With all its solemn imagery” (21-23). The sublime aspect of nature, or Lacanian symbolic order, interpellates the boy to adopt a new subject position by sowing the seed in the mind of the boy, then waiting for his recognition of the meaning in “solemn imagery.” This new form of interaction between man and nature, as in *Tintern Abbey*, demands the separation of immortal mind from material body as well as a distinction between subject and object. In his *The Tables Turned*, Wordsworth observes:

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect. (*Poems I*, 25-28)

Ironically, the separation into different levels of nature that correspond to different levels of the human organism is itself the dissection that murders Nature as well as a man’s possible unity with nature. It is this “meddling intellect” that recognizes the voice of “mountain-torrents” as “solemn imagery” in the mind and foreshadows later distinctions. The introduction of “solemn imagery” reveals the superior form of nature beyond a phase that the boy cannot now reach but will one day when he grows up.

In the original version, *There Was a Boy* was voiced by the first-person speaker. The later change to the third-person, in retrospect, betrays the symbolic meaning Wordsworth intended to express in the original version. At the end of the poem, the boy died “ere he was full twelve years old” (27), and, when the speaker passes where the boy died, he would stand “Mute--- looking at the grave in which he lies!” (33-34). Death, from the aspect of the original version, is not so much the real death but the symbolic one, the death of childhood. When the character is changed from

first-person to the third, from “I” to “he,” the death becomes not just an end to a story but the inheritance from which another boy rises to a higher level of bodily disposition. The gaze on the grave therefore presents a confrontation between two boys in the Lacanian mirror stage: seeing the wholeness of body the reflected in the mirror, the boy in front of the mirror recognizes his incapability in wielding his fragmented body. The autonomy of the specular image results in the boy’s aggressiveness and his alienation from himself, leading up to his distinction from the “other.” In the case of Wordsworth, this recognition of a fragmented body, a body that is no longer capable of free movement in interaction with nature, either mimicking the howl or running “like a roe,” forces him to leave the imaginary order of nature and advance into the symbolic stage of culture, in which the “solemn imagery” of “mountain-torrents” directs us to the rule of the symbolic. To use the term of Arnold Van Gennep, it is Wordsworth’s “rite of passage,” an indicator of transition, in which the body is mortified and mutilated in order to signal a change of status. The decease of the body gives rise to the birth of the mind. Commenting on the death of the boy, Marlon B. Ross notes that “his reversion to a ‘purely natural’ state is tragic because he had a claim to an identity beyond nature” (“Naturalizing Gender” 100).

The mutability of a male child before nature is radically changed in *The Nutting*, in which Wordsworth recollected his childhood experience. Different from the innocence of the boy and benign nature in *There Was a Boy*, the confrontation between boy and nature ends in the boy’s relentless ravaging of nature. Out of his animal instinct, the boy leaves the “cottage-threshold, sallying forth/ With a huge wallet o’er [his] shoulders slung, / A nutting-crook in hand” (*Poems I*, 5-7). While the “cottage-threshold” marks the boundary between culture and nature, the “nutting-crook in hand” foretells the exploitation of nature. Like a colonizer

searching for virgin land, the boy finds a spot unvisited, in which, “not a broken bough / Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign / Of devastation” (18-19). This peaceful land displays the double face of a feminine (“[a] virgin scene”) as well as a masculine authority (the hazels “Tall and erect”) (21; 20). The feminization of nature anticipates its development as a sex object waiting to be conquered and dominated, the boy “[b]reathing with such suppression of the heart / As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint / Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed / The banquet” (22-25). The suppressed desire at the beginning in “wise restraint,” projected as food, but toward the end of this poem, after the male child fully enjoyed the scene through his senses (“played,” “saw, ” “heard” [26; 34; 38]), he suddenly rose up and attacked the imaginary “rival” relentlessly, he

dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being[.] (44-48)

The ravaging of nature out of animal violence, or the Freudian death drive, repeats the “devastation” any place of nature experiences when humans enter it. The ravaging that worked to destroy a spot leaves behind the marks of human intervention and human conquest. The “rival,” symbolized in the hazels “[t]all and erect” is overcome. After the destruction, the boy “felt a sense of pain when [he] beheld / The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky” (52-53), the sublime image of which represents the Name of the Father, inculcating the importance to respect the rule of the symbolic and the necessity to regulate human desire. This experience constitutes his final exhortation to his “dearest Maiden” to be gentle in heart because “there is a spirit in the woods” (54; 56). As in *Tintern Abbey*, the function of exhortation is to keep

the female figure (presumably Dorothy) in her state of bodily interaction, while the deployment of “a spirit in the woods” is not so much a warning to himself but the recognition of the symbolic order projected onto nature waiting to be reached and conquered by the boy when one day he grows up. As Marlon B. Ross points out, that the exhortation “reinscribes that sexuality in such a way that the boy asserts his freedom from nature while the maiden is instructed by the mature male how to move within nature” (“Naturalizing Gender” 97). The “spirit” implies a sublimity rooted in the symbolic, as well as the mind that seeks to overcome the rule of the symbolic to create one’s own sublimity.

In contrast to the initiative of the boy, the female child in Wordsworth’s poems in this period figures as passive puppet silenced and manipulated. In *Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower*, the girl is described as a sex object to be desired. Through the voice of “Nature,” the destiny of the girl is decided:

‘A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own. (Poems I 2-6)

Under the guise of the voice of Nature, patriarchal authority objectifies the girl as a “lovelier flower” to be possessed, a “lady” that is the property of the male. Under the patriarchal imperative of “law” and out of the instinct of sexual “impulse” (8), this patriarchal voice claims the right of property and rationalizes its sexual desire as law. In his exacting power and control over the girl, in the following years the girl “shall” enjoy the beauty of nature: she “shall feel an overseeing power,” “shall be sportive as the fawn,” “shall lean her ear / In many a secret place” (11; 13; 27). In a word, she will enjoy added pleasure thanks to male domination and manipulation. In a Godlike

gesture, to the girl are ordained privileges to enjoy, but all of these enjoyments, rather than stemming from her own will, further the girl's passivity in this "naturalized" environment. As Marlon B. Ross notes, "Lucy is being taught more how to be an object of appreciation than how to appreciate" ("Naturalizing Gender" 102). She is being molded into the form of an ideal sex object for man, until "[t]he work was done" and then her "race was run" (*Poems I*, 37-38), which leaves to the speaker only the "memory of what has been" in "[t]his heath, this calm, and quiet scene" (40-41). She has no freewill nor voice of her own, and "just at the point at which she may be allowed to speak, she is silenced with death" (Ferguson 189). They "do not exist as independent, self-conscious human beings with minds as capable as the poet's" (Mellor 19).

In the other three "Lucy poems," the female child, Lucy, is either put to death or implied to be dead at the end of poem. In *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways*, Lucy is described as a country girl who lives "[b]eside the springs of Dove," among those "whom there were none to praise / And very few to love" (*Poems I*, 2-4). As in *Three Years*, she is objectified as a flower, a "violet" "[f]air as a star" (5; 7-8). However, she is known only to a few, and even when "Lucy ceased to be and was" "in her grave," it makes a difference only to the speaker (10-12). In *Strange Fits of Passion Have I known*, Lucy is "a rose in June" living in a cottage. The speaker, Lucy's lover, has "strange fits of passion" and of thought one day when he is riding his horse to where Lucy lives. When he arrives "behind the cottage roof" while "the bridge [where] moon dropped," he has a "fond and wayward thought," a premonition which "will slide / Into a Lover's head" that 'Lucy should be dead' (23-28). In *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal*, the speaker shows "no human fears" about the death of Lucy, when "[s]he seemed a thing that could not feel/ The touch of earthly years," no

longer fated to be “[r]olled round in earth’s diurnal course, / With rocks, and stones, and trees” (7-8).

In a letter to Thomas Poole on 6 April, 1799, Coleridge remarks *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal* that: ‘some months ago Wordsworth transmitted to me a most sublime epitaph.... Most probably, in some gloomier moment he had fancied the moment in which his sister might die’ (qtd. in *Poems* I, 955). Composed during 1798 and 1799, the figure of Lucy in the “Lucy poems” is without any question to be identified with Dorothy. The reason why Lucy is always put to death, according to Coleridge’s letter, may be explained as the compulsive repetition to reduce his anxiety about the death of his sister. However, from the description of the lover from the first-person speaker in these poems, Lucy/Dorothy is seen as an object of sexual desire. This implication of incest is hidden in the name of Lucy. In the “Lucy poems,” F. W. Bateson suggests that Wordsworth solved the “threatening” relationship with his sister “by killing her off symbolically.” Her symbolical death, placed as a barrier to incest, explains why Lucy never grows into a mature woman. All the Lucies in these poems are depicted as pre-pubic girls, kept in the role of virgins and put to death before their “virgin bosom swell[s]” (*Three Years* 33). The growth of Dorothy into a mature woman both makes her a possible sex object and poses a threat to the unmarried brother. Before they left Alfoxden, the relationship between Wordsworth and Dorothy had aroused suspicion (Stephen Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 156). Creating Lucy as the boy’s double, Wordsworth is able to memorialize the childhood he shared with Dorothy and portray it in a sympathetic light. As mutual sympathy leads to the threat of incest, a symbolic killing becomes the imperative demand of this universal taboo. As Alan Richardson suggests:

The Romantic poet is drawn to mingle the two kinds of love [erotic love and sibling love] by a fascination with the power of sympathy, but that power is

broken by the unconscious horror of incest, and the fascination turns to guilt or revulsion shortly before or shortly after the union is consummated. (“Incest in Romantic Poetry,” 744)

As suggested above, killing Lucy symbolically reveals the desire to confine Dorothy to the role of a pre-pubic girl, therefore killing her preserves her in her natural state; being devoured by Nature prevents her from becoming a threatening sex object.

Leaving her to nature at the same time fulfills the natural desire for sexual consummation, since this nature is personified as male. Therefore, what her death means is the fulfillment of sexual desire through the devouring of nature, Lucy Dorothy being taken as a lady and mistress of nature. Besides resolving his hidden sexual desire for Dorothy, the transfixing of Lucy in nature duplicates the binary opposition of man/culture/sublime and woman/nature/beauty. As Marlon B. Ross points out:

In Wordsworth’s developmental scheme (in which the poetical mind [his] is metonymic for the intellectually mature and socially responsible man), the female becomes a mediator between man and nature, and in her mediatory role she becomes delimited (arrested) by nature so that man can attempt to achieve human fulfillment. (“Naturalizing Gender” 95)

By preserving Lucy/Dorothy in nature, Wordsworth is capable of transcending his sexual desire and ensuring his dominance of both woman and nature.

IV. Death and Sublimity in *The Prelude*

The two types of gender difference regarding death present a complicated relation between Wordsworth’s anxiety about his sexual tension with Dorothy and his ambition to achieve sublimity. The imagining of his own death provided a threshold that he had to cross into maturity, foreshadowing the power of his sublimity as well as that of nature; the imaging of Dorothy’s death reduplicates male dominance and

reveals traces of masculine sublimity, whose illusory power derives from desexualization. The motif of death became a necessary part in the formation of ego and awareness of self-identity. In his *The Prelude* (1805), death not only persists as a reminding call for the interpellation of the symbolic order; it further evolves into a means through which sublimity is attained.⁴⁵ With the repetition of death in the mind, death becomes not so much a rejection of the specular image as a longing for it. In his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud distinguishes death drives, the impulsive drive to destroy, from life drives, the tendency towards unity and cohesion. Lacan's rereading of Freud mixes the two ideas and sees the death drive as nostalgia for lost harmony, a desire to return to union with the mother (Evans 32). Nostalgia for lost harmony is an expression of narcissism, and through the repetition of the death drive, one attempts to go beyond the pleasure principle to reach the original. In other words, narcissism and the death drive are two faces of one coin: narcissism is the love for the specular-image of wholeness and the autonomy of the body that lures the uncoordinated body in front of the mirror; the death drive is the will to return to the pre-Oedipal status of wholeness by self-destruction. The repetition of the death drive shows the will to negate the symbols and Law that regulates and inscribes one's body, be it sexual, biological, or philosophical. By the extreme negation of one's body, i.e. death, the imagined wholeness of the body is expected to be retrieved. In the later development of Lacan's theory, he shifts the death drive from the imaginary to the real, which more fully explicates the relation between the death drive and the sublime. The Fantasy of the wholeness of the body exists in the imaginary, but the death drive, which attempts to recapture the original status of the body, through repetition discovered "the Thing" in the real. Since real death leads only to the

45 Three versions of *The Prelude* are officially recognized nowadays: the *1799 Prelude* (Two-Part), the *1805 Prelude* (thirteen Books), and the *1850 Prelude* (fourteen Books).

Lacanian “real,” the materiality, deceased body, the repeated death drive soon finds a disguised, displaced object as substitute for the autonomous body, that is, the autonomous mind. That is to say, the repetition of the death drive is an attempt to seek the fantasy of the imaged autonomous body, and the will to death, under the surveillance of the Law, is transformed, sublimated into a socially accepted form of aesthetic transcendence, with the desirable autonomous body being transferred into the autonomous mind.

The origin of the *The Prelude* derives from a discussion between Wordsworth and Coleridge in early 1798 on a philosophical poem to encourage those who were disappointed with the result of the French Revolution and to cure them of their skepticism. Coleridge insisted that Wordsworth was the only one who was able to take on this task.⁴⁶ With the subtitle the “Growth of a Poet’s Mind” (this name may have been taken from Coleridge’s *To William Wordsworth* [1805]), *The Prelude* is identified as a kind of modern “Bildungsroman” (M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 74). The retrospection of a mature man reveals his growth from innocence to sophistication. The focus of retrospection is on mental aspects, therefore, the physical surroundings serve only as a catalyst for Wordsworth’s poetical education. More precisely, it is a “spiritual autobiography” (Mahoney 141). Wordsworth’s main concern was to show how the power of his imagination grew, from its initiation, and development, to its crisis and restoration. M. H. Abrams identifies this mature subject with its consciousness: “The mind of man... develops through successive stages of division, conflict, and reconciliation, toward the

⁴⁶ Coleridge in September 1799 wrote to Wordsworth: “write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*. It would do great good” (I. 527). This project helped Wordsworth find direction in life: “Until meeting Coleridge, Wordsworth had experienced disappointment or failure through most of his adult life.... Wordsworth was without purpose, hope, or direction” (Matlak 47).

culminating stage at which, all opposites having been overcome, it will achieve a full and triumphant awareness of its identity” (*Natural Supernaturalism* 188).

Appropriating John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* as a blueprint, Wordsworth intended to parallel the growth of his vision with Adam’s fall and redemption, by which he asserts the status of his epic work. The crisis of his imagination is located in the French Books (from Book IX to Book X), where Wordsworth declares that “juvenile errors are my theme” (X. 637).

Michael Gamer suggests that the year between Wordsworth’s returning home to England in April 1799 and the publication of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in January 1801 is the critical period when Wordsworth turned from the Gothic to the natural (119). From the observations of *Tintern Abbey* (1798), the *Two-Part Prelude* (beginning in late 1798), and the revision of *Salisbury Plain* and *Ruined Cottage*, the gothic, it should be added, is taking on the appearance of the new Wordsworthian sublime, from the portrayal of human suffering to the overcoming of the natural sublime by the poet’s imaginary power. This philosophical poem, when Wordsworth started to write it in the late 1798, partakes of the genre of autobiography in epic form. This epic, emplotted with the mutability of the natural sublime and poetic sublime, denies the dominance of either the pure gothic or a gothic imbued with social protest, as Gamer suggests:

By attaching “gothic” to the “adolescence” of the younger self being represented, the gothic sections of both poems [Wordsworth’s *Prelude* and the later cantos of Byron’s *Don Juan*] deflect attention from what might otherwise be an embarrassing fact of their composition: that they are inventions not of juveniles full of youthful errancies [sic] and enthusiasm, but of mature poets writing either within or against the grandest and most elevated poetic form of all, epic. (11-12)

The “youthful errancies” of the gothic are for Wordsworth are far beyond the fancies of childhood. It was one of Wordsworth’s habits to voice social protest and his belief in the French Revolution, as witnessed in the previous chapter.

Interaction between nature and the first-person narrator is structurally and thematically extended in *The Prelude*. More complicated than the re-visitation after five years in *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude* traces the memory from childhood to adulthood, interspersed with different “spots of time,” memories that are not chronologically presented. These “spots of time” have their importance in shaping and reshaping the mind:

There are in our existence spots of time
Which with distinct preeminence retain
A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed
By trivial occupations and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds---
Especially the imaginative power---
Are nourished and invisibly repaired. (XI. 257-263)⁴⁷

These “spots of time” are most of all childhood memories, and these memories are framed by encounters with the natural sublime. The pantheist overtone in *Tintern Abbey* continues, with a detailed account of events in which nature poses a threat to “self-preservation.” In the “woodcocks” episodes, the young Wordsworth, after destroying the snares, “heard among the solitary hills / Low breathings coming after me, and sounds / Of undistinguishable motion, steps / Almost as silent as the turf they trod” (I. 329-332); in the “stealing eggs” episode, when the young Wordsworth “hung alone,” “strange utterance did the loud dry wind / Blow through my ears,” and “the

⁴⁷ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (London: Norton, 1979). All subsequent references to *The Prelude* are from the 1805 version unless otherwise stated.

sky seemed not a sky / Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds” (I. 347-350). The “stealing boat” episode has the most direct encounter between sublime nature and the poet, wherein “the huge cliff/ Rose up between me and the stars, and still, / With measured motion, like a living thing / Strode after me” (I. 409-413). Following the new direction discovered in *Tintern Abbey*, these sublime experiences are not so much exploration of possibilities in Burkean terminology but an education from which a poet may grow “the imaginative power” from the memory of “fructifying virtue.” From the natural sublime to the transcendental sublime, Wordsworth attributes these supernatural powers to the “powers of earth” and “genii of the springs” (I. 490-491) that help “the growth of mental power / And love of Nature’s works” (I. 535-536). As discussed in the previous section, these “powers of earth” and “genii of the springs” represent the Law of the symbolic that regulates the body of the child, its sexual and philosophical aspects. The perverse body of the child waywardly violates social rules by stealing and destroying is the body before stratification, the Deleuzian “Body without Organs” before the interference of the symbolic order. In Deleuze’s explanation, the “Body without Organs” “is not a dead body but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organization.... The full body without organs is a body populated by multiplicities” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 30). This body is a pure “desiring machine,” assembling itself with other bodies to form a temporary linkage in order to channel libido. In this process, organs are not systematized and stratified into a centered and hierarchical order. They are only for temporary usages such as for flow and energy. As Elizabeth Grosz points out:

The BwO does not oppose or reject organs but is opposed to the structure or organization of bodies, the body as it is stratified, regulated, ordered, and functional, as it is subordinated to the exigencies of property and propriety.

The BwO is the body before and in excess of the coalescence of its intensities and their sedimentation into meaningful, organised, transcendent totalities constituting the unity of the subject and of signification. (169-170)

The energy and flow in the child's body, the "strong desire" (*Poems* I. 325) that encourages the child Wordsworth to act as a "plunderer" of nature (I. 336), foreshadows his other perversion of social rules, the desirable transgression of sibling love and the pro-revolutionary stance. In this sense, the repetition of the Law and its threatening power in memory, while functioning as a reinforcement of Law, at the same time reveal Wordsworth's nostalgia for the autonomous body that freely moves, links to excess without hindrance. From this aspect, the repeated imagining of his life being threatened by "[l]ow breathings coming after me," the "strange utterance" of "the loud dry wind," and the "living thing / [that] Strode after me" imply Wordsworth's death drive, his impulsive instinct to seek the original status of the autonomous body. The death drive repeated in memory channels the libido through the self, but the love for a self-image of the wholeness of the body is blocked by the implication of natural death in the "spots of time."

Childhood memory of "spots of time" contains two groups: the first group refers to the natural sublime as mentioned; the second group, to his experience of death scenes. The three episodes of the second group are not recollected either to empower the imagination or to praise the sublimity of nature. Instead, they are directly related with the young Wordsworth's experience of death, from the death of a Hawkshead Grammar School teacher to the death of his father. These memories escape the plot line of the poet's growth of imagination from bodily sensation to philosophical mind under the education of the natural sublime. When Wordsworth starts to narrate the years after "[e]ight summers," the time when he first came to Hawkshead grammar school, the Wordsworthian sublime suddenly loses its control

over the plot, and the first thing that enters the scene between nature and Wordsworth is “[a] heap of garments” left “[b]eneath a tree and close by the lake side” (V. 461-462), a synecdoche anticipating “the dead man” raised “with iron hooks and with long poles” (469-470). The gothic view of the man’s “ghastly face,” accompanied with “that beauteous scene / Of trees and hills and water” (470-471), form picture that neither the sublime nor the beautiful can dominate. It is from here that Wordsworth moves to another theme that deviates from “the growth of mental power” and “love of Nature’s works”: the “tragic facts” of “rural history” (475-476). These “tragic facts,” with their association with death, lead to the scene of Penrith Beacon, where the young Wordsworth sees the decaying “gibbet-mast,” “where in former times / A murderer had been hung in iron chains” (XI. 288-290).⁴⁸ Somewhere in this place, whence “the bones / And the iron case were gone,” “[s]ome unknown hand had carved the murderer’s name” (293). The last episode, which leads to the end of the association with death, is the account of the death of Wordsworth’s father, John Wordsworth. Impatiently waiting for the carriage to take his brother (John Wordsworth, Jr.) and himself home for Christmas on “a day / Stormy, and rough, and wild,” after “ten days /... in my father’s house, he dies, / And I and my two brothers, orphans then, / Followed his body to the grave” (XI. 355-367). The understanding of his father’s death as result of the son’s “anxiety,” when recollected, is tempered by his “morality, / Yet with the deepest passion, I bowed low to God who thus corrected my desires” (XI. 371-374).

Deviation of motif on the surface, these “spots of time” episodes can be classified into two groups: the first group, Wordsworth’s childhood memory of the

⁴⁸ As editorial note suggests, Wordsworth conflates two murder stories, those of 1767 and 1672. In 1767 a Thomas Nicholson was hanged for the murder of a local butcher near Penrith, and in 1672 a Thomas Lancaster was hanged for the murder of his wife. Ibid, 9. The “gibbet-mast” episode followed the “drown man” episode in the *Two-Part Prelude*.

sublime aspect of nature; the second group, his memory of death, including of one Hawkshead schoolmaster, James Jackson; a murder in Penrith Beacon; and Wordsworth's father, John Wordsworth. While the terror in the first group is presupposed by Wordsworth as means to educate the mind, the second group is the tour of death in the mind. Wordsworth does not explain how these episodes are replete "with distinct preeminence" and how they "retain" their "fructifying virtue" in their "imaginative power." As Yu points out, these three passages "obviously belong to the ones that cannot be classed," and the fact that "Wordsworth makes no mention of the *genius loci*.... suggests that what impresses the poet, either as child or adult, is not attributable to the 'spirits' and 'powers' of mountains and woods" (153). The experience of another's death, under close scrutiny, denotes Wordsworth's own death.

These three episodes have specific features that differ from the rest of the episodes in the childhood "spots of time." They are related with death, and these deaths are not make-believe events to achieve the gothic, but the real deaths Wordsworth experienced in childhood. If we put them into chronological order, the sequence of the three episodes is "Penrith Beacon," "The Drowned Man," and finally, "The Christmas Holidays." The "Penrith Beacon" episode was destined to occur when Wordsworth was 5, living with maternal parents in Penrith; "The Drowned Man," when Wordsworth was 9, leaving home and studying in Hawkshead; "Christmas Holidays," when Wordsworth was 13, coming home for Christmas just before his father died. The first event Wordsworth recounts, occurring immediately after he went to Hawkshead Grammar School when he was nine, is the "Drowned Man" episode. Nevertheless, one major event that cannot escape the poet's memory during this period of time is the death of Ann Wordsworth, Wordsworth's mother, in 1778, which marks the first disaster of the Wordsworth family.

On 8 March, 1778, Ann Wordsworth died of pneumonia, and her death brought

the Wordsworth family into immediate destitution. Wordsworth tells us, “Early died/
My honoured mother, she who was the heart / And hinge of all our learnings and our
loves; / she left us destitute, and as we might, / Trooping together” (V, 256-260).
Wordsworth’s usage of “hinge of all our learnings and our loves” is beyond its
metaphorical meanings, because when Ann Wordsworth passed away, the Wordsworth
family was separated: on 13 June 1778 Dorothy was sent to live with Elizabeth
Threlkeld (Ann Wordsworth’s cousin) and her brother William Threlkeld in Halifax;
Wordsworth, one year later, went off to the grammar school at Hawkshead with his
brother Richard. Possibly, the first two weeks of Wordsworth’s arrival at Hawkshead,
according to Mark L. Reed’s detailed chronology of Wordsworth, were from 15 May
to 19 May, one year after the death of Ann Wordsworth, while the day when
Wordsworth discovered the clothes of a drowned man beside Esthwaite Lake was 18
June (48). Therefore, the death of the drowned man is only a structural necessity in
the narrative chronology to start the account of the nine-years, functioning as the
beginning of the association with death. At the center of it is the death of Ann
Wordsworth that is not told here.

The death of Ann Wordsworth leads to the break up of the Wordsworth family,
and it is not until January 1794 that Wordsworth reunites with his sister, Dorothy to
live in Halifax. After their return to England but before settling down in Grasmere,
they lead an unstable life in Halifax, Racedown, and Alfoxden. Their economic
problem has its origin in the death of John Wordsworth, the poet’s father. It is in this
sense that the “drowned man” episode, on its deeper level, has a closer connection
with the “Christmas Holidays” episode.

Serving as the law-agent for Sir James Lowther, the most powerful man in the
Northwest of England who controlled nine members of the House of Commons, John
Wordsworth became Bailiff and Recorder of Cockermouth and Coroner of the

Seigniorship of Millom as Sir James Lowther gained more control in this area through elections. It is not until John Wordsworth's death, according to Stephen Gill, that the Wordsworths discovered that in his lifetime John Wordsworth "used more than four and a half thousand pounds of his own money in pursuing Sir James' affairs" (*William Wordsworth: A Life* 34). The death of Ann Wordsworth led to the family separation, while the death of John Wordsworth brought down the family economy. For years Wordsworth lived by the support of relatives and friends. After John Wordsworth's death, Sir James Lowther refused to pay the money the Wordsworths had inherited, and it was years before they finally received it.⁴⁹ Facing the most powerful man in the Northwest of England, the young Wordsworth channeled his indignation toward the powerful into his support for the French Revolution, exemplified best in his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Memories of the death of his father and mother, in a metonymic association lead to the death of the early Wordsworth himself. As the political climate in England became worse, the voice of the pro-revolutionary was gradually silenced. The "Penrith Beacon" episode, with its memory of a criminal executed, poses more threat to the enthusiast, Wordsworth himself included. As Kenneth R. Johnston points out:

Penrith Beacon, 'the beacon on the summit,' was not an ancient monument, as many modern readers think, but a relatively new piece of military hardware, dating from 1719, when it was erected as part of an early-warning system for national rebellions like those of 1715. It had most recently been activated in the Jacobite uprising of 1745, when the Scotch rebels marched down the same road. (40)

The image of Penrith Beacon functions not only as part of a childhood memory, but

⁴⁹ It was not until 1802, when Sir James Lowther died, that his cousin Sir William Lowther, indicated that all just claims on the estate would be met, the claim from the Wordsworths amounting to £10,388. 6s. 8d (Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* 207).

also as a reminder of the possible death for the pro-revolutionaries, the Jacobians, and the men of a “republican spirit.” When leaving for Germany in 1798, Wordsworth might have been aware that Hamburg, the first site of their arrival, was “a place which ‘has long been the receptacle of those disaffected persons who have fled from Great Britain or Ireland, either from apprehension of the consequences of the treasonable practices in which they had been engaged, or for the purpose of assisting the conspiracies carried on against their respective countries’” (Ibid, 156). As mentioned previously, in 1797 when living in Alfoxden, Wordsworth was spied on by a government agent, James Walsh, for suspicious activities. In addition to the implication of death for the traitor, Penrith Beacon may have brought a more vivid memory of the death of Antoine-Joseph Gorsas, a revolutionary executed in 1793. When Wordsworth met Gorsas in Paris in 1792, Gorsas was a journalist writing articles to support the French Revolution and a Deputy in the National Convention. At the beginning of the Terror in 1793, Gorsas was guillotined, and “[l]ate in life Wordsworth told Carlyle that he had witnessed the execution of the journalist Gorsas” (Stephen Gill *William Wordsworth: A Life* 77). It is in this sense that in the “Penrith Beacon” episode, the decaying “gibbet-mast” where “the iron cases were gone,” is overshadowed by the man who was hanged in Paris.⁵⁰ From the death of a Hawkshead Grammar School teacher to the death of his father, these three episodes, with the help of these historical subtexts, leads to the threat of Wordsworth’s death.

Based on the close relation between the sublime and death, however, we can find the principal reason why they are grouped together in the same section of the

⁵⁰ As Roe suggests: “The *Two-Part Prelude* is a poem of self-interrogation, written at a period when Wordsworth was very much aware of the contemporary realities of persecution and imprisonment....The primary memory in all of these cases [of “spots of time”] relates to childhood, but the traumatic experiences of terror and self-blame have a strange familiarity in adult life; for Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, childish trauma uncannily prefigures the violence of revolution he had known (and perhaps witnessed) many years later. (“Revising the Revolution: History and Imagination in *The Prelude*, 1799, 1805, 1850” 99).

Two-Part Prelude. All these episodes circle around death, but to different degrees. The first group belongs to Wordsworth's death drive, his imaging of the Lacanian "symbolic death" in order to return to the original state of the autonomous body; the second group relates to "natural death," death in its biological sense. The zone between the two deaths is where the sublime is situated. As Žižek explains:

Lacan conceives this difference between the two deaths as the difference between real (biological) death and its symbolization, the "settling of accounts," the accomplishment of symbolic destiny (deathbed confession in Catholicism, for example). This gap can be filled in various ways; it can contain either sublime beauty or fearsome monsters. (135)

Wordsworth's symbolic death is repeated in the "spots of time" of childhood memory, and first culminates in his remembrance of the experience in Simplon Pass when he climbed the Alps, as described in Book VI. His disappointment at not seeing the sublimity of the Alps, having finished the expected tour without knowing it, leads to the arousal in him of feelings of sublimity:

Imagination--- lifting up itself
Before the eye and progress of my song
Like an unfathered vapour, here that power,
In all the might of its endowments, came
Athwart me. I was lost as in a cloud,
Halted without a struggle to break through,
And now, recovering, to my soul I say
"I recognize thy glory." (VI. 525-532)

While the "lost" announces Wordsworth's death in the symbolic, the "glory" demands a return to the symbolic order. The drive to the imaginative body leads to the real blankness between the memory of disappointment and the present epiphany, and the

intervention of “Imagination,” a disguised form of the autonomous body, in an immaterial shape, “unfathered vapour,” asserts the autonomy of the mind and self, in its full completion of body “deterritorialization.” In Deleuze’s interpretation of synthesis in *Repetition and Difference*, the first synthesis denotes the confrontation between man and world, the internalization of which becomes the basis of memory, the second synthesis. The third synthesis, the disruption of past and present, id and ego, results in the Nietzschean eternal return. Combining the theory in *Repetition and Difference* with the idea of BwO in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the series of stratifications of the body in the first two syntheses experiences its re-assemblage after the sublime occurs. Deleuze envisions the eternal return as the outcome of the third synthesis, but Wordsworth in the third synthesis, in the Kantian fashion, discovers his independent subjectivity. In Wordsworth’s scheme of *The Prelude*, these “spots of time” are tours through which he finds his power of imagination. It results in what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar calls the goal of the male quest, which is “to re-beget the self, to be one’s father” (81). However, with *Tintern Abbey* and Wordsworth’s other poems relating to the motif of death in the late nineteenth century as subtexts, the rebirth as “one’s father” through the experience of sublimity involves Wordsworth’s sexual, political, and philosophical body at work. Symbolic death as a means of a “settling of accounts” for Wordsworth is to discard his “juvenile errors,” his pro-revolutionary fervor as well as for tabooed incest desire in order to regain an imaginative bodily oneness with nature. As Robert Young points out, “Wordsworth’s own fiction (which he calls truth) is the concept of the imagination,” which is “the representer of a lost totality [and] the fantasmatic goal of Wordsworth’s quest” (85). The “lost totality” of childhood experience is now disguised as totality of mind, the “unfathered vapour” of his power of imagination in “infinite.” In her paraphrases of the third synthesis of sublimity in Deleuze’s theory, Dorothea

Olkowski notes that:

When virtual objects are displaced and real objects disguised such that the passive ego becomes narcissistic as it experiences itself displaced in the virtual object and disguised in the real object, these displacements and disguises are the ego's narcissism, its own sexual drives affecting it and producing its modifications. (179-180)

Wordsworth's nostalgia for lost harmony, his narcissism, displaces the autonomous body for the autonomous mind, the mind that "[is] lord and master, and that outward sense/ Is but the obedient servant of her will" (XI. 270-272).

In Wordsworth's adopted blueprint of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, his imagination faces a crisis after his disappointment with the French Revolution.⁵¹ This French experience constitutes another gap between symbolic death and actual death, between the deviation from English ideology and political execution, as explained in the second group of childhood "spots of time." His narration of his French experience begins from Book IX. When he arrived in France in 1791, the military conflicts had come to a halt, but he eagerly "visited / In haste, each spot of old or recent fame, / The latter chiefly" (IX. 41-43) thus acting "in the guise / Of an enthusiast" (66-67). Though disappointed by his belatedness, Wordsworth finally found Charles Le Brun's "Magdalene" to represent the scene of the fall of the Bastille:

the Magdalene of le Brun,

A beauty exquisitely wrought--- fair face

And rueful, with its ever-flowing tears. (78-80)

⁵¹ The political undertone of Wordsworth's "juvenile error" is well explained by Brenda Banks: "the French Books of *the Prelude*, in particular, reveal a coping distinction that he [Wordsworth] began to make when he looked back upon the Revolution between early 'innocent,' 'Girondin' revolutionary idealism and later 'violent,' 'Jacobin' ruthlessness.... if the Revolution could be said to have betrayed itself with the ascendance of the 'violent' Jacobins and Napoleon, then former British Radicals could be pardoned for once supporting the Revolution, as well as for eventually abandoning France's cause" (111).

In his representation of Le Brun's painting, Wordsworth uses a Gothic image to symbolize the passion and sensibility of enthusiasts. From Orleans to Blois, Wordsworth carefully collected any information to paint the whole picture of the French Revolution, to find "[a] regular chronicle which might shew [sic]" all the events and give this events "[a] form and body" (101; 104-105). All these efforts failed, but through this disjointed information Wordsworth consolidated his belief in the French Revolution: "I gradually withdrew / Into a noisier world, and thus did soon / Became a Patriot--- and my heart was all / Given to the People, and my love was theirs" (123-125).

The description of a French enthusiast was gradually revised in Book X, which related the historical events from 1792 to 1794, including the deposition and execution of Louis XVI, the September Massacres, the Reign of Terror under Robespierre, the outbreak of war between France and Britain in 1793, and the death of Robespierre in 1794. The deposition of Louis XVI ended the constitutional monarchy and initiated "[T]he body and venerable name / Of a republic (X. 30-31), but this was an authoritarian republicanism, notoriously termed 'The Terror.' Louis XVI was deposed in August, and in September over 3000 Royalist suspects were taken from prison and slaughtered. At first, Wordsworth blinked at the bloody slaughter and believed it a necessary route toward liberty and equality (33-36), but after crossing the Square of the Carrousl, which was "few weeks back / Heaped up with dead and dying" (47-48), his belief in the French Revolution was on the verge of breakdown. In his solitude at night, the shock of the slaughter of the September Massacres returned to arouse his fears (62-65). The feeling of terror finally erupted through Wordsworth's senses and elicited the lines from Shakespeare as a succinct characterization of the demonic sublime: "'Sleep no more'" (77). With the change of national and international climate depicted in Book XI, the tension between French

enthusiasm and England patriotism increased. The series of French invasions of other countries (791-796) constituted a final blow to Wordsworth's convictions towards France: "I lost / All feeling of conviction, and, in fine, / Sick, wearied out with contrarities, / Yielded up moral questions in despair" (897-900). As a French enthusiast / English traitor, he was symbolically dead, having been expelled from the English ideology of the status quo. This loss sets Wordsworth between symbolic death and natural death, the zone between which the sublime is revealed.

Wordsworth's recovery of imaginative power is described in Book XIII, his memory of climbing Mount Snowdon in June 1791. When he was on top of Mount Snowdon, he found himself surrounded by "a huge sea of mist." From "[a] hundred hills" and "[a]ll over this still ocean,"

the vapours [of mist] shot themselves

In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,

Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed

To dwindle and give up its majesty,

Usurped upon as far as sight could reach. (XIII. 47-51)

In the "huge sea of mist," Wordsworth re-experiences another symbolic death as punishment for his "juvenile errors." Though lost in the symbolic order, the natural sublime of Mount Snowdon, where "Nature lodged / The soul, the imagination of the whole," helps him recognize "[t]he perfect image of a mighty mind" (65, 69).

Wordsworth's "description of the mind at Snowdon," as Robert Young suggests, "hark[s] back to this primal myth, the poem's original seduction and deceit," to "the child['s] wholeness and totality that the adult can only enviously desire, or fantasize as still possessing himself" (88). The myth of "wholeness and totality" is Wordsworth's imaginary BwO, while it also suggests the myth of the "infinite" of life. In the *Fenwick Notes on Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of*

Early Childhood, Wordsworth notes that

[n]othing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being.... I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. (*Poems I*, 978)

In this sense, to believe in the “infinite” of nature is the best guarantee of the “infinite” of life. Onno Oerlemans points out that the external world Wordsworth is reluctant to recognize “signif[ies] blankness and death, since death itself defines our most direct connection to the world through the mortality and materiality of our bodies” (36). In other words, “his conviction of his own immortality was, as metaphor, a deliberate disguise against death” (Woodman 117). The external world of the Lacanian real is a thing-in-itself that promises nothing for Wordsworth. Although Wordsworth manipulates his own symbolic death, such a death does not lead naturally to the exploration of the real. On the contrary, the material aspect once experienced by the body is suppressed, and the childhood myth of wholeness and totality is sublimated as the adulthood myth of the mind of sublimity.

In this sense, the construction of nature’s totality is nothing but a springboard to assert the totality of the mind, a “pure ego” (Mellor 149) that denies materiality, including death. As Louise Economides explains this strategy of the “anthropocentric sublime,” the confrontation between mighty nature and man is “a dialectic wherein the subject is only temporarily ‘humbled’ before nature; the second moment in this exchange is typically one in which the subject’s mind and/or imagination is exalted above nature, transcending anything it encounters in the material world” (88-89). That is to say, the essence of this “masculinist” sublime

“seeks to master, appropriate, or colonize the other” (Pipkin 599).

Wordsworth’s suppression of body in his sublime aesthetic leaves traces of bodies that are the foundation of his sublimity. Based on sensual perception, sublimity involves gender discrimination between the masculine mind and feminine body. Politically, sublimity for Wordsworth represents his rejection of French ideology, the pro-revolutionary fervor now deemed a juvenile error of passion. His belief in immortality of mind and materiality of body responds not just to the medical discourse but also to political implications in late nineteenth century England. From Lacan and Deleuze’s theories of sublimity, we further discover the importance of death in sublimity. As an extreme means of debasement of body, death actually functions as a springboard to sublimity. In Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, only after his symbolic death is his fantasy about the autonomous body transformed into the independence of mind of the imagination. Wordsworth’s transit from the picturesque to the sublime is a process from material eye to immaterial mind, from a pro-revolutionary stance to a confession of his political activism, and from sensual sympathy to escapist disembodiment.

Chapter Four: On the Beautiful— The Politics of Health

Sometime before the completion of *The Prelude* in 1805, Wordsworth started to change his attitude towards his surroundings. Personally, his marriage with Mary Hutcheson in 1802 effectively alleviated his tension with Dorothy and the sense of guilt he bore toward Annette Vallon; financially, Sir William Lowther, a Tory politician and the heir of Sir James Lowther, discharged the debt owed to the Wordsworth family; politically, his acceptance of official service as Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland in 1813 and participation in the Westmorland Election in 1818 gave birth to a new Tory poet. The publication of *The Excursion* in 1814 disappointed second-generation poets such as Shelley, because Wordsworth was gradually putting on a public face, no longer the young pro-revolutionary republican, nor the confessional apostate expecting his rebirth. Accompanying this change of identities is a new world-view that sees the world as a harmonious whole, a beautiful landscape under the wing of a centralized authority.

In this picture of a beautiful landscape, natural as well as national, any indeterminate elements should be identified, located, and tamed. In the late eighteenth century, the idea of health, burgeoning from the medical field, started to take on a national status. Wordsworth's new world view coincided with the time when politics and medicine converged on the idea of health. As the basis of nation, the health of the individual body had significant influence on the health of the political body, both in their medical sense and political sense. The Brunonian system of medicine in the late eighteenth century advocated a balanced adjustment of nervous excitement, a golden mean version of medicine that was soon adopted by the anti-revolutionary campaign to proclaim the importance of obeying the ideology of the status quo so as to stay politically healthy. Early in the *Preface to the Lyrical*

Ballads (1800), Wordsworth uses a similar idea of health to advocate a healthy literature, one that is beneficial to the national taste. From then on, he started to fashion himself as a healthy poet who is able to check his feelings with reason, at the same time acting as a “poet-physician,” to use the word of James Robert Allard, curing national disease by transforming what is harmful to the eye to what is beneficial to the mind. Following his own definition of poetry, his poems after 1805 attempted to leash the overflow of powerful feeling unregulated by tranquil reason. The will to regulate is not just confined to Wordsworth’s concept of self-discipline, however. As he gradually became the public figure, the will to regulate his own body changed into regulation of the nation. In his *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*, the Lake District, synecdoche for England, is depicted as a place where the Benthamian panopticon center oversees its peripherals. In this imagined nation, everything is carefully measured, and differences became intolerable. Also, Wordsworth’s attitudes toward the lower class drastically changes: the guilty should be severely punished, the gypsy despised, and the lower-class stay where it is. In other words, his watchword is now discipline.

I. The Beautiful and Medical/Political Health

In his analysis of the passions that belong to the sense of the beautiful, Edmund Burke defines two sorts of possible social relation that provide the basis: first, there is the society of the “sexes,” man’s passion for woman, which has “the purpose of propagation”; second, the “general society,” which is the passion “we have [to be] with men and with other animals, and which we may in some sort be said to have even with the inanimate world” (*A Philosophical Enquiry* 37). Although Burke’s focus is mostly on his first definition, that is, the passion man carries toward woman’s body and his desire to be with her, the second definition, based on the first, elaborates on the passion to dominate to the full by extending the idea of the beautiful to the

realm of society as a whole. To see society as an agreeable wholeness has its archetype in a man's love for a woman. The beauty of a woman evokes a man's passion, and the beauty of society, likewise, arouses a man's passion to get connected. However, there is a sequential logic here: in Burke's definition, the object desired needs to be beautiful in the first place, including traits of smallness, smoothness gradual variation, and delicacy, in order to be the catalyst of man's passion. In regards to "general society," society as a whole, following Burke's logic, has to be constituted hierarchically, with no abrupt intrusion, like a woman's body, from head to neck, breast, and feet. Members of this society, in the eyes of the viewer, are supposed to follow certain rules to reach this harmonious beauty. Differences do exist, but the function of these differences is to bring out the effect of harmony on a broader scale. As Francis Hutcheson defines the meaning of beauty: "The Figures that excite in us the Ideas of Beauty, seem to be those in which there is *Uniformity amidst Variety*.... what we call [the] Beautiful in Objects, to speak in the Mathematical Style, seems to be in a compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety" (qtd. in Hipple 27; original italics). Hutcheson's metaphysical definition of the beautiful elevates this aesthetic idea from one specific object to "other animals" and even the "inanimate world." To see the beauty of "uniformity amidst variety" in a society requires regulation, specific types of rule to identify and hierarchically place individuals. In this sense, Burke's second definition of the beautiful and Hutcheson's own both suggest a world picture of regularity. Varieties are allowed to remain stable within the social hierarchy, but in order to look beautiful, they are not allowed to endanger the hierarchy itself. Therefore, the aesthetic of the beautiful, with its implications for rule and order, in this way relates itself with the idea of health in the realms of the medical and political.

With rule and order as their common denominators, medical health in the late

eighteenth century infiltrated the realm of the political and provided effective anti-revolutionary rhetoric. Infection of the national body derived from political errantry, and to cure the disease of the country and restore health, the nation needed only one opinion on political affairs, national as well as domestic. On July 9, 1798, *The Anti-Jacobin* magazine published a poem named “New Morality” to inculcate and promote the importance of national health:

From mental mists to purge a *Nation*'s eyes;
To animate the weal, unite the wise;
To trace the deep *Infection*, that pervades
The crowded Town, and taints the rural Shades,
To mark how wide extends the mighty Waste
O'er the fair realms of *Science, Learning, Taste*;
To drive and scatter all the brood of Lies,
And chase the varying *Falsehood* as it flies;
The long arrears of ridicule to pay,
To drag reluctant *Dulness* back to day;
Much yet remains.--- To you these themes belong,
Ye favour'd Sons of Virtue and of Song! (qtd. in Barfoot 1; my italics)

False ideology was deemed the cause of infection of the country. The aim of the Anti-Jacobin, as the author self-righteously believed, was to “purge” the “Nation’s eyes” and “unite the wise,” to heal national disease in disparate disciplines and places now spreading from “[t]he crowded Town,” and “the rural Shades.”

In Book Eleven of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes his enthusiasm for the French Revolution as “the crisis of that strong disease” (XI. 306). This seemingly metaphoric usage, with its attempt to disarm the sting of his Jacobinical politics, involves a history of body regulation in the name of health. First finished in 1805,

The Prelude was written in a time when neuroscience took the place of Galenic humoral pathology as a legitimate medical discipline. Neurophysiologists in the late eighteenth century such as William Cullen, John Brown, and Thomas Beddoes saw the human body in the light of a nervous system instead of a humoral model.

Trained at the Edinburgh Medical School in Scotland, these medical doctors viewed life as a function of nervous energy, whose blockage or overexcitement damaged the health. Therefore, health meant the regular and balanced fluctuation of nervous energy. One popular medical theory in the late eighteenth century was John Brown's principle of "excitement." According to Brown's theory, health depends on the body receiving appropriate stimuli, with too much or too little excitement causing disease:

Excitement, the effect of the exciting power, the true cause of life, is, within certain boundaries, produced in a degree proportioned to the degree of stimulus. The degree of stimulus, when moderate, produces health; in a higher degree it gives occasion to diseases of excessive stimulus; in lower degree, or ultimately low, it induces those that depend upon deficiency of stimulus or debility. (qtd. in Youngquist, *Monstrosities* 31)

When one is not in a healthy state, it is due to either too much or too little excitement. To regain health, increasing or decreasing the excitement is the cure, according to Brown. This principle of moderate stimulus envisions a regulated body, a body that avoids deviation from the norm of health or any immoderate behaviors.⁵²

Underlying the distinction between health and illness is its moral implication. This tendency of medical discourse to relate health with morality in the late eighteenth century functions as a "governmental restriction on behavior and activities," relating personal health with moral health in the way that "the health of the body politic is... threatened by infectious immoralities, and diseased ideologies" (Wallen 6).

⁵² Ironically, John Brown became a notorious drunkard in his later years.

The propagation of theories of health in medicine coincided with the time when the healthy mind was regulated by politics. “In the years following the French Revolution,” as G. C. Grinnell points out, “the rhetoric of health or sickness” became “a predominant means of policing the social and political unrest in Britain” (*On Hypochondria* 12). Neurophysiology provided politics with the medical terms and knowledge to portray a picture of the abnormal mind, through which are regulated the possible disorders of any unhealthy body politic and political deviance. In the battle against the pro-revolutionaries and the domestic reformers in the 1790s pamphlet war, the William Pitt campaign usually diagnosed the French enthusiasts with excessive imagination and passion, which were detrimental to the health of the body politic. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke repudiates the “metaphysical abstraction” of the theory of liberty, which allowed that only a “madman” would wish to escape “from the protecting restraint” of rules based on habits (7). For Burke, a political system based on imagination rather than custom and habit only results in political upheaval, as in France, because “the deceitful dreams and visions of the equality and rights of men” always end in “an ignoble oligarchy formed of coterie of rootless men” (190; 223). Passions had to be restrained, and the imagination had to be confined. When “reason being overborn by the fervor of the passions,” and “an imagination inflamed with an idea of advancing God’s glory,” argues William Fox in his *Thoughts on the Death of the King of France* written after Louis XVI’s execution, it is always “productive of no less dreadful consequences” (155). Likewise, George Canning (founder of *The Anti-Jacobin*) denounced the “new Theory of Government” as “false, visionary, and impracticable,” totally “inconsistent with the nature of man, and with the fame of civil society” (209-210). All these anti-revolutionary discourses had as critical target “the troubled Mind” that blindly adored the “airy Vision” (Ann Yearsley, “Reflections” 174). This

pathology of mind, from the perspective of the anti-revolutionaries, derived from an excessive passion (Brunonian “excitement”) that led the imagination astray.

Contemporary medicine identified this mental problem as “hypochondria.” In Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), it was an aspect of melancholy (“Hypochondriacal Melancholy”), a disease related to an excess of black bile. In the eighteenth century, however, hypochondria became an official term embracing the concept of melancholy. As G. J. Barker-Benfield points out, “‘Hypochondriasis’ was the eighteenth century’s version of the ancient ‘melancholy’ and the ancestor of modern ‘neurosis’” (25). After neurophysiology replaced Galenism in the early eighteenth century, hypochondria was considered a problem of the nervous system, usually deriving from delicate nerves. In the neurophysiological pattern, the major function of the nerves was to receive sense data from outer stimulation; therefore, delicate nerves suggested a refined sensibility. “By the common eighteenth-century conception of sensibility,” Daniel Sanjiv Roberts observed, “the more refined or civilized a person was, the more likely he or she was to be affected by the sufferings of others” (122).⁵³ Hypochondria in the early eighteenth century, therefore, became a fashionable disease, in its cultural meaning referring to a refined sensibility and a powerful imagination. Whether locating the pathological area in the spleen or stomach, contemporary neurophysiologists believed that the fabricated nerves were pre-requisite for the animal spirit to be extraordinarily transmitted to the brain where it would cause hallucinations.

In Bernard Mandeville’s *Treatise of Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions* (1711), wealth and leisure are viewed as two important factors resulting in

⁵³ In his *Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals*, Robert Whytt hypothesizes the “sentient principle”: “Nerves are endued with feeling, and ... there is a general sympathy which prevails through the whole system; so there is a particular and very remarkable *consent* between various parts of the body” (qtd. in Steven Bruhm, 11).

hypochondria, businessmen and scholars being seen as the major sufferers of hypochondria. Hypochondria was also called “the Disease of the Learned,” because the sufferers “continually fatigue their Heads with intense Thought and Study, whilst they neglect to give the other parts of their Bodies the Exercise they require” (qtd. in Barker-Benfield 25). Following Mandeville, George Cheyne, in *The English Malady* (1733), identifies hypochondria along with melancholia as a class-specific disease that beset the English aristocracy. Because of their overuse of mind and lack of exercise, aristocrats and scholars were believed to be the major sufferers of hypochondria. In the second-half of the eighteenth century, hypochondria “became increasingly characteristic of the mercantile classes” and “a disease of affluence and intellectual refinement” (Grinnell, “Thomas Beddoes” 226). After the French Revolution, hypochondria seemed to be a suspicious disease connoting political dissent. In their efforts to normalize the body, both medicine and politics found similarities between a hypochondriac and a political dissenter: they both shared the symptoms of an abnormal sensibility and imagination. Nevertheless, this boundary between medicine and politics was never really crossed: the political dissenters were not denounced as sufferers of hypochondria nor were the hypochondriacs charged with being political deviants. Even so, hypochondria provided the political dissenters with medical justification for their political deviance.

The distance held between the politicized imagination and medicalized imagination made possible James Currie’s vindication of Robert Burns. In his *Works of Robert Burns* (1800), Currie portrays Burns as an innocent victim of hypochondria rather than a French enthusiast. Receiving his medical training in Edinburgh, Currie had adequate knowledge of hypochondria to play down any possible charges against Burns’s political stance and shelter Burns’s embarrassing history under the protection of his medical diagnosis. As Leith Davis points out:

he [James Currie] shows Burns's politics as a kind of national prejudice which is associated with a specific disease, hypochondriasis.... It is this hybrid disease of the emotions and of the body which, according to Currie, eventually causes Burns's early demise and which... becomes an appropriate means of deflecting the threat of Burns's undesirable political notions. (49)

Associating Burns's political notions with hypochondria, James Currie grasped the ulterior meaning of hypochondria in England after the French Revolution.⁵⁴ In his explanation of the popularity of hypochondria, Esther Fischer-Homberger noted two interrelated meanings: first, the sufferers believed they partook of civilized culture because hypochondria was considered typical of scholars and might indicate the victim's intelligence and learnedness. Second, sufferers of hypochondria could use their illness to explain away their failings because hypochondria, with its protean nature, could be indicated by the widest variety of symptoms (qtd. in Potter 8).

The discipline of health, either in medicine or in politics finds its aesthetic counterpart in Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). At the beginning of the "Preface," Wordsworth explains the subject matter of this preface: "it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved" (*Prose* I, 120). Though the aim of poetry is to give the reader pleasure, Wordsworth believes that too much pleasure would pose a threat to their health.

the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants.... For a multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost

⁵⁴ It may not be a coincidence that many pro-revolutionaries in this period (before 1793) were sufferers of hypochondria: Robert Southey, Mary Wollstonecraft, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, etc.

savage torpor.... The invaluable works of our elder writers... are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. (*Prose* I, 128)

In his denouncement of this “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation” (129), Wordsworth envisages the healthy effect that poetry has “to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure” (146). While “gross and violent stimulants” express the same idea of the political “fervor of the passions,” the balanced pleasure echoes John Brown’s principle of “excitement.”⁵⁵ Similar to the medical/political discourses after the French Revolution, the aim of the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* was to correct the sick body, both the personal body and the body-politic. Seen in this light, the famous “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” with “its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility” (148) is not just an individual poet’s enchanting experience of poetry but a manifestation of health.

With Robert Burns in mind, Wordsworth in *Resolution and Independence* resents that “We Poets in our youth begin in gladness / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness” (*Poems* I, 553). Ross Woodman points out that “[t]he ‘madness’ that Wordsworth feared as psychosis, having had a first-hand experience of it, he also defended as divine, the difference between them becoming difficult to distinguish, so that the latter appeared to contain the former as the spectral form of it” (112). Living in a time when both genius and madness were problematized,⁵⁶ Wordsworth separated himself from this spectral form in his appeal to “a healthful state of association” or lively imagination in his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, contrasting his natural sensibility with Burns’s diseased sensibility.

⁵⁵ Paul Youngquist suggests that “the word ‘excitement’ ties Wordsworth’s aesthetics directly to Brown’s physiology” (*Lyrical* 157).

⁵⁶ “In the 1790s Edmund Burke used his political aesthetics to argue that the spurious ‘genius’ of natural philosophers had fomented subversion through intellectual conspiracy” (Schaffer, “Genius in Romantic Natural Philosophy.” 84).

The dichotomy of sensibility and reason held in balance in Wordsworth's definition of poetry acquires its importance in literary history. As Åke Bergvall suggests, "the period Wordsworth wishes to bypass is the immediately preceding century, distinguished by a combination of cold reason and 'frantic' and 'sickly' emotionalism" (17). In eighteenth century theory, poetry had its origin in passion. As Hugh Blair makes clear in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), poetry

in its ancient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion it owed its birth. Prompted and inspired by objects which to him seemed great, by events which interested his country or his friends, the early bard arose and sung. (qtd. in *The Poems I*, 113)

However, the political undertone of Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" stops short of waywardly emotional expression. Unharnessed by reason, feeling would degrade to the "savage" and "sick"; on the other hand, reason misused would not result in good poetry. The balance kept between the two faculties is where social/medical health resides. David Simpson identifies the two contemporary political theories at work behind Wordsworth's definition of poetry. In the "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," informed by thinking "long and deep," "[c]ustomary habit and Rousseauvian (Jacobin) sensibility are here yoked together," as Wordsworth "attempts a synthesis of the otherwise antagonistic principles of Burke and Paine" (*Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory*, 152-53).

Although Wordsworth promoted the balance between feeling and reason, this distinction is not without the separation of the primary from the secondary. Passion,

before being expressed, must undergo thinking “long and deep.” It is not to be immediately expressed, but held in reserve until the power of the mind matures enough to give voice to it. In other words, it is an incubated representation of passion. Therefore, reason has its privileged place in poetry. The immaterial mind and material body still function as hierarchical distinctions. As Martin Wallen points out, the “discriminating powers” Wordsworth advocates to distinguish good poetry from the bad

belong to the mind and raise the person above the appetites. With this tension between mind and appetites, we get the oppositional extremes of the ethical hierarchy. Appetites lie at the low end, with their need for hourly gratification--- immediate and therefore unsustainable. Undirected by higher faculties, appetites steer a person to ephemera, which are more readily available than the joy found by the mind. So we have the contrast between superficial stimulation associated with physical hunger and the deeper satisfaction found by the mind, and which is non-physical. (21)

Tranquility is a mental state that leads to self-reflection, reasoning, yet under the surveillance of reason the passion of feeling deriving from sensibility may also erupt. For Coleridge, passions aroused by direct bodily encounter, must be encapsulated in masculine Reason, for it is this dichotomy of male reason and female sensibility embedded in the male poet’s mentality that harnesses this poetic supremacy.

Wordsworth recognized the significance of bodily perception in poetry but, somewhat paranoically, placed it under the constraint of reason, the highest faculty of the mind.

In his “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface,” Wordsworth further elaborates the difference between feeling and tranquility by combining the two faculties into one higher mode of emotion. Two modes of “emotions of the pathetic” are discussed here. The first is the innate pity one carries to the poor. This emotion is “simple

and direct” and “participates of an *animal* sensation”; the second is “complex and revolutionary,” in that “[t]here is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself--- but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought” (*Prose* III, 82-83). “Simple and direct” emotion, deriving from “animal sensation,” is the most immediate human response. The “meditative” emotion, namely “reason” and “thought,” is not just a supplement of the primary but the refined mode of the first. From this perspective, health is the coordination of body and mind, with mind on top to regulate the body.

II. Wordsworth’s Discipline of Self

In his justification of poetic meter in the production of pleasure, Wordsworth believes that pleasure derives from the “perception of similitude in dissimilitude.” The arousal of passion, “sexual appetite” as well as “all the passions connected with it,” takes root in seeing “similitude in dissimilitude” (*Prose* I, 148). Applying this argument to the theme of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, we note that all poems circle around the life of the lower class, with different marginal figures (dissimilitude) living in destitution (similitude). Indeed, as Wordsworth came to terms with English ideology, especially regarding his attitude towards the French revolution, this “similitude in dissimilitude” gradually transformed itself into the aesthetic effect drawn from the lives of different marginal figures. Wordsworth started to shift his emphasis to the beautiful effect of poetry, while his “similitude in dissimilitude” aimed to produce the aesthetic pleasure derived from recognizing the beauty in his poems, which represent harmony in society. Wordsworth became what James Robert Allard terms a “poet-physician” (10), a cultural guardian whose responsibility was to cure disease and promote the health of the nation.

In his manifesto of healthy poetics in “The Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*,

Wordsworth consolidates the hierarchy and disposition of passion and reason. A necessary component of poetry, passion should be harnessed by reason to avoid both excess and sterility. Wordsworth sees “sexual appetite” as the basic form of passion, and all other passions are more or less the extension of this sexual appetite. This understanding of the sexual, together with his Brunonian mindset of health, shapes the sexual as a precarious but ineluctable ingredient of not only poetry but also human beings. His *Vaudracour and Julia*, completed in 1805 and published in 1820, and *Home at Grasmere*, started from 1801 and completed in 1806, both contain Wordsworth’s personal history in which he struggled with an overflow of sexual energy only to transform it into broader national scale.

A. *Vaudracour and Julia*: A Love Affair Ends Badly

Originally designed as one episode in the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, *Vaudracour and Julia* was separated from *The Prelude* and published in 1820. It is famous for its off-the-record love affair with Annette Vallon, in the sense that the story of Vaudracour and Julia in many ways is just a transparently fictionalized version of Wordsworth and Annette Vallon’s union: the lovers are forbidden to get married, they have an illegitimate child (Vallon moved from Blois to Orleans to give birth to her child, while Julia, on the contrary, moves from Orleans to Blois to avoid scandal before she becomes visibly pregnant), and they are finally separated apart as an end.

In the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, the story of Vaudracour and Julia is placed at the end of Book Nine. After recording his friendship with Michel Arnaud Beaupuy, a general in the Republican army, and his revolutionary fervor in the early eighteenth century the passage, culminates in their witnessing of a “hunger-bitten Girl / Who crept along[as be] fitting her languid self,” and who “with her two hands / Was busy knitting in a heartless mood / Of solitude.” Upon watching this scene, Beaupuy

points to the child and cries out: “‘Tis against that, / Which we are fighting” (IX 512-20).⁵⁷ His proclaimed belief in the French Revolution, with no detailed explanation, is abruptly shifted to the story of the French lovers:

I will here instead
Draw from obscurity a tragic tale
Not in its spirit singular, indeed,
But haply worth memorial, as I heard
The events related by my patriot friend
And others who had borne a part therein. (IX 550-555)

The love story is thematically unrelated with Wordsworth's experience in France as recorded in the text, and there is not even mention of the French Revolution in the Vaudracour and Julia story, which further intensifies the mystery of this story and its relatedness with Wordsworth's love affair. The son of nobility in France, Vaudracour “vowed his love / To Julia,” a lady “from parents sprung / Not mean in their condition, but with rights / Unhonoured of nobility” (564-567). Though his love for Julia is objected to by his father due to the impropriety of her lower social status, Vaudracour, “[s]eeing so many bars betwixt himself / And the dear haven where he wished to be / In honorable wedlock with his love,” still enjoys his time with Julia until “Julia, yet without the name of wife, / Carried about her for a secret grief / The promise of a mother” (598-600; 610-612). The baby is born, which exacerbates the lovers' situation: Julia is carried to a convent, and Vaudracour imprisoned in his father's house, finally lapsing into a mental breakdown.

Similarities and differences co-exist in the two stories; Wordsworth in 1805 acted as a rational storyteller whose job was nothing but delineating a story seemingly

⁵⁷ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (London: Norton, 1979). All subsequent references to *Vaudracour and Julia* are from the 1805 version unless otherwise stated.

unrelated to him. Vaudracour is depicted as a young man full of passionate for his lover without heeding constraints of reason, one who always “[w]as under fascination,” for “he beheld / A vision, and he loved the thing he saw” (IX 581-583), and it is his rashness and other untoward events of rashness, including an unplanned elopement, the murder of his father’s guardians, and the sending of his child to an orphanage, that altogether lead to tragedy.

In August 1802, during the Peace of Amiens, the first truce between England and France in nine years, Wordsworth visited his onetime lover, Annette Vallon, and his daughter, Anne Caroline Wordsworth. The visit was planned before Wordsworth’s marriage with Mary Hutchinson in the coming October. John L. Mahoney wittily points out Wordsworth’s attitude in late 1802 towards the mother and the daughter: “Annette and Caroline were still on his mind, and Wordsworth, formerly the political radical and gallant lover and now the more sober, concerned poet about to marry and to take on new responsibilities, wanted to deal with what he considered his obligations” (158). Whether the guilt was aggregated or alleviated after the visit and his marriage with Mary Hutchinson, the love affair turned into a story of and for others. In 1805, three years after the visit, Wordsworth was grated by the distance, when he recollected his personal history silhouetted in the story of Vaudracour, and self-complacently preserved his health by his opaque “confession.” When it was published separately in 1820, no one but the Wordsworth circle could recognize the relation between this French love story and Wordsworth’s own biography of events on French soil.

B. *Home at Grasmere: Dorothy as Invisible Voice*

Wordsworth’s marriage with Mary Hutchinson not only temporarily ended the Wordsworth/ Vallon affair; it had a more drastic impact on the Wordsworth/Dorothy relationship. As early as the summer of 1799, Wordsworth started to pay visits to his

childhood friend, Mary Hutchinsion, living at Sockburn, and the love between them grew until finally they planned to get married in October, 1802. As literary historians note, it posed a great problem to the brother/sister relation:

Dorothy's anxieties about her brother's visits to Mary and about the implications of marriage for his poetic career notwithstanding, Wordsworth and Mary were formally engaged and planned a simple autumn wedding... [w]ith Dorothy reassured that she would live with her brother and sister-in-law after the wedding. (Mahoney, 158)

In addition to the promise of all three living together given to Dorothy after the marriage, Dorothy's reaction to the wedding also went beyond the normal relationship between brother and sister: "The night before the wedding she [Dorothy] slept wearing the wedding ring (though not on her second finger) and when she gave it to Wordsworth on the morning of 4 October he slipped it back on again and 'blessed [her] fervently'" (Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life*, 211). The ring on Dorothy's finger carries more meaning than can be readily explained by pure loyalty and love between brother and sister.

The passion between brother and sister, symbolized in the wedding ring, was in late 1802 forced to subside as the simply dual relation extended to one among brother/sister-in-law/sister. This change of relation is latently recorded in *Home at Grasmere*. Composed early in 1800 and finished in 1806, *Home at Grasmere* was planned as the first Book of *The Recluse*.⁵⁸ Like *The Prelude*, the first part of *Home at Grasmere* was preserved until its posthumous publication (*The Prelude* in 1850, *Home at Grasmere* in 1888). The years from 1800 to 1806 encompass the time when Wordsworth and Dorothy moved to Dove Cottage, Grasmere on December 20,

⁵⁸ In Wordsworth's blueprint of his "philosophical song," *The Recluse* contains three parts. The first part, *Home at Grasmere*, was published in 1888; the second part, *The Excursion*, is the only part published in Wordsworth's lifetime (*PW* II 951).

1799, to Wordsworth's marriage with Mary in October, 1802. As John Beer comments, Grasmere with Dorothy alone is a prelude to Grasmere with Dorothy and Mary, with the intense love of brother/sister extending from the smaller to the larger community, "where the quiet work of the mature human heart, anchored in a deeply physical love, could contain, and find a place for, more intense and extreme attachment" (164).

Home at Grasmere can be divided into two parts: the first part records Wordsworth's moving Grasmere and his first few years living there; the second part pinpoints Wordsworth's ambition to compose his "philosophical song," *The Recluse*. While the first part contains personal history, the second part lays out the sketch of his poem. The distinction between the public and private sphere may be the reason why the second part was taken to be the "Prospectus" for *The Excursion*, published in 1814, while the first part was kept hidden from public view until 1888. In the first part, Wordsworth retraces his childhood memories in Grasmere, setting the tone of a sense of home for Grasmere. When he was still a boy, the "unfettered liberty" he felt, the "beautiful" place enjoyed by his senses, had early decided him that Grasmere "[m]ust be his Home, / this Valley be his World" (37; 49; 45).⁵⁹

The determination, retrospective as it is, comes true when he proclaims:

And now 'tis mine, perchance for life, dear Vale,
Beloved Grasmere (let the Wandering Streams
Take up, the cloud-capt hills repeat, the Name),
One of thy lowly Dwellings is my Home. (56-59)

An image of home is Grasmere, the feeling for it resulting not from its beautiful scenery or childhood memories. As an essential element of home, Wordsworth more

⁵⁹ Quotations of the first part of *Home at Grasmere* are from *William Wordsworth: The Poems*. Vol. 1. Ed. John O. Hayden (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1977).

imbues family with a sense of homeliness. “Eden,” the metaphor for Grasmere, a paradise where “[t]he boon is absolute” and “grace” is “surpassing” (103-105), implicitly associates Wordsworth and Dorothy as Adam with Eve. The close relationship between brother and sister is ambivalently described:

Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her Voice was like a hidden Bird that sang,
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an *unseen* companionship, a breath
Or fragrance independent of the wind. (90-94; original italics)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Dorothy's reliance on Wordsworth in 1799 had caused trouble and financial problems for Wordsworth on their trip to Germany in 1799. The tension between an unmarried girl and her adult brother, moreover, led not only to the brother's anxiety but to suspicions among their neighbors in Alfoxden. Reading these lines in their historical context therefore discloses Wordsworth's ambivalence towards Dorothy. Dorothy is a good companion, but her reliance on her brother, following “[w]here'er [his] footsteps turned,” may not have always been a pleasant thing to experience. Her tender voice and companionship did help Wordsworth through the trauma of the French Revolution (*The Prelude* 1805 XI), but their close relationship sometimes became a burden for the brother. Therefore, it should be suggested, Wordsworth aestheticizes Dorothy's existence, turning her into a beautiful presence, a “hidden Bird that sang,” “a flash of light,” offering “*unseen* companionship.” Dorothy's presence is beautified, and at the same time Wordsworth's sense of uneasiness over this day by day companionship is partly revealed. Ideally, she is sometimes “hidden” and “unseen.” When Wordsworth describes their first year in Grasmere, the image of swans further attests to his uneasiness. On the day of thanksgiving, he and Dorothy enjoyed the view and “the

happy Choirs of Spring,” only to find that:

But two are missing— two, a lonely pair
Of milk-white Swans, wherefore are they not seen
Partaking this day’s pleasure? From afar
They came, to sojourn here in solitude,
Choosing this Valley, they who had the choice
Of the whole world. (238-244)

They have become familiar with the two swans since they moved into Grasmere. For the past “two months of unrelenting storm,” the two swans were seen “at the centre of the Lake” (244-245). Now the two swans are lost, causing sorrow for their human friends because

They were more dear than may be well believed,
Not only for their beauty, and their still
And placid way of life and constant love
Inseparable, not for these alone,
But that their state so much resembled ours. (248-252)

The sympathy projected on to the swans speaks more about what Wordsworth and Dorothy had undergone. Like the swans, they were “strangers,” “a solitary pair” “[f]aithful Companions” when they moved to Grasmere (254; 255; 262). Strangers to the new environment, it is due to the close tie and mutual trust that the feeling of home gradually takes root. However, the disappearance of the swans, the surmise being they were shot by “[t]he Dalesmen,” with either one killed or both (“both are gone / One death, and that were mercy given to both” [266-268]), contains not so much the misgivings of an outsider but the acceptance of a new family circle. The metaphor of the pair of swans, as applied either in *The Evening Walk* (1793) or *Salisbury Plain* (1798), suggests the interdependence and pure love of a couple.

Their imagined death implies the end of the brother and sister's own close relationship, not really through corporeal separation but from the addition of family members and friends:

Our beautiful and quiet home, enriched
Already with a Stranger whom we love
Deeply, a Stranger of our Father's House.
..... And others whom we love
Will seek us also, Sisters of our hearts
And One, like them, a Brother of our hearts,
Philosopher and Poet in whose sight
These Mountains will rejoice with open joy. (652-661)

The addition of family and family-like members included John Wordsworth, the poet's elder brother, Coleridge, the "[p]hilosopher and Poet" treated as a "[b]rother,"⁶⁰ and childhood friends, Mary Hutchinson and her sister Sara Hutchinson, one "[s]ister" of which was to become the poet's wife. It is the gathering of new family members that adds color to the feeling of home, at the same time changing the relations of the "solitary pair," especially the appearance of Mary Hutchinson. With the participation of Mary in the new home, the "solitary pair" turns into a new couple with a now solitary sister.

New tension between Wordsworth, Mary, and Dorothy can be detected from the love letter Wordsworth sent to Mary on 22 July 1810:

D— is gone to church at Ashby with the ladies, and I seize with eagerness this opportunity to write to my dearest Love.... I was so much affected by the manner in which you spoke of dear little Catharine and her lameness.... D—

⁶⁰ The close tie of friendship between Wordsworth and Coleridge substantially changed after their quarrel in 1810, due to Wordsworth's public criticism of Coleridge's usage of opium.

[.] who is grown very fat and looks better than she has done, since she had that complaint at Racedown. (*Love Letters*, 34-35)

For years, Dorothy had taken on the task of writing down and editing Wordsworth's poetry, but love letters are for sure not appropriate vehicles to be written down by others. What is revealed in Wordsworth's expression, "seiz[ing] with eagerness this opportunity to write," is that writing to Mary in Dorothy's presence might cause uneasiness. With Dorothy's absence, Wordsworth is free to express his feeling for his wife and concern for his daughter. However, Dorothy seems to be a main topic in the letter that Wordsworth could not omit, because she is member of the family. In this complicated new relationship, Dorothy became an ineluctable presence, and even an obstacle between Wordsworth and Mary, effectively preventing the husband's spontaneous overflow of powerful love for his wife. In the fleeting moment of the sister's absence from the mind, the husband's expression of love can be quite straightforward, with his passion circumventing the surveillance of his sister:

I fancied that we should have seen so deeply into each others [sic] hearts, and been so fondly *locked in each others arms*.... O Mary I love you with a *passion* of love which grows till I *tremble* to think of its strength.... I am at every moment, I will not say *reminded* of you, for you never I think are out of my mind 3 minutes together however I am engaged.... not having you at my side my *pleasure* is so imperfect that after a short look I had rather not see the objects at all. (*Love Letters* 61-62, my italics)

In his study of the problematization of the pleasure of sex in *The Use of Pleasure* (the second volume of his *History of Sexuality*.) Foucault locates different positions of sexual pleasure in and outside marriage in ancient Greece. Some discourses combined sexual pleasure with marriage, especially in a strict monogamous system, while others located sexual pleasure outside marriage and emphasized the sexual

relation in its reproductive function, as nothing but a means of procreation, as in the formula typified by the speech *Against Neaera* (144-145). In addition to its reproductive function, the pleasure of sex for Wordsworth is also confined to marriage and severely precluded outside marriage. Marriage fulfills the role of surveillance, preventing the seeking of sexual pleasure outside its bounds, his awareness of which he manifested in his visit to Annette Vallon right before his marriage with Mary, and the distance he kept from Vaudracour, the French counterpart of his youth. As the same time, his sexual relations were encumbered by the female member of the family, a figure often mistaken for his wife.⁶¹ The invisible voice of Dorothy, incarnated as the sensual base for Wordsworth's philosophical system of reason and imagination, is literally an invisible presence between Wordsworth and Mary.

Wordsworth's discipline of self, seen from *Vaudracour and Julia* and the first part of *Home at Grasmere*, is a series of operations of reason to identify the appropriate distribution of his passion. The passion for Vallon is implicitly declared to have subsided, and love for Dorothy is revealed more in praise for her sensibility. The appearance of Mary Hutchinson signals a new stage in Wordsworth's life.⁶² Though the voices of Vallon and Dorothy might still hold a place in Wordsworth's mind,⁶³ his adjustment to the new identity of husband allowed them only to be released in poems.

III. Naturalized Body-Politic: Map of the Nation

⁶¹ In addition to the general impression of Wordsworth and Dorothy being almost husband and wife when they lived in Alfoxden in 1797 and when they travelled to Germany in 1799, as described in Chapter Three, the observation of Crabb Robinson also attests to this impression. Crabb Robinson told Charles Lamb in 1816 that "he never saw a man so happy in *three wives* as Mr. Wordsworth is." The so-called "three wives" included Dorothy, Mary Hutchinson, and Mary's sister, Sara Hutchinson (qtd. in Hagstrum 85).

⁶² Right after his marriage with Mary, Sir William Lowther cleared the debt Sir James Lowther owed to the Wordsworths, amounting to £10,388. 6s. 8d (Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* 207).

⁶³ It was not until 1816, before the marriage of Caroline Wordsworth (daughter of Wordsworth and Vallon), that Mary Hutchinson and Annette Vallon finally met. To use the words of Stephen Gill, this event serves "to complete one movement in his [Wordsworth's] life" (*William Wordsworth: A Life* 299).

A. Marriage of the Mind and the External World

The self-discipline of a healthy poet, as discussed in a previous part, was extended to include the nation in the poet's mind. In the first part of *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth sees Grasmere as a beautiful place, a harmonious society:

A termination, and a last retreat,
A *Centre*, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A *Whole* without dependence or defect,
Made for itself, and happy itself,
Perfect Contentment, *Unity* entire. (*Poems* I, 147-151; my italics)

The picture of a harmonious whole in his description of Grasmere belongs to the aesthetic catalog of the beautiful in Burke's and Francis Hutcheson's theories. Though this society contains differences, these differences are closely related to produce the effect of identity: "One of a mighty multitude, whose way/ Is a perpetual harmony" (201-202). The perfect image of harmony projected on to Grasmere, however, is not without its problems when taking the real aspects of life into account. Wordsworth confesses that, after second thoughts, Grasmere, or anyplace he goes, is never without encounters of hardship:

I came not dreaming of unruffled life,
Untainted manners; born among the hills,
Bred also there, I wanted not a scale
To regulate my hopes; pleased with the good,
I shrink not from the evil with disgust,
Or with immoderate pain. (347-352)

Bracing for difficulties, he determines to face the "evil" and the "pain" actually existing not only here in Grasmere but also in the world. Ironically, the gap between what is found in the world and what he pictures as a place of beauty calls for the

recognition “a scale.” Towards the end of the first part of *Home at Grasmere*, this “scale” is understood as “a genuine frame” of divine contrivance, which is capable of erasing the distance between the ideal and the actual: “Society is here / A true Community— a genuine frame / Of many into one incorporate. / *That* must be looked for here” (614-617, original italics). This “true Community” of concordia discord, under “paternal sway,” is “[o]ne household, under God, for high and low, / One family and one mansion” (617-619).

In the second part of *Home at Grasmere*, separated from the first part and used as a “Prospectus” for *The Excursion* when it was published in 1814, Wordsworth promises to unite the actual with the ideal by transforming the material into a divinity of mind. Acting as a divine “genius poet,” Wordsworth’s ambition is to discover “Beauty” in the “living Presence of the earth” (*Poems* II, 42):

the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these [Beauties]
 A simple produce of the common day.
 — I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation. (52-58)

The belief that “the individual Mind” and “the external World” is “exquisitely” “fitted” (63-66) is Wordsworth’s philosophical argument not only for *The Excursion* but also for his poems as a whole. However, the mind, as discussed in Chapter 3, is for Wordsworth an immaterial existence isolated from the material body. The combining of the disparate entities is only possible when the material is subsumed into the realm of mind. Upon hearing Wordsworth’s argument in the “Prospectus,” however, William Blake sneered at this fallacy: “Does not this Fit, & is it not Fitting

most Exquisitely too, but to what? — not to Mind, but to the Vile Body only & to its Laws of Good & Evil & its Enmities against Mind” (qtd. in Bloom *The Visionary Company* 128). The natural world, instead of “fitting exquisitely” with the mind, is commensurate only with the body.

The seemingly impossible task of incorporating the material with the immaterial, body with mind, is soon practiced in the first book of *The Excursion*.⁶⁴ *The Excursion* contains two main characters: the poet and his senior old friend “the wanderer.” Once a peddler, the wanderer is portrayed as a noble savage, possessing the ability to see the inwardness of things through the education of Nature. A father-image for the poet (“I learned / To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice / In the plain presence of his dignity” [*Poems* II, 74-76], the wanderer is at the same time Wordsworth’s imagined self, who is “endowed with highest gifts, / The vision and the faculty divine” (79-80). This vision is the ability to integrate mind with world, finding “Beauty” in “the common day.” In the argument claimed in the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth is to show his reader a life of “flesh and blood,” rather than “abstract ideas” (*Prose* I, 130).

The story of “flesh and blood” is described by the wanderer through a lady named Margaret when he and the poet stop at her disheveled house: “It was a plot / Of garden ground run wild” and “[t]he gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips” “had tempted to o’erleap / The broken wall” (*Poems* II, 453-459). The house is ruined because the family members living here have all passed away: due to the scarce harvest from “[t]wo blighting seasons,” worsened by “affliction in the plague of war” (537; 539), taking away the life of Margaret’s husband (Robert), her children, one by

⁶⁴ The first Book contains two sections: *Peddler* and *The Ruined Cottage*. Both of them are self-sufficient poems, with their first version composed in 1798 and 1797 respectively. After several revisions, they were integrated into *The Excursion* with many changes, especially the interpretation of Margaret’s suffering at the end of Book the First.

one, and finally herself. Different from *Salisbury Plain* in 1793, these events which caused human suffering, national or domestic, are not directed as a charge against governmental policy. On the contrary, they are mysteriously rationalized in the wisdom of the wanderer. Before narrating Margaret's tragedy, the wanderer tells the poet that:

I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
Even of the good is no memorial left. (469-474)

The cottage is ruined not just because the family no longer could take care of it: it has changed, "d [ying] with" the family. The wanderer's philosophy that everything is doomed to die, man as well as nature, seeks no comfort or hope in the material. Instead, he believes the power to "see" things through is the reason why he could narrate the story in a calm voice: "[s]ympathies there are / More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth, / That steal upon the meditative mind, / And grow with thought" (481-484). The wanderer's "tranquil sympathy" is contrasted with the poet's sorrow for the misfortune of Margaret's family.⁶⁵ After the story, the poet "turned aside in weakness," and while he "stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall / Reviewed that Woman's sufferings." He then did the only thing he could do "with a brother's love / I blessed her in the impotence of grief" (919-924). Upon seeing the poet's grief, the wanderer dissuades the poet from suffering endless sorrow and leaves his comment on

⁶⁵ It should be pointed out that in the original version of *The Ruined Cottage* (1797), the occupation of the Wanderer is peddling, a suspicious trade, being "the backbone of pilfered and stolen goods" and notorious for the propagation of "revolutionary sympathies" (Bailey 245-246). Paradoxically, in the revised form of *The Excursion*, the Wanderer is highlighted as a retired peddler, carrying a political undertone when Wordsworth's early political inclination is taken into view.

Margaret's story:

My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Nor more would she have craved as due to One
Who, in her worst distress, had ofttimes felt
The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer. (932-939)

With the image of Christ set forth, suffering in the world is consoled by faithful religious belief. The disparate tone in such stories of human suffering marks the change from the earlier Wordsworth when he dealt with a similar topic, if we compare the vehement charge against government at the end of *Salisbury Plain* (1793) with the revised *Ruined Cottage* discussed here. As James H. Averill notes, “after 1805, the center of his inquiry shifts to the metaphysical problem of evil, to suffering taken as a theological issue” (14). What Wordsworth preaches here is an other-worldly view of life: the “pain” inflicted on the body invites no political discourse to assert itself. Instead, the pain of the body informs the story, the moral lesson of which is to inculcate the steadfastness of the “meek Sufferer” when she faces difficulties in life. This “meditative sympathy,” different from the corporeal pain felt by the viewer discussed in Chapter One, aims to erase any political implication related with the body and transcend it for a religious one, which in turn consoles the body in pain for the viewed as well as the viewer. In his “spousal verse” of intellectual mind and universe, Wordsworth downplays the meaning of pain for the material body, the “flesh and blood” that constitute the center of his story. This “marriage” of the material with the immaterial is to draw the body away from its historical contingency. What

the mind really does in its combination with the world is to disembody the material, and dub the body with belief in passive suffering. When Shelley and his future wife (Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin then) read the first Book of *The Excursion*, both of them were “much disappointed.” The disappointment led to the following comment on Wordsworth: “He is a slave” (*The Journals of Mary Shelley* I, 25-26).

B. Imaging the Beautiful Nation

On the title page of *The Excursion*, Wordsworth inserted a poem to show his gratitude toward William Lonsdale, Earl of Lonsdale: “by thy care befriended, I appear / Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present, / A token (may it prove a monument!) / Of high respect and gratitude sincere” (*Poems* II, 5-8). In 1803, William Lonsdale cleared the debt his uncle owed to the Wordsworths. Since then, Wordsworth became close to this Tory nobleman. In February 1812, Wordsworth approached Lord Lonsdale to see about the chance of working as a civil servant. Lord Lonsdale initially promised to provide £100 a year, but it was refused by Wordsworth. In autumn 1812 Lord Lonsdale sought help from Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister. In March 1813, the Distributor for Westmorland retired, and the vacancy was soon appointed to Wordsworth (Moorman 242-244). His position as a government official further consolidated Wordsworth’s role as a “poet-physician,” curing the diseases of the country and preserving its health. In the first Book of *The Excursion*, as discussed in the previous section, Wordsworth’s strategy of finding beauty in the “common day” was to ignore embodied human suffering and produce harmony by relating the individual to the religious. In *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*, Wordsworth portrays a national picture of ideal harmony with the aestheticization of this historical-geographical landscape.

The outbreak of war between England and France in 1793 made the tour to the Continent a high risk, therefore the domestic tour substituted for the Grand Tour

(traveling to the Continent) as part of his liberal education. With the improvement of the roads and the construction of turn-pikes, tourists were able to visit places discovered by travel writers such as Thomas Gray and William Gilpin, and, following in their steps, appreciated select views from certain stations. The domestic tour led the English travelers to unexplored places in Britain, such as the Lake District, Southern Scotland, Eastern Wales. Different from the domestic tours starting in the sixteenth century, the main purpose of travelers was no longer to satisfy their antiquarian or geographical interest; instead, tourists went to the spots to make tangible the knowledge they acquired from literature, painting, and aesthetics. They appropriated Burkean phrases of the sublime and the beautiful, to which was later added the picturesque after Thomas West and William Gilpin popularized it, to describe the natural scenery.

Wordsworth's *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*, when published in 1810, was only an anonymous essay attached to Joseph Wilkinson's collection of paintings called *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire*. It was not until 1823 that *A Guide* was published separately from Wilkinson's painting, with a map added to it. In Wilkinson's paintings, it is easy to detect the influence of the Gilpinian picturesque style, with its three layers of background (sky), middle-ground (river or bridge), and foreground (a slanted tree). To follow the vogue of the picturesque travel, Wordsworth applies phrases from Burkean aesthetics (that is, the binary distinction of beauty and sublimity) and the Gilpinian picturesque in *A Guide*. For instance, he defines the Lake District as an area full of the sublime and the beautiful: "I do not indeed know any tract of country in which, within so narrow a compass, may be found an equal variety in the influences of light and shadow upon the *sublime or beautiful* features of landscape" (*Prose* II, 174; my italics). Nor did the phrase "picturesque" escape Wordsworth's appropriation: "Troutbeck,

distinguished by the mountains at its head--- by *picturesque* remains of cottage architecture; and, towards the lower part, by bold *foregrounds* formed by the steep and winding banks of the river (162; my italics). These popular aesthetic terms used in contemporary travel literature and travel tours were prevalent in Wordsworth's *A Guide*. However, the appropriation of aesthetic terms in his description of the Lake District was not just to pinpoint the scenery of specific spots, as other travel literature did; it aimed to create the effect of multiplicity in unity in this area by seeing these spots as parts of a whole. To achieve this end, Wordsworth appealed to the readers' "mind" when they appreciate these views:

In preparing this Manual, it was the Author's principal wish to furnish a Guide or Companion for the *Minds* of Persons of taste, and feeling for Landscape, who might be inclined to explore the District of the Lakes with that degree of attention to which its beauty may fairly lay claim. (*Prose* II, 155; original italics)

The emphasis on the readers' mind instead of their eyes has an ulterior meaning.⁶⁶ Naked eyes could only discern the beauty of specific spots, but forming a whole picture of beauty demands mind, with its imaginative power to transcend the individual and material aspect of nature. This "marriage" of immaterial mind and material world as we discussed in the first Book of *The Excursion* puts on another face here. To help his readers with this general idea of beautiful harmony, Wordsworth adopts contemporary cartography to make abstract the Lake District.

In the eighteenth century, topographical paintings and maps were usually sponsored by landowners and aristocrats, and "[i]n these atlases, map-makers often rewarded sponsors by conspicuously representing their aristocratic arms, manor

⁶⁶ As John R. Nabholz points out, as a local resident Wordsworth wrote *A Guide* "in the hope that his work might serve in some way as a corrective to previous studies of local scenery" because "all previous accounts of Lake Country scenery had been directed to the *eye* of the reader" (288-289).

names or family pedigrees on a map's face or in its margins" (Wiley 29). The first attempt to map out the whole of England was made in 1746 (under the reign of King George II), when General William Roy was commissioned to map Scotland's highlands after the Battle of Culloden. This military need for more accurate maps (based on one-inch measurements together with modern measurement tools [in 1791, the Board of Ordnance Survey purchased a huge new Ramsden theodolite]), was filled by England's national Ordnance Survey. It was not until the England-France war in 1793 that England, under the threat of French invasion, became aware of the importance of the Ordnance Survey (France began its own OS earlier than England). In 1798, Colonel William Mudge, was appointed Superintendent of the Ordnance Survey, and the same year (21 June), the Ordnance Survey Act was passed in parliament, listing boundaries to be shown and giving rights of access to private property by Ordnance surveyors. With the same will to imagined power, the differences between the official map and private map not only affected the removal of cartouche and unnecessary decoration; with its political/economic intention (the mapping of Ireland from 1825 to 1838 aimed to assess land taxes accurately and reduce tensions caused by antiquated rate records), the focus of the official map was on the boundary between specific areas (shire/county) and the distribution of landforms and vegetation, and populations.

The political/ economic function of the map was reapplied and transformed into an aesthetic one in Wordsworth's *A Guide*. In the beginning of "Description of the Scenery of the Lakes," Wordsworth describes the power of a French map to elicit the viewer's imagination:

At Lucerne, in Switzerland, is shewn a Model of the Alpine country which encompasses the Lake of the four Cantons. The Spectator ascends a little platform, and sees mountains, lakes, glaciers, rivers, woods, waterfalls, and

vallies [sic], with their cottages, and every other object contained in them, lying at his feet.... It may be easily conceived that this exhibition affords an exquisite delight to the *imagination*, tempting it to wander at will from valley to valley, from mountain to mountain, through the deepest recesses of the Alps. (*Prose II*, 170; my italics)

After the description of this French map, Wordsworth attempts to create the same effect by his map by asking his reader to freely imagine by way of his description of the Lake District:

let us suppose our station to be a cloud hanging midway between those two mountains [Great Gavel and Scawfell], at not more than half a mile's distance from the summit of each, and not many yards above their highest elevation; we shall then see stretched at our feet a number of vallies [sic], not fewer than eight, diverging from the point, on which we are supposed to stand, like spokes from the nave of a wheel. (*Prose II*, 171)

The landscape being termed as spokes of a wheel includes the vale of Langdale and the lake of Winandermere (south-east), the vale of Coniston (south), the vale of Duddon (the west), and so on. These spokes of a wheel appropriate William Mudge's trigonometric triangulation of height and distance, with a specific location projecting sideways toward the nearest spot to measure the relative distance. Imagining a central spot to include "the sublime and beautiful region" (170), Wordsworth also included "the vales of Wytheburn, Ulswater, Hawswater, and the vale of Grasmere and Rydal" to remedy the "deficiency on the eastern side" (173) and to produce an ideal center reaching all parts of the landscape.

This imaginary center, of course, is not the exact geographical center of the Lake District, and the distances from the nave of the wheel to the ends of its spokes are totally different. However, through the power of imagination (at the beginning of

the *Guide* Wordsworth hopes his book will furnish “the Minds” of his readers [*Prose* II, 155]), differences are to be subsumed under this picture of variety in harmony so as to behold: “before the eye correspondent colours through every variety of beauty, and through all degrees of splendour” (174), for “clustered together, every valley has its distinct and separate character: in some instances, as if they had been formed in studied contrast to each other, and in others with *the united pleasing differences and resemblances of a sisterly rivalry*” (ibid; my italics). The Burkean beauty and sublimity, included in the wheel spokes, are transformed to produce the effect of the Gilpinian picturesque, that is, variety in unity: “Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects” (Gilpin, *Three Essays*. 19). Though each landform produces different effects on the eyes, they are, from this panoramic view, only parts of a harmonious whole. Comparing the French map with his own imagined one, Wordsworth elevates the status of the Lake District to represent the English picturesque. As a synecdoche for England, the Lake District is to be understood as a harmonious place where differences exist under the principle of identity. This identity is preserved and controlled by a center, the sublime “cloud hanging midway” between all other mountains and valleys. Marlon B. Ross sees Wordsworth’s enthusiasm for nationalism as starting from the center, and it “spreads itself wide,” finding “[i]n every nook... its destined fulfillment” (“Romancing the Nation-State” 64). This panoramic view from the center, as Alan Liu suggests, exemplifies “the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century idea of bureaucracy as ‘natural’” (Liu 100). The imagined center of the natural is at the same time the imagined origin of political power, the “cloud” above all natural forms that keeps a certain distance from each of them.

The naturalization of political power in the map of the Lake District is further

extended vertically to complete the political hierarchy. In addition to the application of cartography, Wordsworth further adopts contemporary geology to deepen the complicated but unified layers of ground. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Burnet's *A Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684 English Edition) had great influence on geological thought. Debates on whether the earth was shaped by the (Biblical) flood (Neptunism) or volcanoes (Plutonism), and the age of the earth circled around the questions Burnet left behind. The development of geology influenced the Industrial Revolution, which in turn encouraged the progress of geology. Placement of canals, railways, and highways depends on geological knowledge, as did the location of coal and iron deposits. Furthermore, canal and railroad cuts exposed rock strata that had previously been covered with layers of soil. From early fossil collectors (antiquarians) to mine detectors, the interest in land shifted from pure aesthetic appreciation to pragmatic usage and exploitation. In 1807, "The Geological Society of London" was established, and it soon became the leading center for collaborative research. In 1820 the society published a stratigraphical map of England and Wales.

When Wordsworth describes the scenery between Eskdale and Wasdale, he applies geological knowledge to shape another beautiful picture of variety in harmony:

In the ridge that divides Eskdale from Wasdale, granite is found; but the MOUNTAINS are for the most part composed of the stone by mineralogists termed schist, which, as you approach the plain country, gives place to lime-stone and free-stone.... With this blue or grey colour [of schist] is frequently intermixed a red tinge, proceeding from the iron that interveins [sic.] the stone, and impregnates the soil. (*Prose II*, 175)

Geological knowledge is not only directly applied to explain the colors of the mountain, but is also aestheticized via the image of a "dove's neck": "The iron is the

principle of decomposition in these rocks; and hence, when they become pulverized, the elementary particles crumbling down, overspread in many places the steep and almost precipitous sides of the mountains with an intermixture of colours, like the compound hues of a dove's neck" (175-176). The plants (lichens) affect the color of stone, in gradation (one element in the Gilpinian picturesque), mixing with the color of the iron. The iron nurtures the soil, which in turn will "impregnate" the plant. This organism of life circle, together with the aestheticized unity of the rocks spreading throughout the turf or soil, corresponds with the discourse of unity in discord, typified in Gilpin's picturesque: "That principle [the picturesque] / which rules these various parts, / And harmonizing all, produces one" (*Three Essays*, 135). The idea of "One" is what Wordsworth tries to represent in the Lake District. No matter how much modern science enters this area to extend its scope of influence, Wordsworth subsumes them under his aesthetic language, which in turn portrays a picture of wholeness. This concept of wholeness is found throughout *A Guide*, and the concept of "harmony" is prevalent in his description of the Lake District ("harmony" [*Prose* II. 176], "harmoniously" [176, 177]). The contemporary sciences (of cartography and geology) not only helped map out a harmonious whole of beauty, but through Wordsworth's "mind," the material "variegated landscape" (181) is configured as an ideal national picture.

The unity in variety and irregularity found in natural scenery of the Lake District is also found in the economical activities of this area. In the section "Aspect of the Country, as Affected by its Inhabitants," Wordsworth portrays an ideal republic before the invasion of the Industrial Revolution and its accompanying results (enclosure, plantations, gardening). This self-sufficient agricultural society, in the eyes of Wordsworth, is the best exemplar of the whole the England. This ideal nation, the republic of shepherds, the local mountains and rivers, constitutes what Anne Janowicz

calls Wordsworth's "naturalized nationalism" (133). However, when he proceeds to introduce the Lake District in its present face, this newly-developed society, with its burgeoning industrial activities, escapes the attention of Wordsworth (the exception of this is the introduction of transportation via tollroads and turnpikes). Compared with other places in Britain, the Lake District has relatively few mines, but mining in the Lake District has created a remarkable phenomenon that cannot be ignored. The copper mine in Coniston, the Honister slate mine near Keswick, and the coal mine in Whitehaven, all of them lay beside the routes and scenery described in *A Guide*: Coniston is the second stop from Lancaster; Keswick is a necessary stop for Derwent Water; and Whitehaven, home of Wordsworth's uncle, Richard Wordsworth (who, after the death of Wordsworth's father, became one of their legal guardians) and a place Wordsworth often visited in his childhood, can be easily spotted on the west side from the imaginary center between Great Gavel and Scawfell. Information on these places was confined to the surface level to avoid unnecessary obstacles to aesthetic appreciation. Compared with other contemporary travel literature, however, Wordsworth's attitude towards lower class people can be readily glimpsed.

In 1813, Richard Ayton and William Daniell began a domestic tour that finally resulted in their 3-volume *A Voyage Around Great Britain* (1814). One stop in their travels was the William Pit in Whitehaven (of the Lake District), the misery of the coal-mine workers being described in terms of the Burkean sublime as "gloom" and "terror":

We were frequently interrupted in our march by the horses proceeding in this manner with their cargoes to the shaft, and always driven by girls all of the same description, *ragged and beastly* in their appearance and with a shameless indecency in their behaviour, which *awe-struck as one was by the gloom and loneliness* around one, had something quite frightful in it and gave the place

the character of *hell*. (qtd. in Pike, 252 my italics)

What Richard Ayton and William Daniell discovered at William Pit was a “hell,” the appearance of coal-miners “ragged and beastly.”⁶⁷ In their description, Cumbria is a newly-developed county of ten to twelve miles with four considerable towns. A local resident bred in this area, Wordsworth seemed have no reason to bypass the mines vividly recorded by other writers of travel literature. Given his preference for the description of human sufferers in the 1790s, Wordsworth clearly now holds a different view of the marginals.

Wordsworth’s ideal republic, as exemplified in the spokes of the wheel and the dove’s neck, consists in differences in identity. In this ideal republic that Wordsworth aims to project onto the present, sciences are aestheticized, though mining, one of the scientific activities that created Burkean sublimity underground literally and metaphorically, is totally hidden from Wordsworth’s *A Guide*. In his geological discussion on the landforms of the Lake District, Wordsworth adapts Thomas Burnet’s theory of the earth’s formation (from beautiful Paradise to post-diluvian ruin) to explain the present face of the landscape: “Sublimity is the result of Nature’s first great dealings with the superficies of the earth; but the general tendency of her subsequent operations is towards the production of beauty, by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole” (*Prose II*, 181). Behind the preference for beauty (“a multiplicity of symmetrical parts”) over sublimity (“Nature’s first great dealings”) is contained not just Wordsworth’s shift in aesthetic focus from the sublime to the beautiful. The definition of beauty as “multiplicity of symmetrical parts” carries a strong political implication, close to the Gilpinian

⁶⁷ Following Gilpin’s principle of the picturesque, Richard Ayton and William Daniell, after they left William Pit, soon described the beautiful scenery of Whitehaven, with Whitehaven coast as the foreground and the mountain summits as the background, placing the William Pit in the middle to alleviate its shock in this picturesque picture.

picturesque in which every item (man) in a painting (real life) is well-disposed. In the unpublished manuscript entitled *The Sublime and the Beautiful*, Wordsworth further elaborates this argument:

Though it is impossible that a mind can be in a *healthy state* that is not frequently and strongly moved both by sublimity and beauty, it is more dependent for its daily well-being upon the *love & gentleness* which accompany the one, than upon the *exaltation or awe* which are created by the other.— Hence, as we advance in life, we can escape upon the invitation of our more placid and gentle nature from those obtrusive qualities in an object sublime in its general character. (*Prose II*, 349; my italics)

The exchange of sublimity for beauty being harmful to the mind, Wordsworth believes that “love & gentleness,” which derives from beauty rather than sublimity, is more suitable for our daily life. To use the phrase of John Brown, “exaltation or awe” brings “excessive stimulus,” which causes disease. As Theresa M. Kelley points out, this passage is “ethically sound,” with sublimity and beauty understood as “authoritarian” and “domesticated” respectively (24). As an example of nature’s “first great dealings” with the earth, the rise of political power is always accompanied by “exaltation or awe,” but once the power is seized, peace and harmony are demanded for political stability. In other words, beautiful views in nature, with their different elements unified into a whole, are commensurate with the current ideology of political power on top.

IV: Discipline of the Minority Body

Wordsworth’s implicit support for the powerful in *A Guide* is revealed in the 1818 Westmorland Election, in which he publicly helps Lord Lonsdale, the most influential politician in Westmorland, to win the support of the freeholders. A Tory nobleman, Lord Lonsdale in this election was met with a challenge from the Whig

candidate, Henry Brougham, for two parliamentary seats in this area. Both a government official and a public figure now, Wordsworth used his influence to seek to persuade freeholders who were against Lord Lonsdale and reported the result to his patron (Owen and Smyser III 140). In April 1818, Wordsworth published a pamphlet *Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmorland*, in which he harshly criticized Henry Brougham for his “Whiggism” (*Prose* III, 163). He champions Lord Lonsdale as “a faithful guardian to the several orders of the State” (155), while depicting Brougham as a Jacobin resulting from the tyranny of Napoleon (164-165).⁶⁸ Besides, Brougham’s support for domestic reform, i.e., the elective franchise, was treated as sabotage to the British system. Brougham’s opinion was to extend the franchise to all males who paid tax, but for Wordsworth this was the idea of a Jacobin. For Wordsworth, only the landed class should enjoy the privilege to vote. As for the candidate, he who has more properties should be voted for: “Men of large estates cannot but be men of wide concerns; and thus it is that they become known in proportion. Extensive landed property entails upon the possessor many duties, and places him in divers [sic] relations, by which he undergoes a public trial” (176). According to this logic, only the richest person in Westmorland was capable of being selected as an ideal representative for this area. Brougham, due to his lack of economic status, was not an strong candidate compared with Lord Lonsdale. When *Two Addresses* was released, it soon aroused disgust from those who upheld the necessity of domestic reform. After reading Wordsworth’s pamphlet, Thomas Love Peacock wrote to Shelley, thus summarizing Wordsworth’s argument: “Wordsworth has published an Address to the Freeholders, in which he says they ought not to

⁶⁸ A similar depiction was found in Dorothy Wordsworth’s letter: “I assure you he has nothing of a Westmoreland Countenance. I could have fancied him one of the French Demagogues of the Tribunal of Terror at certain times, when he gathered a particular fierceness into his face. He is very like a Frenchman” (qtd. in Kim 54).

choose so poor a man as Brougham, riches being the guarantee of political integrity” (71). Responding to Peacock, Shelley regretted Wordsworth’s political conversion: “I wish you had sent me some of the overflowing villainy of those apostates.... What a beastly and pitiful wretch [is] that Wordsworth!” (*The Letter II*, 25-26).

Wordsworth’s image as a “leveling muse,” as perceived from *Lyrical Ballads*, was contradictory with his public support for the Lowther (Lord Lonsdale’s) family. As Timothy Webb suggests:

for his contemporaries and especially for those who belonged to the next generation, Wordsworth’s complexity was increased [and].... readings of it [*Lyrical Ballads*] or estimates of what it seemed to represent were overlaid or complicated or obscured or occluded by impressions of what Wordsworth had become. (215)

Wordsworth’s arguments attacking Henry Brougham, including his support for domestic reform and his economic status, all went against the image he projected in the late 1790s. His interest was no longer in social reform; on the contrary, keeping society’s status quo and preserving England’s patriarchal tradition he now saw to be his duty as a “poet-physician.” In the *1850 Prelude*, Wordsworth praises Edmund Burke, the anti-revolutionary figure he attacked in his *Letter to Llandaff*, as a “genius”:

While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
Against *all systems built on abstract rights*,
Keen ridicule; the majestic proclaims
Of *Institutes and Laws hallowed by Time*;
Declares the vital power of social ties
Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain
Exploding *upstart Theory*, insists

Upon the Allegiance to which Men are born— (VII. 523-530; italics mine)⁶⁹

Ernest de Selincourt suggests that the insertion of this tribute to Burke might have been made some time after 1820 (XXXI), being a tribute that “revises at a stroke his text, his politics, and his account of the French Revolution in Book X” (Jacobus *Romanticism, Writing and Sexual Difference* 38).

This change on behalf of the patriarchal tradition is, as Richard Cronin points out, from “the spokesman for a particular ‘class of men’” to “a champion of the independence not simply of the statesmen but of the state” (34). In *Gypsies* (1807), Wordsworth shows his intolerance for the poor. A group of gypsies, the “unbroken knot / Of human Beings,” gather in “the self-same spot” the whole day doing nothing at all (*Poems* I, 1-2). Their aimlessness in “this torpid life,” in the eyes of Wordsworth, arouses the “reprove [al]” of “[t]he weary Sun,” “the mighty Moon,” and “the very stars” (13; 19; 23), the revolving of which form a sharp contrast to the gypsies’ idleness. Though reluctant to reveal publicly his contempt for the homeless and jobless (“In scorn I speak not” [26]), Wordsworth believes these gypsies should take the blame themselves for their suffering: “they are what their birth / And breeding suffer them to be” (26-27). These “[w]ild outcasts of society” are born to suffer, and their breeding exacerbates this vicious circle. In his study of common attitudes held toward gypsies in the early nineteenth century, David Mayall points out that with mainstream society “alleging they did not perform ‘real’ work but rather occupied themselves with as little toil as was compatible with survival,” in this sense gypsies “were thought to be idle, parasitical and beggarly, with no belief in the value of work” (46). This contemporary common view is reflected in Wordsworth’s idea on gypsies, who would camp at the same place the whole day and do nothing. Thus,

⁶⁹ Quotations of *The 1850 Prelude* are from *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*. Eds. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: Norton, 1979).

in contrast with the portrait of the gypsies in Wordsworth's 1790s poems, in which the pain of their bodies was drawn out to vent his discontent with the political situation, the gypsies now aroused only feelings of disgust. They were a group cast out from society, but instead of being forced into poverty, homeless and jobless, they incurred what they suffered.

First submitted by Thomas Potter, MP for St. Germans in Cornwall in 1753, the Census Bill intended to enumerate the total number of English people, marriages, births, deaths, and the number of the poor receiving alms from every parish. Objection to governmental intervention by parliament deferred the passage of the bill, but in 1800 changes in politics and the economy, together with strong arguments from Malthus' theory of population and John Rickman's national rhetoric, the Census Bill was finally passed (Garrett 14-19).⁷⁰ The Census Bill functioned as a means to identify everyone in the country, their age, marital status, and occupation. Because of their nomadic homelessness, the gypsies were a group hard to exactly locate. This "unbroken knot" is an unidentified group that cannot be separated as individuals to record, study, and control, because they are "[w]ild outcast[s] of society." In his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault notes the control of the distribution of individuals in space as the first principle of discipline on the body:

One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, and anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals.... It was a procedure, therefore, aimed

⁷⁰ The fact that other European countries launched a national census encouraged the practice in Britain: Norway and Denmark in 1769, the US in 1790, and Spain in 1798. A series of bad harvests and the deteriorating war with France made national census in England necessary to help calculate the import of food and recruitment for the army (Garrett 14-19).

at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes and analyzes space.

(143)

Wordsworth's anxiety derives from the fact that these gypsies contribute nothing to the economic growth of the country. While the heavenly bodies (the sun, the moon, the stars, which symbolize not just time but the labor of common people) have their routine, gypsies only wander and idle. They are an "unusable and dangerous coagulation," bodies refusing to be disciplined. If the aim of the Census was, to use Foucault's words, to "transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities" (148), then the jumbled gypsies reject being subsumed under an umbrella of control. In this way, they are a potential disease to the health of the nation. "The marginal or 'minority'" as Homi K. Bhabha points out, "is a much more substantial intervention into those justifications of modernity— progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past— that rationalize the authoritarian, 'normalizing' tendencies within cultures in the name of the national interest or the ethnic prerogative" (4). The criticism on the marginals for their uselessness and uncontrollability attests to the exigency of "normalizing tendencies" and proves the failure of the imagination to incorporate the material as claimed in the "Prospectus." The "unbroken knot" of gypsies defies inclusion in the "multiplicity in unity," the premise of which is to be properly located and measured to accord with the "national interest." After the publication of this poem, Coleridge attacked it for its "mental bombast" and its "thoughts and images too great for the subject" (qtd. in *Poems* I 1025). For Coleridge, the subject of low-class people is not qualified for poetry. As abstract figures on the table of the census, the imagination operates to abstract the material into the representative. Rejecting subsumption the order of the census/imagination, the description of marginals causes only "mental bombast."

Wordsworth's change of feeling toward the low-class people is attested in

another two poems: *Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day* (1835) and *Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain* (1842). *Guilt and Sorrow* is the third version of *Salisbury Plain* (1793), with the story of Traveler and the female gypsy fully extended. The Traveler in *Salisbury Plain* is an observer of social justice as embodied in the female gypsy; in *Guilt and Sorrow*, he turns into a sailor who was forced into the army and left it with no money when discharged. His poverty led him to commit murder on his way home. At the end of the story, the sailor turns himself in and receives the death penalty:

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:— no one on his form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.⁷¹ (658-666)

Though the sailor's experience arouses pity from the people in the neighborhood, the crime of murder he committed still needs to be redressed to maintain the order of society. The addition of the sailor's story, instead of pointing the finger of guilt at social injustice like the final argument in *Salisbury Plain*, functions to remind the reader of the importance of social order even when social injustice exists. The neighbors could not gaze at the sailor's body hung on the scaffold because gazing at it would incur more pity and produce a possible argument against the overbearing

⁷¹ Quotations from *Guilt and Sorrow* are from the Stephen Gill edited *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell UP, 1975).

authority of the political. Wordsworth's plotting controls the range of sympathy ("Reader, forgive the intolerable thought") as he arranges the sailor's body in the way he describes Louis XVI's body (Chapter 2): limited sympathy is required to the humanity of human nature, but exaggerated pity is irrational. By controlling sympathy, Brunonian "excitement" would maintain a healthy state, and society would also be a healthier one because the criminal would have received his due punishment without arousing too much agitation.

Wordsworth's ideal society in his later stage is not the one advocated in the 1790s, with all people in the country taken into account. As Benjamin Kim notes concerning Wordsworth's support for patriarchal conservatism:

A healthy government is not defined as that which gives voice to the People, but as that which reflects a certain kind of ideal existence: rural, independent, traditional, and tied as much to place as to the nature of humankind.... This chain of causalities, put forward as a prescription for the health of the individual and the body politic, gives nationalism a leg-up on universal benevolence and justice, and describes the political orientation that Wordsworth would hold for most of his life: a conservatism that wished to conserve both a way of life and the center of political power. (56)

In *Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day* in 1835, Wordsworth publicly declares his mistrust for low-class people and any reform (political/economic) to change the status quo. These low-class people are described as mob whose demand for social reform would only sabotage the harmony of the nation, and it is better for them to stay where they are in the social hierarchy:

"PEOPLE! your chains are severing link by link;
Soon shall the Rich be levelled down--the Poor
Meet them half way." Vain boast! for These, the more

They thus would rise, must low and lower sink

Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think. (*Poems II*, 1-5)

The social chains that tie low-class people to the bottom of the social hierarchy, even when broken, still cannot help them rise to a higher status. The Jacobin mentality to level down the rich, in the eyes of Wordsworth, only sinks the supporters to “low and lower” status because only a few among those that seize political power would enjoy the result of revolution: “[w]hile all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few / Bent in quick turns each other to undo, / And mix the poison, they themselves must drink” (6-8).

Those low-class who support revolution or believe “[k]nowledge will save me from the threatened woe” (10) are doomed to be disappointed, because

if than other rash ones more thou know,

Yet on presumptuous wing as far would fly

Above thy knowledge as they dared to go,

Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty. (11-14)

Using penalty as threat against either drastic revolution or social reform (here education), Wordsworth disciplines the body of the marginals. No later than the late 1820s, Wordsworth had started to speak as guardian of the nation. In his *Ode: 1814*, Wordsworth uses the tone of Saint George to announce: “I, the Guardian of this Land, / Speak not now of toilsome duty;/Well obeyed was that command” (25-27).

A cultural guardian, “poet-physician” of the nation, Wordsworth endeavored to preserve the health of the nation, “bind[ing] together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time” (“Preface” in 1850, from *Prose I*, 141). By heeding his advice, social disease in abuse of passion would be cured, and the marginal’s body disciplined to conform to the social system.

Conclusion

Both in his portraiture and in his poems, Wordsworth from 1830 on endeavored to create an ideal public image to the world.⁷² In this ideal image, reason is seasoned with feeling, and sensibility coordinated with sublimity. His dissatisfaction with Henry William Pickersgill and W. H. Watt only attested to this impossibility. His poems, extending over 50 years and often undergoing multiple revisions, produce disparate images of the poet that he could never unify or rectify, try as he might. A young pro-revolutionary, an escapist apostate, a government official; an unmarried father, a brother mistaken for his sister's husband, a man marrying his childhood friend; a poet of sensibility, a leveling muse, a nature poet. These variegated identities resist a unifying image, therefore dooming the efforts of a single-minded Wordsworth to failure.

These images were, in the past, phrased in terms of mind. The most orthodox Wordsworthian description, and of Romantics in general, is "mind confronts nature and their interplay constitutes the poem" (Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze* 78). Deconstructionists duplicated the play on the mind, and Ecologists brought the superiority of mind back on track from New Historicists' deviation from the immaterial. The change of critical scenario started after the attention given to body criticism. In the field of literary history, the study of Pre-Romanticism addressed the age of sensibility as the background era for most Romantics; in the field of history of medicine, investigation into the discipline of neuroscience consolidated the relation between the Romantic poet and contemporary medical discourse. These efforts in the last decade of the eighteenth century broadened the critical scope of historical investigation into a concrete contour of the body, not just the body straitjacketed into

⁷² As James M. Garrett comments: "Wordsworth is "active in the creation of his own self-image" (8).

an abstracted theory often disguised as ahistorical. The contemporary understanding and disposition of the body, seen in a certain critical light, helps us read one more, critical, page in the history of the body.

Interestingly enough, two modern theorists of the body rooted their theory in nineteenth century neuroscience: Nietzsche was John Brown's reader, and Deleuze developed such key Brunonian words as "excitation," "vibration," "stimulant" (*What is Philosophy*) into his "flow" and "energy." Besides, Deleuze's "machine," a seeming metaphor for the body under capitalism, is actually commensurate with our understanding of the body since Descartes, a passive automatism separated from the soul. In this sense, the appropriation of their body criticism to the historical study of the body may not be anachronistic. It is a return to the future.

The body can be seen as a machine which has different aspects in contemporary times: aesthetic, medical, political, and sexual. The procedure of this dissertation has been to define the three aesthetics, namely the picturesque, the sublime, and the beautiful, as three body relations, or machine connections. All three aesthetic stages of Wordsworth were at the same time interspersed with different aspects of medical discourse (the sentient principle, material mind, health), political discourse (pro-revolutionary/anti-revolutionary), and sexual relationships (Annette Vallon, Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Hutchinson). The four axes in three stages therefore provide the different body aesthetics of Wordsworth.

In the second chapter, "The Politics of Pain," the picturesque aesthetic was seen as related with Whytt's sentient principle, Wordsworth's pro-revolutionary rhetoric, and his love affair with Annette Vallon. The picturesque aesthetic is a body relation that channels the flow of sympathetic energy towards the sufferers. According to Robert Whytt's "sentient principle," the self-contained body mobilizes nerves when one feels pain in body. When one sees others in pain, their pain will be transmitted

to the viewer and generate nerve mobilization to show similar pain as a response. This medical discourse stratified certain parts of the body (the nervous system) and regulated one's feeling to show sympathy (to oneself as well as to others). In the age of sensibility, this medical discourse was usually applied to confirm male dominance. Woman's tenderness and frailty were said to make her more beautiful when she was in pain. The male gaze produced its sadomasochistic pleasure from seeing or imagining woman in pain. In this representation of the female image, the binary oppositions of male/female and mind/body seemed consolidated, but from contemporary medical discourse this male gaze was actually had its basis in the body's reaction. In his early picturesque stage, Wordsworth stopped this flow of male desire and redirected it into pro-revolutionary discourse. Using the female gypsy's body as an embodiment of social injustice, he connected the pain in the body to political discourse. The "inscription" in the body, to use the terms of Judith Butler, was meant to lay the ground for the logic of cause and effect, the pain elicited by the torture of English tyranny. In his late eighteenth century works, the image of the female gypsy was overlapped with his internalized portrait of Annette Vallon. This displacement can be discerned from his deliberate change of the female gypsy's background: the English for the French, the American War for the French Revolution. The guilt over his desertion of Vallon was accompanied with sexual desire for his French lover, therefore the female gypsy's body in *Salisbury Plain* is inscribed with both political outrage and sadomasochistic pleasure.

In the third chapter, "The Politics of Mind," the aesthetic of the sublime is studied together with the material configuration of the mind, Wordsworth's transition in political belief, and the disposition of Dorothy's body. A stronghold for male dominance, the traditional binary opposition of male/female, mind/body, sublime/beautiful was challenged by developments in neuroscience, which postulated

a material mind in the body rather than out of the body. This configuration of new theory reorganized not just the stratification of the machine; it posed a threat to the privileged relations in all binary oppositions. Man's mind was no longer believed to be disembodied, and the challenge to the concept of mind soon became a challenge to the political. In the late eighteenth century, this new theory was used as political rhetoric demanding political change, as old theory upholders disparaged it as stinking of the Jacobin. In this debate, Wordsworth opted for the old theory as the first step toward discarding his faith in the French Revolution. Besides, his idiosyncratic picturesque style was turned into the Gilpinian, covering the marginal figure under the tree and asserting his mind's sublimity. In this sublimity, Dorothy is clothed in her traditional status, the sensual animal of the body, as contrasted with Wordsworth's mature mind. However, this mature mind is harassed by the sexual drive of the body. In the Lucy poems, the incarnation of Dorothy, Lucy, always meets death before her puberty, which shows Wordsworth's anxiety over living so closely with a grown-up sister. Retracing his attainment of sublimity in the growth of his mind, Wordsworth emplotted scenes of death in his "spots of time" to affirm the maturity of his imagination. His ambivalence towards death is twofold: on the one hand, the threat of death is the power of the symbolic; on the other, the death drive enables him to return to the status in which the body was not stratified into a systematic organism. The deceased body, death, is one way to embrace the original pleasure of the autonomous body, the Deleuzian BWO. Wordsworth chose symbolic death to purge his "juvenile errors," in this way deterritorializing the body and rigidly stratifying his body into an organism in which the mind is fully isolated from the body.

In the final chapter "The Politics of Health," Wordsworth's aesthetic of beauty is explained with Brunonian health, anti-revolutionary discourse, and Wordsworth's discipline of himself as well as of other bodies. Demanding a balanced

“excitement,” John Brown set up an ambiguous measure for political conservatives to apply in their political discourse. From the health of the body to the health of the body-politic, a nation of health was said to be imbued with reason and passion properly proportioned, and Wordsworth in the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* advocated his literary version of national health by stating the harness of powerful feeling to be tranquility. His self-discipline is in essence sexual, aiming to silence the voice of Annette Vallon and regulate his relation with Dorothy. In *Vaudracour and Julia*, the image of the mad lover is passed onto Vaudracour; in *Home at Grasmere*, the death of the swan lovers suggests his sense that his suspicious relationship with Dorothy, who, nevertheless, still sometimes disturbs his marriage relation with Mary Hutchinson. Wordsworth’s reception of government office (as Stamp Collector) and public support from Lord Lonsdale in the Westmorland Election declared publicly his change of political belief and foreshadows his official status as a national poet. The mapping of the Lake District, horizontally and vertically harmonious, pictures a nation of health, with multiplicity viewed in unity. This imaging of a nation, however, turned out to be a means of normalization. Reason and passion kept in balance was advocated as rule of thumb, but the body of the marginal figure, the “flesh and blood” to which Wordsworth once determined to give voice, was disciplined as a small cog in the economic machine. His gradual intolerance for the low-class people, as the final stroke, became distrust of their potential and opportunity to rise in the social hierarchy. The aesthetics of the picturesque, the sublime, and the beautiful, therefore, introduce three subject positions Wordsworth traversed. As discussed in this dissertation, these subject positions are enmeshed in the medical/political/aesthetic/sexual body. It is the body, rather than the mind, that decides the three looks of Wordsworth.

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