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Wordsworth's Philosophy of Wonder:

Epistemology, Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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Though scholars in the field of British Romanticism have made much of the opposition between the Enlightenment system genre and the Romantic fragment genre, they have granted comparatively little attention to the *epistemological* counterpoint to system: the detotalizing attitude of a philosophical wonder. By highlighting the integral yet much neglected role that wonder has played in Romantic epistemology and in Wordsworth's prose and *Prelude* in particular, this study rectifies the misguided assumptions that have informed modern accounts of Wordsworth's epic aspirations and philosophical practices. While Arnold famously alleged that the British Romantics "did not know enough," this dissertation demonstrates that Romantic contemporaries such as Wordsworth, Schiller, Blake, Byron and Keats each consciously resisted the impulse to claim they had acquired knowledge. Suspending judgment in the manner of Plato's aporetical dialogues and of the ancient skeptical epochê, these poets anticipated later philosophies of wonder such as Freudian psychoanalysis and Husserlian phenomenology. Though the prevailing narrative of Wordsworth's career suggests that the poet lacked the ingenuity to produce the systematic poem that Coleridge expected and that the two planned under the title of *The Recluse*, this study examines the ways that Wordsworth's prose and *Prelude* placate Coleridge's systematic aspirations in word while undercutting them in practice. Instead of aiming to explain determinate truths, Wordsworth's speaker describes the indeterminate phenomena that appear when the thinking subject attends to mental activities such as remembering, imagining, and the gray area of confabulation that blends the two. Though he at one time aspired to produce a poetic "work / Of ampler or more varied argument," the 1805 *Prelude* represents a different kind of "philosophic song" altogether. In this sense, Wordsworth is something like the Benedictine monk who, according to legend, tried to produce white wine from black grapes and accidentally produced the first bottle of Dom Pérignon champagne. In striving to produce a philosophical poem of one kind, Wordsworth inadvertently produced one of a different kind entirely, demonstrating that poetry can be "philosophic" in a way that Coleridge had only vaguely envisioned.

To my wife Gina, who created the world

that gave life to these pages

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List of Abbreviations

AE Friedrich Schiller. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man.* Trans. Reginald Snell. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004.

AR Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Aids to Reflection*. Vol. 9 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. John Beer. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1993. 16 vols.

AS Sigmund Freud. *An Autobiographical Study*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1989.

BL Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1983. Vol. 7 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. 16 vols.

BLJ *Byron's Letters and Journals*. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand. London: John Murray, 1973-94. 13 vols.

BPP Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1989.

C Saint Augustine. *Confessions.* Trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin, 1961.

CBB Sigmund Freud. "'A Child Is Being Beaten': A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions." Vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1950-74). London: Hogarth, 1981. 177-204.

CD Maurice Merleau-Ponty. "Cézanne's Doubt." *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*. Trans. Michael B. Smith. Ed. Galen A. Johnson. Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1993. 59-75.

CJ Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.

CL *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956-71. 6 vols.

CLHP Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. J. R. de J. Jackson. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2000. 16 vols.

CLL *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*. Vol. 5 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. R. A. Foakes. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1987. 16 vols.

CN *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. New York: Pantheon, 1957-62.

CP Cornell edition of William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1798-1799*. Ed. Stephen Parrish. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1977.

CPR Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996.

CV Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Culture and Value*. Ed. G. H. von Wright. Trans. Peter Winch. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

DJ Lord Byron. *Don Juan.* New York: Penguin, 2004.

DOC Sigmund Freud. "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex." Vol. 19 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1950-74). London: Hogarth, 1981. 172-79.

DP Percy Bysshe Shelley. *The Defense of Poetry*. *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. New York: Norton, 2002. 510-35.

DPP Sigmund Freud. "A Difficulty in the Path of Psychoanalysis." Vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1950-74). London: Hogarth, 1981. 136-144.

E William Blake. *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*. Ed. David V. Erdman. New York: Anchor, 1988.

EJ Edmund Husserl. *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern U P, 1992.

EM Maurice Merleau-Ponty. "Eye and Mind." *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*. Trans. Michael B. Smith. Ed. Galen A. Johnson. Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1993. 121-149.

EY *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. Ed. E. de Selincourt. *The Early Years, 1787-1805*. Revised by Chester L. Shaver. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

F Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *The Friend*. Vol. 4 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Barbara E. Rooke. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1969. 16 vols.

FC Matthew Arnold. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*. Vol. 3 of *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*. Ed. R. H. Super. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1973. 258-85. 11 vols.

FQC Geoffrey H. Hartman. *The Fateful Question of Culture.* New York: Columbia U P, 1997.

H William Hazlitt. *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*. 21 vols. Ed. by P. P. Howe (London: J. M. Dent, 1930).

HCR Henry Crabb Robinson. *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*. Ed. Edith J. Morley. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1938. 3 vols.

HIL Edmund Husserl. Husserl's Inaugural Lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau (1917), "Pure Phenomenology, Its Method, and Its Field of Investigation." *Husserl: Shorter Works*.

Trans. Robert Welsh Jordan. Ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston. Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1981. 10-17.

HLHP G. W. F. Hegel. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Trans. E. S. Haldane. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1999. 3 vols.

HP *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*. Trans. Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.

HPI Edmund Husserl. Husserl's Preface to the English Edition of *Ideas. Husserl: Shorter Works*. Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. Ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston. Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1981). 43-53.

I Edmund Husserl. *Ideas Pertaining to Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*. Trans. F. Kersten. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983.

ID Sigmund Freud. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic, 1998.

KPP John Keats. *Keats's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. New York: Norton, 2009.

KSL John Keats. *Selected Letters*. Ed. Robert Gittings and Jon Mee. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2002.

L Josef Pieper. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. Trans. Gerald Malsbary. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998.

LB William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads and Related Writings.* Ed. William Richey and Daniel Robins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

LD Edward S. Casey. "Literary Description and Phenomenological Method." *Yale French Studies*. 61 (1981): 176-201.

LH Sigmund Freud. "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy ['Little Hans']." *The "Wolfman" and Other Cases*. Trans. Louise Adey Huish. New York: Penguin, 2003. 1-122.

LS Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *A Lay Sermon: Addressed to the Higher and Middle Classes on the Existing Distresses and Discontents. Lay Sermons*. Vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. R. J. White. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1972. 115-230. 16 vols.

LY *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. Ed. E. de Selincourt. *The Later Years, 1821-50*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1939. 3 vols.

MY I *The Letters of William and Dorothy Word*sworth. Ed. E. de Selincourt. *The Middle Years, 1806-11*. Revised by Mary Moorman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969.

MY II *The Letters of William and Dorothy Word*sworth. Ed. E. de Selincourt. *The Middle Years, 1812-20*. Revised by Mary Moorman and Alan Hill. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

NCP Norton Critical Edition of William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.

O Anthony DeCurtis. "'An Outsider in This Society': An Interview with Don DeLillo." *Introducing Don DeLillo*. Ed. Frank Lentricchia. Durham: Duke U P, 1999. 43-66.

OM Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Opus Maximum*. Vol. 15 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Thomas McFarland and Nicholas Halmi. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2002. 16 vols.

PA Edmund Husserl. "Phenomenology and Anthropology." *Husserl: Shorter Works*. Trans. Richard Schmitt. Ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston. Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1981. 315-323.

PC Eugen Fink. "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism." *The Phenomenology of Husserl: Selected Critical Readings*. Ed. and trans. R. O. Elveton. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970. 73-147.

PI Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*. Tr. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

POP Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. London: Routledge, 2003.

PP William Wordsworth. *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth. London: Penguin, 1995.

PPH Eugen Fink. "The Problem of the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl." Trans. Robert M. Harlan. *A Priori and World: European Contributions to Husserlian Phenomenology*. Boston: M. Nijhoff, 1981. 21-55.

PR Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Remarks*. Ed. Rush Rhees. Trans. Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998.

PS G. W. F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1977.

PU Percy Bysshe Shelley. "Preface" and text of *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts. Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. New York: Norton, 2002. 206-286.

PW William Wordsworth. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. Ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1974 3 vols.

RS Emmanuel Levinas. "Reality and Its Shadow." *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*. Ed. Clive Cazeaux. London: Routledge, 2000.

RTP Marcel Proust. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Trans. C. K. Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. New York: Vintage, 1982. 3 vols.

S Sigmund Freud. "Screen Memories." Vol. 3 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1950-74). London: Hogarth, 1981. 301-22.

SL S. T. Coleridge. *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton.* New York: Burt Franklin, 1968.

SM Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *The Statesman's Manual. Lay Sermons*. Vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. R. J. White. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1972. 1-114.

SPP Percy Bysshe Shelley. *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. New York: Norton, 2002.

TE Sigmund Freud. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic, 2000.

TI Emmanuel Levinas. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne U P, 1969.

TT Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Table Talk*. Vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Carl Woodring. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1990. 16 vols.

VM Jacques Derrida. "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas." *Writing and Difference.* Chicago: U of Chicago P 1978. 79-153.

W Matthew Arnold. "Wordsworth." *English Literature and Irish Politics*. Vol. 9 of *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*. Ed. R. H. Super. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1973. 36-55.

WM Sigmund Freud. "From the History of Infantile Neurosis [The 'Wolfman']." *The "Wolfman" and Other Cases*. Trans. Louise Adey Huish. New York: Penguin, 2003. 203-320.

WN Don DeLillo. *White Noise: Text and Criticism*. Ed. Mark Osteen. New York: Penguin, 1998. 1-326.

WPW William Wordsworth. *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford U P, 1969.

WR Kenneth R. Johnston. *Wordsworth and The Recluse.* New Haven: Yale U P, 1984.

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Poetry, Philosophy and the Romantic Renewal

of Philosophical Wonder:

An Introduction

> The reason why the philosopher can be compared to the poet is that both are concerned with wonder.
>
> ~ Thomas of Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* (1271)[1]

a) Defamilarizing the Familiar

Poets and philosophers make the world appear strange. When Aquinas (following Aristotle's discussion of wonder in the *Metaphysics*[2]) likens philosophical inquiry to poetic creation, he is acknowledging that both activities aim to unearth assumptions and perceive details that in everyday life one takes for granted. Poets and philosophers share a paradoxical conviction: Our beliefs about the world can prevent us from learning anything about it that we do not already know – or think we know. In affirming this conviction, Aristotle and Aquinas are not saying that disbelief is smarter or morally superior to belief. Nor are they saying that poets and philosophers should exist in a constant state of radical doubt. Rather, they indicate that if I can temporarily suspend my belief and disbelief about what appears to me, I will be more sensitive to the nuance and complexity of what I perceive, remember, imagine and think. If I can bracket preconceived judgments and call familiar appearances and occurrences into question as I ponder, my knowledge of myself and of the world I inhabit will grow. Indeed, to the extent that I can enrich and heighten my daily experiences, the world itself will appear to grow. This temporary suspension of belief and disbelief is what premodern philosophers called wonder.

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates declares that wonder is the origin of philosophical practice and the fundamental attitude of the inquiring philosopher (155 c-d; Plato 1957 43); poets and other artists cultivate a similar attitude. As Victor Shklovsky says, "art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*" (Shklovsky 12). When Gertrude Stein says, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," she incites a mental experience of roses that would not occur if she had used the word "rose" only once. In this way, she demonstrates that any word or thing can become strange if you repeat or ponder it long enough (Stein 1968 187).[3] To the extent that Socrates aims to encourage such ponderings and instill such experiences in his listeners (and Socrates is always trying to puzzle people), he too is a kind of artist. "The technique of art," Shklovsky says, "is to make objects 'unfamiliar'" (12), and this is a technique that both poets and philosophers practice.

At the advent of the nineteenth century, this commitment to defamiliarizing the familiar was especially prominent. In his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Samuel Taylor Coleridge foreshadows Shklovsky's insistence that artists should "make the stone *stony*" when he observes that though "custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops," William Wordsworth's poems had demonstrated a remarkable power to revivify these qualities (BL I.80). Describing the plan that he and Wordsworth had outlined in preparation for their first poetic collaboration, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Coleridge recalls that Wordsworth's conscious object was …

> to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand (BL II.7).

Shelley echoes Coleridge's description in his *Defense of Poetry* (1821), announcing that poetry "purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being" (DP 533).[4] Both descriptions evince a Romantic awareness that our habits and customs can intrude upon our appreciation of "the wonders of the world before us" and "of our being." They also indicate that poetry has the power to remove the "film of familiarity" that conceals these wonders. Moreover, Coleridge suggests that Wordsworth's particular objective in *Lyrical Ballads* was to suffuse with novelty even those mundane objects and experiences that poets have tended to overlook and to reveal that these objects are at once trivial and significant – trivial to those who see their ordinariness yet capable of carrying and conveying significance.[5]

As the literary careers of Wordsworth and Coleridge were getting underway, G. W. F. Hegel was grappling with similar problems on the other side of the English Channel. While poets were encouraging readers to feel the extraordinary qualities of ordinary objects, philosophers were encouraging them to recognize the cognitive interest of those objects. "Quite generally," Hegel says,

> the familiar [das Bekannte], just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood. The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account; with all its pros and cons, such knowing [solches Wissen] never gets anywhere, and it knows not why (§31; PS 18).

Knowing is, for Hegel, a latent yet recognizable process of learning called Spirit (*der Geist*), of which humankind is becoming increasingly aware through the course of history. These familiar objects, not pondered and yet not understood, obstruct the progress of this awareness. Traditionally, as Hegel observes, the philosophical task of defamiliarizing has been left to the powers of analysis (a word that derives from the Greek for 'breaking down'):

> The analysis of an idea, as it used to be carried out, was, in fact, nothing else than ridding it of the form in which it had become familiar. To break [auseinanderlegen] an idea up into its original elements is to return to its moments, which at least do not have the form of the given idea, but rather constitute the immediate property of the self (§32; PS 18).

Analysis breaks a "given idea" into its "moments," because when an idea is taken as "given" it can calcify in a way that hinders further insight. When philosophy does what it is supposed to do, consciousness dissects familiar ideas, 'lays' them 'apart' or open to view (*auseinanderlegen*), and constructs new concepts that possess greater explanatory power. In this way, philosophy engages in a constant process of analysis in which the familiar becomes unfamiliar and familiar once again. Yet, according to Hegel, constant analysis is only half of the process in its optimal form:

> This analysis, to be sure, only arrives at *thoughts* [nur zu *Gedanken*] which are themselves familiar, fixed and inert determinations. But what is thus *separated* and non-actual is an essential moment; for it is only because the concrete [das Konkrete] does divide itself, and make itself into something non-actual [Unwirklichen], that it is self-moving [sich Bewegende] (§32; PS 18).

For Hegel, "the concrete" is, paradoxically, the conceptual, and it is significant that analysis "only arrives at *thoughts*." Hegel contends that "know[ing] is only actual [wirklich], and can only be expounded, as Science or as *system*" (§24; PS 13), and this means that the "non-actual" moments or thoughts that are revealed when concrete concepts are divided can only become "actual" when they are developed systematically. This belief that thoughts must be reconstituted and reintegrated into a system is characteristic of the Enlightenment.[6] What is peculiar about Hegel's system, however, is that it does not aim at a static and self-aggrandizing construct but at a fluid and dynamic process; in other words, his system is vital and resembles the workings of the human mind. Hegel's commitment to the ideal of a "self-moving" system leads him to propose a cycle of analysis and synthesis that involves a continual process of differentiation and reconstitution. The Spirit "wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself," and it achieves this victory by "looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it" (§32; PS 19). This cyclical process and its confrontation with the negative are of particular relevance to the Romantic renewal of wonder, which, in suspending belief and disbelief, perpetuates inquiry and encourages the view of philosophy as a way of life that aspires toward something at once higher and more personal than the endeavor of knowledge production.[7]

In describing the aims of poetry, Coleridge and Shelley suggest that poets have the capacity to remove the film of familiarity and reveal the wonders the film obscures, yet one might instinctively recoil from the notion that poets engage in a form of analysis like the one Hegel describes. In the opening lines of his *Defense*, Shelley distinguishes imagination, "the principle of synthesis," from reason, "the principle of analysis," and he says, "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the Imagination.'" Poets create by allowing the imagination to express itself, pushing its internal visions into an external world. Yet Shelley also suggests that if imagination (or synthesis) is "the agent," reason (or analysis) is "the instrument" (510-11) – an evocative yet enigmatic claim, to say the least. How exactly do these two faculties interact?

That Shelley does not fully develop this provocative assertion would be no surprise to Edgar Allan Poe. An admirer of Shelley's "utter abandonment" and disdain for any "Rule" that restricts poetic creativity, Poe also thinks that with all his passionate energy Shelley "wearies in saying too little rather than too much" (Poe 1985 357). Shelley provokes, demanding participation, and Poe was quite willing to participate in Shelley's creative process. A year after the appearance of Shelley's *Defense*, Poe published his first piece of detective fiction, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), which begins with prefatory remarks that elaborate upon Shelley's claim (Poe 1956).[8] Poe's narrator distinguishes analysis, a "moral activity which *disentangles*," from ingenuity, a "constructive or combining power." He concludes his prologue with the following associations:

> The analytical power should not be confounded with simple ingenuity; for while the analyst is necessarily ingenious, the ingenious man is often remarkably incapable of analysis. […] Between ingenuity and analytic ability there exists a difference far greater,

> indeed, than that between the fancy and the imagination, but of a character very strictly analogous. It will be found, in fact, that the ingenious are always fanciful, and the *truly* imaginative never otherwise than analytic.

The story that follows these remarks – often cited as one of the first instances of the modern detective genre – narrates the crime-solving tactics of a Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin. Offering an early model for Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Poe's story is narrated by an admiring friend and disciple who acts as Watson to Dupin's Holmes (if not as Robin to Dupin's Batman). While the success of the French flaneur detective's analytical imaginings in "Rue Morgue" and Poe's other Dupin stories is up for debate,[9] it is clear that Poe was familiar with Coleridge's distinctions between fancy ("a mode of Memory") and imagination (a mode of invention that functions in at least partial response to the "conscious will") (BL I.304).[10] Indeed, the notion that the imagination in some sense implies (or at least complements) an equal and opposite process of analysis is already apparent in Coleridge's description of the secondary imagination, which instead of merely synthesizing also "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create" (BL I.304).

Though analysis on its own often connotes a process that is at best coldly surgical and at worst sadistically destructive, this mingling of the powers of analysis and imagination in a cycle of breaking and combining implies a sustained commitment to rational engagement that resists premature resolution. As Hegel would say, it represents a dynamic, self-moving procedure that instead of accepting the familiar as given, faces the negative and tarries with it. Hegel, Coleridge, Shelley and Poe together replace the concept of system as a static and artificial *whole* (or totality) with the concept of system as a dynamic *process* (or method). In an age that has declared "war on totality" (Lyotard 1993 82), the first reference to system can lead to hasty warnings about totalitarianism. However, this process-based notion of system returns the term to its holistic roots, serving as a reminder that the original models for the concept of system were the processes of nature and the human organism, mind and body indivisibly intertwined.

If the dynamic, process-based method of nineteenth-century poets and philosophers encourages us to defamiliarize the world – to perpetually break and combine the appearances and assumptions that we in daily life take for granted – it makes sense to ask, What is the familiar? How does it come into existence? The familiar is no static thing. Across ages and cultures, classes and families, the familiar varies and shifts, entrenching itself through habitual behavior, hardening and sedimenting itself in its own way for each person so that what is familiar to me is not the same as what is familiar to the people closest to me, let alone to those in lands where I will never travel. The philosopher Edmund Husserl made the familiar an essential part of his phenomenological method, identifying a "natural attitude" or state of mind from which phenomenology seeks to free us. In this phrase, Husserl intends for the word "natural" to be understood in a much broader sense than it normally connotes, including not merely those attitudes that are mine by nature but also those that are mine by nurture, including such influences as cultural heritage and social class. Since the origins of Western philosophy, wonder has been understood as a philosophical attitude in which one can interrogate the familiar, and Husserl's formulation of the phenomenological method is one of the twentieth-century's most striking efforts to renew wonder's resistance to the familiar.[11]

Though scholars have often recognized that Romantic poets such as Coleridge and Shelley emphasize the wondrous *things, beings* and *feelings* that poetry can reveal, they have not

examined the ways they have employed this dynamic, process-based conception of inquiry to reanimate the premodern emphasis on wonder as an *activity* – a willing suspension of belief and disbelief that maintains its commitment to the phenomenon or problem under consideration. Today wonder is typically understood as an involuntary influx of awe, but one should distinguish this form of wonder (as passive aesthetic experience) from the form of wonder that one can cultivate (as active philosophical attitude).

Cleanth Brooks's classic New-Critical work, *The Well Wrought Urn*, tacitly illustrates this distinction between wonder as passive aesthetic experience and as active philosophical attitude in its first chapter, "The Language of Paradox." There Brooks observes that Wordsworth's poetic objective of "awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom," as recounted by Coleridge (BL II.7), illustrates "the Romantic preoccupation with wonder – the surprise, the revelation which puts the tarnished familiar world in a new light" (Brooks 7). Brooks rightly notes the Romantic preoccupation with wonder as an aesthetic experience that poetry can incite. Yet a few pages later, in his reading of Donne's "Canonization," Brooks refers to a different kind of lethargy – one not of the senses or feelings but of the cognitive faculties. Brooks prepares his readers to resist this lethargy by suggesting,

> The poem then is a parody of Christian sainthood; but it is an intensely serious parody of a sort that modern man, habituated as he is to an easy yes or no, can hardly understand. He refuses to accept the paradox as a serious rhetorical device; and since he is able to accept it only as a cheap trick, he is forced into this dilemma. Either: Donne does not take love seriously; here he is merely sharpening his wit as a sort of mechanical exercise. Or: Donne does not take sainthood seriously; here he is merely indulging in a cynical and bawdy parody (Brooks 11).

Kierkegaard devoted two volumes to a performative exercise that explodes the 'Either / Or' dichotomy that reinforces the tendencies of instrumental reason, advocating instead a wonder-filled 'Both / And' attitude, which respectfully remains attentive to multiple points of view. Yet even the persuasive skills of a Kierkegaard could not countermand today's impulse toward premature judgment. As Brooks suggests, there is a cognitive lethargy – a conceptual recalcitrance and an eagerness for closure – which is common to this "modern man" and which insists upon arriving at an "easy yes or no." Accustomed or "habituated" to premature judgments, Brooks's caricatured "modern man" approaches intellectual problems as irritating obstacles that must be quickly assessed, classified and dismissed. While an aesthetic experience might instill in me a sense of momentary wonder that counteracts the lethargy of custom, the film of cognitive lethargy that Brooks describes is more difficult to remove and requires a conscious effort – a voluntary suspension of judgment.

Brooks's "modern man" bears a striking resemblance to the one Wordsworth prophesied in his Preface to the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, where he complained that, "a multitude of causes unknown in 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 savage torpor" (PW I.128). Among the causes of this torpor, according to Wordsworth, are urbanization, specialization, mass communication and an increasingly incendiary media – all of which have conditioned moderns to crave "gross and violent stimulants" (PW I.128). In view of these desensitizing, palate-vitiating stimulants, Wordsworth confesses, "I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavored to counteract it" (PW I.130). His

hope of energizing those who exhibit this "savage torpor" and of unveiling the wonders of the world merely by publishing a modest collection of *Lyrical Ballads* seemed to him all too futile. Yet he felt heartened by a belief that "the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers and with far more distinguished success" (PW I.130).

After the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth strove to create a philosophical poem that might cultivate and illustrate the resistance to cognitive lethargy that Brooks requests of his readers. In his chosen medium of poetry, Wordsworth could not "systematically" eradicate the savage torpor of modern times in the manner that he hoped others would. Yet this philosophical poem nonetheless records his redoubled efforts to revitalize himself and his readers not merely with sudden influxes of aesthetic wonder but with an actively cultivated philosophical wonder. Distinct from both a negative skepticism (or dogmatic denial of knowledge) and from a naïvely intuitive stance (or undisciplined inability to attain knowledge), this sense of an active voluntary wonder found a revival in the writings of nineteenth-century British and German philosophers and poets. Consciously or unconsciously, these writers participated in a Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder.

Wonder challenges the familiar, and the familiar is for each person ever-changing. This study will suggest that Wordsworth and his contemporaries found themselves uniquely capable of resisting the impulse to judge prematurely. More specifically, Wordsworth demonstrated a remarkable ability to challenge familiar assumptions about mental faculties such as imagining and remembering. While the next section of this introduction (b) will offer an outline of the premodern philosophy of wonder, of its rejecters in modern philosophy and of its advocates among Wordsworth's contemporaries, such as William Blake, John Keats and Lord Byron, its penultimate section (c) will provide a preview of how William Wordsworth, reacting against the systematic demands of his friend and collaborator, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, managed to create in *The Prelude* a philosophical poem of a different kind than Coleridge had thought possible. The final section (d) will offer an initial sketch of the ways Wordsworth's wondering poem prefigures the early twentieth century's two great reinvigorations of the philosophy of wonder, psychoanalysis and phenomenology.

b) Premodern and Romantic Epistemology

The Romantic epistemological view most closely resembles the positive skepticism of premodern philosophy and of twentieth-century psychoanalysis and phenomenology. Each of these orientations privileges the epochê or suspension of judgment – a procedure that the ancient skeptics saw as a natural consequence of the Socratic method.[12] The word 'skepticism' is today understood as a denial of knowledge that is merely negative in orientation, but to the ancient Greeks who first used this word it simply meant 'inquiry.'[13] When the ancient skeptics first encouraged the epochê, they did so with the understanding that the lover of wisdom should be hospitable to the initial "impulse" of philosophical questioning without prematurely surrendering to the desire to "assert" or endorse any particular viewpoint.[14] They refused to state their opinions because an "opinion" (or an "assent to the ungraspable") is "a mark of imprudence and the cause of [moral] mistakes."[15] While a misguided skeptic might interpret the epochê as a departure from the world and its concerns, the Romantics exhibit an awareness that in its true spirit the epochê involves a heightened attention that resists both belief (or assent) *and* disbelief (or denial). The misguided skeptic doubts everything, refusing to engage with other points of

view; the Romantic refuses to *stop* engaging. Though some commentators have mistakenly characterized the Romantic epistemological stance as anti-rational,[16] it in fact marks a return to a philosophy of wonder that is intellectually vigorous and positive in orientation.

A study that discusses ancient, Romantic and twentieth-century Continental philosophies of wonder should not attempt to offer final answers. Nor should it suggest that the philosophy of wonder is the *real* or *true* philosophy merely because it appears to have been present at the advent of the Western philosophical tradition. Rather, a study of this sort should attempt to elucidate how philosophies of wonder differ from philosophies of system, and it should acknowledge up front that no philosopher can suspend judgment and abide in wonder continuously.

That Socrates and Plato are appropriate representatives of the classical philosophy of wonder becomes clear when one remembers that Socrates never wrote and that Plato never spoke in his own voice. As Hannah Arendt observes, the ancients and scholastics believed in the "primacy of contemplation over activity," which grew from "the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth the physical *kosmos*, which swings in itself in changeless eternity…" For this reason, she says,

> It weighs heavily in favor of Socrates that he alone among the great thinkers – unique in this as in many other respects – never cared to write down his thoughts; for it is obvious that, no matter how concerned a thinker may be with eternity, the moment he sits down to write his thoughts he ceases to be concerned primarily with eternity and shifts his attention to leaving some trace of them (Arendt 15 and 20).

Though Plato did write, it is important to remember that he wrote dialogues, and that in the spirit of his teacher's aversion to closure, his dialogues typically *stop* instead of concluding with any kind of satisfactory resolution. They are aporetical. Furthermore, in these dialogues, one never hears Plato speak in his own voice. Thus, Francis M. Cornford's choice of the title *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* is highly problematic, because, as John Sallis observes, "Plato himself wrote no treatises expounding 'his philosophy.'" More generally, Sallis adds,

> … it is highly questionable … whether philosophy can ever be the philosophy of someone or whether, on the contrary, such a phrase does not already betray a falling away from the demand of philosophical thought, a falling away in the direction of opinions, which indeed are the possessions of particular men and particular cities (Sallis 1-2).

Perhaps it would have been more accurate for Cornford to call his work *Socrates's Theory of Knowledge*. Yet this, too, would have been problematic, given that in *Theaetetus* (one of the two dialogues Cornford translates), Socrates says,

> You are not bearing in mind, my friend, that I have no knowledge; I cannot claim any such ideas as my own – no, I am barren as far as they are concerned. But I am acting as your midwife, and that is why I am chanting and serving up morsels of wisdom for you to taste (157c-d; Plato 1987 41).

Any conclusion that Theaetetus arrives at is, therefore, attributable to Theaetetus only. Of course, in interpreting Socrates's statement, one might wish to ask Socrates (as Theaetetus does)

"whether you're voicing your own opinion or just trying me out" (155c). What is Socrates's opinion? He is unwilling to tell us, because that would transform the pursuit of eternal wisdom into the pursuit of immortal knowledge.

Socrates's and Plato's great premodern successors, Aristotle and Aquinas, remained sensitive to these priorities, while also departing from them in different ways. Concerned less with the way wisdom as a perennial and unreachable goal affects philosophical practice and more with what "the wise person" must "know," Aristotle defines wisdom as "scientific knowledge and understanding about the things that are by nature most honorable," restricting the classical definition of wisdom and effacing the tension that Socrates places between wisdom and knowledge (1141a-b; Aristotle 1999 91).[17] However, while Aristotle's extant works seem to assume that philosophers should (as Coleridge puts it) "say what they have to say at once in their own persons" (TT II.69) – a demand that demeans Plato's efforts to create aporetical dialogues that would cultivate the attitude of wonder – the historical record indicates that Aristotle, like Plato, also wrote literary-philosophical dialogues (now lost), that the treatises we say he 'wrote' might in fact have been recorded by students during his courses at the Lyceum, and that he might have been merely *trying out* these views instead of expounding them and aspiring toward an all-encompassing completeness as a philosopher of system would (Lawson-Tancred 18 and 21). Furthermore, though Aquinas's systematic aspirations and his apparent adherence to the Anselmian motto ("I believe in order to understand"[18]) would seem to run counter to the radical openness of a wonder that resists both totalization and any predetermination of the beliefs at which an inquiry should arrive, he also – following Aristotle's claim in the *Metaphysics* that philosophical practice begins with wonder, depends upon a useless or non-productive leisure, and exists freely and for its own sake (982b; Aristotle 2004 9) – says it is "necessary for the perfection of the human community, that there be persons who devote themselves to the [use-less] life of contemplation" (L 26). Though it seems counter-intuitive to children of modern capitalism, Aquinas and his premodern forebears view "use-less," non-productive lives of wondering contemplation as nobler and higher than lives that direct themselves toward useful pursuits and the production of immortalizing traces such as systems and other personal monuments.

With the rise of modern philosophy, the classical significance of wisdom, wonder and non-productive contemplation receded. While Aquinas reaffirms the Aristotelian primacy of contemplation over the practical intellect,[19] René Descartes attempts to replace it with something more "practical" and "useful" (Descartes I.142). Similarly, out of respect for "the incomparable Mr. Newton," John Locke likens himself to an "Under-Labourer" who is merely "clearing Ground a little, and removing some of the Rubbish, that lies in the way of Knowledge." In this way, Locke and other philosophers begin to submit their work to the "Trial and Examination" process of the sciences (Locke 10 and 4). Scientific knowledge, according to Aristotle, is known "by necessity," while "what admits of being otherwise escapes observation" (Aristotle 1999 88). As long as philosophy remains a leisurely contemplative pursuit unfettered by the immediate demands of work and productivity, it can serve as an unbiased corrective for the sciences and other forms of thought, identifying observational blind spots. As soon as philosophy becomes the handmaiden of science, however, it becomes as fixed and fixated as all forms of thought that prefer the closure of instrumental reason to the suspended closure of wonder.

Though Romantic writers avow no explicit interest in preserving the founding impulses of the love of wisdom, they frequently speak in direct opposition to the instrumentalizing tendencies of modern philosophers such as Descartes and Locke who would redefine contemplation as a mere means toward the productive ends of science. For instance, one hundred years after the publication of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Blake would express his disdain for Locke's deference to Newton in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), describing "a Dragon-Man" who is busy "clearing away the rubbish from a caves mouth" (E 40). As Blake implies, Locke has become so preoccupied with clearing this narrow stretch of ground for Newton that he has, ironically, failed to notice that he is still in Plato's cave. Similarly, in his annotations to Reynolds, Blake shuns Bacon's "first princip[le]" of "Unbelief" and forwards a counter-principle that is also a Latin variation of Socrates's claim that wonder is the origin of philosophy. To Joshua Reynolds's sober Lockean claim that "enthusiastick admiration seldom promotes knowledge" – an emblematically modern claim[20] – Blake replies, "Enthusiastic Admiration is the first Principle of Knowledge & its last" (E 647-48). Rooted in the Latin *admirare* that connotes wonder, Blakean admiration (in contrast to today's more common connotation of admiration as 'esteem') is the *principium* ('origin' and 'rule') of philosophical practice.[21]

The clearest and most succinct example of the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder may well appear in the letters of John Keats, encapsulated in a phrase that is at once so familiar and so severed from its philosophical heritage that it remains, in some sense, hidden in plain sight:

> I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare posessed so enormously – I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason – Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge. This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration (KSL 41-42).

This person who can voluntarily dwell in a disconcerting space of "uncertainties, Mysteries, [and] doubts," remaining engaged while resisting the impulse toward premature judgment, bears a remarkable resemblance to the classical ideal of the philosopher. Yet Keats's precocious poetic talents and his overall lack of philosophical learning at the age of twenty-two have led commentators to focus more upon how the notion of negative capability informs the poetic theories that were cohering in Keats at the time of the December 1817 letter to his brothers in which it appears.[22] However, in his discussion of negative capability Keats is, above all, making a statement about epistemology – about the study not only of the attainment of knowledge but also of the duties, limits and goals of its pursuit. In September and October of 1817, three months before his mention of negative capability, Keats spent five weeks in the Oxford rooms of his philosophically inclined friend Bailey, conversing, reading and drafting the third book of *Endymion*. In the months that followed the word "philosopher" entered into Keats's habitual vocabulary, and Bate suggests that his usage of the word is often rather ambiguous (201). Yet in

Keats's mention of the "proper philosophical temper," he speaks of philosophy in a manner that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle would have found quite familiar. Bate's description of negative capability as, "The ability to negate one's own identity, to lose it in something larger and more meaningful than oneself" (18), is accurate as far as it goes, yet its generality obscures the concept's epistemological significance. One might assume, for instance, that the application of Keats's concept extends only to artistic ideals such as Shakespeare's chameleonic ability to enter into his characters. However, Keats's concept also bears a distinct resemblance to the reaction to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) that one finds in Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). When Keats privileges the ability to dwell in "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts" over an "irritable reaching after fact & reason," he is suggesting that one *should* reach for truths but that one's reach should *not* be irritable,[23] and his claim is compatible with Schiller's earlier warnings about "the pernicious influence of an overpowering rationality." According to Schiller, the "impatiently anticipating reason" of modern thought has engendered a "widespread and almost insurmountable tendency toward teleological judgements" – an impatience that bears a striking likeness to the irritability of which Keats complains (AE 70n1). Keats says, "with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration" (KSL 42), and one might imagine that he is advocating a naïve, sensualist attitude that precludes intellectual inquiry. Yet to obliterate consideration is, for Keats, to exclude not inquiry itself but a "consequitive reasoning" that irritably and impatiently levies judgments (KSL 36). Keats advocates an epistemological attitude characterized by prolonged, patient and non-judgmental intellectual engagement – a willing suspension of belief *and* disbelief.

In suggesting that in inquiry one might engage in a double suspension of belief and disbelief, Keats is not alone among his contemporaries. Consider the narrator of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, who warns that…

> … whene'er I have exprest
> Opinions two, which at first sight may look
> Twin opposites, the second is the best.
> Perhaps I have a third too in a nook
> Or none at all, which seems a sorry jest.
> But if a writer should be quite consistent,
> How could he possible show things existent?
>
> If people contradict themselves, can I
> Help contradicting them and everybody,
> Even my veracious self? But that's a lie;
> I never did so, never will. How should I?

He who doubts all things nothing can deny.

Truth's fountains may be clear, her streams are muddy

And cut through such canals of contradiction

That she must often navigate oe'r fiction (XV.87-8; DJ 518-19).

Coupled with his cheeky and ironic claim for a "veracious self," the *Juan* narrator's comfort with contradiction anticipates similar pronouncements in Soren Kierkegaard ("The abolition of the principle of contradiction, expressed in terms of existence, means to live in contradiction with oneself" [Kierkegaard 1986 68]), Walt Whitman ("Do I contradict myself? / Very well then . . . . I contradict myself; / I am large . . . . I contain multitudes" [Whitman 87]) and Friedrich Nietzsche ("The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition" [Nietzsche 1982 488]). The *Juan* narrator and his successors advocate a new kind of veraciousness – an honest commitment to truths *and* counter-truths. Not surprisingly, in claiming to resist false resolutions in word, these four thinkers also do so in practice. Byron's flexible *ottava rima* stanza, Whitman's long free verse line (later appropriated by Allen Ginsberg in poems such as "Howl"), Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship and Nietzsche's brief and explosive aphorisms each exhibit a concerted effort to suspend judgment and fold and complicate a synthetic impulse that in modern science and philosophy had become synonymous with inquiry.[24] Each formal decision is calculated to channel the speaker's thoughts in a manner that encourages contradiction and affirms the complexity of consciousness. While a dogmatist would interpret such decisions as an anti-rational departure from engagement, they in fact mark a return to the premodern spirit of philosophical inquiry as embodied in the Socratic method and the Platonic dialogue.[25] Moreover, while a dogmatist might suggest that skeptical stances such as those taken by Byron, Kierkegaard, Whitman and Nietzsche are immoral and irresponsible, one might counter that an awareness of plurality and a commitment to continual consideration is the only truly ethical attitude.[26]

Each of these expressions of Romantic wonder makes a statement about epistemology, which is the study not only of how one attains knowledge but also (this study argues) of the duties, limits and goals of its pursuit. The conception of philosophy that underlies this study has profited greatly from Richard Rorty's remarkable work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, yet I take exception to Rorty's suggestion that epistemology – narrowly defined as "foundational epistemology" (Rorty 315) – is largely a byproduct of Kant's professionalization of philosophy and is consequently something philosophy would be better off without (Rorty 357). As this section has attempted to demonstrate, the concerns of epistemology – implied in both the Socratic method and in the artful form of Plato's aporetical dialogues – have been around for as long as philosophy itself. Thus, the hermeneutical emphases that Rorty rightly seeks to revive should not be placed *in opposition to* epistemology; rather, they should be viewed as *a part of* an epistemology that is richly complex enough to house the extremes of an instrumental reason and a wondering reason.

As an epistemological ideal and attitude, wonder is antithetical to the Enlightenment's ideal of and craving for systematic totality. Recent scholarship has reminded us that during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the system was not merely an idea but also a popular genre that aspired toward completeness and comprehensiveness and that was distinguished from

the essay, then understood not as a discrete effort to produce knowledge but as a 'try' or 'attempt' to address a spontaneously or accidentally chosen topic (Siskin 2009 103). Another genre that was popular during this period and that has received ample attention among Romanticists in particular is the fragment, which like the essay naturally situates itself in opposition to the system. While systems strive to become wholes, unities or totalities, fragments are content to be mere shards, broken pieces or aborted attempts. However, though a number of studies have addressed the fragment and its *generic* opposition to the system,[27] none have examined the equally salient *epistemological* opposition *of wonder* to system. The system is not merely "a written form of inquiry," Clifford Siskin reminds us, but also an "epistemological procedure" – or more broadly, an epistemological attitude (Siskin 2009 106). The epistemological attitude that is informed by a yearning for systematic totality is quite different from the perpetual detotalizing process of breaking and combining described in the previous section. While the fragment is the form of writing that opposes the system (as systematic totality), wonder (as suspension of judgment) has since the origins of the Western philosophical tradition been understood as an inquiring attitude that resists the thirst for knowledge and system that have become so pervasive since the Enlightenment.

Thus, a close examination of the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder must also at least tangentially address wonder's recession in and since the so-called Epistemological Turn – the seventeenth-century sea change that initiated a movement that is still today referred to as 'modern' philosophy. Eager to lay foundations for the physical sciences, Descartes and others consciously or unconsciously encouraged an epistemological attitude hospitable to the hasty judgments of instrumental reason and dismissive of the earnest and respectful attention of a philosophical wonder, which views contemplation as an end in itself and not as a means toward practical ends. As a consequence, contemporary philosophy often more closely resembles the Enlightenment love of system than the ancient love of wisdom.[28] "Seldom do we reflect," Pierre Hadot declares, "upon what philosophy is in itself. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to define it. What philosophy students are introduced to is above all *philosophies*," i.e., "philosophers' systems" – a tendency that Hadot argues is reinforced by "the exigencies of university teaching" and runs counter to "the representations which the ancients made of *philosophia*" (Hadot 2002 1-2). As Cornelis Verhoeven observes, wonder is "an endless deferment of certitude," a "state of suspension between the grasped and the ungrasped" (Verhoeven 12 and 26), which resists the totalization of system. According to Verhoeven's conception of wonder, philosophical skepticism can be positive in orientation.

As participants in this historical narrative, Romantic writers thus also provide an opportunity to reclaim and redefine the concept of skepticism, which in modernity has often been characterized as an attitude that is irrationally and destructively negative. To the contrary, a positive skepticism aims to actively sustain inquiry while maintaining openness to opposing viewpoints. This positive skepticism is an active philosophical attitude that resists the familiar and attends to the unfamiliar in the manner that Hegel and other Romantic writers describe. In this sense, Romantic writers anticipate the twentieth-century efforts of writers such as Freud, Husserl and Derrida who have attempted to reinvigorate the positive skeptical attitude. Just as with his *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth sought to counteract the "savage torpor" of modern times by reviving the senses and feelings of readers (PW I.128), so do Romantic philosophers of wonder seek to counteract the cognitive torpor of modern times by inverting the modern craving for total knowledge and by reinvigorating the premodern pursuit of wisdom.

c) Wordsworth's Philosophy of Wonder

In its effort to adequately address the subject of Romantic wonder, this study pursues three primary goals. First, it responds to a curious omission in the study of British Romanticism, which has produced numerous full-length works on the sublime and not one that documents the integral role that wonder plays in Romantic aesthetics and epistemology.[29] Second, it shows that a renewed attention to Romantic wonder requires one to dramatically recast the traditional narrative of William Wordsworth's career. Third, it concludes by illuminating the relationship between Romantic wonder and postmodern epistemology, showing that Wordsworth's treatment of wonder brings him in dialogue with writers like Don DeLillo and prophetically anticipates the diminished lifeworld of this postmodern age.

When one reaffirms the role of wonder in Romantic discourse, it becomes clear that long-entrenched prejudices against Romanticism – such as Matthew Arnold's claim that the Romantics "did not know enough" (FC 262) and F. R. Leavis's claim that Wordsworth "hadn't enough material" to compose a philosophical poem (Leavis 163) – are grounded in an impoverished view of philosophical inquiry. Though the Romantics intentionally resisted the instrumentalizing tendencies of modern philosophy that give priority to teleological judgment and knowledge acquisition, commentators like Arnold and Leavis assessed their efforts with the very standards they sought to countermand.

The Romantic commitment to wonder is nowhere more evident than in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, but because Wordsworth chose to revise the poem for nearly fifty years instead of completing *The Recluse* (the projected systematic poem that Coleridge had repeatedly encouraged), commentators have usually treated *The Prelude* either as another example of failed Romantic promise or as the poem that cloaks 'Wordsworth's philosophy' and implicitly accomplishes Coleridge's plans. These definitions of 'failure' and 'success' distort the poem's significance. When one reads *The Prelude* in terms of concepts formalized by the twentieth century's two great 'sciences of subjectivity,' psychoanalysis and phenomenology, one observes that these disciplinary strangers share distinct methodological parallels centering upon wonder and that Wordsworth's epic of self-consciousness offers a record not of philosophical influences but of philosophy in practice. While Coleridge encouraged Wordsworth to compose a philosophical poem that would encapsulate "the Colors, Music, imaginative Life, and Passion of Poetry" in "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574), Wordsworth never completed this project – a fact that some have interpreted as the great failure of Wordsworth's career.[30] However, a close examination of *The Prelude* reveals that the system – the favored genre of Coleridge and of the Enlightenment – was incompatible with Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder.

This is not a study of 'Wordsworth's philosophy.' It will not identify underlying doctrines in Wordsworth's poetry that one can extract and assemble into a system, nor will it map Wordsworth's claims onto the system of some other thinker whom he or Coleridge might have read. To speak of 'Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder' is to speak not of a particular philosophy that Wordsworth appears to advocate but of the epistemological and descriptive practices that are evident to readers of his poetry and prose. This study's central thesis is that Wordsworth's epistemological method in *The Prelude* is a rigorous form of wonder that parallels Freud's suppression of the critical faculty (the basis for free association) and Husserl's suspension of the natural attitude (the basis for phenomenological method). Each of these three thinkers intentionally brackets the normative and scientific assumptions latent in common sense,

attending to mental faculties and apparently irrational phenomena with an uncommon sense. Central to this study, therefore, is a crucial paradox: As soon as one forwards 'a philosophy,' one is no longer philosophizing. This claim appears contradictory because two words that are traditionally opposed – wisdom and knowledge – are commonly conflated today. In the classical sense, philosophy is the love of wisdom, and knowledge celebrates a closure that wisdom resists. Wisdom does not content itself with contents. It is a kind of unknowing – a desire for understanding that refuses to possess its beloved. Wonder is the hovering middle state of the mind in which the love of wisdom resides. The wondering philosopher actively and voluntarily gives preference to attention and openness over certitude and closure. Distinct from a passive astonishment, wonder is (as Eugen Fink declares) a "creative *force*" (PPH 25; his italics), and Wordsworth is its foremost Romantic practitioner.

In acknowledging the role of wonder in Wordsworth's poetry, one must also reconsider his career, which is often recounted as the history of a poem he never finished. When *Lyrical Ballads* was published in 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge began a second collaboration. They hoped *The Recluse* would be the first genuine philosophical poem. As legend has it, Coleridge would supply the system, and Wordsworth would render it in verse.[31] But neither man fulfilled his side of the agreement, and this fact has reinforced the oversimplified view that Wordsworth and his passionate contemporaries were talented poets of failed promise, cut short by death or dissolution. In the past, some Wordsworth commentators have struggled against this persuasive narrative by attempting to demonstrate that Wordsworth did not fail – that *The Prelude* contains the philosophy Coleridge was tasked with providing and fulfills the promise of *The Recluse*. However, this is simply an inverted affirmation of a prejudicial narrative that gives priority to fulfillment and totality over wonder and impasse. What *The Prelude* offers is an example of philosophy in practice. It neither supplies a philosophy nor overcomes the impasse of Romantic failure; rather, it is a poem *about* impasse that 'succeeds' in being engaged. In this way, Wordsworth's poetic practice exemplifies the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder.

This reading of *The Prelude* also recontextualizes Arnold's famous claim that the Romantics were talented yet naïve devotees of sense experience who did not know enough. By reaffirming the role of wonder in Romantic discourse, one observes that, in a sense that he did not intend, Arnold was correct: Preferring wisdom to knowledge, the Romantics urged their readers to voluntarily sustain their interest and intellectual commitment instead of settling for an abstract closure that would rarely – or never – suffice.

This study addresses its three primary goals in three parts. Part I, "Wordsworth's Resistance to Coleridge: Wonder and System in Romantic Magnum Opera," addresses the complicated set of literary and interpersonal preoccupations that stirred Wordsworth and Coleridge to produce *The Prelude* and the *Biographia Literaria* – inventive, autobiographical works of great genius. Chapters one and two will, respectively, argue that while the fragments and foldings of Coleridge's literary output often resist totalization and exemplify the Romantic philosophy of wonder, his philosophical pronouncements and proclivities – in particular, his affinity for system and his resolution that Wordsworth's *Recluse* should exhibit "the Totality of a System" – incited a (sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit) philosophical dispute between himself and Wordsworth that the history of *The Recluse* records. Comparatively ignorant of the history of Western philosophy, Wordsworth could not have held his own in such a dispute if Coleridge had not articulated its terms. Yet Wordsworth's prose writings and the history of *The Recluse*

indicate that Wordsworth was reluctant to compose the systematic poem Coleridge expected. Indeed, as commentators such as Jerome Christensen first suggested[32] and as chapter one of this study will further demonstrate, Coleridge himself was deeply divided about system, often producing works that are dialogical, accretive and unfinished. Nonetheless, Coleridge conceived of his literary-philosophical output as directed toward the development of a system, and Wordsworth's rejection of Coleridge's systematic plans gives evidence to his preference for the openness of wonder over the closure of system.

Chapter three will show how this preference for wonder over system finds expression in Wordsworth's thirteen-book autobiographical poem of 1805. Wordsworth's dispute with Coleridge seems to have spurred him to participate in the discovery of a unique sub-genre of autobiography that one might call "autobiographical philosophy." Like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, two other classic autobiographies, Augustine's *Confessions* and Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, initially present themselves as apprenticeship pieces and apologies that prepare the way for more systematic philosophical works, only to break this initial contract and imply that autobiography can itself serve as a detotalizing form of philosophizing that resists the yearning to systematize. Philosophical wonder – exemplified artistically in Plato's aporetical dialogues and methodically in the skeptical epochê – is defined by precisely this resistance to the closure and completion of a systematic totality, and the introduction of the concept of wonder helps us to see that these are not just philosophical autobiographies; rather, they exemplify a form of philosophizing that renews the premodern pursuit of wisdom and challenges the modern attraction toward systematic philosophy.

After these chapters have articulated wonder's relationship to premodern epistemology, Romanticism, systematicity, poetry and autobiography, it will be easier to appreciate the ways that wonder operates in *The Prelude*. Part II of this study, "Wordsworth's 'Philosophic Song': Poetry, Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology," will examine Wordsworth's wondering attention to the mental faculties of imagining, remembering and the grey area of confabulation that combines the two. Wordsworth's attention to these faculties evinces a keen awareness not only of the phenomena that appear to consciousness but also of the mental activities that disclose these phenomena. Scholastic philosophers called this dual-focus intentionality – a concept which Franz Brentano introduced to his students, Freud and Husserl, and which later followers of Husserl such as Eugen Fink and Maurice Merleau-Ponty would associate with wonder. The Interlude begins with a challenge to Arnold's low estimation of the poet's creative powers and of the philosophical worth of Wordsworth's poetry. Though in his criticism Arnold argues that poets cannot create and must simply appropriate the materials that scientists and philosophers have already created, his poems tell a different story, anticipating a geological theory that would not find scientific expression for decades. In his criticism, Arnold is too eager to demean the poet's capacity for intellectual insight, and this prejudice is also apparent in his editorial work. Chapter four will argue that when Arnold selected and organized his *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879), choosing to jettison a number of Wordsworth's categories (imagination, fancy, sentiment) and to introduce generic formal ones (lyric, ballad, sonnet), he demonstrated an ill-informed disregard for Wordsworth's nuanced attention to mental activities.

Chapters five, six and seven offer close readings of Wordsworth's provocative descriptions of and reflections upon remembering, confabulation, and imagining, which yield original insights in an ongoing conversation between poet, psychoanalyst and phenomenologist.

Chapter five explores Wordsworth's insights into the phenomenon of childhood amnesia. While Freud stakes the success of psychoanalysis on its capacity to "remove" the veil of childhood amnesia, Wordsworth affirms that "the soul, / Remembering how she felt but what she felt / Remembering not," is unable to accomplish this. His conclusion – that young children are not self-conscious enough to create memories – finds confirmation in recent studies in cognitive science, demonstrating the peculiar prescience of Wordsworth's attention to the faculty of remembering. The ensuing chapters in part II elaborate on these findings, focusing on Wordsworth's efforts to remember and imagine his own early childhood. While chapter six suggests that Wordsworth and Freud, as autobiographers, have a more consistent grasp of the differences and slippages between remembering and imagining than Freud has when he writes as a scientist determined to represent objective reality, chapter seven shows how Wordsworth's attention to the activities of remembering and imagining enhances his descriptive powers, opening avenues of insight that resemble those of the twentieth-century phenomenologist. Chapters five, six and seven each center on the early books of *The Prelude*, as it is in these books that Wordsworth is most committed to imagining the early years of his life and to reflecting upon the activities of remembering, confabulation and imagining that bring him into contact with his experienced and extrapolated past. Wordsworth's speaker is highly sensitive to the possibility that he is at times fictionalizing his autobiography and imposing his anti-Wedgwoodian views of childhood education onto his descriptions of childhood sensibility, yet his treatment of these confabulations and superimpositions exhibits a level of self-awareness that resembles that of the psychoanalyst and phenomenologist. Wordsworth, Freud and Husserl each – in distinct yet related ways – bracket their critical judgments and preconceived assumptions so that their inquiries will yield fresh insights, which the inquirer can then incorporate into the body of received knowledge.

The third and final part of this study will center upon the wonder of the child and address the suppressions of wonder in Wordsworth's account of the child and in what Lyotard has called "the postmodern condition." The Romantics supposedly popularized the view that children are purveyors of natural intuitions and receptacles of metaphysical truths.[33] However, chapter eight will demonstrate that in "Anecdote for Fathers," Wordsworth presents a child whose advantage is epistemological, not metaphysical. The child is not the bearer of natural truths nor has the child developed the faculties that would enable the comprehension or articulation of such truths; rather, while the adult's eagerness to acquire knowledge sometimes results in premature judgments and recalcitrant convictions, the child inadvertently exhibits a greater philosophical maturity by resisting such judgments and maintaining an inquisitive openness that the adult has been conditioned to suppress. This chapter will also argue that the epistemological stance of Wordsworth's child accords with Lyotard's definition of postmodernism (as an "incredulity toward metanarratives" and "transcendental illusion[s]" [Lyotard 1993 xxiv and 81]) and brings Wordsworth into conversation with contemporary American novelists like DeLillo. Wordsworth indicates that the preoccupations and stimulants of modernity might ultimately diminish the human capacity to wonder, and DeLillo's characterization of the child confirms Wordsworth's predictions and gives new expression to this classic modern problem.

d) Poetry, Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology

Throughout this study, Freud's and Husserl's twentieth-century renewals of wonder will help us to better appreciate the philosophical wonder that operates in Romantic writings in

general and in Wordsworth's *Prelude* in particular. Conversely, the introduction of poetry into discussions of psychoanalysis and phenomenology will help to highlight parallel practices that all three descriptive methods share – an "enriching" approach from which analysts (and presumably, phenomenologists) "stand to gain a great deal," according to Julia Kristeva, provided that they encounter "an aesthetic experience as singular as Joyce's" or as Wordsworth's "less to analyze it than to illuminate their own practice" (Kristeva 1996a 91). Neither Freud nor Husserl would have suggested that their 'sciences of subjectivity' should or could supplant objective thought. They conceived of themselves as scientists, they esteemed the verifiable discoveries of the physical sciences, and they hoped that their self-reflexive methods would function as useful supplements to and contexts for scientific inquiry. In a sense, Freud's and Husserl's work on the subjective basis of objective thought parallels the work of quantum physicists who have shown that the act of measuring and observing an experiment can shape its results. Freud and Husserl both suggest that objective thought should no longer pretend that the detached observer of a phenomenon is truly independent from it. However, they do not take this to mean that everything is subjective. When I exhibit a heightened awareness of my role in inquiry, then I can better identify unintentional influences and better avoid corrupted results. The result is a complex dialectic between subjective and objective thought, not a choice between one and the other. Greatly influenced by both Freud and Husserl, Derrida exclaims,

> … The difference between empirical and essential must continue to assert its rights.
>
> We know that Lévi-Strauss has very harsh words for the philosophies that have made the mind aware of this distinction, and which are for the most part, philosophies of consciousness, of the cogito in the Cartesian or Husserlian sense…. Now whatever one may finally think of philosophies thus incriminated or ridiculed…. it should be recognized that the difference between empirical affect and the structure of essence was for them a major rule. Neither Descartes nor Husserl would ever have suggested that they considered an empirical modification of their relationship with the world or with others as scientific truth, nor the quality of an emotion as the premise of a syllogism. Never in the *Regulae* does one pass from the phenomenologically irrefutable truth of "I see yellow" to the judgment "the world is yellow" (Derrida 1976 117).

So how can philosophies of consciousness contribute to the inquiries of objective thought? Freud and Husserl founded their philosophies of consciousness upon the notion that if the inquiring subject can suspend (or suppress) its belief and disbelief, this suspension can yield new and refreshing insights about the internal and external worlds of phenomena. As Derrida observes, philosophers of consciousness made concerted efforts to respect the distinction between empirical modifications and scientific truths. However, perhaps because they were trained as scientists, Freud and Husserl also occasionally betray a longing to return to the realm of objective truth.[34] Just as Wittgenstein claimed that Freud occasionally mistook his descriptions and speculations for explanations,[35] so did existential phenomenologists indicate that Husserl had gone too far in suggesting that the phenomenological reduction could give the subject access to a purely transcendental consciousness.

This is where the intervention of a poet can prove useful. While Wordsworth seems aware of the need to attend to his mental activities as activities instead of naively pretending that he is a detached observer who has no influence upon the phenomena observed, he would not have mistaken his descriptions for explanations or supposed that his self-awareness would grant

him access to a transcendental consciousness or a hidden unconscious. He suspends judgment, but not so that he can ultimately return to the realm of objective thought and make a lasting contribution to it. His aim is at once more modest and more ambitious. By modeling the practice of a philosophy of wonder, he seeks wisdom. Yet because his pursuit of wisdom is intermingled with his poetic activity, it is peculiarly devoid of preconceived assumptions. Poets and philosophers aim to defamiliarize the world. Yet one might suggest that the philosopher's goal of attaining wisdom is more restrictive in an epistemological sense than the poet's goal of encountering beauty. The end of a poem is even more difficult to predict than the end of an inquiry. By extension, one might suggest that the poet who aspires to create *a* world is even less wedded to the familiar than the philosopher who ultimately wishes to make claims about *the* world.

Consisting in a voluntary exertion of the will, wonder is an orientation of the reason that resists closure out of a preference for continued engagement with and respectful attention toward the phenomena under consideration. As an epistemological attitude, wonder results in a greater awareness of apparently irrational phenomena and of the mental faculties that disclose them. Merleau-Ponty claims, "The will to apply reason to what is taken as irrational is a progress for reason" (Merleau-Ponty 1964a 29). It is precisely this that William Wordsworth demonstrates in his thirteen-book poem of 1805.

Part I. Wordsworth's Resistance to Coleridge:

Wonder and System in Romantic Magnum Opera

1. Coleridge's Dividedness:

Epistemological Tensions

in the *Statesman's Manual* and the *Biographia Literaria*

a) An Impossible Praxis

> Who that thus lives with a continually divided Being can remain healthy!
>
> ~ Coleridge[36]

In this exasperated cry, Coleridge worries that a divided self will destroy his health. According to fellow poet and lay sermonizer Wendell Berry, this opposition between health and dividedness is precisely the right diagnostic measurement: "Health, as we may remember from at least some of the days of our youth, is at once wholeness and a kind of unconsciousness," Berry reflects. "Disease (dis-ease), on the contrary, makes us conscious not only of the state of our health but of the division of our bodies and our world into parts" (Berry 144). It is only natural, Berry suggests, that Coleridge should feel ill at ease when divided by competing concerns and ambitions. Yet commentators such as Thomas McFarland and Seamus Perry have suggested that readers might also paradoxically view this dividedness as proof of Coleridge's intellectual robustness – as "a rare virtue," indicative not merely of "stubbornness" but of "integrity" (McFarland 1969 110-11), and as a "a consistent double-mindedness" that might, "fancifully," be understood as "'di-vision,' 'twofold vision'" (Perry 3). While McFarland reveals a Coleridge whose "tragic tension" has him caught between "a hugely developed sense of inner reality" (the 'I am' of idealism) and "a hugely developed sense of outer reality" (the 'it is' of realism) (McFarland 1969 111), Perry's Coleridge is "principally divided" between an intellect that "desires comprehensive inclusiveness and unity" and a sensibility that is "tenaciously loyal to the diverse plenitude of its experience, to the felt world's discrete, divided-up particulars" (Perry 4). McFarland's and Perry's observations accurately represent Coleridge's competing conceptual imperatives, but they do not unearth the epistemological roots of this dividedness by examining why and how he engages in inquiry.[37] Epistemology, as the study of knowledge, invites inquirers to remain sensitive to the duties, limits and goals of philosophical activity as well as to the differences between the pursuits of wisdom and knowledge. As McFarland and Perry suggest, Coleridge closely attends to the identity and unity imposed by his inner reality and to the difference and plurality that proliferate in his outer reality, struggling to respect and incorporate divergent categories that are difficult, perhaps impossible, to reconcile. However, as this chapter will argue, Coleridge grapples with these extremes by dividing his energies between two conflicting epistemological attitudes that manifest themselves not only in the content of his work but also in his method of inquiry and in his philosophical plans, practices and ambitions. While he strives, on one hand, to uphold a premodern love of wisdom that dwells in wonder, he strives, on the other, to uphold a modern love of system that instead gives priority to the acquisition of knowledge. If there were a form of dividedness that compromised Coleridge's health, it was this one, which determined not merely the concepts in his head but also the labors of his body and the intellectual longings of his spirit.[38]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's philosophy was irreconcilably divided, but no more divided (this chapter will suggest) than the Western philosophical tradition itself. Ideally, the philosopher moves through wonder to *both* knowledge *and* wisdom, modestly asserting what can be proven and modestly acknowledging what requires further questioning. However, history has shown that the anxiety to produce knowledge in modernity has created an intellectual atmosphere of closed-minded certitude or "knowingness" that has suppressed the humility of an engaged wonder as well as the capacity to shudder with awe, which poets and thinkers such as Goethe and Whitehead, Harold Bloom and Richard Rorty have suggested is the best feature of human beings.[39] Coleridge's conflicting epistemological attitudes divided his attentions, varied the intellectual pursuits in which he made progress, and contributed to a rich, multifarious and at times inchoate literary-philosophical output that has preoccupied commentators for two centuries. His yearning to produce an all-encompassing system was incompatible with his equal and opposite conviction that philosophy is a perennial way of life, but while he was certainly conscious of his longing to integrate opposing conceptual positions such as idealism and realism, it is not clear that he recognized the inherent tension between his wondering love of wisdom and his knowing love of system. However, whether he was aware of this tension or not (and this is an open question), it is hardly fair to suggest, as some have, that Coleridge's unevenness is proof that he was an "incoherent" philosopher,[40] especially when one considers how dauntlessly, if ingenuously, he labored to achieve competing aims that the tradition of Western philosophy itself has failed to reconcile.

With one foot in a German philosophical tradition that is steadfastly devoted to systems and another planted among a diverse group of Romantic contemporaries who often shared a commitment to renewing a wonder that would countermand the instrumentalizing and totalizing impulses of modernity, Coleridge was destined to be a pivotal figure. While his philosophical-literary *productions* might aptly be described as rhapsodies – strings of spontaneously connected thoughts, enthusiastically sung after years of study and meditation – his philosophical and theological *plans* throughout his career were consistently directed toward the construction of a systematic whole. Coleridge's rhapsodies present themselves as a kind of philosophical equivalent of "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that is, according to Wordsworth's theory of poetic activity, guided by "habits of meditation" that have "formed" the poet's feelings and thoughts (PW I.126). In his *Statesman's Manual*, Coleridge himself concedes that his style "may be thought to resemble the overflow of an earnest mind rather than an orderly premeditated composition," and in confessing this he also ardently hopes that his readers, while recognizing this rhapsodic "overflow" as an "imperfection of form," will nonetheless bear in mind the importance of his subject (SM 43).[41] The tension between his actual practices and his theoretical plans makes his many aborted projects seem like the inevitable result of a discordant praxis. Praxis is theory in action – the pursuit of theoretical ideals through a practical application or method – and Coleridge's theoretical ideal of a systematic unity runs counter to his epistemological attitude of wonder that guides his practice. His dividedness has rendered him an enigma – a man who defines philosophy as an amorphous middle ground between wisdom and knowledge; who advocates the suspension of judgment when apprehending art but condemns it when this practice begins to capsize received and revealed truths; who demands a hovering imagination that perpetually refuses to settle and an imaginative reason that settles prematurely. A sensitivity to these opposing epistemological ideals provides a key to understanding the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder. This renewal finds its greatest expression in the careers of Coleridge and Wordsworth – two

philosophical poets caught between a wondering philosophy that resembles poetic activity and a systematic philosophy with which poetic activity has little in common.

This close examination of Coleridge's competing epistemological orientations will lay the groundwork for succeeding chapters that show how Wordsworth's *Prelude* departs from Coleridge's systematic goals and offers itself as the most powerful instantiation of the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder. Though *Lyrical Ballads* was not Wordsworth's and Coleridge's first collaboration, it is the only one that resulted in a finished product that more or less suited both authors. A great admirer of Wordsworth's poetic talents, Coleridge tasked his friend with creating "the First Genuine Philosophic Poem" (BL II.156), despite the fact that Coleridge was the poet more versed in the nuances of Western philosophy. They called the projected poem *The Recluse*. Initially, the plan was for Coleridge to produce the system and for Wordsworth to render it in verse (WR xiv), yet this plan eventually gave way to one that was less complicated: Wordsworth would deliver both. In word if not in action, Wordsworth acceded to his friend's plan, spending the rest of his life talking about *The Recluse* and devoting his productive energies to other things. The greatest share of his time he devoted to a long autobiographical poem – itself of epic proportions, at approximately 8,000 lines – which he described as a mere "preparatory" poem to *The Recluse*, an "appendix" (EY 440), or "ante-chapel" to the lifelong project that would one day achieve the scale of a "gothic church."[42] By Coleridge's own admission, this verse autobiography – posthumously published as *The Prelude* – was a "philosophico-biographical Poem," yet, as Coleridge's next phrase makes clear, it was "to be prefixed or annexed to the Recluse" (CL II.1104). Neither *The Prelude* nor *The Excursion* met the philosophical standards Coleridge outlined. While the first poem never pretended to be the kind of systematic poem Coleridge envisioned, the second poem aspired – and failed – to meet Coleridge's mark. Yet this study will explore the possibility that it was a mark toward which Wordsworth should never have aspired and from which he consciously or unconsciously swerved throughout his career, giving priority instead to a poem that privileged the love of wisdom over the love of system. After all, it is difficult to imagine how Coleridge's vision for *The Recluse* could have been achieved at all, given how divided he himself was on what it should look like: He urged Wordsworth to create a poem that would exhibit the "matter and arrangement of *Philosophy*" and "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574), while himself admitting that "a poem does not admit argumentation" (TT I.307). When one attends to Coleridge's divergent emphases of wonder and system, it becomes clear that his vision for *The Recluse* would have been impossible for Wordsworth to satisfy.

Taking Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual* (1816) and *Biographia Literaria* (1817) as its primary sources,[43] this chapter will argue that Coleridge's yearning for system operated in direct conflict with an equal and opposite yearning to renew the premodern philosophy of wonder, and that the epistemological tension between these two opposing attitudes is at the root of several unresolved problems in Coleridge's works. The first of these problems is that of philosophy itself. Though philosophy is sometimes mistaken for the love of knowing, it is rather, according to its etymology, the love of wisdom. This confusion is symptomatic of a reorientation that occurred most strikingly during the Enlightenment, yet one can also observe this craving for knowledge much earlier. The divided aims of the love of wisdom and the love of knowledge appear in a particularly condensed form in the paradoxical figure of Socrates. After the next two sections have (b) outlined the three metaphorical conceptions of system that appear in Coleridge's thought and (c) shown how his alternation between these competing conceptions of

system has helped to conceal the tension between the epistemological attitudes of wonder and system in his writings, the section that follows it (d) will show that Socrates's alternating goals of wisdom and knowledge offer a paradigm for understanding the conflicting attitudes of Coleridge's thought. The last two sections will address two related problems in Coleridge's thought, (e) the problem of the epochê (or suspension of judgment) and its application and (f) the problem of the faculties and their aims. Finally, the conclusion (g) will suggest that each of these problems is marked by a more general conflict between the competing epistemological attitudes of wonder and system, which have vied for dominance throughout the history of Western philosophy and which find a peculiarly compacted form in the divided thought and the impossible praxis of a Romantic poet who wished to produce a philosophical system.

b) Coleridge's Competing System Metaphors

As the introduction to this study has suggested, there are at least two conceptions of the system, one that seeks to totalize and another that resists totalization. The conflict between these two conceptions comes into relief when one observes that thinkers such as Hegel, Shelley and Poe strove to replace the concept of system as a static and artificial *whole* (or totality) with the concept of system as a dynamic *process* (or method). These differing conceptions of system were especially prominent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and they seem to have originated from differing metaphors. In Coleridge's time, there were at least three metaphorical conceptions of system in use: the architectonic, the animal body, and the process-based notion of system. While the first two metaphors find their classic modern articulations in Kant, the third finds its classic modern articulation in Hegel. As we shall see, Coleridge makes use of all three system metaphors, though we will ultimately focus our attention on two of them: the architectonic metaphor of a totalizing system and the process metaphor of a detotalizing wonder. In order for section (c) to more closely examine the competing epistemological ideals of a totalizing system and of a detotalizing wonder in Coleridge's thought, however, it is first necessary to analyze these three system metaphors and briefly consider the extent to which Coleridge relied upon each of them.

1) The third chapter of Kant's "Transcendental Doctrine of Method" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) is entitled "The Architectonic of Pure Reason," and it is in the opening paragraphs of this chapter that Kant famously defines the system as "the unity of the manifold cognitions under an idea" (CPR 755). For Kant, "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*) includes faith or belief (*Glaube*) as well as knowledge (*Wissen*),[44] and he argues that the notions of a divine designer and of an immortal soul represent two articles of religious faith that (not certain and yet not implausible) should be met with a combination of objective "modesty" and subjective "confidence" (CPR 751-52). Kant's modest resolve to "make room for *faith*" (his italics; CPR 31) is one that would have pleased Coleridge, a devout Christian and sermonizer, perhaps inspiring Coleridge to extend Kant's articulation of religious faith. It is therefore unsurprising that Coleridge, following Kant, might have conceived of the system as a structural or architectonic unity. According to Kant, the "architectonic is the doctrine of what is scientific," and the architectonic system is the structure that "turns a mere aggregate of cognition into science" (CPR 755), reinforcing "the science's proper content, articulation (systematic unity), and bounds" (CPR 756-57). The architectonic metaphor (i.e., system as artificial construct) is perhaps the most commonly assumed meaning of the word "system," and it is what Coleridge typically means when he uses the word.

2) However, in the same paragraphs of Kant's chapter, "The Architectonic of Pure Reason," Kant also mixes his metaphors and suggests that the system grows not like a building but like an organic body. A system, he qualifies, "can indeed grow internally" – or by inclusion – "but not externally" – or by external addition. To this he adds, "it can grow only like an animal body, whose growth adds no member but makes each member stronger and more efficient for its purposes without any change of proportion" (CPR 756). In the paragraphs that follow, he continues to employ the metaphor of an "architectonic unity" as if buildings and beings grew in the same way, and readers are left to determine not only which metaphor is more adequate but also how precisely an artificial structure or whole such as a system of thought *can grow* like an organic body.[45]

An article that John Dewey published early in his career, entitled "Kant and Philosophic Method" (1884), sheds light on why Kant might have thought it plausible to suggest that a human-made system could grow like an organic body. As Dewey suggests, Kant believed that in seeking to derive his categories from human experience, he hoped that these categories (and the system that laid them out) would, modeled upon the experiences of an organism, themselves be as natural as an organism. As Dewey puts it, "experience is a system, a real whole made up of real parts. It as a whole is necessarily implied in every fact of experience, while it is constituted in and through these facts." Thus, Kant imagined that "the relation of [his] categories to experience is the relation of members of an organism to a whole" (Dewey 38).

Yet hasn't Kant let the apposite elegance and persuasiveness of this metaphor carry him too far? What could justify his claim that the contents or arrangement of the system's discrete sections are not artificially constructed but *natural*? Kant might, for instance, argue that the *organi*zation of this systematic body would be propelled by natural human impulses. Yet against this claim one might counter that the skills of the system-builder consist more in artfulness and ingenuity than in intuition and spontaneity, and that the impulse to systematize is thus more *contra*-natural than it is natural. Moreover, Kant's claim that his system resembles an organic body does not appear to accord with Kant's other claims about systematic unity. Modestly optimistic about the possibility that behind the world's design there might be "a supreme intelligence" with "wise intentions," Kant devotes his labors to the ideal of achieving a "supreme systematic unity," all the while avowing that this ideal is merely a "regulative principle" that directs his inquiries and not a "constitutive" presupposition of a supreme perfection that can actually be achieved (CPR 650-51). Grounded in a faith that the organic bodies of nature might have a logic no human eye can discern, Kant writes,

> although a dissector may be found guilty of an error if he refers some member of an animal body to a purpose from which it can distinctly be shown not to result, yet there is no possibility whatever of *proving* in any case that a natural arrangement – whatever it may be – has no purpose whatsoever (CPR 651).

If it is impossible for a person to confidently discern the purposes that underlie the organization of animal bodies, how can anyone reproduce a natural arrangement of this sort in systematic form? Finally, with the convenient hindsight offered by Saussurian linguistics, we might also ask, who is to say that the arbitrary signs of language are *natural* in the way that such an organically unified system would require?

According to Dewey, Kant believes that, "the relation of [his] categories to experience is the relation of members of an organism to a whole" (Dewey 38), and his belief that his system grows like an organism is grounded in the assumption that it mirrors what happens in human experience. His tacit employment of the mirror metaphor conceals the fact that his system does not grow as natural bodies grow.

3) Yet in Dewey's neo-Hegelian account of Kant's philosophic method and its shortcomings, Dewey also gestures toward a more plausible process-based (or organic) conception of system. Mistakenly, according to Dewey, Kant "assumes at the outset that there is something external to Reason by which it must be excited" (Dewey 40), and so he posits the existence of a reason that analyzes by nature but that synthesizes "only upon condition that material be given it to act upon" (Dewey 40). Dewey argues that this assumption is grounded in Kant's inordinate commitment to the traditional subject / object dichotomy, and he suggests that if Kant had unburdened himself of this preconceived assumption, he would, like Hegel, have recognized that, "the desired object is a theory of the Conceptions of Reason in an organic system" – a dialectic that "is itself both integrating and differentiating" and that "through its successive differentiations and resumptions of these differences" is able to create "higher unities" in a dynamic, perpetual, self-moving process (Dewey 45).[46]

To what extent does Coleridge rely upon the architectonic metaphor of an artificial totalizing structure, the animal body metaphor of an internally growing body, or the process-based metaphor of a perpetual detotalizing cycle? In view of these three metaphors, it is instructive to examine Coleridge's writings for evidence of each.

1) In an 1818 installment of *The Friend,* Coleridge notes that the Germans seem to have a predilection for the architectonic system metaphor, observing that in their intellectual proclivities the Germans characteristically exhibit the qualities first of "IDEA, or Law anticipated," second of "TOTALITY," and third of "DISTINCTNESS." In a footnote, he adds, "In totality I imply encyclopædic learning, exhaustion of the subjects treated of, and the passion for completion and the love of the complete" (F I.421). Following his German contemporaries, Coleridge too makes use of the architectonic metaphor. In a letter to Wordsworth that chapter two will examine more closely, Coleridge declares that *The Recluse* – the long philosophical poem Coleridge continually urged Wordsworth to produce – should in its "arrangement" exhibit "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574). In harboring this hope, Coleridge was most certainly influenced by Kant's definition of the system as an architectonic totality.

Despite this evidence, some commentators have denied the dominance of the craving for systematic totality and completeness in Coleridge's thinking. For example, David Simpson argues that Coleridge was among those in nineteenth century England who, out of an antipathy for the French, found it difficult to "argue a positive case for the benefits of system and theory, repeatedly defined as French obsessions" and as "explicitly un-English" (Simpson 43). It is clear from Coleridge's comments in *The Friend,* however, that for him the system was primarily a German phenomenon, and if he harbored a distaste for system, as Simpson suggests, it would be difficult to account for his stated vision for *The Recluse,* which represented a lifelong ambition that he passed along to Wordsworth. Along similar lines, Thomas McFarland has suggested that Coleridge's preoccupation with system was "first of all the need to connect rather than the need to complete" (McFarland 1969 110), yet McFarland himself describes Coleridge's intellectual habits using the architectonic metaphor:

> A particular bit of knowledge rarely seems to lie loosely catalogued in Coleridge's mind; rather it seems to be bound firmly, in implicit comparison and contrast, to all other facts in his knowledge, the whole – both the direction of his reading in general and the stress of facts in particular – being subsumed under, and unified by, a group of organizing ideas (McFarland 1969 xxv).

Like an architectonic structure, Coleridge's various fragments of knowledge are "bound firmly" together like a building, "subsumed" like a hierarchy of floors that is then divided into rooms, the entire structure "unified" by the "stress" and balance of its engineering.

2) Yet this predilection for the architectonic metaphor does not mean that the animal body metaphor was not also operative in Coleridge's writings. Curiously, during the years surrounding Coleridge's declaration that Wordsworth's *Recluse* should exhibit "the Totality of a System," Coleridge was also refining a theory of organic unity upon which he would allow poems *other* than *The Recluse* to be "systematic" in a manner that resembles Kant's second system metaphor, the animal body. While it seems unlikely that a system of thought might grow naturally like an animal body, it is easier to see how a poem might metaphorically be thought to grow in this way. Systems expand not naturally but through compression, excision and accretion – due, in a word, to discipline – like the multiple blueprints drafted before commencing an architectural project. Systems, then, are artfully artificial in the highest sense. A poem, a rambling prose essay or a collection of thematically connected aphorisms, by contrast, might more validly be said to grow organically in the manner that Kant describes. Reflections like those found in the drafts of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual* and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* can arrive in bursts of inspiration that are analogous to the natural growth of an animal body. However, the *organization* of these bursts of inspiration into a regular, orderly and comprehensive unity – the assembly, in Kant's words, "of the manifold cognitions under an idea" (CPR 755) – is far more laborious and unnatural. At times, Coleridge seems keenly aware of this fact. Particularly relevant in this connection is his assertion that, "Could a rule [for poetic creation] be given from *without*, poetry would cease to be poetry, and sink into a mechanical art" (BL II.83). How, if this were his view, could he have conceived of arranging a poem to convey the orderly arrangement and single-minded purpose of an architectonic totality? Wouldn't this have fallen squarely into the category of a mechanical rule "given from *without*"? In his theory of poetry, therefore, Coleridge appears to have relied primarily on the system metaphor of the animal body.

3) Finally, there is the Hegelian conception of system as a dynamic method – a perpetual, self-moving process of analysis and synthesis. Kathleen Wheeler makes a strong case for the possibility that a number of Coleridge's theorizings – spread throughout his letters, notebooks and marginalia as well as in the works he published during his lifetime – together offer a Hegelian resolution to the shortcomings of Kant's philosophy along the same lines that Dewey describes.[47] Quoting an illustrative passage from the *Biographia*, she notes in brackets the moments during which Coleridge speaks of analysis and synthesis:

> The office of philosophical *disquisition* consists in just *distinction*; while it is the priviledge of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts [analysis]; and this is the technical *process* of philosophy. But

> having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist [synthesis]; and this is the result of philosophy (BL II.11; Wheeler 27).

This passage, buttressed by others pulled from Coleridge's personal writings, offers a fine demonstration of Coleridge's engagement with a process that resembles a Hegelian dialectic in which analysis is "the technical *process* of philosophy" and synthesis is "the result of philosophy." However, it is not clear from Coleridge's rehearsal of this material what form these "results" will ultimately take. Given Coleridge's frequent reliance upon the architectonic system metaphor, it seems reasonable to assume that he conceived of this process as directed toward a totalizing system.

At times, Coleridge will shift between these metaphors without any clear indication that he distinguishes between them. One telling instance of this is the oft-quoted reference to his system in *Table Talk*:

> My system is the only attempt that I know of ever made to reduce all knowledges into harmony; it opposes no other system, but shows what was true in each, and how that which was true in the particular in each of them became error because it was only half the truth. I have endeavored to unite the insulated fragments of truth and frame a perfect mirror (TT I.248).

As Tim Milnes has noted, while features of this passage seem, on one hand, to be "strikingly Hegelian in appearance," Coleridge's endeavor to "frame a perfect mirror" seems, on the other hand, to assume that the goal of inquiry is to discover nature's hidden truths and construct a system that would mirror those truths so accurately as to achieve a one-to-one relationship between mind and world (Milnes 1999 309). Coleridge's usage of the mirror metaphor is symptomatic of just the kind of correspondence theory of truth that Hegel avoids and that Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* would later seek to explode (Rorty 1979). Moreover, Coleridge's yearning to "unite the insulated fragments of truth" suggests an accretive or mosaic growth that resembles Kant's architectonic system metaphor – one that Coleridge echoes in the *Biographia*, saying (following Leibnitz) that "a true philosophy" must "at once explain and collect the fragments of truth scattered through systems apparently the most incongruous" (BL I.244). In taking "fragments of truth" from faulty systems and assembling them into a true system, Coleridge is like the watchmaker who can construct a finely tuned timepiece from a series of disparately gathered parts. These mixtures of system metaphor suggest that Coleridge tended to rely upon whichever metaphor seemed most convenient at the time of his writing.

Perhaps it was, above all, this tendency to mix his system metaphors that led Coleridge to entertain the two competing epistemological attitudes that the remainder of this chapter will examine. While the animal body metaphor served as his primary guide as he fashioned his theory that great poems exhibit an organic wholeness, the architectonic and process-based metaphors competed for dominance in his philosophical speculations. The architectonic metaphor propelled him toward the ideal of a totalizing system, and the process-based metaphor reminded him that the love of wisdom is a way of life – a perpetual cycle of analysis and synthesis. When he speaks of "system," Coleridge typically has the architectonic metaphor in mind. Yet the process-based metaphor is implicit in his writings whenever he speaks of the defamiliarizing powers of poetry and philosophy. As this chapter will argue, this alternating

reliance upon two metaphors – upon the totalizing system and upon the detotalizing cycle of analysis and synthesis that the ancients called wonder – is the underlying source of Coleridge's dividedness. It is therefore necessary to more closely examine the problem of epistemology in Coleridge's thought. How did these two contrary epistemological attitudes express themselves in his philosophical writings? How and why did he come to accept the validity of both attitudes?

c) Wonder and System:

The Problem of Epistemology and Its Obligations

Coleridge called Immanuel Kant the "illustrious sage of Königsberg" (BL I.153), and it was most likely Kant who convinced him that the system should be his genre of choice.[48] Coleridge would have been predisposed to respect the advice of the German philosopher who (in his words) "took possession" of him "as with a giant's hands," commanding his attention for much of the first decade and a half of the nineteenth century (BL I.153). So when Kant gave explicit priority to the architectonic system over the spontaneous expression and arrangement of thoughts, Coleridge must have been paying especially close attention. "Under reason's government," Kant declares, "our cognitions as such must not amount to a rhapsody; rather, they must amount to a system, in which alone they can support and further reason's essential purposes" (CPR 755). This privileging of "system" over "rhapsody" (from the Greek *rhaptein*, to string together + *ōidē*, ode or song) would have had a powerful effect on an esteemed poet and aspiring philosopher such as Coleridge. Kant continues his pejorative treatment of rhapsody a few paragraphs later, in an effort to highlight the obstacles that one faces in assembling a proper system:

> It is terrible that only after we have, in accordance with the instruction of an idea lying hidden in us, for a long time collected rhapsodically as building material many cognitions referring to this idea, and indeed only after we have over long periods of time assembled these cognitions technically, we are first able to discern the idea in a clearer light and to sketch a whole architectonically in accordance with the purposes of reason (CPR 757).

As I collect strings of experiential data, the unifying idea that would allow me to organize and understand these disparate strings remains hidden from me. Only after I have amassed this data for long periods of time can I begin to assemble them architectonically in a manner that would allow me to grasp and present them as a complete and coherent whole. This architectonic whole or system is, according to Kant, the goal toward which reason naturally directs itself. Coleridge's reading of Kant would have assured him that a string of spontaneously connected thoughts, enthusiastically sung, will not achieve the effect he is after, and Coleridge (in his plans if not in his practice[49]) consistently affirms Kant's assessment.

Kant's concept of system as an architectonic whole had a profound influence on Coleridge's plans. One of Coleridge's letters is of particular relevance here because it appears at the same time as Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual* and *Biographia*. With the first of these works in correction and the second already printed, Coleridge writes to a friend,

> I have devoted 20 years' incessant Thought, and at least 10 years' positive Labor to the one in six [Treatises, entitled] Logosophia, or on the Logos in man and Deity – forming *a*

> *compleat and perfectly original system* of Logic, Natural [Philosophy] and theology, and including a detailed Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (my italics; CL IV.736).

What does Coleridge mean when he uses the word "compleat"? In one sense, he might merely mean that his *Logosophia* (one of the titles he considered for the projected magnum opus that remained incomplete at his death) was or would one day be *finished*. A second possibility is that he wishes it to be a *comprehensive* work, addressing all the subjects he deems necessary. Finally, a third possibility is that he believes his magnum opus will be neither merely finished nor merely comprehensive but *all-encompassing* – a totalizing system – and it appears from his ideal of "a total and undivided philosophy" that this is the form of completion Coleridge has in mind (BL I.282). Kant declares, "Under reason's government our cognitions as such must not amount to a rhapsody; rather, they must amount to a system" (CPR 755), and echoing Kant, Coleridge states that, "the end and purpose of reason" is "unity and system" (BL I.285). In the table of contents that appears in the beginning of chapter nine of his *Biographia*, Coleridge proposes, first, to address the question, "Is philosophy possible as a science, and what are its conditions?" (BL I.140). As Engell and Bate observe, this may well be a conscious echo of Kant's question, "How is metaphysics as a science possible?" which is among the first topics Kant addresses in his first critique (BL I.140n1; CPR 62). Among the topics in this table of contents that follow, Coleridge also lists, "Fichte's attempt to complete the critical system" of Kant, and "Its partial success and ultimate failure" (BL I.140).

In view of Coleridge's succeeding references to the efforts of "Kant's disciples" to "complete his system" (BL I.155), to Fichte's efforts to complete it by "add[ing] the key-stone of the arch" (BL I.158), and to Coleridge's enigmatic comment that in encountering Schelling's work he discovered "a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do" (BL I.160), it is clear that Coleridge had set for himself the task of completing his own all-encompassing system. He confirmed in the last years of his life when he said that the endeavor of his system was to "reduce all knowledges into harmony" and "unite the insulated fragments of truth and frame a perfect mirror" (TT I.248). This system of all systems was Coleridge's goal.

At first glance, it seems unlikely that anyone would consider the construction of an all-encompassing system a concrete possibility. Few in this post-Nietzschean and post-Rortian age would suppose such a thing to be possible. Yet Coleridge's age was quite different from ours. For example, in G. W. F. Hegel's "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) – an elaborate introduction to his system that was otherwise marked by a painstaking commitment to "execution" and to "exert[ing] ourselves to know the particulars" instead of rashly and prematurely emphasizing "final results" – Coleridge's contemporary ambitiously announces that his plan is, "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title '*love* of knowing' and be *actual* knowing – that is what I have set myself to do" ((§1 and §5; PS 1 and 3). Sympathetic to the systematic impulses of German thinkers like Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel and aware that Kant's valorization of the system as a genre was grounded in the conviction that "systematic unity is what first turns common cognition into science" (CPR 755), Coleridge would most likely have identified with Hegel's aspiration to "bring philosophy closer to a form of Science," thinking it not only possible but necessary – even (in accordance with his concept of organic unity) *natural*. Coleridge himself argues that the "willful resignation of intellect" that *ignores* the call to produce a "system of philosophy" is one

that his "human nature itself fought up against," and that is, in effect, "contra-natural" (BL I.141). Propelled by this belief in what is natural, one wonders if – perhaps in the manner of the *Summa Theologica* (literally, 'sum of God's word'), which Aquinas would reputedly abandon and dismiss as "chaff"[50] – Coleridge's failure to produce his own system might have been due to an unrealistic ideal of completeness. Though McFarland suggests that Coleridge's preoccupation with system was "first of all the need to connect rather than the need to complete" (110), it would seem that this unrealistic ideal of completeness fueled Coleridge's ambitions throughout his career. Moreover, it seems plausible that if Coleridge had finished a systematic masterwork, he would have been in a better position to acknowledge (as the "giant" Kant often did) that "this completeness" – this all-embracing ideal – "will, of course, never be reached" (CPR 654). As Kant assures, the systematic ideal of an absolute totality is not a concrete possibility but a theoretical goal that directs and regulates philosophical inquiry – a fact that Coleridge occasionally forgets.

Yet in Coleridge's vital and deeply divided mind, every action is met by an equal and opposite reaction, especially given Coleridge's tacit awareness that the roots of this particular debate between absolute totality and irreducible incompleteness dig deep into the rich and diverse soil of Western philosophy itself. Though Coleridge occasionally applies the concept of system in a manner that goes against Kant's explicit intentions, he is nonetheless aware of the philosophical bases for Kant's modesty. The ideal of a totalizing system is a perversion of the love of wisdom exemplified in Plato's aporetical dialogues, because the love of wisdom, according to Socrates and the ancient skeptics, consists in cultivating a philosophical wonder that questions received truths, defamiliarizes the familiar, and perpetuates inquiry by means of a mental activity called the epochê (or suspension of judgment). Insatiably driven toward the acquisition of knowledge by the love of system, Enlightenment thinkers tended to ignore wonder's integral role in the love of wisdom.[51] By contrast, Coleridge acknowledges the importance of philosophical wonder. One instance of his awareness of wonder's role in philosophical inquiry and poetic activity appears in the *Biographia* – in a passage of sufficient importance to have been first included in *The Friend* (1809-10) and to be presented in slightly different form as the opening aphorism in his *Aids to Reflection* (1825):

> In poems, equally as in philosophic disquisitions, genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues the most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Truths of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as *so* true, that they lose all the life and efficiency of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side, with the most despised and exploded errors (his italics; BL I.81-82).

According to Coleridge, good poetry should do the same thing as good philosophy: discover new truths and rescue and refresh those truths that have lost their vitality. The problem, according to Coleridge, is that truths can become "*so* true," they "lose all the life and efficiency of truth." Coleridge's concern finds a palpable echo in *Being and Time* (1927), where Martin Heidegger indicates that the historical *progress* of philosophical learning can, paradoxically, *inhibit* human understanding by calcifying the familiar. According to Heidegger, while the ancient philosophers found the question of being "continually disturbing as something obscure and hidden," after Plato and Aristotle it ceased to function "*as a theme for actual investigation*"

and began to be taken as a subject of "clarity and self-evidence." The problem, according to Heidegger, is often the familiarizing and desensitizing influence of tradition. "If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent," Heidegger says, "then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved" (his italics; §1 and §6; Heidegger 1962 21 and 44). This loosening up, this disclosure of phenomena through the softening, dismantling or deconstruction of tradition is, according to Coleridge (and in his later work, Heidegger), the task of poets and philosophers. To make sure that truths are constantly refreshed and that the world is (according to the same ideal of freshness) constantly redisclosed, we must strive to enliven our attention and resist recalcitrant beliefs – a resistance that ancient philosophers referred to as the capacity to wonder.

d) Wisdom and Knowledge:

The Problem of Philosophy and Its Definition

From Parmenides and Heraclitus to Aristotle and Aquinas, numerous premodern philosophers have either implicitly or explicitly affirmed wonder's central role in the love of wisdom, but it was Socrates who articulated this role most emphatically.[52] Moreover, as the primary figure of Plato's aporetical dialogues, driving each inquiry and preventing its premature resolution, Socrates also practices what he preaches – most of the time. The 'most of the time' is necessary because there is evidence that Socrates is, like Coleridge, a figure divided between two opposing epistemological attitudes. As Nietzsche's comments below will suggest, Socrates's philosophical activities exhibit a tension between a love of wisdom that suspends judgment and a love of knowledge that hastens toward judgment. The dividedness of Socrates offers a paradigm for understanding the tensions in Coleridge's own thought, which the remainder of this chapter will explore. When one compares the competing epistemological attitudes that divided the speculations of both Socrates and Coleridge, it becomes clear that Coleridge's dividedness was a direct consequence of his willingness to engage the competing sides of a problem that has been present since antiquity: the problem of philosophy itself.

Addressing a group of men who would soon condemn him to death, Socrates famously announces that wisdom and knowledge are in some sense antithetical and that wisdom resides in one's acceptance that little can be known for sure. As he himself puts it, "I am likely to be wiser than [other people] to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know" (21a and 21d; Plato 1981 27). His message to a young man, Theaetetus, shortly before his defense, imprisonment and execution, is quite similar. The young man has been conversing with Socrates, and as usual, Socrates has asked enough puzzling questions to make Theaetetus doubt his initial assumptions. Perplexed, the young man confesses himself "lost in wonder," adrift in his "swimming" mind, and hesitant to commit himself to a single viewpoint – perhaps fearing that Socrates will question the young man's next response so that it too will appear inadequate (Plato 1952 55). But Socrates assures Theaetetus that there is nothing shameful in being lost in wonder. On the contrary, he replies, "This sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher. Philosophy indeed has no other origin…" (155c-d; Plato 1957 43). Just as the love of wisdom remains open to what it does not know, so is wonder defined by its openness to infinitude and its aversion to closure. In practice, the love of wisdom resides not in the acquisition of knowledge but in a *suspension* of acquisition. It aspires toward an ignorant knowing – a knowing of which one does not and need not know.

This Socrates, who calls wonder the *archê* ('foundation' or 'origin'[53]) of philosophy, is not the Socrates most people are likely to recognize. Thanks to the polemics of later philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Socrates is more often presented as the godfather of the doctrine of Platonic idealism. Yet Nietzsche's remarks about Socrates suggest that there is, in fact, more than one Socrates. And surprisingly, though Nietzsche (an avowed enemy of Coleridge's favored genre, the system) is infamous and in some cases esteemed for his contradictions,[54] it would seem that in this case Socrates is the one who is being contradictory. Is Socrates's goal to pursue wisdom as a way of life or to acquire certain knowledge? Two passages from Nietzsche's *Gay Science* (1882-87) illustrate that Socrates cannot decide between these two epistemological attitudes.

In the first passage, Nietzsche presents Socrates as the first and quintessential philosopher, who loved wisdom and chose to abide in a state of wonder:

> The ancient philosophers taught that the main source of misfortune was [not selfishness, as Christians say, but] something very different. Beginning with Socrates, these thinkers never wearied of preaching: "Your thoughtlessness and stupidity, the way you live according to the rule, your submission to your neighbor's opinion is the reason why you so rarely achieve happiness; we thinkers, as thinkers, are the happiest of all" (aphorism 328; Nietzsche 1974 258).

Here we have a philosophy that embodies the 'love of wisdom.' The philosopher's peculiar happiness derives from his or her insistence upon thinking through problems instead of simply embracing the comfort of traditional solutions. In this spirit, the philosopher can never attain certitude – at least, not about anything that matters. By definition, a philosophical problem is one that anticipates no such closure. The philosopher's happiness surges out of philosophical activity itself – out of a refusal to live naively in accordance with established opinions and out of a willingness to dwell in a state of indeterminacy if genuine engagement so requires.

The second passage begins with an expression of respect for Socrates, yet it concludes with a gesture toward another Socrates for whom Nietzsche has no respect:

> I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said – and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life; in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits (aphorism 340; Nietzsche 1974 272).

By calling Socrates a "mocking and enamored monster," the "pied piper of Athens," Nietzsche intends to pay Socrates a compliment: Socrates was a challenger of norms, a thinker who compelled thought in others. The inventor of the *elenchus* (the 'Socratic method' that now carries his name), he asked questions that made people reflect upon their lives. When he and his listeners came to questions to which no one could respond with authority, he encouraged them to keep thinking, and he remained silent – except, as Nietzsche notes, "at the last moment of his life." Socrates's last words, recorded in Plato's *Phaedo*, were, "Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius; make this offering to him and do not forget" (118a; Plato 1981 155). To those listening, Socrates was saying that he owed Aesclepius thanks because Aesclepius, the god of

health, had cured him. As Nietzsche explains, Socrates was saying that "*life is a disease*" and death is the cure (Nietzsche 1974 272). Oddly, Socrates's last words represent a complete disavowal of the rigorous method of inquiry he had spent his lifetime demonstrating – the *elenchus* that consists in a staunch refusal to succumb to the temptations of premature judgment. Nietzsche thinks that instead of uttering such a pessimistic life-negating sentence in his last moments, interpreting life as a disease only death can cure, Socrates should have maintained his silence. He thinks that for a man to speak so carefully and wisely throughout his life, remaining engaged and refusing to assent definitively to any important philosophical question, it was uncourageous and disrespectful to take solace in the comforting belief that this new state, death, would be preferable to life on earth, especially given that he could forward no compelling evidence of the immortality of the soul. In one sense, Socrates is consoling those whom he leaves behind, assuring them that he will be fine. Yet in another sense, Socrates is demeaning the lives that his friends must continue to lead by construing earthly life as diseased. Nietzsche takes this claim as a kind of infidelity, one that is all the more frustrating in view of its popular Christian variation, which conceives of life as a mere precursor to a better afterworld.[55] Though Socrates may not have conceived of his afterworld as a reunion with a benevolent creator, he may well have conceived of it as a reunion with the forgotten knowledge that he spent his life on earth trying to recollect. Nietzsche reveres the Socrates who advocates a philosophy of wonder that resists premature judgment, and he disdains the Socrates who judges prematurely and aggrandizes himself by claiming to know what he cannot know: that he is passing into a new and better afterworld. For the first Socrates, Nietzsche has the greatest respect; for the second, he has none at all.

These two notions of Socrates encapsulate two opposing epistemological attitudes that were at work even in the early stages of the Western philosophical tradition. There is the Socrates with whom most people are accustomed, who believes in two worlds and provides the basis for the Christian notion of heaven – the Socrates whose mantra is "Know thyself" and who might have agreed with Hegel's definition of philosophy as the love of knowing.[56] By contrast, there is also the other Socrates, who gives priority to wisdom over knowledge and considers wonder the *archê* of philosophical practice.

The different attitudes of Socrates offer a paradigm for understanding Coleridge's dividedness. As the following aphorism from his *Aids to Reflection* suggests, the conflict between wonder and knowledge was a constant source of tension in Coleridge's thinking:

> In Wonder all Philosophy began: in Wonder it ends: and Admiration fills up the interspace. But the first Wonder is the Offspring of Ignorance: the last is the Parent of Adoration. The first is the birth-throe of our knowledge: the Last is its euthanasy and apotheosis (AR 236).

Though the gnomic quality of this declaration – its pith and parallelism – prevent readers from locating a single, transparent interpretation, one can nonetheless draw from it some useful evidence of Coleridge's attitude toward wonder. When Coleridge says, "In Wonder all Philosophy began," he appears to echo Socrates's declaration in *Theaetetus* that wonder is the *archê* of philosophical practice. Moreover, his assertion that philosophy also "ends" in wonder leads one to suspect that Coleridge might even belong to that "higher order of spirits" from which Nietzsche excludes the Socrates of Plato's *Phaedo*. However, closer examination of the aphorism as a whole suggests that Coleridge might actually be employing the word wonder in

different senses and might in fact be declaring himself a member not of Nietzsche's party of wonder but of Socrates's party of final judgment. The first sign of this allegiance expresses itself when Coleridge says that philosophy begins in wonder *but transforms* into admiration, suggesting that Coleridge is employing the word admiration not in its premodern sense (as wonder) but in its contemporary sense (as esteem or approval). When Rosencrantz scolds Hamlet and defends Gertrude by saying, "Your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration" (III.ii.312-13), his use of the word admiration suggests not esteem but wonder, confusion, bewilderment and heightened attention.[57] However, in distinguishing wonder from admiration, Coleridge could hardly mean to employ the word admiration in the same sense as Shakespeare does, since the transition from wonder to *admirare* would then be redundant. More likely, the admiration that "fills up the interspace" in Coleridge's account is equivalent not to a committed engagement to inquiry but to a complacent respect for a world that can be known and granted approval. In asserting that philosophy begins in wonder instead of being consistently propelled by it, Coleridge suggests that wonder is merely the initial origin or first stage (*initium*) of philosophy rather than its 'rule' or 'principle' (*principium*), which in its classical sense makes wonder (in Josef Pieper's words) "the abiding, ever-intrinsic origin of philosophizing" (L 106).[58] Furthermore, in perhaps the most striking sign of Coleridge's preference for the Socrates who loves knowledge over the Socrates who valorizes wonder, he appears, upon one interpretation of the aphorism, to redefine wonder as a kind of knowledge. Like premodern philosophers, Coleridge implies that "the first Wonder" is an awareness and fear of ignorance that serves as "the birth-throe of our knowledge," stirring inquiry.[59] Yet Coleridge also tellingly declares that "the Last" wonder is not "the birth-throe of our knowledge" but "its euthanasy and apotheosis." In his use of these two words, Coleridge provides much ground for interpretation. In the context of this study, it appears that Coleridge is declaring his allegiance to the Socrates who proclaims his faith in an afterworld instead of remaining silent as Nietzsche would have preferred. As Quinn suggests, Coleridge here appears to adopt "the Protestant reduction of wonder to reverential awe" (263), suggesting that philosophy "ends" with a vulgarized form of "wonder" that Coleridge, curiously, equates with the "apotheosis" of human "knowledge." Instead of upholding wonder's classical definition as an epistemological attitude that suspends judgment and maintains intellectual engagement, Coleridge seems to cast wonder as the awe-inspired belief in a 'good death' (*eu* + *thanatos*) that will transform the dying human's *faith* into divine *knowledge* through a union with God (*apo*, 'change' + *theos*, 'god'). These religious interpretations of "euthanasy" and "apotheosis" find corroboration in Coleridge's claim that, "the first Wonder is the Offspring of Ignorance: the last is the Parent of Adoration," which suggests that in the good death and the change-to-god, the ignorant wonder of birth is permanently replaced by a final moment of adoration during which my faith is rewarded by being confirmed as knowledge. Yet faith is not knowledge. According to Kant's definitions, knowledge is a form of "assent that is sufficient both subjectively and objectively," but faith is "sufficient only subjectively" (CPR 749). According to this reading of the aphorism, Coleridge has transformed the classical wonder that stirs inquiry and resists closure with a wonder that completely effaces the distinction between faith and knowledge, construing faith in a God and in a good death as the culmination of human knowledge. Following Anselm's credo, "I believe in order to understand" (Anselm 53), Coleridge allows his faith to determine the outcome of his inquiry in advance. Following the Socrates of Plato's *Phaedo*, Coleridge suggests that life is a disease and that death is the cure.

Coleridge is well aware that philosophy is, according to its Greek etymology, defined as the love of wisdom. "The term, Philosophy," he says in the *Biographia*, "defines itself as an affectionate seeking after the truth" (BL I.142). Yet while Coleridge's notion of "an affectionate seeking" accords with the 'love' of *philo*sophy, his suggestion that this love seeks not wisdom but "the truth" marks a palpable departure from Socrates's definition of wisdom in Plato's *Apology* as a knowing of which one does not and need not know.[60] Moreover, Coleridge, like Hegel, valorizes "the heaven-descended, Know Thyself" as an objective of inquiry (SM 79), going as far as to suggest that the statement "I Know Myself," his variation on the Delphic proverb, also represents a way of knowing God, "proceed[ing] from the Self, in order to lose and find all self in God" (BL I.283 and n2). Though Coleridge may be more aware than his Romantic contemporaries of the integral role that wonder plays in the origins of Western philosophy, he is less willing than they are to resist the Enlightenment thirst to acquire knowledge. He explicitly acknowledges the tension in his philosophical approach that often remains latent when he says, "Philosophy is the middle state between Science or Knowledge and Wisdom or Sophia" (TT I.174). While premodern philosophers define philosophy as a love of wisdom that dwells in wonder, and while modern philosophers like Hegel redefine it as a "*love* of knowing" that might ultimately "lay aside" this affectionate seeking altogether and become "*actual* knowing" (PS §5; 3), Coleridge situates himself somewhere between these extremes and provides no practical guidelines that would allow thinkers to determine which direction to pursue in any particular inquiry.

e) Negative Faith and Facts of Mind:

The Problem of the Epochê and Its Application

> Now my dear fellow I must once for all tell you I have not one Idea of the truth of any of my speculations – I shall never be a Reasoner because I care not to be in the right, when retired from bickering and in a proper philosophical temper –
>
> ~ Keats[61]

The epochê (or suspension of judgment) is a procedure that the ancient skeptics saw as a natural consequence of the Socratic method.[62] While the word 'skepticism' is today often interpreted as a strictly negative attitude that denies the possibility of knowledge, it was originally conceived as a way of prolonging inquiry and resisting premature judgment by use of the epochê. The suspension of judgment is, therefore, a practical tool that arouses and perpetuates philosophical inquiry, and it is by means of a positive application of the epochê that one might voluntarily cultivate a philosophical wonder.[63] However, when one employs the epochê, a practical question inevitably arises: When should one *stop* suspending judgment? While lovers of wisdom who see philosophy as a way of life are in no rush to levy judgments, lovers of system who want to acquire and produce knowledge feel more compelled to judge and are more inclined to do so prematurely, reinforcing the "pernicious," "widespread and almost insurmountable tendency toward teleological judgements" in modernity of which Schiller complains (AE 70n1). Even the most responsible lovers of system employ the epochê fitfully until their inquiries lead them to original insights, apposite additions to their architectonics, or dead ends that require them to either turn back or question their foundational assumptions. In Coleridge's thought, the love of wisdom inspires him to embody the suspension of judgment in a

number of his gnomic formulations (notably, negative faith, poetic faith and the willing suspension of disbelief), but as a lover of system he justifies his fitful employment of the epochê by relegating it to the realm of art and by granting his "Facts of mind" sway in the realm of philosophical inquiry.

As the introduction to this study suggested above, Keats's concept of negative capability is a form of the epochê that succinctly illustrates the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder,[64] and it seems plausible that Keats's concept might have been influenced by the various formulations of the epochê that Coleridge offers in his *Biographia*.[65] In particular, Keats's concept bears a striking resemblance to the concept of "*negative* faith" that Coleridge discusses in chapter twenty-two of that work (BL II.134). According to Coleridge, the reader who practices negative faith "permits the images presented to work by their own force, without either denial or affirmation of their real existence by the judgment" (BL II.134). In this context, negative faith applies to the experience of reading literature.[66] Yet in his correspondence Coleridge uses similar language to describe what happens when the dreamer dreams:

> It is not strictly accurate to say, that we believe our dreams to be actual while we are dreaming. We neither believe it or disbelieve it – with the will the comparing power is suspended, and without the comparing power any act of Judgement, whether affirmation or denial, is impossible (CL IV.641).

In both of these passages, Coleridge suggests the possibility of a *double suspension* – a suspension not merely of disbelief, as in the famous "willing suspension of disbelief" that he calls "poetic faith" (BL II.6), but also a suspension of belief. Coleridge's concept of negative faith arises in a discussion of some of the defects of Wordsworth's poetry. According to Coleridge, Wordsworth has a tendency to include facts and accidental details in his compositions that would be appropriate in biographies or in novels that "pass for histories" (like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*), but not in poetry (BL II.133). Moreover, Coleridge believes that when a poet places "sentiments and language" that are clearly "the poet's own" in the language of multiple characters (as in Wordsworth's *Excursion*), or when a poet presents fantastical images in close proximity to "words and facts of known and absolute truth" (as in Klopstock's *Messiah*), then the reader's negative faith must and should founder (BL II.133-34). I can suspend my belief and disbelief when I imagine, but as soon as these imaginings begin to run counter to my understanding, they are, according to Coleridge, "rendered impossible" (BL II.134). Though "facts," like fiction, are themselves 'made,'[67] Coleridge indicates that facts of the understanding inevitably direct the course of an inquiry. In Coleridge's defense, one might argue that he is objecting to the intrusion of facts into the free play of imagination precisely because such an intrusion would require the inquiring mind to downshift from the plane of the imagination to the plane of ordinary experience. Yet why, one might counter, can't these facts of experience be modified and reshaped on the plane of the imagination? Why can't one give the imagination free reign to adjust one's conception of the facts?[68] The answer, for Coleridge, appears to be that the facts of the understanding must have priority over the fictions of the imagination.

Coleridge and Keats strongly disagree about how, when and why one should employ the epochê. In his account of negative capability, Keats distances himself from Coleridge quite explicitly, and his choice of words lends credence to the possibility that he might have Coleridge's discussion of negative faith in mind. Negative capability is the ability to dwell "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" (KSL 41-42),

and Keats implies that Coleridge's refusal to question "facts of known and absolute truth" represents an irritable reaching of just this sort (BL II.133-34). Keats conceives of negative capability as a necessary correlate not only to the appreciation of art works but also to a general success in literature, life and philosophical activity. As he writes in a letter to his siblings two years later, "The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing – to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts. Not a select party" (KSL 303). By contrast, Coleridge suggests that when I watch a play on stage, my suspension of judgment will not and should not fly in the face of received or revealed truths and facts.[69] Moreover, he ignores the possibility that his double suspension of belief and disbelief might operate in philosophical inquiry. Though Coleridge's *Biographia* offers several classic formulations of the epochê, Keats is far more interested in extending their influence.

The differences between negative faith and negative capability also bring Coleridge's love of system and Keats's love of wisdom into greater relief. According to Keats, Coleridge "would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge" (KSL 42).[70] Commentators such as Walter Jackson Bate have interpreted Keats's reference to Coleridge in the negative capability letter as an unfair accusation grounded in ignorance. As Bate puts it,

> The mention of Coleridge's allowing "a fine isolated verisimilitude" to "go by" seems ludicrously inept, though forgivable considering how little Keats had read of him. However much Coleridge yearned for system, he could never attain it simply, because he was able to let so little "go by": the glory of his critical writing consists in its numerous "isolated verisimilitudes" (Bate 249n16).

Yet Bate adopts a view of Coleridge's writings that is marked by more than a century of critical appraisal. The observation that Coleridge "yearned for system" and failed to achieve it has become so commonplace that Keats's judgments are dismissed as "ludicrously inept" merely because Keats takes Coleridge at his word and assumes that Coleridge's determination to forge a system will result in one. Moreover, Keats is at least half right. Though he is perhaps unaware of the ways that Coleridge's writings resist system, which commentators such as McFarland and Christensen have identified, he is on target when he suggests that Coleridge is often, contrary to his own detotalizing impulses, "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge." Keats's formulation comes quite close to Coleridge's own description of his system years later. Unlike Lyell's system, which Coleridge says "is half the truth – but not more" (TT I.395), Coleridge's own system was to unite "insulated fragments of truth" and show "how that which was true" in other systems "became error because it was only half the truth" (TT I.248). Even in his last year, Coleridge dismisses "that metaphysical disquisition at the end of the first volume of the Biographia Literaria" – a passage that, containing his brief distinctions between primary imagination, secondary imagination and fancy, surely represents one of the greatest of the "isolated verisimilitudes" in his oeuvre – as "unformed and immature," saying that "it contains the fragments of the truth, but it is not full, nor thought out." The "judicious," staged and self-authored letter "from a friend" (signed "*Your affectionate, &c*") (BL I.300-304), which appears in the concluding pages of volume I of the *Biographia* and which allows Coleridge to justify his failure to produce the detailed theory of the imagination that would ultimately never appear, is perhaps among the instances of literary production that Derrida would have cited as so ironic and self-reflexive as to be in some sense already deconstructed (Derrida 1992 61-62). Yet the

literary achievement of chapter thirteen does not impress the aged Coleridge. Capping his critique of the chapter, he wistfully adds, "It is wonderful to myself to think, how infinitely more profound my views now are, and yet how much clearer they are. The circle is completing; the idea is coming round to, and to be, the common sense" (TT I.492). These are hardly the words of someone who cares more for connection than completion, as McFarland suggests (110), or who has taken solace in the "glory of his critical writing[s]" in the terms by which Bate praises them. In 1834, the year of his death, Coleridge has produced no system and yet declares, "The circle is completing." Nearly two centuries later, editors and commentators are still helping Coleridge complete the circle, even as they acknowledge the ways that Coleridge in other moments seems determined to resist the circle's completion. Morever, it would be incorrect to assume that Coleridge resisted the circle's closure in his early years and sought to close it in his later years. He surged back and forth between these two contrary aims throughout his career.

Coleridge is willing to suspend judgment only as long as this suspension does not require him to deny "facts of known and absolute truth" (BL II.134). What kinds of "facts" does Coleridge have in mind? In Coleridge's writings appear two very different classes of facts: the "simple" facts of the empiricist, which Coleridge views as in themselves valueless, and "Facts of mind," to which he attributes the highest value. The second class of facts is the one by which the suspension of judgment is, in Coleridge's words, "rendered impossible" (BL II.134).

In his 1811-12 lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, Coleridge describes the class of facts that the empiricist seeks: "They then began, as a new discovering, with the last point of the human mind – viz: – the simple observation of facts – facts, taken as the senses recorded them without even a psychological connection" (CLL I.270). In the *Biographia*, this "simple observation of facts" gives him reason to find fault with Locke and others. "We learn all things indeed," he proclaims, "by *occasion* of experience; but the very facts so learnt force us inward on the antecedents, that must be pre-supposed in order to render experience itself possible." As he puts it in his *Statesman's Manual*,

> as long as man shall exist, so long will the possession of that antecedent knowledge (the maker and master of all profitable Experience) which exists only in the power of an *Idea*, be the one lawful qualification of all Dominion in the world of the senses. Without this, Experience itself is but a cyclops walking backwards, under the fascination of the Past… (SM 42-43).

According to Coleridge, Locke's empiricism takes too literally Aristotle's claim that, *nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu* ('There is nothing in the mind that was not before in the senses'), and overlooks Leibnitz's clever addition, *præter ipsum intellectum* ('except the mind itself') (BL I.141). A philosophy that relies solely upon the "simple" facts of the senses must founder. To observe such facts without turning inward toward the antecedent perceptions and reflections that endow these facts with meaning is like "build[ing] without cement" (BL I.143).[71] Such facts would have no existence without the mind.

By contrast, Coleridge declares the existence of a class of facts for which he shows far more respect: facts which, paradoxically, require no empirical verification at all. In a letter to John Thelwall dated 19 November 1796, Coleridge writes:

> I have read & digested most of the Historical Writers –; but I do not *like* History. Metaphysics, & Poetry, & 'Facts of mind' – (i.e. Accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed your philosophy-dreamers from Tauth [Thoth], the Egyptian to Taylor, the English Pagan,) are my darling Studies (CL I.260).

No commentator has, to my knowledge, traced the source of Coleridge's concept of "Facts of mind," but it seems plausible that he might have been partially influenced by what Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) calls a "fact of reason" (*Faktum der Vernunft*) – a special class of facts that "thrusts itself upon us on its own as a synthetic a priori proposition not based on any intuition, whether pure or empirical," but as a unique, non-intuited "fact" that demonstrates "the objective reality of the moral law" (Kant 2002 46 and 66). Whatever the origin of Coleridge's phrase, it is clear that these "Facts of mind," incorporating the "strange phantasms" of "philosophy-dreamers," represent a broader class than Kant's strictly moral fact of reason and yet derive, like Kant's, not from experience but from the mind.

When Coleridge's term "Facts of mind" appears in a religious context, he uses the category in a way that Kant would have avoided and that illustrates his willingness to limit the epochê. In the polemical annotations entitled, "Notes on a Barrister's Hints on Evangelical Preaching" (1810), Coleridge avows,

> a sphere there is, – facts of mind and cravings of the soul there are, – in which the wisest man seeks help from the indefinite, because it is nearer and more like the infinite, of which he is made the image: – for even we are infinite, even in our finiteness infinite, as the Father in his infinity. In many caterpillars there is a large empty space in the head, the destined room for the pushing forth of the *antennæ* of its next stage of being (Coleridge 1854 488).

These are beautiful reflections, yet they also reveal some of the tensions inherent in Coleridge's divided epistemological leanings. While Kant suggests that belief in a divine designer and in an immortal soul ought to be met with a combination of objective "modesty" and subjective "confidence" (CPR 751-52), Coleridge exhibits no such modesty. Buttressed by the biblical notion that human beings are made in God's image and likeness, Coleridge asserts that we are "even in our finiteness infinite," and that people should embrace the indefinite because – amorphous and uncomprehended – it resembles the infinite. Yet what sort of thinker embraces the indefinite merely because it is not understood? What "facts of mind" would justify such a hasty epistemological leap? As a human being who longs to comprehend the uncomprehended and to believe in something more than the facts can support, I sympathize with Coleridge's yearning for the infinite, and I admire the enviable facility with which he combines the attentiveness of the naturalist with the imagistic powers of the poet. Yet from an epistemological point of view, it is dangerous to allow the rhetorical presentation of a natural symbol to take on metaphysical significance.

As often occurs in Coleridge's writings, he lends persuasiveness to his assertions by employing symbolism and other literary devices – in this case, the symbol of a space in the mind left empty so that a new form of intuition can express itself in the "next stage of being." Likened to "*antennæ*" that will one day push themselves forth as one form of being transforms into another, this new form of intuition is, from the point of view of the present moment, *extra*sensory – a sixth sense. It aspires toward an awareness that only divine creatures possess.

Further evidence that Coleridge's facts of mind derive from Kant's moral fact of reason appears in the *Biographia*, where Coleridge (employing the caterpillar symbol once more) says of these extrasensory "organs of spirit" that their "first appearance discloses itself in the *moral* being" (BL I.242). In his *Statesman's Manual*, he further speculates about the possibility that "in the recesses of our nature, and undeveloped, there might exist an *inner* sense," a "divining power in the human mind," which would provide access to a world beyond the organs of sense (SM 81 and 83). Elsewhere in his writings, Coleridge implies that this sixth sense, which has the capacity to transcend not only the senses but also the otherwise earth-bound cognitive faculties of the mind, resides (even if in a shadowy, subterranean form) in the faculty of reason. Departing strikingly from Kant's usage of this term, Coleridge sometimes likens the reason to a magnifying glass that can allow human beings to glimpse truths that the mere understanding would and could never venture to glimpse.[72]

No one could deny that Kant's two articles of religious faith – those of a divine designer and an immortal soul – represent "cravings of the soul," yet it seems that Coleridge would also call them (and other articles in which he believes) "facts of mind." This tendency is also apparent in the *Biographia* where he speaks of two classes of "facts," both "material and spiritual," of which one might possess knowledge (BL II.81). Elsewhere in his "Notes" to the barrister, Coleridge gives a clearer sense of what he might mean when he refers to "facts" of a "spiritual" nature. He asks, "Are there not facts in religion, the causes and constitution of which are mysteries" (Coleridge 1854 503). The answer to this question may, for many readers, seem far from certain. What sorts of "facts" would these be, which are apparently causeless and impossible to constitute with the mind? What sort of philosopher would label such "mysteries" as "facts" – perhaps even as "facts of known and absolute truth" (BL II.133-34) – discontinuing inquiry as soon as they have obstructed one's pursuit of wisdom? Coleridge is, it appears, just such a philosopher, for in his *Statesman's Manual* he defines "*mysteries*" as "doctrines of the pure and intuitive *reason*, which transcend the understanding…" (SM 56). According to Coleridge, mysteries are not problems but doctrines. Yet, as further evidence of his dividedness, Coleridge also chastises those religious people who say, "'It is a mystery: and we are bound to believe the words without presuming to enquire into the meaning of them,'" reminding them that, "St. Paul repeatedly presses upon his Hearers" the "thoughtful perusal of the Sacred Writings" as well as "habits of earnest though humble enquiry" (SM 45-46). Clearly, Coleridge has two kinds of mysteries in mind: on one hand, *true* mysteries that are "doctrines of the pure and intuitive reason," and on the other hand, spiritual matters that people *call* mysteries out of an unwillingness to inquire into them. Yet Coleridge's own position is paradoxical. He declares that, "all effective Faith presupposes Knowledge," yet he is also grateful that in England, "speculative Infidelity is, Heaven be praised, confined to a small number" (SM 47). He wants mysteries to be pondered – *and* fervently embraced. He wants religious beliefs to be interrogated – *and* humbly accepted. Not least of all, he wants these mysteries and religious beliefs to be understood as "facts."

When Coleridge's philosophical contemplations bring him into the region of religious faith, a new pair of competing conceptual imperatives invades his writings. Paul Hamilton alludes to this division in Coleridge's thought when he observes that, "as the advocacy of Coleridge's seriousness and originality as a philosopher approaches the systematic, an alien system threatens to supervene, casting Coleridge in the role of Christian apologist rather than that of philosopher proper" (Hamilton 177). Hamilton's interpretation accurately characterizes

the conflict between an unfettered philosophical inquiry and one limited by premature judgments such as those that Anselm preemptively admits in accordance with his Scholastic credo, "I believe in order to understand" (Anselm 53). However, I would challenge Hamilton's claim that Coleridge's religious beliefs interfere with his philosophical activity *when* he "approaches the systematic," as it may well have been Coleridge's apologetic leanings that spurred his systematic ambitions in the first place. Moreover, Hamilton implies that systems are the "proper" goals of "serious" philosophers. His reference to the "philosopher proper" invites comparison with a similar passage in one of Keats's letters to Benjamin Bailey, composed a few months after his discussion of negative capability. "Now my dear fellow," Keats writes, "I must once for all tell you I have not one Idea of the truth of any of my speculations – I shall never be a Reasoner because I care not to be in the right, when retired from bickering and in a proper philosophical temper" (KSL 70). Paradoxically, Keats indicates that when he is in "a proper philosophical temper," he is *not* "a Reasoner." Yet when one remembers that Keats contrasts negative capability with an "irritable reaching after fact & reason" (KSL 42), it becomes clear that the label "Reasoner" is a pejorative one meant to undermine the intellectual proclivities of people like Coleridge who are "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge" (KSL 42) and like his friend Dilke who "cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made up his Mind about every thing" (KSL 303). Thus, one might agree with the suggestion that Coleridge's religious beliefs intrude upon his philosophical activities and yet argue that this intrusion occurs for reasons other than those that Hamilton offers. It is not that Coleridge's religious views intrude when he seeks to fulfill his aim of a philosophical unity; rather, it is that his religious views compel him to create a systematic unity that his philosophical inclinations resist.

It is not merely Coleridge's apologetic impulse but also his determination to produce a "system of philosophy" (BL I.141) that causes him to stray from what Keats calls the "proper philosophical temper" (KSL 70). His apologetic and systematic leanings both lead him to limit the epochê and its application. If in the course of an inquiry or the reading of a poem, his thoughts begin to run counter to "facts" or "doctrines" of a "spiritual" nature that he believes to be "of known an absolute truth," he refuses to suspend judgment any longer. He feels compelled to abandon the epochê out of a preference for the foundational beliefs of his system.

f) Hovering Imaginings and Imaginative Reasonings:

The Problem of the Faculties and Their Aims

> No one, indeed, will be able to boast that he *knows* that there is a God and that there is a future life; for if he knows this, then he is just the man that I have been looking for all along.
>
> ~ Kant[73]

Coleridge wishes to make judgments upon religious matters that extend far beyond Kant's two modest articles of religious faith. While allowing that knowledge and faith are both forms of cognition, Kant is by no means willing to suggest that this places them on an equal footing. Knowledge is a form of "assent that is sufficient both subjectively and objectively," but faith is "sufficient only subjectively" (CPR 749). Coleridge handles this distinction with less care than Kant, but he leverages his skills of "disquisition" – or "just *distinction*" (BL II.11) – to mitigate his hasty handling of it. In particular, Coleridge relies upon and revises Kant's

"transcendental" division of the faculties to suit his own purposes, infusing his incompatible loves of wisdom and system into the faculties of imagination and reason respectively.[74] While Coleridge identifies a "hovering" imagination that exhibits all the rigorous suspending powers of a philosophy of wonder, he endows the "imaginative Reason" with the power to apprehend religious truths with a confidence that the wondering philosopher would never permit. His concept of imaginative reason conceals his longing for a reason that can leap from the natural world into an imagined supernatural world. Adopting Anselm's motto of belief before understanding – the classic *hýsteron próteron* (or 'Latter-Former') that fueled the Christian philosophical speculations of the middle ages[75] – Coleridge declares that, "Reason and Religion differ only as a two-fold application of the same power" (SM 59). He is determined to arrive at the beliefs endorsed by his religious faith, though from a rigorously epistemological point of view this Scholastic tendency is problematic. While in the realm of art and aesthetic experience Coleridge allows the imagination (*qua* wonder) to resist the fixating tendencies of the earth-bound understanding, he insists that in the realm of inquiry all the other faculties contribute to a reason that strives to apprehend religious truths. He reinforces his claims for reason by identifying and interpreting symbols that exist in nature and that bridge the gap between the natural and the supernatural. Though I will argue that these symbols function as rhetorical justifications for and distractions from his epistemological indiscretions, Coleridge's appropriation and enrichment of the symbol to suit his speculative agenda nonetheless represents a remarkable symbiosis of his scientific, poetic, philosophical and religious activities. As distinct from metaphors, similes and other forms of figurative language, symbols are, he avers, actually "established in the truth of things" (SM 72). Harnessing the power of symbols that he carefully selects from nature and poetically describes, Coleridge argues that the space in a caterpillar's head left dormant for its future wings and the heightened sense of sight granted by a magnifying glass are each concrete symbols from this world that foreshadow the spiritual realities of the next world.

In his 1811-12 lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, Coleridge distinguishes the faculty of the imagination from that of the understanding in a way that makes the Coleridgean imagination seem like a natural and necessary expression of the suspension of judgment. There he describes the imagination as "a middle state of the mind" that consists in a "hovering between images." Elaborating upon this suggestive description, he distinguishes the imagination from the understanding, explaining that, "As soon as it [the imagination] is fixed on one image, it becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and wavering between them, attaching itself pe[r]manently to none, it is imagination." Coleridge's hovering imagination seems analogous to a wonder that sustains the impulse of inquiry ("unfixed and wavering") and resists the assertion of understanding ("fixed" and "attaching itself pe[r]manently") (SL 64-65; also CLL I.311 and 319). After opposing the "fixed" understanding to the "hovering" imagination, Coleridge declares, "The grandest efforts of poetry are where the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind, still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected" (SL 64-65). This "strong working of the mind" that refuses to become "fixed on one image" or to "produce a distinct form" reinforces the connection between the Coleridgean imagination and a philosophical wonder.[76] Such a "middle state of the mind" pursues the impulse of inquiry while resisting the closure of assertion. Instead of expressing itself with "a distinct form," it cultivates an attitude that consists in "still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected," resisting the understanding's goal of judgment.[77]

Coleridge indicates that the hovering imagination is "called forth" by great poetry or other powerful stimuli (SL 64-65). However, for the Coleridgean imagination to truly resemble a philosophical wonder, it must be active and somewhat voluntary. These features of wonder come into relief when one considers the claims of phenomenologists such as Eugen Fink and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who suggest that wonder has much in common with Husserl's phenomenological reduction and is defined by its departure from astonishment, the aesthetic experience with which modern thinkers have unjustly confused wonder since Descartes.[78] As Fink observes, "Astonishment descends upon man; it essentially" – and involuntarily – "*befalls* him" (PPH 23). By contrast, Fink adds, "If the origin of a philosophical problem lies essentially in astonishment, then its emergence from astonishment is not a passive occurrence." The shift from passive astonishment to active philosophizing requires "the creative *force of wonder*" – a force that modern philosophy and modern aesthetics have effaced (PPH 25; his italics). While one might refer to astonishment as an involuntary 'aesthetic state' or 'aesthetic experience,' it is misleading to speak of wonder in this way. Wonder is a voluntary mental activity that one can cultivate and temporarily sustain. Following Fink, Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests that in the simplest terms Husserl's phenomenological reduction might be understood as an attitude of "'wonder' in the face of the world" (POP xv).[79] Like Husserl's reduction,[80] wonder is not an activity that one can *permanently* sustain. Because as a being in the world I must always eventually return to a world in which phenomena are taken for granted as 'real,' wonder is not wholly voluntary. Yet few mental activities *are* wholly voluntary. Just as in lived experience one's sense of being a thinking subject or a stable self or a free individual is regularly contradicted by unconscious thoughts, unstable moods and unconscious habits, so might one say that wonder is subject to shifts in focus, mood and control. Wonder is not, like imagination or reason, judgment or understanding, what one would refer to as a mental faculty. Rather it is an *attitude* or *stance* by which one might *direct and sustain* one's mental faculties, maintaining engagement and suspending judgment by a voluntary exertion of the will. A wondering reason is, therefore, an orientation of the reason that voluntarily resists the temptations of its opposite – the instrumental reason which has become so prominent in modern thought and which longs to acquire knowledge instead of *suspending* the acquisition of knowledge as the love of wisdom invites. Does Coleridge leave open the possibility that his hovering imagination, instead of merely being "called forth," might in fact be invoked and voluntarily sustained in the manner of a wondering reason?

Coleridge's distinction between the primary and the secondary imagination hinges on a distinction between the involuntary expression and the voluntary exertion of mental faculties, and in this sense he indicates that in its secondary form the hovering imagination *already implies* the voluntary effort and creative force that a philosophy of wonder demands. If I lie down in a dark quiet room and close my eyes, this dearth of sensory stimulation does not 'clear my head.' My mind wanders; my body feels itself breathing and feels the bed pushing up beneath me; my spirit rises and falls with the thoughts, feelings and images that stir within me. If I fall asleep, my unconscious supplies my mind with images as I dream. In this sense, I have no control over what I imagine. As Coleridge announces, "The primary I M A G I N A T I O N I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I A M" (BL I.304). In Kant's sense, the imagination is the faculty of apprehension and combination, and it is responsible for all the images that I observe when I perceive, remember, imagine and dream. It inundates me with images whether I

want it to or not. Yet in a more specific sense, which Coleridge denotes as secondary, the imagination is …

> … an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead (BL I.304).

On Coleridge's model, the secondary imagination, while similar in kind to the primary imagination, is at least partly subject to "the conscious will," and it responds to my "struggles to idealize and to unify" the images that appear in my mind and in the external world. While the primary imagination, like astonishment, befalls me, the secondary imagination, like wonder, is "essentially vital" and partially controllable. Furthermore, the secondary imagination's vital energy acts upon objects that are "essentially fixed and dead," and this view reinforces Coleridge's earlier claim that the task of the hovering imagination is to remain "unfixed and wavering" and to resist the fixating tendencies of the understanding.[81] Moreover, Coleridge's claim that this secondary imagination actively "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create" implies (as the introduction above has suggested) that the imagination (normally understood as a merely synthesizing faculty) is in fact an analytical *and* synthetic faculty that breaks phenomena down in order to recreate them in a higher, more compressed and powerful form, in a manner that resembles the Hegelian negative.

However, while Coleridge encourages the hovering imagination (*qua* wonder) to resist the understanding (or "the science of phaenomena" the operations of which "supply the rules and constitute the possibility of Experience"), he has quite different plans for the way the imagination should function in relation to reason (or "the science of the universal") (SM 59). In a striking departure from his account of a hovering imagination that resembles wonder by rigorously remaining "unfixed and wavering," Coleridge suggests that in tandem with reason the imagination is forced to take on an entirely different and subservient role and to assist reason by finding imaginative ways to confirm preconceived religious beliefs. In the marginal emendations to his *Statesman's Manual*, Coleridge speaks of an "imaginative Reason" (SM 29n1), and it is the role of this hybrid faculty neither to intentionally waver and remain unfixed, nor to remain vital by diffusing and dissolving phenomena in order to recreate, but rather to serve as,

> that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the *conductors* (SM 29).

The new role of Coleridge's imagination (*qua* "imaginative Reason") is to provide the reason with "symbols" which, "consubstantial with the truths" of reason, will serve as conductors and promulgators of those truths. No longer meant to hover between images and resist the clenching impulses of understanding and judgment, the imagination will now incorporate and organize images, assembling them into a "system of symbols." Moreover, Coleridge has a very unusual notion of symbolism in mind. According to his definition, a symbol "partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible," and it "abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the

representative" (SM 30). As opposed to a "metaphor or allegory or any other figure of speech or form of fancy," Coleridge's symbol is "an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents" (SM 79). So when the imagination constructs a "system of symbols" that is "consubstantial with the truths" of reason, it is giving those truths a concrete reality. By appropriating the imagination and leveraging its powers, Coleridge refashions the Kantian faculty of reason so that it can *imagine* truths that are *natural* (as symbol) *yet supernatural* (as divine).

This infuses new meaning into the symbol of the caterpillar in Coleridge's 1810 "Notes" to a barrister. There Coleridge likens his "facts of mind and cravings of the soul" with the scientific evidence that, "In many caterpillars there is a large empty space in the head, the destined room for the pushing forth of the *antennæ* of its next stage of being" (Coleridge 1854 488). On the surface, this would seem to be nothing more than a thoughtful metaphor that is meant to illustrate Coleridge's point and evoke in the reader's mind an evocative image that might make this point easier to remember. Yet for Coleridge it is much more than that. Coleridge's interest in the caterpillar and its transformation finds early expression in his notebooks of 1803, where he outlines its various stages of development in elaborate detail, going as far as to note that during one stage of its transformation the caterpillar appears to be "in great Agony" (CN I.1378). This interest in the earthly agony of the caterpillar and in its natural *yet supernatural* transformation into a creature of flight manifests itself again years later in very different ways. In an 1811 notebook entry he defines possessors of "Faith" (CN III.4088), and in his 1817 *Biographia* he defines possessors of "the philosophic imagination" (BL I.241), as those who are able to "feel in their own spirits the same instinct, which impels the chrysalis of the horned fly to leave room in its involucrum for antennæ yet to come" (BL I.241-42). Between the 1811 notebook entry and the 1817 revision of the passage for the *Biographia*, a curious transformation has taken place. Coleridge's definition for religious faith has morphed into his definition for "the philosophic imagination," which he calls "the sacred power of self-intuition" (BL I.241). In the *Biographia* passage, Coleridge indicates that the possessors of this "sacred" and "philosophic" power of self-intuition are precisely those "who within themselves can interpret and understand the symbol, that the wings of the air-sylph are forming within the skin of the caterpillar" (BL I.241-42). Determined to identify a spiritual fact that goes beyond mere faith, which according to Kant's definition is "sufficient only subjectively" (CPR 749), Coleridge implies that those who learn to know themselves with the sacred power of self-intuition and who learn to know the natural world through its symbols can now declare their *knowledge* of a divine designer and of an immortal soul with an "assent that is sufficient both subjectively and objectively" (CPR 749).

It would be interesting to know how Coleridge came to the conclusion that religious beliefs about non-earthly phenomena can be discovered in earthly life, so it is convenient that in his *Statesman's Manual* he both explains and illustrates the thought process that brought him to these conclusions through the symbols of natural light and of the looking glass that reflects light. For Coleridge, "Light" is the "material symbol" of "the pure untroubled brightness of an Idea, that most glorious birth of the God-like within us" (SM 50). By extension, he likens his knowledge of physical and metaphysical phenomena to a "glass" or mirror that reflects and intensifies his comprehension of the scriptures and "the pure untroubled brightness" of his ideas:

> I can truly affirm of myself, that my studies have been profitable and availing to me only so far, as I have endeavoured to use all my other knowledge as a glass enabling me to receive more light in a wider field of vision from the word of God (SM 70).

Coleridge is pleased to discover that the "other knowledge," which his scientific, poetic and philosophical activities have instilled in him, now serves as a mirror whose great breadth and brightness widens his field of vision and illuminates his way as he seeks to grasp spiritual truths. The passage continues, "If you have accompanied me thus far, thoughtful reader! Let it not weary you if I digress for a few moments to another book, likewise a revelation of God – the great book of his servant Nature" (SM 70). Though Coleridge asks his readers to indulge him in this apparent digression, it is for him no digression at all. Though his explicit subject in the *Statesman's Manual* is the Christian Bible, it is precisely from this other "great book," the natural world, that Coleridge gleans the "correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world" (SM 70). "True natural philosophy is," he asserts, "comprized in the study of the science and language of *symbols*" (his italics; SM 79), and it is in these symbols that Coleridge finds the most concrete manifestation of God's revealed truths on earth.

In his second *Lay Sermon*, Coleridge describes another symbol that reinforces his optimistic account of the powers of the imaginative reason – in this case, the telescope of religion, which has the capacity to glimpse divine truths from the barren plain of an otherwise earth-bound human existence. Coleridge's introduction to this work concludes with a piece called, "Allegoric Vision," which had previously been published in other forms and contexts, and it is within this vision, set in the "Valley of Life," that one encounters "a woman, tall beyond the stature of mortals, and with something more than human in her countenance and mien, which yet could by mortals be only felt, not conveyed by words or intelligibly distinguished" (LS 134-35). When those present inquire after her name, she replies that it is, "Religion" (LS 136). The speaker tells us, "She led us to an eminence in the midst of the valley, from the top of which we could command the whole plain, and observe the relation of the different parts, of each to the other, and of each to the whole, and of all to each" (SM 136). Just as Coleridge asserts that, "Reason and Religion differ only as a two-fold application of the same power" (SM 59), so now do readers find that under Religion's guidance the speaker can observe the cumulative relationships of parts to whole in accordance with Coleridge's definition of reason as, "the science of All as the Whole" (SM 64). Yet this is merely the beginning of what reason can achieve under Religion's tutelage:

> She then gave us an optic glass which assisted without contradicting our natural vision, and enabled us to see far beyond the limits of the Valley of Life: though our eye even thus assisted permitted us only to behold a light and a glory, but what we could not descry, save only that it was, and that it was most glorious (SM 136).

Though the optic (or magnifying) glass functions as a tool of Religion, and though Religion is in turn one of several figures in a religious allegory, it is nonetheless clear that Coleridge's magnifying glass is a symbol, meaning that it "partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible" (SM 30). As a literary technique, allegory is inferior to symbolism, according to Coleridge, because an allegory is "but a translation of abstract motions into a picture-language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses" (SM 30). For Coleridge as for Hegel, abstractions lack depth, richness and vitality because (in Hegel's words) when an "abstract form" is familiar or "ready-made," it loses its resonance as felt truth and its significance

as an object of inquiry (§33; PS 19). Moreover, the fact that for Coleridge an allegory is merely "an abstraction from objects of the senses" suggests that it is a product of an understanding that discerns and categorizes phenomena and not of a reason that explores and reaches toward ideas. According to Coleridge, "In Religion there are no abstractions" (SM 90). The magnifying glass in Religion's hands is a symbol because, as Coleridge takes pains to clarify, the glass "assisted without contradicting our natural vision." Though a supplement to the sense of sight granted to humans by their very nature, the vision through the glass is nonetheless natural, and as such it offers a concrete correlate from this world that illustrates how reason (the vision from the top of the eminence) complemented by revelation (the vision through the magnifying glass) can provide spiritual insights about the next world. Indeed, the magnifying glass is a supplement to natural vision even in Derrida's paradoxical sense of the term, because as supplement the magnifying glass is an addition *and* a replacement of the base or whole to which it initially appears to be a mere appendage (Derrida 1976 7). The *true* vision, capable of glimpsing divine truths, is not the vision of reason but the vision seen through the magnifying glass that religion *lends* to reason. In *Aids to Reflection*, published a few years later, Coleridge uses the same symbol to make the connection between reason and religion even more explicit than the allegoric form allows, declaring, "By the eye of Reason through the telescope of Faith, i.e., Revelation, we may see what without this telescope we could never have known to exist" (AR 341). That the scientific discovery of the telescope has provided human beings with a way of magnifying a vision with which nature has already endowed them imbues Coleridge with a sense of confidence in the truths of religion that goes beyond the modest, subjective faith that Kant recommends.

Coleridge finds another – and for him, the ultimate – natural symbol of this triumphant reason in the unity of nature itself, the parts and whole of which serve as a mediator between this world and the next:

> Lo! – how upholding the ceaseless plastic motion of the parts in the profoundest rest of the whole it becomes the visible organismus of the whole *silent* or *elementary* life of nature and, therefore, in incorporating the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason, in which the whole series (know to us in our present state of being) is perfected… (SM 72).

In this present – "now," according to Coleridge – one can recognize the perfection of this series "as co-existing in the unity of a higher form, the Crown and Completion of the Earthly, and the Mediator of a new and heavenly series" (SM 72). As "the natural symbol of the higher life of reason," the entire organism of nature – the whole series of parts that make up the visible world human beings can know directly – is, according to Coleridge, co-existent with and co-extensive to "a new and heavenly series," the life of an invisible world that "the visible organismus" of nature adduces. Coleridge's brief digression onto the topic of the "great book" of nature has proven a highly useful and original one indeed (SM 70).

However poetic, striking and innovative Coleridge's "imaginative" appropriation of Kantian "Reason" might be, though, the question remains whether it is valid and defensible from a philosophical point of view. It is unlikely that Kant would have answered this question in the affirmative. At the conclusion of the last appendix to his *Statesman's Manual*, Coleridge alludes to a topic of debate that helps to explain why and with what justification he transforms the Kantian faculties as he does: "Whether Ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant; or likewise Constitutive, and one with the power and Life of Nature, according to Plato,

[…] is the highest problem of Philosophy, and not part of its nomenclature" (SM 114). It is interesting that Coleridge should cite this question as a "problem" because by the end of his *Statesman's Manual* one has little reason to doubt that he has already taken sides.[82] As Coleridge himself observes, Kant asserts that when examining the phenomenal world cosmological ideas such as that of a supreme being and designer provide the understanding with an ideal of systematic unity and perfection that proves useful for inquiry, but Kant specifically warns that these ideas should serve as "nothing but regulative principles, and are far from positing – constitutively, as it were – an actual totality of such series" (CPR 649; also 650-51). Kant specifically confirms that his notion of the ideas and ideals, "unlike the Platonic ones, do not have a creative power," but merely function as "regulative principles" (CPR 561). However, in stark contrast, Coleridge does not merely affirm the possibility of a perfected series or absolute totality; he goes as far as to extrapolate from the visible world, "the natural symbol of the higher life of reason," the invisible presence of a "co-existing," "new and heavenly series" (SM 72-73). By transforming the Kantian idea from a regulative principle that merely guides inquiry into a constitutive principle that serves as the concrete goal of inquiry, Coleridge also transforms Kant's unreachable ideal of a systematic unity into an all-encompassing totality that Coleridge's "imaginative Reason" might reach (SM 29n1). .

It is in this sense that Coleridge's Platonized Kantianism can paradoxically be understood as a kind of realism.[83] Clearly, Plato is not a realist but an idealist, yet when Coleridge Platonizes Kant and takes a real visible world as proof (via his theory of symbolism) of a *real ideal* world he transforms Kant's hypothetical noumenal realm into a phenomenon or hidden phenomenal realm. By assuming that symbols that appear in the natural world at once gesture toward the supernatural *and* participate in the supernatural world they represent, he transforms both Plato and Kant. For Plato, the phenomenal world, itself unreal, merely participates in the ideal. For Kant, the phenomenal world, the only real, provides modest hopes that ideas and ideals useful in the examination of the phenomenal world might nonetheless turn out to be real. But according to Coleridge, the phenomenal world, as real, containing symbols that are at once fully real and partially ideal, proves the reality of an ideal world we can only imagine.

Kant describes such arguments as examples of an "inverted reason" – a *hýsteron próteron* (or 'Latter-Former') – which puts the cosmological cart before the rational horse. As Kant notes, such inverted arguments have found expression since the advent of human history:

> It is a quite remarkable fact – even though by nature it could not have happened differently – that in philosophy's infancy human beings started from the point where we would now prefer to end: they started, viz., by studying their cognition of God and their hope for another world, or perhaps even the character of such a world (CPR 771).

An inverted use of reason consists in precisely this historical phenomenon – in starting from the point where one should end. While for Kant the idea of a divine designer is merely a regulative ideal that provides philosophical inquiry with the productive goal of systematic unity, this idea becomes an excuse for an inverted use of reason when "one begins by presupposing as hypostatic [i.e., substantive] the actuality of a principle of purposive unity; and because the concept of such a supreme intelligence is in itself quite inscrutable, one determines it anthropomorphically" (CPR 654). Coleridge himself suggests that "the natural Man" is liable to fall prey to the temptation of "anthropomorphic monotheism" by losing sight of "the Infinite in striving after the One" (SM 60), yet he fails to avoid the error himself.

Coleridge's willingness to invert reason in this way signifies a perversion of the wondering epochê and a preference for the love of system over the love of wisdom. In the discussion of Keats's "irritable reaching after fact & reason" above (KSL 42), I noted Schiller's warning of a "pernicious" and "almost insurmountable tendency toward teleological judgements" that is propelled by the modern love of system (AE 70n1). This tendency is a manifestation of the inverted reason that Kant and Schiller both discourage. Just as Kant criticizes the thinker who "thrusts purposes upon nature forcibly and dictatorially, instead of seeking them – as is proper – along the path of physical investigation" (CPR 654), so does Schiller chasten those of us who, encountering "Nature," find that…

> all her diversity is lost upon us, because we are looking for nothing in her but what we have put there, because we do not allow her to come forward to meet us, from without, but rather strive with impatiently anticipating reason to go out from within ourselves to meet her… (AE 70n1).

One hears in Schiller's words echoes of the distinction between exegesis and eisegesis. The hermeneutical scholar's most basic rule is that one must (in Schiller's words) learn how to distinguish the moments when nature has "come forward to meet us" (exegesis) from the moments when we encounter not nature but "what we have put there" (eisegesis). The premodern distinction between exegesis and eisegesis is already informed by a philosophical wonder, and it implies that as evocative as Coleridge's interpretations of the symbols of the natural world may be, they are examples of premature teleological judgments – judgments not of what simply "come[s] forward to meet us" in nature but of "what we have put there." Moreover, Coleridge's willingness to take the idea of an absolute totality not as regulative but as constitutive takes for granted that such a totality is possible. This is precisely what Kant had sought to avoid: "Although in reason's empirical use this idea [of absolute totality] can never come about [as realized] completely, the idea yet serves as a rule as to how we are to proceed …" (CPR 649). Instead of employing the idea of an absolute totality as a philosophical ideal, Coleridge consistently stated his ambition to forge "a total and undivided philosophy" (BL I.282).

g) "Extremes Meet": Coleridge's Undivided Trinities

In his notebooks of 1805, Coleridge cries, "Who that thus lives with a continually divided Being can remain healthy!" (CN II.2557). In this chapter, I have argued that one continual division in Coleridge's being was the epistemological tension between wonder and system. In *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930), the novelist Hermann Hesse's narrator describes a similar conflict that occurs in Goldmund, a young man who harbors conflicting longings:

> It was impossible to emulate simultaneously the kindly humble Abbot and the extremely intelligent, learned, brilliant Brother Narcissus. Yet every fiber of his youthful soul strove to attain these two incompatible ideals. It caused him much suffering.[84]

Coleridge, like Goldmund, appears to have suffered as a result of his effort to respect both a humble wonder that (in Derrida's words) suspends the aspiration toward transcendent understanding and a learned system that aspires toward transcendent understanding.[85] By the time he publishes his *Statesman's Manual* in 1816, he has discovered at least one cause of this unhealthy dividedness:

> … ungenial, alien, and adverse to our very nature would appear the boastful wisdom which, beginning in France, gradually tampered with the taste and literature of all the most civilized nations of christendom, seducing the understanding from its natural allegiance, and therewith from all its own lawful claims, titles, and privileges. It was placed as a ward of honour in the courts of faith and reason; but it chose to dwell alone, and became an harlot by the way-side (SM 73-74).

The first cause of this perverse harlotry is the thought of the French, but the second cause (and the more culpable because from it more was expected) is the faculty of understanding itself, which has forsaken "its natural allegiance as a ward of honour in the courts of faith and reason." According to Coleridge, the understanding is "an instrumental faculty *belonging* to reason," and he takes pains to distinguish this reason from "the abstract reason" that is "the mere *organ* of science"; rather, the reason to which the understanding belongs is "the integral *spirit* of the regenerated man" – the reason, more specifically, through which Coleridge has integrated and regenerated himself (SM 69). While an unhealthy, divided person allows his or her understanding to operate independently, a person "of healthful and undivided intellect" employs the understanding only "as a tool or organ" of the integral spirit of reason, which "without being either the Sense, the Understanding or the Imagination contains all three within itself" (SM 68-69). To reinforce his belief that this tri-fold unity represents the proper, healthful state of the intellect, Coleridge looks for corroboration in nature, and he finds that this "undivided Reason," which he has "endeavoured to contra-distinguish from the Understanding," has its natural correlate in every "single tree or flower" that abides "as one of the great organs of the life of nature" (SM 72). Moreover, no "arbitrary illustration," this organic correlate to his concept of the undivided reason is a "symbol," a concrete example of "the same Power in a lower dignity" (SM 72). As distinct from "a mere *simile*," which is "the work of my own Fancy," a symbol is "established in the truth of things" (SM 72). As distinct from "a metaphor or allegory or any other figure of speech or form of fancy," a symbol is "an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents" (SM 79). Coleridge's "undivided Reason" is not the only tri-fold unity that he creates to heal the dividedness of his thought and being. Reason in turn participates in a further triad. For Coleridge as for Anselm, "Reason and Religion differ only as a two-fold application of the same power" (SM 59), and Coleridge's faith in the Christian Trinity gives him the confidence to suggest that,

> There exists in the human being, at least in man fully developed, no mean symbol of Tri-unity, in Reason, Religion, and the Will. For each of the three, though a distinct agency, implies and demands the other two, and loses its own nature at the moment that from distinction it passes into division or separation (SM 62).

Just as the understanding can betray its "natural allegiance" to faith and reason, so might any member of this Tri-unity of thought, spirit and action betray the other two and in so doing lose "its own nature." In calling this Tri-unity a "symbol," Coleridge underscores his belief that this Tri-unity *actually* "exists" in those human beings who are "fully developed," just as every symbol "partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible," and "abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is a representative" (SM 30). Participating in this natural union of Reason, Religion and Will, the symbol of Tri-unity is more than an abstraction; it too is natural.

One of the many works Coleridge planned and never finished was "Extremes Meet," a work which itself could have assumed numerous guises, among them "a Volume" composed of

"instances of the Proverb" (CN I.1725), or an "Essay" that would "first explain my system of balanced opposites – & thence the Like in the Unlike" (CN III.3400). The phrase appears once again in the introductory aphorism to his *Aids to Reflection*:

> In philosophy equally as in poetry it is the highest and most useful prerogative of genius to produce the strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues admitted truths from the neglect caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Extremes meet. Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as *so* true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors (AR 11).

The phrase, "Extremes meet," did not appear in the earlier version of this passage that appeared in the *Biographia* and that was quoted at the beginning of this chapter, yet it here takes on a novel character, not merely illustrating the conflict between wonder and system – between the active pursuit of inquiry and the recalcitrant complacence of certitude – but also illuminating the paradoxical figure of Coleridge himself, his health, his discordant thought, and his "divided Being." Admitted truths can begin to seem so true, according to Coleridge, that they lose their resonance and fail to be acknowledged by the people who should know them. For example, one might suggest that if he had finished his essay, "Extremes Meet," compellingly articulating his "system of balanced opposites," it would most likely have suffered exactly this fate. By extension, such would have been the fate of his soon-to-be-completed magnum opus, the "circle" that was "coming round to, and to be, the common sense" (TT I.492). Analysis, as Hegel explains, is not enough: "The analysis of an idea, as it used to be carried out, was, in fact, nothing else than ridding it of the form in which it had become familiar," the state in which it "is not cognitively understood" (§31-32; PS 18). The task of philosophers and poets is, as Coleridge suggests, for them to harness their genius, create "the strongest impressions of novelty," and rescue familiar truths from neglect.

Yet the process itself must be a dynamic one, self-moving and perpetual. It must be the work of a philosophy of wonder that is grounded in a love of wisdom, and not of a philosophy of system that is grounded in the love of knowledge. Extremes must meet *and divide* again and again. No static system can unite all the "insulated fragments of truth" and overcome the defect of being "half the truth – but not more" (TT I.248, 395). Nonetheless, Coleridge harbored his ambition of "a systematic knowledge of our collective Knowing" – "a total and undivided philosophy" in which "philosophy would pass into religion, and religion become inclusive of philosophy" (BL I.282-83). Each of the sections above address a tension that is at work in Coleridge's writings, and each of these tensions participates in the more general tension between the conception of wonder that prevailed in premodernity and a conception of system that prevailed in modernity. What were the epistemological goals of Coleridge's theoretical writings? He never decided.

2. Wordsworth's Resistance:

Coleridge's and Wordsworth's

Competing Conceptions of Philosophical Poetry

a) Wordsworth and Philosophy

In the previous chapter, I argued that Coleridge's prose writings animate an unresolved tension between the opposing epistemological attitudes of wonder and system – a tension latent in the enigmatic and paradigmatic figure of Socrates and in the dissonant relationship between the premodern and modern conceptions of philosophy. While the modern philosophers of the Enlightenment – eager to produce "useful" and "practical" results in accordance with the mandate of modern science and of thinkers such as Descartes (I.142) – generally strove to make judgments, finalize their inquiries and arrange their results in systematic totalities, premodern philosophers suspended judgment and rarely considered any inquiry settled or final. In his own words, Coleridge embraced the modern obsession with forging "a total and undivided philosophy" (BL I.282) – a "system" that would unite all the "insulated fragments of truth" and "reduce all knowledges into harmony" (TT I.248). Yet he also harbored a special appreciation for the premodern conviction that philosophy, like poetry, should "rescue admitted truths from the neglect caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission" (AR 11) – a rescue made necessary by the paradoxical fact that when admitted truths become familiar they are not understood in their fullest vitality.[86] On the first view, philosophical activity aims at the production and organization of knowledge, centering itself on what Ernst Cassirer (playing on the etymology of 'philosophy') has called the "love of system" (Cassirer vii and 8). On the second (and properly etymological) view, philosophy is the love of wisdom – not merely an area of study (or *logos*) but also a way of life (or *bios*) which, instead of striving to produce or organize knowledge, pursues a wisdom that resides in the acceptance that little can be known for sure.[87] The ultimate goal of the previous chapter was to demonstrate that Coleridge's efforts to reconcile these opposing epistemological aims – certainly ingenious (or artfully resourceful) – were perhaps also, paradoxically, ingenuous (or artlessly innocent) in the sense that he may or may not have recognized the incompatibility of these aims. Ultimately, his divided efforts made him the victim of an impossible praxis and of an unhealthily "divided Being" (CN II.2557). He strove to heal this dividedness by conceiving of the human mind as a series of tri-unities modeled after the Christian trinity and by imagining that natural symbols could serve as bridges to the supernatural knowledge that he desired.

Conceding that among the British Romantics Coleridge was most knowledgeable about the history of Western philosophy, this chapter will argue that in his poetic efforts Wordsworth was, perhaps inadvertently, more committed than Coleridge to the love of wisdom and to the premodern emphasis on wonder as the fundamental attitude of the inquiring philosopher. Comparatively indifferent to Coleridge's Enlightenment preoccupations, Wordsworth was able to achieve an intellectual latitude largely unfettered by modern encumbrances such as the anxiety for knowledge production and organization. Soon after their first collaboration on *Lyrical Ballads* – a project which (in Coleridge's words) required Wordsworth "to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us" (BL II.17) – Coleridge presented Wordsworth with an even more ambitious goal: "What Mr. Wordsworth *will* produce,

it is not for me to prophesy: but I could pronounce with the liveliest convictions what he is capable of producing. It is the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC POEM" (BL II.155-56). This chapter will argue that Wordsworth achieved this goal, but not in the way that Coleridge had in mind. Instead of producing the systematic poem that Coleridge expected, Wordsworth consciously or unconsciously resisted Coleridge's demands, allowing his poetic theories and practices to be infused with and directed by a philosophical wonder that consists in a *resistance* to system.

The works of Edmund Husserl and the later works of Ludwig Wittgenstein – the twentieth-century founders of phenomenology and ordinary language philosophy – illuminate the tension between wonder and system, and Wordsworth's poetic theories and practices foreshadow their own unique efforts to renew the premodern emphasis on philosophical wonder. Though Wittgenstein's early *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) epitomizes the craving for system and for "a total and undivided philosophy" (BL I.282), Wittgenstein eventually became disenchanted with this approach and began to do philosophy in a very different way. At the beginning of his later period Wittgenstein appropriated the language of phenomenological method to characterize his newly forming philosophical practice, distinguishing the descriptive project of the (in his case, "grammatical"[88]) phenomenologist from the explanatory project of the physicist:

> Physics differs from phenomenology in that it is concerned to establish laws. Phenomenology only establishes the possibilities. Thus, phenomenology would be the grammar of the description of those facts on which physics builds its theories.
>
> To explain is more than to describe; but every explanation contains a description (PR 51).

While "explanation" is an Enlightenment preoccupation, the perennial practice of "description" (and re-description) is essential to the premodern conception of philosophy as a way of life. Wittgenstein asserts that "every explanation contains a description," and he validates the importance of any "grammar" of description that "establishes the possibilities" of "laws" without striving for explanatory closure. Similarly, Husserl hoped that the descriptive efforts of phenomenology (conceived as "the science of consciousness" [HIL 13]) would provide a foundation upon which the sciences could base their work in the future.[89] Moreover, both Husserl and Wittgenstein believe that the most suitable objects for their philosophical investigations are concrete objects and exemplary suppositions.[90] While for Kant the thing-in-itself is an inaccessible presence that is shadowed forth in the perceived world of phenomena, Husserl in polemical opposition to Kant's formulation calls philosophers to stop positing the presence of a transcendent thing-in-itself and to instead go 'To the things themselves!' (*zu den Sachen selbst*), the immanent phenomena available to consciousness (I 35-6), tasking himself with producing "piece[s] of pure description *prior to any 'theory'*" that would record his encounters with phenomena that "are *simply there for me, 'on hand'* in the literal and figurative sense" (I 56, 51; his italics). Likewise, Wittgenstein speaks of his desire to produce a "phenomenological colour theory" – "a theory in *pure* phenomenology in which mention is only made of what is actually perceptible and in which no hypothetical objects – waves, rods, cones and all that – occur" (PR 273). Like the phenomenologist, Wittgenstein believes that an investigation is "pure" when the perceiver describes the colors *as they appear* without allowing *theories about* color to interfere with his or her perceptions. He reinforces this emphasis on

concrete nuanced description in *Culture and Value*, a posthumously published collection of aphorisms, when he discusses a certain "semitic" and "*unpoetic* mentality, which heads straight for what is concrete" – a mentality which is, he adds, "characteristic of my philosophy" (CV 6e).[91] These priorities of description over explanation and of an attention to things and examples over extant theories suggest a philosophy of wonder and a resistance to system. Wordsworth – the self-appointed poet of nature in all its concrete manifestations and matter-of-fact details – would have found Husserl's and Wittgenstein's emphasis on the faithful description of concrete phenomena quite similar to his own practice. His only question would have been why Wittgenstein deems this mentality "unpoetic."[92]

One of the primary goals of this study as a whole is to examine the early books of *The Prelude* with an eye for the ways that Wordsworth's poetic practice resembles the investigations of thinkers like Husserl and Wittgenstein, and for this reason these chapters will be peppered with apposite remarks from these thinkers. However, before entering into the analysis of Wordsworth's *Prelude* that will absorb Part II of this study, it is necessary here to look more closely at Wordsworth's and Coleridge's tacit dispute about the natures of philosophy, poetry and philosophical poetry and to illuminate the philosophical trends against which Wordsworth was reacting. Because Wordsworth's long poems, *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, were composed and presented as parts of the larger unfinished work, *The Recluse*, which Coleridge hoped would become "the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC POEM" (BL II.155-56), one can characterize the philosophical achievement of Wordsworth's *Prelude* only after examining (as we did in chapter one) Coleridge's divided emphases of wonder and system and (in this second chapter) the peculiar ideal of a systematic poetry which Coleridge expected of Wordsworth and against which Wordsworth was reacting. In this connection, Wittgenstein's remarks on wonder, the familiar, scientific explanation, and his own peculiar form of philosophical investigation will be particularly helpful in revealing the chasm that divides Coleridge's half-hearted adherence to the modern love of system and Wordsworth's more consistent commitment to the premodern ideal of a philosophical wonder. Wonder not only directs and complements Wordsworth's method of inquiry but suffuses his entire attitude toward the world, transforming a way of thinking into a way of life.

The next section (b) will examine Coleridge's stated plans for *The Recluse*, Wordsworth's efforts to placate Coleridge while composing poems according to his own lights, and the ways that Coleridge's plans and Wordsworth's efforts have been received by succeeding generations of commentators. The two sections that follow will consider Coleridge's and Wordsworth's competing conceptions of philosophical poetry by (c) analyzing Coleridge's peculiar expectation that *The Recluse* should exhibit "the Totality of a System" and by (d) showing how Wordsworth in his prose works (beginning as early as 1800 and spanning toward his supplementary essay of 1815) developed poetic theories and practices that were calculated to *resist* the kinds of systematic statements Coleridge wanted him to deliver. Sensing Coleridge's ambivalence and finding himself incapable of producing a long poem that would reconcile his friend's competing priorities, Wordsworth shaped his poetic theories and practices accordingly. In opposition to Coleridge's devotion to system, Wordsworth's theories bear a striking resemblance to a phenomenological method which, according to Eugen Fink and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, has origins in the premodern philosophy of wonder. As the conclusion (e) will suggest, these reflections upon the relationship between Wordsworth's poetic theories and phenomenological method will, in turn, prepare the way for ensuing chapters that consider

Wordsworth's *Prelude* as the quintessential example of the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder.

b) "Wordsworth's System" and Its Reception

> Whatever in Lucretius is Poetry is not philosophical, whatever is philosophical is not Poetry: and in the very Pride of confident Hope I looked forward to the Recluse, as the *first* and *only* true Phil. Poem in existence. Of course, I expected the Colors, Music, imaginative Life, and Passion of *Poetry*; but the matter and arrangement of *Philosophy* – not doubting from the advantages of the Subject that the Totality of a System was not only capable of being harmonized with, but even calculated to aid, the unity (Beginning, Middle and End) of a *Poem*.
>
> ~ Coleridge, letter to Wordsworth (30 May 1815)[93]

In 1815, Wordsworth presented Coleridge with a copy of his nine-book poem, *The Excursion* – the first published installment of a much larger epic poem called *The Recluse*, which was to be Wordsworth's life-work.[94] In response, Coleridge felt obliged to confess that *The Excursion* did not live up to his vision for *The Recluse*. He wrote Wordsworth a letter in which he sought to explain what his expectations for the poem had been and why they had been disappointed. Certainly, in perusing the poem, he "expected [to find] the Colors, Music, imaginative Life, and Passion of *Poetry*." Yet these characteristics should, he thought, be calibrated to complement the poem's overall content and structure, which should exhibit "the matter and arrangement of *Philosophy*" and "the Totality of a System."

What exactly is Coleridge proposing in this letter? His comments upon Lucretius indicate that he is in possession of some pointed opinions about what makes poetry poetical and philosophy philosophical. The set of poetical qualities that he outlines is nicely calculated to include the visuality ("Colors"), the rhyme, rhythm and meter ("Music"), the cognitive engagement ("imaginative Life"), and the emotional commitment ("Passion") that come together to form a poem, which is a harmonious union of what the reader sees and hears and what the poet thinks and feels. A poem is, in short, a remarkable confluence of human events. Not only must the poet create images with words, but the reader must see them too. Not only must the poet echo and assemble subtle textures of sound, but the reader must sense the pattern too. In addition, the inner lives of the poet and the reader must jointly give unity to the poem, and the poet and the reader must also jointly locate or cultivate a shared font or structure of feeling. The priority Coleridge gives to imagination and passion are emblematically Romantic – as illustrated by Coleridge's distinctions between the primary imagination, the secondary imagination, and the fancy, by Wordsworth's claim that for the young, "Poetry is, like love, a passion" (PW III.63), and by Byron's claim that, "poetry is itself passion" (BLJ V.582) – yet his description could also, for the most part, be taken as a representative description of the art of poetry in general.[95]

As if all this were not already enough, Coleridge also avers that while poets typically compose poems in response to their inspirations and arrange them more or less intuitively into lines and stanzas, the philosophical poet must satisfy not merely the above set of poetical requirements but also those of a philosophical treatise. The parallelism of the first clause ("the

matter and arrangement of *Philosophy*") with the next clause ("…the Subject that the Totality of a System…") suggests 1) that "the matter" is the philosophical "Subject" of the poem and 2) that the proper "arrangement" of a philosophical poem, like that of a philosophical treatise, is to produce a work that achieves "the Totality of a System."

1) When one ponders the proposed "matter" or "Subject" of Coleridge's projected philosophical poem, one wonders if poetic imagery (esteemed for its concreteness, in accordance with Shklovsky's famous rule that in poetry the "stone" should be made "*stony*" [Shklovsky 12]) can or should be employed with the aim of reinforcing philosophical speculations (esteemed for their generality and universality). Intriguingly, however, this conception of a philosophy that aspires toward generalities and universal truths is replaced in the works of certain twentieth-century Continental thinkers by a contrary emphasis on the seemingly minor and accidental phenomena of human experience that a defamiliarizing wonder brings to light. According to Wittgenstein,

> the old idea – roughly that of the (great) western philosophers – was that there were two kinds of problem in the scientific sense: essential, big, universal problems and inessential, as it were accidental, ones. According to our conception on the other hand we cannot speak in science of a *great*, essential problem (CV 10e).

Wittgenstein's aim is not to speak in great, overarching generalities that would encompass all matters (i.e., explanation directed toward system), but instead to cultivate keen insights about smaller problems that are seemingly "inessential" and perhaps even "accidental" (i.e., description directed by wonder to *resist* system and attend to the ordinary). Consequently, his conception of his own philosophical practice is strikingly similar to the preoccupations of the poet who is concerned with creating images that will incite fresh ways of thinking and perceiving in readers. Wittgenstein declares, "A good simile refreshes the intellect" (CV 1e). On his view, the creation of such similes is the task not only of poets but also of philosophers of his ilk. "I don't believe I have ever invented a line of thinking," he says. "What I invent are new *similes*" (CV 19e). According to the later Wittgenstein, the tools of the poet and the philosopher are, in this instance, compatible.

2) However, while Wittgenstein's remarks suggest that the "matter" of philosophy could prove compatible with the conventions of poetry, they also suggest that he would have more trouble reconciling himself to Coleridge's demand for the proper "arrangement" of philosophy. Wittgenstein's description of his own philosophical practice accords far more closely with the kind of philosophizing Kant and Coleridge reject than with the kind that they expect. This suggests that while the later Wittgenstein bears a natural affinity to premodern thinkers such as Aristotle and Aquinas who view wonder as a common concern of both poets and philosophers (Aquinas 1961 24), Kant and Coleridge are more driven by the modern yearning for systematic totalities that suppresses philosophical wonder.

Coleridge's craving for system and his conception of the system as a genre are amply documented in his lectures and published works. As I noted in chapter one, Kant says, "Under reason's government our cognitions as such must not amount to a rhapsody; rather, they must amount to a system, in which alone they can support and further reason's essential purposes" (CPR 755). Kant's pejorative treatment of rhapsody in the first *Critique* may well have stirred Coleridge's own commitment to the system as a genre as well as his expectation of receiving a

systematic poem from Wordsworth. Already by the time of his lectures on Shakespeare and Milton in 1811-12, Coleridge was complaining of poems that exhibited the defining characteristics of a "rhapsody," which "were made up by heaping together a certain number of images, & a certain number of thoughts, and then merely tying [them] together with a string as if it had [been] bought at a penny the yard" (CLL I.272). In the *Biographia*, Coleridge offers further evidence of his conception of the system as a genre with a particular "arrangement" when he speaks of his plan to offer "demonstrations and constructions of the Dynamic Philosophy scientifically arranged" (BL I.263), and when he suggests that Richard Saumarez's second book, "an Examination of the natural and artificial Systems of Philosophy which now prevail," is "not quite equal" in "style or arrangement" to Saumarez's first book, "a new System of Physiology" (BL I.162n). What were the defining characteristics of the system genre? Citing Johnson's *Dictionary*, Clifford Siskin observes that in the eighteenth century the system was defined as a genre that engages in "the 'reduc[tion]' of 'many things' into a 'regular' and 'uni[ted]' 'combination' and 'order'" (Siskin 2001 204). It was just such qualities that Coleridge would have had in mind, particularly those qualities impressed upon him by Kant's influence. That the system might be called a genre, according to Kant's formulation, is evident when one observes that he distinguishes the "content" that is proper to a given science from its proper "articulation," which is that of a "systematic unity" (CPR 757). Coleridge may well have Kant's conception of the system genre in mind when he speaks of the proper "matter [or content] and arrangement [or articulation] of *Philosophy*" (CL IV.574).

However, while Coleridge argues that the "willful resignation of intellect" that *ignores* the call to produce a "system of philosophy" is "contra-natural" (BL I.141), Wittgenstein suggests, in a 1937 remark, that it is, instead, the system which runs counter to the natural flow of inquiry, producing unnecessary material and absorbing energy that might have been more fruitfully employed in further attention to concrete inquiries:

> If I am thinking about a topic just for myself and not with a view to writing a book, I jump about all round it; that is the only way of thinking that comes naturally to me. Forcing my thoughts into an ordered sequence is a torment to me. Is it even worth attempting now?
>
> I *squander* an unspeakable amount of effort making an arrangement of my thoughts which may have no value at all (CV 28e).

Wittgenstein reaffirms this conviction a few years later in the 1945 preface to his *Philosophical Investigations*, where he confesses, "my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination" (PI ix). Thus, it would appear that Wittgenstein's own philosophical practice bears a much stronger likeness to a rhapsody (from the Greek *rhaptein*, to string together + *ōidē*, ode or song) than to a system. When one considers Coleridge's unusual expectation that not only philosophy but *even poetry* should exhibit the "arrangement" and "the Totality of a System," one is forced to wonder how this could and why this should be achieved.

Later in life, Coleridge himself appears to have had misgivings about his systematic goals. One witnesses, for example, a slippage in what Coleridge means by the term "system," which leads one to suspect that he may have retroactively revised his conception of the tasks he had set for himself and for Wordsworth. In an installment of *Table Talk* dated July 21, 1832, he

discusses the intended design of Wordsworth's *Recluse* once more, saying, "the plan suggested and laid out by me was – that he [Wordsworth] should assume the station of a man in repose, whose mind was made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy" (TT I.307). This statement of Coleridge's plan for Wordsworth's poem sounds quite similar to the one Coleridge describes in the 1815 letter. Yet after outlining a number of the topics this system would address, Coleridge adds, "It is what in substance I have been all my life doing in my system of philosophy" (TT I.308). This is a curious claim, as readers of Coleridge's published and unpublished writings frequently come across plans for projected works that never appeared. Most recently, nearly two centuries after its inception in Coleridge's mind, the *Opus Maximum* has been completed by the work of dedicated scholars who have succeeded in piecing together unfinished manuscripts into a whole based on Coleridge's plans. Yet in 1832, not long before his death, Coleridge speaks of "what I have been all my life doing in my system of philosophy" as if there were already a system available for perusal. It would appear, then, that in his last years Coleridge was employing a very different conception of system than the one that framed his letter to Wordsworth, according to which he demanded a distinct and regular order or "arrangement" and would reduce many things into a systematic unity or "Totality." Between his 1815 letter to Wordsworth and his writings of the 1830s, Coleridge appears (on my reading) to have drifted from thinking of the system as a genre with particular formal characteristics to thinking of it as a conceptual framework that is *latent* (i.e., not formally articulated) in the text and need not be articulated systematically.[96]

Another curious feature of Coleridge's late-in-life vision for the form of *The Recluse* arises in the same installment of *Table Talk,* where he shifts from suggesting the form *The Recluse* should take to criticizing the form *The Excursion* does take. This shift is important because of its implications for his view of philosophy itself. "Can dialogues in verse be defended?" Coleridge asks. "Wordsworth [in] undertaking a grand philosophical poem ought always to have taught the reader himself as from himself; a poem does not admit argumentation – though it does admit development of thinking" (TT I.307). In reading this passage, one is struck, first of all, by the shallowness of Coleridge's objection to dialogue: It is difficult to understand how Coleridge can justify claiming that dialogue is inimical to verse as if Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton had not composed some of the most beautiful poetic lines ever written in the West so that their characters could speak them. Furthermore, when Coleridge says that one "undertaking a grand philosophical poem ought always to have taught the reader himself as from himself," one wonders if Coleridge has forgotten that it is not only poets who have sought to write in dialogue but also philosophers, such as Leibnitz, Berkeley and above all, Plato. In *The Friend*, Coleridge himself praises a small group of writers whose imaginative works took "a scientific or philosophic direction: as in Plato, indeed in almost all the first-rate philosophers – in Kepler, Milton, Boyle, Newton, Leibnitz, and Berkley" (F I.416). It is curious to note that in this list of "the first-rate philosophers," Coleridge includes not only Plato, Leibnitz and Berkeley but also Milton – all users of dialogue – and that the others whom he mentions would today be classified as scientists. Yet while Coleridge's *Table Talk* in one moment praises Plato's dialogues as, "preparatory exercises of the mind" (TT I.98), he declares in another moment (alongside his criticism of Wordsworth's use of dialogue), "I must confess that even in Plato and Cicero, I am always vexed that the authors did not say what they had to say at once in their own persons" (TT I.307). In his determination to criticize the philosophical rigor of dialogue, Coleridge begins to sound like the angry and aggressive Thrasymachus of Plato's *Republic*. "You know very well that it is easier to ask questions than answer them,"

Thrasymachus tells Socrates. "Give an answer yourself, and tell us what you say the just is" (336b-c; Plato 1992 12). In criticizing Plato's artistic rendering of the Socratic method of questioning, Coleridge forgets that the apparent objective of Plato's "preparatory exercises of the mind" was to be aporetical – to provoke thought and intentionally *resist* a direct statement of opinion that might extinguish thought. Coleridge wants Wordsworth to adopt the posture of one "whose mind was made up" (TT I.307), and this posture is inimical not only to the premodern conception of philosophy but also to much of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's best poetry, as for example in Coleridge's 1817 version of the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in which the text of the poem and its marginal glosses compete for dominance and resist a univocal interpretation. Moreover, when Coleridge concedes that "a poem does not admit argumentation," it becomes even less clear what he might have meant when he urged that the poem should embody the "matter and arrangement of *Philosophy*." If a system is nothing more than a written work that demonstrates the "development of thought," one can only assume that most works – Plato's and Wordsworth's dialogues included – should have met his standards. His late-in-life concession that poetry and argument are inimical flies in the face of his earlier expectations for *The Recluse*.

Though Coleridge is commonly taken as the most accomplished philosopher among the British Romantic poets, Wordsworth began to grapple with the incompatibilities between the poem and the system almost two decades before his philosophic friend and collaborator expressed his own reservations in the 1830s. In his 1814 preface to *The Excursion*, Wordsworth declares, "It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system." The great weight he places on the word "formally" becomes clear when he adds, rather ambiguously, that if the author succeeds "in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty extracting the system for himself" (PW III.6). Wordsworth is struggling to describe *The Excursion* (and perhaps *The Prelude*) in a way that will satisfy Coleridge's philosophical expectations as well as his own sense of poetic form. His denial that he intends "formally to announce a system" is a denial that a poem should exhibit the form and the explicitly defined purpose of the system as a genre. As early as his 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth had called for poems that are "naturally arranged" (PW I.132), and in 1802, he added that "the Poet's art" involves "an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe" that is "not formal, but indirect" (PW I.140). The strict arrangement and design of the system and its direct and explicit argumentative purpose run counter to Wordsworth's earliest published theories about poetic composition. How, then, should one interpret Wordsworth's assertion that he offers a system that is implicit and easily extractable? His efforts seem calculated to assuage Coleridge's demand for a system, yet the results leave something to be desired. One wonders precisely what Wordsworth means by "system" if he foresees such an easy "extraction." The daily intercourse of human life provides plenty of "lively images and strong feelings," though few people experience the spontaneous emergence of an all-encompassing system that explains them. While a well-crafted system will contain many "clear thoughts," such thoughts, one must assume, will form a system only if the author conveys them systematically. Either consciously or unconsciously, Wordsworth has struck a compromise between Coleridge's plans for *The Recluse* and his own: Instead of defining the system as a genre with particular formal characteristics, he defines it as a conceptual framework that is latent in the text and built in collaboration between author and reader. Perhaps Wordsworth consciously concocted the notion of a latent, extractable system in an effort to placate Coleridge. Regardless of his intentions, however, what is important is his recognition (nearly two decades before Coleridge would come to similar conclusions in his *Table Talk*) that the *systematic poem*

is a strange and contradictory ideal. What poetry and philosophy share (this study argues) is the defamiliarizing and vitalizing power of a philosophical wonder – an affinity that the contrary ideal of a systematic totality would destroy.

Coleridge's and Wordsworth's preoccupations with the system had a significant impact on scholarly reactions to their work. Despite the objections that might be made against the accessibility or verifiability of such a latent system, Leslie Stephen is one commentator who, with some careful distinctions, nonetheless takes Wordsworth at his word. In "Wordsworth's Ethics," Stephen argues that when "extracted" and properly assembled, Wordsworth's "doctrines" can be shown to "fall spontaneously into a scientific system of thought" (Stephen 136 and 139-40). While Stephen has apparently lifted the words "extracted" and "system" directly out of Wordsworth's 1814 preface to *The Excursion*, his insertion of the word "spontaneously" is a curious one, which might derive from Wordsworth's description of poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" in the 1800 preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (PW I.126; 148). If this *is* what Stephen has in mind, one might raise some objections. Feelings are a matter of expression, but ideas (especially whole architectonics of ideas!) are a matter of *com*pression. If poetry can emerge in a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, this does not imply that a philosophical treatise can or should emerge in the same way. Perhaps sensitive to such objections, Stephen, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, is careful in his description of this peculiar form of poetic system, which does not exist in the physical world but instead "falls spontaneously" into existence in the reader's mind:

> The difference [between the poet and the philosopher] is that the poet has intuitions, while the philosopher gives demonstration; that the thought which in one mind is converted into emotion, is in the other resolved into logic; and that a symbolic representation of the idea is substituted for a direct expression (127).

Here Stephen demonstrates his awareness of the practical and formal differences between poetry and philosophy, yet it is difficult to comprehend how with any validity a reader could "extract" a poet's "intuitions," assemble them into a system and attribute the "system" to the poet. One cannot help but feel that in this context the construction of Wordsworth's system is indistinguishable from the construction of Stephen's (perhaps Wordsworthian) system. Yet one is also aware that Stephen (writing decades before the legend of *The Recluse* as "Wordsworth's great failure" had been promulgated[97]) was somewhat justified in attempting to extract the system that Wordsworth said was latent in *The Excursion*.

In the preface to his edition of *The Poems of Wordsworth* (1879), Matthew Arnold cites Stephen as a prime example of a group of people whom he calls "the Wordsworthians." According to Arnold, these are people from whom Wordsworth's poetry must be protected:

> …. we must be on our guard against the Wordsworthians, if we want to secure for Wordsworth his due rank as a poet. The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy, – so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of 'a scientific system of thought,' and the more that it puts them on, – is the illusion (W 48).

Though Stephen has taken a kind of liberty in proposing to extract and reassemble Wordsworth's system, he is more careful with Wordsworth's words than Arnold, who attributes to Wordsworth a "formal philosophy" despite Wordsworth's explicit denial that he has announced one (W 48). Wordsworth has rejected the strict arrangement ("*formally* to announce") and the explicitly articulated purpose ("formally to *announce*") of the system as a genre (my italics; PW III.6), and Arnold has ignored this nuanced effort to suggest the kind of philosophizing that can be expected from his poetry. Nonetheless, Arnold's claim that Wordsworth's philosophy is an "illusion" has become one of the introductory critical obstacles for scholars who wish to consider the relationship between philosophy and Wordsworth's poetry.

While commentators after Arnold have had differing views about whether Wordsworth's poetry can be properly called philosophical, they have tended to steer clear of Stephen's emphasis on extracting a system from it. Newton P. Stallknecht prefaces his study, *Strange Seas of Thought* (1958), by saying,

> I hope that the reader will not expect me to produce a Wordsworthian 'system' of philosophy. There are, as it happens, several interesting and important philosophical points of view which may be called Wordsworthian; but, despite Leslie Stephen, there is no Wordsworthian system of ethics or of metaphysics and I have tried most conscientiously not to manufacture one (Stallknecht 1962 viii).

Some commentators, such as F. R. Leavis and W. B. Gallie, have taken the absence of system in Wordsworth's poetry as a sign of Wordsworth's inadequacy, though they might have considered whether the system and the long poem could or should ever, in fact, be joined. In the chapter on Wordsworth that he included in *Revaluation* (1947), Leavis, following Arnold, refers to the "Wordsworthians" as those who see "something for positive acclaim" in Coleridge's declaration that "'Wordsworth possessed more of the genius of a great philosophic poet than any man I ever knew.'" Leavis states that in expecting a system of philosophy, Coleridge "proposes for Wordsworth an ambition that proved unmistakably beyond Wordsworth's powers" (Leavis 154-55). Though Gallie asserts that Wordsworth's *Prelude* has philosophical significance and suggests that in it Wordsworth identifies "the inadequacies of certain of our categories," Gallie likewise states that Wordsworth "had not the ingenuity to replace these categories by a new system" (Gallie 664).

Commentators have not wavered, however, in assuming that Wordsworth's and Coleridge's plan for a philosophical poem would be modeled on the genre of the system. In *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (1984), Kenneth R. Johnston says, "Both Wordsworth and Coleridge still conceived of philosophy as a logically integrated system of metaphysical articulations about the universe rather than the human-centered programs of psychology, history, or language that have become modern refinements of traditional philosophy…" (WR xiv). While I would give Wordsworth more credit than Leavis and Gallie, who assume that Wordsworth's intellectual shortcomings are the reason he shunned Coleridge's project of a systematic epic poem, it seems reasonable to assume, as Johnston does, that Wordsworth might have imagined no other way of doing philosophy than the construction of a system. Then again, maybe Wordsworth was consciously or unconsciously pursuing a kind of philosophy quite different from his modern predecessors and contemporaries.

Yet here I must be careful. The question of the philosophical import of Wordsworth's poetry is much contested, and therefore, precarious. As Stephen Gill declares, "I will waste no time asking 'Is Wordsworth a philosophical poet?', since this is invariably the prelude to pointless manoeuvres aimed at redefining the word 'philosophical' to ensure that the answer is Yes" (Gill 143). I sympathize with this remark as it resonates with my own experience reading commentaries that illuminate the philosophical issues raised by Wordsworth's poetry. These ingenious studies identify countless rich and insightful confluences between Wordsworth's poetry and the competing philosophical positions extant at the time of his writing, yet they often do so without substantial evidence to suggest that Wordsworth was much acquainted with these positions or with the thinkers who espoused them. In a brief survey of such commentators, one might begin with Arthur Beatty (1922), who "found it easy" (as David V. Erdman observes) "to define all of Wordsworth's psychological thinking as a development of Hartley's branch of associationism – but difficult to prove when (or even that) he had read Hartley" (Erdman 1956b 497n19) – a difficulty that, more or less, remains the case today.[98] Beatty's is one example of a peculiar form of source criticism, which relies upon Wordsworth's friendship with Coleridge when it cannot demonstrate that Wordsworth has in fact read the philosopher in question. Melvin Rader's study (1967) takes similar causal liberties, yet contra Beatty, Rader highlights the German transcendentalist tradition instead of the Hartleian reading. While Stallknecht in his early work (1929) emphasizes Wordsworth's Spinozism, he later opts to emphasize Wordsworth's pantheism (1958). Grob (1973) and Thomas (1989) offer interventions that mediate between Beatty's and Rader's classic arguments while offering nuances of their own.[99] Each study attempts either to introduce a new philosophical influence or to temper and integrate the influences commentators have already identified.

Gill's complaint about the "pointless manoeuvres" of commentators implies that the concept of philosophy has become so overdetermined – so belabored by the varied *philosophies* it must contain – that the question of whether Wordsworth is a philosophical poet cannot yield scholarship that is interesting or useful. Despite Gill's apparent frustration, however, it might be worthwhile to examine why philosophy can be so variously defined and what its overdetermination says about the discipline of philosophy and about the possibility of a philosophical poetry. Perhaps this overdetermined concept of philosophy in Wordsworth studies has been the result of nearsighted readings of Wordsworth that are moored in the writings of specific thinkers he might have read. Instead one might consider the philosophical import of Wordsworth's poetic theories and practices with an attention to the underlying epistemological attitudes that have expressed themselves throughout the history of Western philosophy. Such an attention would call not for source criticism and theories of authorial influence but for an examination of the similarities and differences between the activities of poets and philosophers in general. This study proposes that by examining the tension between the premodern and modern epistemological priorities of wonder and system, one can better understand why philosophical studies of Wordsworth and contemporary philosophy programs have become overdetermined by schools of thought and lost their grounding in the love of wisdom. Referring to Cicero's *Hortensius* (now lost), which was itself a Latin corollary to Aristotle's *Protrepticus* (also lost) (Fitzgerald 437), Augustine writes, "the only thing that pleased me in Cicero's book was his advice not simply to admire one or another of the schools of philosophy, but to love wisdom itself, whatever it might be, and to search for it, pursue it, hold it, and embrace it firmly" (III.4; Augustine 59). Yet, as Pierre Hadot has observed, this has become much more difficult since the founding of the discipline of philosophy, which methodically introduces students to "*philosophies*" or

"philosophers' systems" instead of to the wondering practice of philosophizing (Hadot 2002 1-2). It is useful to begin this study of philosophical poetry by recalling Augustine's and Hadot's invitations to give priority to the love of wisdom itself, over and above the various extant schools or systems of philosophy.

A closer examination of F. R. Leavis's remarks on Wordsworth gives one a sense of why the concept of philosophy can seem so overdetermined.[100] Though Leavis claims that the construction of a system was "far beyond Wordsworth's powers" (155), he is also willing to concede that, "He [Wordsworth] had, if not a philosophy, a wisdom to communicate" (163). Given that philosophy literally means the 'love of wisdom,' one must ask what Leavis and other commentators mean when they deem Wordsworth's poetry philosophical or unphilosophical. Let us view Leavis's statement in context:

> It was not for nothing that men like Mill and Leslie Stephen could count Wordsworth an influence in their lives, and there was more to be derived from him than mere emotional refreshment –
>
> > He laid us, as we lay at birth,
> >
> > On the cool flowery lap of earth.
>
> He had, if not a philosophy, a wisdom to communicate. The mistake encouraged by Coleridge is understandable, and we can see how *The Recluse* should have come to be projected – see, too, that the petering out of the enterprise in that long life does not prove essential failure (though it proves the enterprise misconceived). It may be said, fairly, that Wordsworth went on tinkering with *The Prelude* through his life instead of completing the great 'philosophic poem' because, as he had in the end tacitly to recognize, his resources weren't adequate to the ambition – he very obviously hadn't enough material (163).

In this passage, Leavis certainly shows himself to be a reader of Arnold. Just as Arnold criticizes the British Romantic poets because they "did not know enough," alleging that they proceeded "without sufficient materials to work with" (FC 262), so does Leavis criticize Wordsworth because "he very obviously hadn't enough material." Yet in this statement Leavis provides two different conceptions of philosophy, one explicit and the other implicit (and perhaps inadvertent). On Leavis's first conception, which is suggested by his reference to the plan for *The Recluse* as a "mistake encouraged by Coleridge," philosophy is a profession in which practitioners gather knowledge into systems. Philosophical professionals must have the intellectual "resources" to classify, analyze and synthesize whole libraries worth of "material," and Wordsworth, according to Leavis, lacked both the resources and the material. On Leavis's second and implicit conception, which is suggested by his claim that Wordsworth had "a wisdom to communicate," philosophy is a wondering way of life that pursues wisdom before knowledge, resisting the desire to systematize. Far from aspiring to "deliver upon authority a system of philosophy," as Coleridge would have it (TT I.307), these philosophers would think it a great deal to have "a wisdom to communicate," and even if they could communicate it, they would be unlikely to call themselves wise or knowledgeable.

According to which of these two conceptions of philosophy might one determine the possibility of a philosophical poetry? Leavis himself gestures toward a possible answer. In all fairness, he reminds us, "Wordsworth went on tinkering with *The Prelude* through his life instead of completing the great 'philosophic poem.'" What are we to make of this? Is it possible that Wordsworth might have chosen "tinkering" over "completing"? Completion seems so much more satisfying. Yet perhaps Leavis vaguely suspected that there is something more to this impulse to tinker – and not complete. Is there a way to understand Wordsworth's tinkering response to Coleridge's systematic expectations that does not involve calling Wordsworth's efforts a failure?

c) Coleridge's Ideal of the Philosophical Poem as a System

> Should it please the Almighty to restore me to an adequate state of Health, and prolong my years enough, my aspirations are toward the concentring [of] my powers in 3 Works. The first (for I am convinced that a true System of Philosophy (= the Science of Life) is *best* taught in Poetry as well as most safely) Seven Hymns with a large preface or prose commentary to each – 1. to the Sun. 2. Moon. 3. Earth. 4. Air. 5. Water. 6. Fire. 7. God ...
>
> ~ Coleridge[101]

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a *poetic composition*. It must, as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future or past. For I was thereby revealing myself as someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do.
>
> ~ Wittgenstein[102]

The striking parallels between these two passages offer a rich terrain within which to contemplate the possibility of a philosophical poetry and the relationship between poetry and philosophy in Coleridge's writings. While Coleridge is "convinced that a true System of Philosophy (= the Science of Life) is *best* taught in Poetry," Wittgenstein suggests that "philosophy ought really to be written only as a *poetic composition*." Coleridge's and Wittgenstein's shared suggestion that the ideal form for philosophy is a *poetic* composition is curious, first of all, because the genre typically employed for a work of systematic philosophy is, of course, the system – a constructed unity consisting of discrete segments that inform and build upon each other and that aspire toward comprehensiveness and completion. In view of this modern emphasis on the system, it seems strange that Coleridge and Wittgenstein should independently adopt the notion that the ideal form for *philosophical* activity is a *poetic* composition – a notion which, oddly, affirms the validity of a view that Wordsworth attributes to Aristotle: "Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing" (PW I.139).[103]

What makes this situation even more curious is, secondly, that neither Coleridge nor Wittgenstein indicates precisely *why* they believe that a poetic composition is the ideal genre for

philosophical activity. The omission is partly justified by the setting of these assertions. Each announcement is made privately – the first in a letter, the second in conversation with a student.

A third and related parallel is that instead of offering explanations for their claims that would invite acceptance in rational discourse, each writer justifies his claim by deferring to the details of his autobiography and to his own creative limits. In claiming that philosophy should be rendered in verse, both thinkers ironically imply that they are unlikely to achieve this goal. While Coleridge couches his belief that "a true System of Philosophy" is "*best* taught in Poetry" in his hope that he will one day have the health, leisure and energy to produce such a systematic poem, Wittgenstein candidly concedes that his belief in a philosophy rendered in poetic form places his ultimate ambitions beyond his grasp. That each writer should enter into the autobiographical mode instead of into the argumentative mode at the moment when rational discourse demands justification for this claim suggests that both writers harbor an unusual conception of philosophical activity. Indeed, while Wittgenstein's informal observations in *Culture and Value* at one point suggest that "working in philosophy" is "really more a working on oneself" (CV 16e), Coleridge's notebooks (years before he officially begins work on his *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*) announce: "Seem to have made up my mind to write my metaphysical works, as *my Life*, & *in* my Life – intermixed with all the other events / or history of the mind & fortunes of S. T. Coleridge" (CN I.1515). That philosophy is a kind of autobiography, or that philosophical reflections should appear as figures against an autobiographical background – these are strange notions, which implicitly undermine the assumption that philosophers can arrive at objective, universal truths. Though modern philosophical discourse gives priority to objective verification over subjective opinion and accidental circumstance, Coleridge and Wittgenstein appear to put an extraordinary amount of weight on subjective justification.[104]

Yet one great difference between these passages is that while the later Wittgenstein here as elsewhere appears to have embraced a kind of philosophy that (in Richard Rorty's words) is more edifying and descriptive than systematic and explanation-driven,[105] Coleridge is primarily concerned with the "true System of Philosophy" that he wishes to produce and only secondarily with the poetry in which it would be rendered. It appears that in his view the poetry would function as a pedagogical tool, on the assumption that poetry is the form in which certain subjects are "*best* taught." This letter appears sixteen months after the one he sent to Wordsworth regarding his vision for *The Recluse*, and the brevity of this second reference to a systematic poem makes it impossible to tell whether it accords with Coleridge's 1815 conception upon which the poem exhibits the "arrangement" and the aspiration toward "Totality" of the system genre or with his 1832 conception upon which the system is in some manner latent within the text of the poem and not formally evident. Either way, his longing to deliver "a true System of Philosophy" and his definition of philosophy as "the Science of Life" appear to be guided by the explanatory agenda of the Enlightenment.

By contrast, elsewhere in *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein announces, "Man has to awaken to wonder – and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again" (CV 5e). In the same aphorism, he suggests that Renan is incorrect "if he supposes that scientific explanation could intensify wonderment" (CV 5e). These reflections resonate with Wittgenstein's predilection for a phenomenology that describes without the intrusion of preconceived theories, as opposed to generalizing sciences like physics that seek to establish

laws and deliver explanations (PR 51). An explanation-driven approach aspires toward the kinds of "knowledge-claims" which, according to Rorty, have dominated the profession of philosophy since Kant helped to found it.[106] As Wittgenstein's observation suggests, the cultivation of wonder and the complaisance of scientific explanation at times function as competing epistemological attitudes: While wonder is other-directed, scientific explanation is at times self-aggrandizing. While wonder is an awakening to thought and to the phenomenal world, scientific explanation at times attempts to resolve questions and put them – and by extension, to put one's mind – to sleep with regard to the particular issue at hand. Of course, this is not the attitude of scientists in general, and according to Rorty, philosophers of science such as Thomas Kuhn have done much to counteract the explanation-driven pursuits of past scientists who adopted the current paradigm as absolute and ignored alternative viewpoints despite persuasive evidence. In speaking stereotypically about "scientists," Wittgenstein aims to polemically challenge the tendency of inquirers to privilege persuasive paradigms or assumptions over and above persuasive new evidence that the current paradigm obscures. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein's critique seems to be directed primarily at the persuasiveness of a particular metaphor, as becomes clear when he notes, "What a curious attitude scientists have –: 'We still don't know that; but it is knowable and it is only a matter of time before we get to know it!' As if that went without saying" (CV 40e). As the title of Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* suggests, the history of philosophy has been dominated by a metaphor that tells inquirers they should aim to 'discover' as many of the world's hidden truths as would allow them to claim that their knowledge mirrors nature, explaining all of its appearances and occurrences. Wittgenstein skeptically challenges those who naively accept the validity of the mirror of nature metaphor and imagine that it is only a matter of time before everything that can be known is known. As Wittgenstein's, Kuhn's and Rorty's views suggest, it is just as likely that truths are *made* and not found.

Wittgenstein's metaphorical likenings of explanation to sleeping and of wonder to awakening help to illuminate Coleridge's ambivalent views about poetry and philosophy. In particular, it highlights the ambivalent nature of Coleridge's contradictory yearnings, on one hand, to produce "a total and undivided philosophy," and on the other hand, to philosophize in a manner that resembles the poet who "rescues admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission" (BL I.282, 82). According to Wittgenstein's view, the first conception of philosophy is of a thought put to sleep by the closure of explanation and system; the second conception of philosophy is of a thought awakened by a vitalizing wonder that resists closure and system. Wittgenstein seems to reinforce this dichotomy in the second sentence of his epigram above, where he says that from his yearning to render his philosophy in a poetic composition, "It must, as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future or past." This claim suggests an allegiance with the premodern philosophers of the past who saw a greater affinity between philosophy and poetry – and perhaps a special allegiance with Plato, the philosopher poet who Northrop Frye hailed as "the only philosopher who was artist enough to master a visionary form" (Frye 87). How strikingly such an admiration for Plato's "visionary form" would differ from the view of Coleridge, who announces, "I must confess that even in Plato and Cicero, I am always vexed that the authors did not say what they had to say at once in their own persons" (TT I.307). In the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel complains of a common tendency among philosophers to become "fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity" and to assume that "a given philosophical system" should be "either accepted or rejected" (§5; PS 2). Coleridge's wish

that philosophers such as Plato would "say what they had to say at once in their own persons" might well derive from this impulse to accept or reject views with an eye for those that would gel with his inchoate plans for his own system. He calls Plato's dialogues "preparatory exercises of the mind" (TT I.98), but he seems to think that he has outgrown these dramatizations of philosophical wonder. He now wishes that Plato would expound views he could either affirm or deny.

In his lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, Coleridge's claims about the relationship between poetry and philosophy are especially conflicted. As I noted in chapter one, Coleridge's redefinition of the 'love of wisdom' as "an affectionate seeking after truth" (BL I.142) is telling because he translates the Greek *sophía* – the word for a 'wisdom' which, according to Socrates, is a kind of *ignorant* knowing (i.e., a knowing of which one does not and need not know) – as "truth" (i.e., a knowledge that can be possessed). This redefinition becomes quite curious when one observes the role of "truth" in Coleridge's mutually incompatible claims about poetry and philosophy. In the lectures, Coleridge would in one moment declare that poetry is the "Antithesis" of philosophy, defining the goal of the former as pleasure and the latter as truth (CLL I.217; also 245), only to speak in another moment of "that two-fold Being of Shakespere, the Poet & the Philosopher, availing himself of it [Logic] to convey profound Truths in the most lively Images…" (CLL I.267). If Shakespeare is at once poet and philosopher, employing logic "to convey profound Truths," why bother to call poetry and philosophy antithetical? Coleridge's most likely reason for this is that Shakespeare is philosophical in a sense that Coleridge feels obliged to acknowledge but cannot ultimately endorse. Though Shakespeare is able to "convey profound Truths," he does so without any desire to verify them, announce them as final, or encapsulate them in a system. His works have philosophical value without meeting the aim of knowledge production that Coleridge and other modern philosophers demand.

In the *Biographia*, Coleridge's conflict over the relationship between poetry and philosophy directly informs his account of Wordsworth's poetry. There Coleridge makes an objection to Wordsworth's *Excursion* that blatantly contradicts his own professed wish that *The Recluse* would have the "arrangement" and "the Totality of a System." He objects to *The Excursion*, he says, "because the object in view, as an *immediate* object, belongs to the moral philosopher, and would be pursued, not only more appropriately, but in my opinion with far greater probability of success, in sermons or moral essays, than in an elevated poem," which should be distinguished from a work of philosophy that "proposes *truth* for its immediate object, instead of *pleasure*" (BL II.130). To first task Wordsworth with the goal of producing a philosophical poem, to then object by personal correspondence because it does *not* conform to the conventions of one genre (the system), and to *then* object publicly because it *does* exhibit some of the characteristics of *another* genre (the moral essay), is vexing indeed. Moreover, that Coleridge should even bother to repeat his distinction between the antithetical goals of a pleasure-seeking poetry and of a truth-seeking philosophy is difficult to comprehend, given his claims in the same work that one of the "cardinal points of poetry" is "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature" (BL II.5); that, "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher" (BL II.26); and that Plato created "poetry of the highest kind" (BL II.14). Again, it would seem that Coleridge feels forced to acknowledge the philosophical exercises evident in the works of great poets as well as the poetical aspects of the works of great philosophers even as he insists that

philosophy must direct itself toward the revelation of hidden truths and the construction of systems.

Wittgenstein's remarks in *Culture and Value* offer insightful challenges to Coleridge's assertion that the aims of poetry and philosophy can be firmly distinguished. In resistance to Coleridge's insistence upon pleasure as the immediate goal of poetry, Wittgenstein says, "People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea *that these have something to teach them* – that does not occur to them" (CV 36e). In resistance to Coleridge's insistence that truth is the immediate goal of the philosopher and not the poet, Wittgenstein says, "A poet too has constantly to ask himself: 'but is what I am writing really true?' – and this does not necessarily mean: 'is this how it happens in reality?'" (CV 40e). Wittgenstein's comments suggest that poetry can teach us not because of some system that it latently distills but because it aspires toward a different kind of truth, which is not necessarily restricted by the need to adhere to what "happens in reality." Wittgenstein's poet is freed from the obsession with system and with knowledge-claims that mirror the objective truths of nature. The descriptions of his poet achieve a different kind of truth.

Though both Coleridge and Wittgenstein would seem to agree with Aristotle's and Aquinas's suggestion that poets and philosophers share a common concern with wonder, Coleridge's yearning to find truths that mirror the objective truths of nature and to embody them in a systematic totality suggests that he conceives of wonder as the mere entry point (or *initium*) for philosophizing and not, like the premoderns, as its "abiding, ever-intrinsic" origin and principle (or *principium*) (L 106). When he is forced to choose between wonder and system, his commitment to system proves more powerful, and the richly divided epistemological tensions that are latent in his writings surface. Even if philosophy – even if a philosophical *poetry* – begins with a wondering attention that resists totalization, it must culminate, Coleridge believes, in a systematic totality. His obsession with the ideal of a systematic poetry is the most compressed and resonant kernel of his conflict between wonder and system.

As chapter one suggested, Coleridge's alternating reliance upon three different conceptions of system (or rather, as Wittgenstein's and Rorty's writings help us to see, three different system metaphors[107]) has helped to conceal the inherent tension between the epistemological attitudes of wonder and system in his thought. While the animal body metaphor served as his primary guide as he fashioned his theory that great poems should exhibit an organic wholeness, the architectonic and process-based metaphors competed for dominance in his philosophical speculations – the architectonic metaphor driving his inquiries toward a totalizing system, the process metaphor insisting that his inquiries reside in a detotalizing wonder that analyzes and synthesizes in a perpetual cycle.

Given Coleridge's alternating reliance upon these three metaphors in his discussions of poetry and philosophy, a natural question arises: In his conception of philosophical poetry, which metaphor or metaphors does he choose to emphasize? Placing the emphasis on philosophical *poetry*, he might have envisioned a poem that would grow as naturally and spontaneously as an animal body. Placing the emphasis on *philosophical* poetry, he might have envisioned a poem that would totalize or resist totalization. In the instance of Wordsworth's *Recluse*, Coleridge gave priority to the architectonic metaphor. In *The Friend*, he had defined "totality" as "encyclopædic learning, exhaustion of the subjects treated of, and the passion for completion and the love of the complete" (F I.421), and in stating that *The Recluse* should

exhibit "the Totality of a System," it is clearly just such an exhaustive treatment of appropriate subjects, assembled into a complete, orderly systematic structure, which Coleridge had in mind. After all, his vision for Wordsworth's *Recluse* was quite possibly the resurfaced symptom of an aborted hope from his early life, voiced in an April 1797 letter:

> I should not think of devoting less than 20 years to an Epic Poem. Ten to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable Mathematician, I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine – then the *mind of man* – then the *minds of men* – in all Travels, Voyages and Histories. So I would spend ten years – the next five to the composition of the poem – and the five last to the correction of it (CL I.320-21).

Coleridge's projected epic poem greatly resembles both Kant's description of "an architectonic of all human knowledge" (CPR 757) and Leavis's description of what Wordsworth's philosophical poem should have looked like – a long poem consisting of particular "materials," which the poet would "collect" for ten years before even commencing its composition (163). As if in homage to Kant, Coleridge's 1815 letter to Wordsworth advocates a strange ideal: a structure which, like a skyscraper, would collect and arrange all his knowledge into an architectural totality, perhaps reaching upward (as the account of Coleridgean symbol in chapter one suggests) toward divine truths of the imaginative reason that are inaccessible to the earthly understanding. Initially, the plan for *The Recluse* was for Coleridge to supply the materials for the structure and for Wordsworth to assemble it in verse,[108] yet when Coleridge failed to deliver on his side of the deal, Wordsworth was left with a double burden that Coleridge expected Wordsworth to shoulder on his own.

How could Wordsworth have produced a long poem that would also exhibit "the Totality of a System"? As the next section – and indeed, the rest of this study – will seek to demonstrate, Wordsworth did not really try to meet this strange demand. Resisting Coleridge's thirst for a systematic totality, Wordsworth began to formulate a theory of poetry and to hone poetic practices that would consist precisely in a resistance to system. In so reacting, he found himself renewing a premodern marriage of poetry and philosophy that centers on the sustained and respectful attention of a philosophical wonder. In conceiving of the system in varying ways and in continuing to forward the totalizing system as the necessary form of the first genuine philosophical poem, Coleridge foisted upon Wordsworth's *Recluse* an incompatible ideal against which Wordsworth reacted, creating a kind of philosophical poetry very different from the one Coleridge had in mind.

d) Wordsworth's Phenomenological Experiments

To account for the history of *The Recluse*, magisterial scholarly commentaries such as M. H. Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism* and Kenneth R. Johnston's *Wordsworth and The Recluse* have compellingly assembled the pieces and charted the trajectories of Wordsworth's unfinished lifework, offering testaments to the abiding intrigue and fascination wrought by ardent artistic aspirations and richly inchoate thoughts. Yet this chapter will conclude by suggesting that Wordsworth's failure to complete *The Recluse* might have been a direct result of a kind of philosophizing that resisted completion. In particular, it will suggest some of the ways that Wordsworth's poetic theories resemble a phenomenological method that gives priority to

wondering attention over systematic completeness, lived experience over general principles, and description over explanation.

Beginning with the publication Geoffrey Hartman's first writings on Wordsworth in the 50s and 60s, commentators have pondered the relationship between Wordsworth's poetry and phenomenological method. Why are Hartman's phenomenologically-inflected readings of Wordsworth's poetry so persuasive? One possible answer to this question – that Hartman is one of the most graceful and insightful scholars writing in the English language – is undeniable. Yet perhaps this is not the only, or the entire, answer. In a 2006 homage to Hartman's work (one of an entire issue that *The Wordsworth Circle* dedicated to Hartman in the winter of that year), Ian Balfour offers a characteristic assessment of *Wordsworth's Poetry* (1964), hailing it as "perhaps the best book on Wordsworth ever and one of the finest single-author studies extant" (Balfour 15). Balfour also confesses that he had, for some time after reading the book, harbored the wish that "later in his career he [Hartman] might turn his attention to another of the Romantics (I was secretly rooting for Keats) as the subject for a book-length study" (Balfour 15). Perhaps aware that fellow scholars had such expectations, Hartman began his second book-length study of a Romantic, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (1987), with the admission that, "I have never been able to get away from Wordsworth for any length of time" (Hartman xxv). Though this particular inability is unlikely to surprise readers of Wordsworth, I would like to suggest that Hartman's attraction to Wordsworth's poetry – and the singular effectiveness of his treatment of that poetry – is more than an affinity of passion, intellect and sensibility. In the forward to *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, Donald G. Marshall asserts that "Hartman's phenomenological approach" is "most adequate to the historical and cultural significance of Wordsworth" (Marshall xvii), and Hartman himself suggests that Wordsworth's poetry sometimes appears to record and animate a kind of "spontaneous phenomenology" (Hartman 1987 xxvi-xxvii). Yet is Wordsworth's phenomenology merely spontaneous? In this chapter, I illustrate that a phenomenological approach to Wordsworth's poetry is most persuasive precisely because Wordsworth's own poetical approach, as framed and articulated in his prose writings, is peculiarly, and presciently, phenomenological.

Though phenomenology was founded early in the twentieth century, its waters are fed by the Western philosophical tradition more than its founder, Edmund Husserl, was consistently willing to admit. The fundamental procedure of Husserl's method is the phenomenological reduction, and this method begins with the suspension of a natural (or perhaps more aptly, a natural*ized*) attitude. Husserl claims that this natural attitude causes me to naively rely upon the blinding assumptions of familiarity and common sense for the constitution of my perceptions. Though it might sound counter-intuitive to say that the 'familiar' is something that 'blinds' people, this is the paradoxical truth that underlies both poetry and philosophy – two practices fuelled by an active wonder that refreshes human perceptions by defamiliarizing the phenomenal world. While the rigor and specificity of the reduction that Husserl employs in his phenomenological philosophy and his particular emphasis on bracketing existence were rather novel, his efforts to remove the recalcitrant, "film of familiarity" that resists perception was distinctly Romantic (BL II.7; DP 533). As Hegel suggests in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), the familiar, as familiar, is "not cognitively understood," and philosophy has traditionally relied upon the activity of analysis to interrogate the familiar, breaking each idea into its component parts or moments (§32; PS 18). Following Hegel and Husserl, Heidegger would later suggest that these notions of the naturalized and the familiar are integral to the concept of

tradition. According to Heidegger, tradition "blocks our access to those primordial 'sources' from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn" (§6; Heidegger 43). In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger's focus on the tradition of Western ontology leads him to suggest that, "If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent, then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved" (§6; Heidegger 44). Tradition hardens and conceals, and it must be loosened and dissolved.

Yet how does the phenomenologist perform this reduction or loosening? According to Husserl's follower, Eugen Fink, philosophical wonder is the key to loosening and dissolving the "hardened tradition" that Heidegger says conceals my everyday prejudices. Fink declares,

> Wonder dislodges man from the prejudice of everyday, publicly pregiven, traditional and worn out familiarity with the existent, drives him from the already authorized and expressly explicated interpretation of the sense of the world and into the creative poverty of not yet knowing what the existent is (PPH 24).

Though it might surprise some postmodern readers, Fink's paradoxical description of wonder as a "creative poverty" coincides with the premodern concept of philosophical wonder. As Fink's footnotes suggest, Socrates (*Theaetetus* 155d) and Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 982b11) were among the first to advocate this notion of a wonder that resists traditional or familiar prejudices and that invites me to challenge my most basic, existential assumptions (PPH 54-55). As the "creative" activity that breaks me out of the passive state of lack or scarcity that is properly called astonishment, wonder is poor, for Fink, insofar as it has relinquished its hold upon certain knowledge, and it is creative insofar as it provides access to a new vantage or attitude like the one Husserl's phenomenological reduction purports to offer.

With the advent of the Enlightenment, however, the encroachment of scientific method upon philosophical practice gradually undermined the premodern attitude of philosophical wonder. In *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), Francis Bacon referred to "wonder" not as an engaged, philosophical attitude but as a form of "broken knowledge" – a thing inherently lacking (Bacon 2001 9). Propelled by the demand that philosophy be "practical" and "useful," Descartes reinforced Bacon's claim by labeling wonder as a dangerously unproductive sibling of a naïve and infertile astonishment (Descartes I.142; I.353-56). Subsequent thinkers, determined to redefine philosophy as the "love of system" (Smith 187; Cassirer vii, 8), effaced the premodern etymology of philosophy as the 'love of wisdom.' These thinkers replaced the wondering reason that suspends judgment with an instrumental reason that occasionally judges prematurely. This premature form of judgment – which Schiller and Keats would later refer to as an "impatiently anticipating reason" (Schiller 70n1), or an "irritable reaching after fact & reason" (Keats 41-42) – was in part driven by an eagerness to construct a totalizing system that would fulfill the primary ambition of the Enlightenment project: to adequately mirror external reality.

In his non-foundational polemic, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), Richard Rorty (expanding upon the work of pragmatists such as John Dewey and philosophers of science such as Thomas Kuhn) shows how extensively the Enlightenment's conceptions of inquiry and of the mind were dominated by this mirror metaphor. "Beginning with Bacon," John Dewey had written a century before Rorty, empiricism "asserted that the mind must be freed from all subjective elements, and become a mirror, to reflect the world of reality" (Dewey 35). This

metaphorical conception of the mind as a potential mirror of reality is evident even in the words we use to describe thought, such as 'reflection' and 'speculation' (from *speculum* or 'mirror'), and its persuasiveness is as apparent in the writings of Plato as it is in the writings of Coleridge.

However, the metaphor of the mirror – which is pervasive in Western thought and which Rorty was among the first to challenge – elicited a curious reaction from Coleridge's friend and collaborator, William Wordsworth. In opposition to Enlightenment thinking, Wordsworth found himself advocating a kind of phenomenological seeing that would not find adequate articulation until the twentieth century. The self, according to Wordsworth, should not be defined as a mind (or inner world) aspiring to become the perfect mirror of a nature (or outer world). Rather, somewhere between the polarizing dualism of a disclosing mind and a disclosed world exists a mutually interpenetrating symbiosis of the sensing self and the sensed universe that can never ultimately be divided. That a poet should think to revise the conventional epistemological attitude of the Enlightenment is not all that surprising when one observes that the descriptive texts of poets and phenomenologists (as philosophers of consciousness) share more in common with each other than with the evidence-based explanations of the scientists who (as essentialist philosopher) seek to discover hidden truths. Wordsworth's reaction against Enlightenment assumptions occurs in strikingly condensed form in the Prospectus to his unfinished epic poem, *The Recluse*, which he attached to his 1814 Preface to *The Excursion*. This reaction comes into starker relief when one considers the parallel manner in which Wordsworth and Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, seem to depart from the attitudes of an Enlightenment thinker such as Francis Bacon, as expressed in Bacon's prefaces to *The Great Instauration* and the *Novum Organum*.

The writings of Bacon, Wordsworth and Husserl provide useful grounds for comparison because they, at first glance, exhibit a number of notable similarities. For example, all three thinkers suggest that their predecessors have been encumbered by the premature acceptance of received ideas and practices; all three employ a conquistador rhetoric of exploration, discovery, and conquest when they speak of the revolutionary nature of their newly founded methods; and all three worry that the novelty of their ideas might serve as an initial encumbrance to the public's comprehension and appreciation. As early as the 1798 Advertisement for *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth described his poems as "experiments" (PW I.116),[109] and in the first half of the twentieth century, Edwin Berry Burgum noted that Wordsworth's 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* reads like "a sort of *Novum organum* of aesthetic study" (Burgum 207). Moreover, Wordsworth's unfinished, three-part poem, *The Recluse* – each part envisaged with epic proportions, and the whole prefaced by a fourth and supplementary autobiographical poem of thirteen books – resembles the scale and ambition of another unfinished English epic of sorts, *The Great Instauration*, which Bacon planned in six parts, completing nearly three of them – the first part, *The Divisions of the Sciences* (an extension and Latin translation of his 1605 *Advancement of Learning*); the second part, his 1620 *Novum Organum* (or 'New Instrument' of Reason); and portions of the third part, *The Phenomena of the Universe* (Urbach x-xi). Along similar lines, Husserl, like Bacon, strove to formulate an entirely new method of approaching the phenomenal world with the aim of providing a new foundation for the sciences. However, both Wordsworth's and Husserl's plans come closest to resembling Bacon's plans just before departing from them.

Bacon and Husserl at first appear to resemble each other in the emphasis that each gives to "things." Though Husserl makes no mention of Bacon in his *Crisis of European Sciences* and though Herbert Spiegelberg's history of the phenomenological movement suggests that Husserl "never showed any deep interest" in Bacon (Spiegelberg 107), Husserl does affirm that his method resembles Bacon's in its assumption that a truly scientific philosophy depends upon a close attention to "things." In the 1927 drafts for his unpublished *Encyclopedia Britannica* article, which he composed in an effort to summarize phenomenology and its historical origins, Husserl remarks, "Since Bacon modernity has been imbued with the striving for a universal world-knowledge in the form of a complete system of the sciences that deal with real things…" (Husserl 1997 151). Generally speaking, Husserl's interpretation of Bacon is correct, though Bacon is primarily concerned with dealing with "real things" and far more modest in his systematic ambitions than Husserl indicates.[110] Insofar as Husserl's phenomenological method calls for a close attention to things, it resembles the 'new instrument' of inductive reasoning that Bacon describes in the prefaces to his *Great Instauration* and *Novum Organum*. Just as Husserl's slogan urges that the phenomenologist go to the things themselves (I 35-6), so does Bacon urge the scientist to engage in a "study of things" modeled after "the first and earliest seekers after truth" who did not naively accept views that were "handed down to them" (Bacon 1994 96).

However, Husserl calls attention to the affinity between these two methods only so that he can show where Baconian induction went astray. In his essay, "Phenomenology and Anthropology," Husserl declares, "Rather than 'interrogate' nature, as Bacon recommended, we must, therefore, interrogate consciousness or the transcendental ego, in order to force it to betray its secrets" (PA 322). Where Bacon goes off course, according to Husserl, is precisely in his naïve acceptance of the received doctrine that he is surrounded (in Husserl's words) by the "real things" of nature and that these things are out there waiting to be investigated. In Husserl's 1917 Inaugural Lecture at Freiburg, the German-speaking philosopher explains that the subject matter of "pure phenomenology" is actually "invisible to naturally oriented points of view" because each of these naturally oriented points of view are grounded upon the assumption that I am a subject surrounded by a world of objects that actually exist (HIL 10). By bracketing existence and conceiving of things not as real or existent but as phenomena or mere appearances that present themselves to the inquiring subject, Husserl founds a method by which "natural objects" can be "experienced before any theorizing" (HIL 11). He calls this method the phenomenological reduction – a "change in attitude" that enables the inquiring subject to bracket (i.e., suspend or place "out of action") the "actuality of all of material Nature," including even that of my own body (HIL 13, 15). Bacon complains that, "the mind, through the daily intercourse of life, has become occupied with received and false doctrines, and is beset with the vainest *idols*" (Bacon 1994 38), but Bacon unwittingly perpetuates this problem: If Husserl were to appropriate Bacon's words, he would say that the preconceived belief in the actuality of nature is among the "vainest" and most pernicious of the received doctrines or "*idols*" that inhibit philosophical inquiry. As Husserl himself admits, one can destroy this idol only with great difficulty: "This radical suspension of Nature stands in conflict, to be sure, with our most deeply rooted habits of experience and thinking" (HIL 16). While Bacon took an important first step in methodically interrogating the things of nature, Husserl noticed that one must first interrogate something even more basic: the consciousness without which the things of nature would never appear.

As an examination of the Prospectus to *The Recluse* and some of the other prefaces suggests, Wordsworth is another thinker who views Bacon's efforts as somewhat compatible with his own. A great irony of Wordsworth's projected magnum opus, *The Recluse,* is that the incomplete and fragmented poem was supposed to be about unity. Wordsworth wanted to unify or marry the visible universe with the conscious self whose five senses disclose it. The union Wordsworth sought to forge with his projected three-part epic poem was, predictably, an ambitious one – a "great consummation" between "the discerning intellect of Man" and "this goodly universe" – two substances which, once "blended," would become an entirely new "creation" (lines 110-29; PW III.7-8). As M. H. Abrams notes, "Wordsworth's holy marriage, far from being unique, was a prominent period-metaphor," one that he shared with other poets and philosophers of the age such as Hölderlin and Novalis, Schelling and Coleridge, Blake and Shelley (Abrams 27-31). Bacon's *Great Instauration* (or 'restoration'), like Wordsworth's *Recluse*, aspires (in Bacon's words) "to restore to its original condition, or at least to improve, that commerce between Mind and Things," establishing "a true, lawful and lasting marriage between the empirical and the rational faculties" (Bacon 1994 3, 14). Bacon adds that once "it has been made clear what is due to the nature of things and what to the nature of mind, I think I shall, with God's good help, have prepared and adorned the bridal chamber of the mind and the universe" (Bacon 1994 23).

At this point, it would be plausible to speculate that Bacon's efforts to restore this union might have supplied Wordsworth not merely with the concepts and imagery that Abrams identifies but also with a point of disagreement in reaction to which he would cultivate an epistemological attitude resembling that of phenomenological method. Admittedly, the likeness between Bacon's "bridal chamber of the mind and the universe" and Wordsworth's "intellect of Man" that is "wedded to this goodly universe" is striking enough to raise the question of direct influence. However, my aim is not to press the possibility of a direct relationship between Bacon's work and Wordsworth's but to forward Bacon as emblematic of those modern thinkers against whom Wordsworth might have reacted, aligning himself, perhaps inadvertently, with premodern and twentieth-century philosophers of wonder. Bacon is not the only possible source for Wordsworth's philosophical innovations, which might also, for instance, derive from reactions against Enlightenment and proto-Enlightenment thinkers whom he read such as Isaac Newton, John Locke, George Berkeley, Joshua Reynolds, and Edmund Burke as well as against acquaintances such as Coleridge and Thomas Wedgwood. While there is evidence to suggest that Wordsworth was familiar with Bacon's writings, [111] I would like to do something different from either identifying new philosophical influences or tempering the already existing accounts of possible influences identified by others. Instead of advocating the pervasive influence of some thinker or other upon Wordsworth, I would like to propose that an analysis of Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder opens up new possibilities by examining the epistemological and descriptive practices that are evident to readers of Wordsworth's poetry and prose.

As the remainder of this chapter will seek to demonstrate, Wordsworth, like Husserl, adopted his epistemological stance as a reaction against the prevailing attitudes of the Enlightenment. In what follows, Bacon serves as an emblematic Enlightenment figure – the kind of thinker in contradistinction to whom phenomenological thinking first found expression. If in the course of this essay, certain similarities between Bacon, Wordsworth and Husserl should emerge, they should be understood not as a contradiction of the argument that Wordsworth and

Husserl are departing from Enlightenment thought but as a reinforcement of the idea that tradition influences future thought in complex ways, inciting not merely agreement but also disagreement and qualification. Wordsworth and Husserl resist Baconian premises by challenging now common assumptions such as the dualism of internal mind and external world, the realism of inquiry and its external objects, and the merely passive role of sense perception. Like Husserl, Wordsworth views sense perception as a kind of passivity in activity, and this paradoxical concept offers a helpful way of grasping his philosophy of wonder. Though Enlightenment thinkers such as Bacon and Descartes relegate wonder to the role of near-knowledge and passive aesthetic state, later philosophers of consciousness such as Wordsworth and Husserl illustrated that a philosophical wonder is neither naïve nor infertile but intrinsically creative.

One common Enlightenment emphasis that Wordsworth resists is the preoccupation with knowledge and facts. Toward the conclusion of the published "Plan" for *The Great Instauration*, Bacon offers a formulation of his now famous suggestion that knowledge is power. "So it is," he says, "that those two objects of mankind, *Knowledge* and *Power*, come in fact to the same thing; and the failure of works derives mostly from ignorance of the causes" (Bacon 1994 29). By "works," Bacon means 'results' (Urbach x), and he attributes the failed efforts of his predecessors to an over-reliance on received ideas and an inattention to observable facts and causes. Coleridge revises Bacon's adage in accordance with his predilection for system, asserting that, "All *system* so far is power," and suggesting that this power is evident even in the seemingly ignorant labors of the "*systematic* criminal" who is "self-consistent and entire in wickedness" (his italics; SM 66). However, in an early draft of *The Convention at Cintra*, Wordsworth qualifies Bacon's words in a manner quite different from Coleridge, arguing that there is a form of "power" wholly distinct from the one that scientific knowledge provides:

> Lord Bacon two centuries ago announced that knowledge was power and justified by the wrong practice which had till that time generally prevailed and by the wants which were then most pressing he strenuously recommended physical investigation to be carried on by induction and experiment for the attainment of knowledge. But knowledge of facts conferring power over the combinations of things in the material world has no necessary connection with the encrease of power in the constitution and faculties of the mind, either in the mind of the individual or in the general mind of the age (PW I.325n).

Here Wordsworth, while complimenting Bacon,[112] also takes pains to distance himself. Though Bacon is steadfastly committed to "things in the material world," Wordsworth suggests that this "knowledge of facts" confers a power quite distinct from the kind that resides in "the constitution and faculties of the mind." His determined effort to distinguish these two types of knowledge – knowledge of things and knowledge of the faculties that disclose those things – marks Wordsworth's move away from Bacon's realism and toward the phenomenological investigation of consciousness. When a phenomenologist *intends* an object – in accordance with the concept of intentionality that Husserl adapted from the writings of Franz Brentano – he or she attends not merely to the object but to the faculties of consciousness that disclose and constitute such objects. Wordsworth, like the phenomenologist, is not content to merely accept as real the "things of the material world"; he is aware of something that deserves separate consideration – something quite distinct from the realism that views external things as the royal road to facts.

Wordsworth also distances himself from the belief held by thinkers such as Bacon and Coleridge that the mind should aspire to become a mirror that reflects all the hidden truths of nature. In the plan for his *Great Instauration*, Bacon says,

> Now the first beginnings of this restoration must only be made by a natural history, and that of a new kind and compiled on a new system. For it would be useless to polish the mirror if there were no images to be reflected, and obviously there must be suitable material prepared for the understanding, as well as safeguards for dealing with it (Bacon 1994 24-25).

In his great restoration of the sciences, Bacon's aim is to "polish the mirror" or instrument (*organon*) of inquiry so that the "images" of nature can be properly and accurately "reflected." In keeping with Bacon's mirror of nature metaphor, Coleridge insists that despite any similarities between poetry and philosophy, poetry is the "Antithesis" of philosophy in that their immediate aims are pleasure and truth respectively, the first aiming to influence the reader's sensibility, the second discovering truths that remain hidden in nature (CLL I.217). Coleridge reaffirms this emphasis on the correspondence theory of truth in his *Table Talk* during the last years of his life, declaring that in his system he has "endeavored to unite the insulated fragments of truth and frame a perfect mirror" (TT I.248). However, in his 1802 additions to the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – compelled, in part, by Humphry Davy's introductory lecture on chemistry at the Royal Institution earlier in 1802 (PW I.112) – Wordsworth declares,

> Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony... (PW I.139).

Though Wordsworth concedes in the same paragraph that the poet's "one restriction" is "the necessity of giving immediate pleasure" (PW I.139), this does not prevent poets from taking "truth" as their "object." Yet the "truth" that Wordsworth pursues in his poetry is distinct from the "individual and local" kind of truth that Baconian induction pursues, which relies solely on the "external testimony" of empirical observation and verification. Wordsworth's "truth" resides instead in the constitution and faculties of the mind, which "is its own testimony" – an assertion that greatly resembles Husserl's own discussions of the *Evidenz* of consciousness, which, though not easily translatable into English, has a near equivalent in the concept of self-evidence (Hill xxv). As Husserl asserts, "Philosophical reflection inquires into the relationship of ideality and objectivity to 'subjectivity,' to consciousness," and *Evidenz* is "*insight*," "the consciousness of a fulfilling, adequate perception"; significantly, it is "a *subjective criterion*, an indicator," which allows me "to differentiate between correct and incorrect judgments" (my italics; Husserl 2008 169, 317-318, 153). According to Husserl, "Science does not consist in direct grasping and seeing, but in indirect deducing and substantiating." Thus, science can find a new grounding in phenomenology, which examines the "distinctive content upon which the tenability and Evidenz of the substantiation hinge" (Husserl 2008 5). In suggesting that poetry approaches a "truth" that is independent of "external testimony" and that "is its own testimony" (PW I.139), Wordsworth resists scientific realism in the same moment that he anticipates the phenomenological practice of intentionality or directedness that attends not merely to object phenomena but to the faculties that disclose and constitute such phenomena. His poetry concerns itself with the *Evidenz* (or the subjectively self-evident testimony) that precedes the deductions and substantiations of science.

Wordsworth also resembles Bacon and Husserl in exhibiting an intense preoccupation with things, yet upon closer examination, both Wordsworth and Husserl depart from Bacon's realism by emphasizing that the human subject encounters phenomena, not things. This parallel departure from Bacon becomes particularly clear in Wordsworth's Essay, Supplementary to the Preface of 1815, which as Abrams observes, "expands upon certain parts of the program announced in the Prospectus, published the year before" (Abrams 483n7). In the sentence that immediately follows Bacon's reference to "*Knowledge* and *Power*" in his "Plan" for *The Great Instauration*, he writes that the success of his method "depends on keeping the mind's eye fixed on things themselves, so that their images are received exactly as they are. For God forbid that we should give out a dream of our imagination for a pattern of the world" (Bacon 1994 29-30). As Abrams has observed, Bacon's description greatly resembles Wordsworth's assertion in the Supplementary Essay that "the eye of the Poet" should remain "steadily fixed upon his object" (Abrams 61-62; PW III.73). Yet while Abrams merely notes this parallel in passing, the present context invites closer examination. Particularly relevant is a passage that appears at the beginning of the Supplementary Essay, where Wordsworth asserts,

> The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions* (his italics; PW III.63).

Still present are Bacon's aims of minutely observing things and of forging a "pure science," free of preconceived prejudices. Yet contrary to Bacon's emphases on receiving images "exactly as they are," on discovering objective truths, and on transforming his mind into a mirror that corresponds to the external world, Wordsworth aims to describe things "not as they *are*, but as they *appear*." The methods of Husserl and Bacon both attend to "things themselves." However, just as Husserl's slogan prioritizes things as they are given to consciousness over the Kantian thing-in-itself – the objective truth which, Kant theorizes, underlies the phenomenal world – so does Wordsworth explicitly aim to describe the things of his world "not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*." These are not occasional emphases in Wordsworth's prose writings. In 1800, he speaks of "certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act" upon the human mind (PW I.130), as well as of having "at all times endeavored to look steadily at my subject" (PW I.132). Moreover, he frequently discusses these objects as if they were mere appearances, speaking of "forms of nature" (PW I.124), of "the image of things" (PW I.139), of "the appearances of nature" (PW III.73), of "the phenomena of nature" (PW III.74), and of "the visible universe" (PW I.142, III.74). He even seems to gesture toward the Husserlian concept of horizon – the ever-vanishing periphery of the life-world, spatially and temporally – when he speaks of the poet's "atmosphere of sensation" (PW III.141). While Bacon longs to fix upon things "as they are," exclaiming, "God forbid that we should give out a dream of our imagination for a pattern of the world" (Bacon 1994 29-30), Wordsworth exhibits no fear of mistaking the world as it appears with the so-called true "pattern of the world." He does not appear to share Bacon's realist assumptions.

Like Coleridge's own hybrid brand of Platonized Kantianism (Vigus), Bacon's worldview begins to look like a realism masquerading as idealism, and Wordsworth cannot accept it. As Coleridge's notebooks suggest, Bacon's views appear to correspond to the Platonic view that second-hand, earthly appearances have a reality only insofar as they participate in a

world of Forms. According to Bacon, "the form of a thing is the very thing itself, and a thing does not differ from its form in any way, otherwise than the apparent differs from the real, or the external from the internal, or as it relates to man and as it relates to the universe" (Bacon 1994 158). If Bacon goes to the things themselves, he does so only so that he can then discover the true nature of these apparent, external and subjective things and get to the real, internal and universal forms submerged within them. Coleridge – playing on the title of *The Great Instauration* (or 'restoration') – casts Bacon as, "The great Restorer of the genuine Platonic Logic – viz – Progress by Induction" (CN I.457-8), and his praise derives from his belief that Baconian induction promises "Progress" toward the underlying truths that Plato called Forms. In formulating his own poetic theories and practices, Wordsworth seems uninterested in pursuing this goal. As in the case of his observation in *The Convention at Cintra* that knowledge of things and knowledge of mental faculties represent two different categories, Wordsworth again feels the need to distinguish (in Derrida's words) between the "essential" and the "empirical," between philosophies of "scientific truth" and "philosophies of consciousness" (Derrida 117): "…the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion" (PW III.141). While Bacon, Kant and Coleridge remain drawn to the objective truths that underlie phenomena, Wordsworth experiences the "presence of truth" when he encounters immanent, "visible" phenomena. He is content to describe the world of phenomena as it appears, without any yearning for objective discoveries.

Finally, Wordsworth rejects Bacon's characterization of nature as a sexual object that the scientist ravishes, instead cultivating an attitude toward nature that is not violently invasive but actively receptive, and Wordsworth's preference for an active receptivity represents another parallel between his own theories and those of phenomenological method. Though Bacon sometimes characterizes his method by using metaphors that are gender neutral, as when he speaks of reaching "the very bowels of Nature" (Bacon 1994 21), he more often sexualizes nature, casting "her" as a beloved whose pursuers, the men of science, must force to submit. The wooing scientists of the past have not, according to Bacon, successfully obliged nature to "give herself up to them" (Bacon 1994 24). Thus, Bacon calls for a new class of "men" who desire "not only to cling to and make use of knowledge already discovered, but to penetrate further; to conquer, not an opponent in argument, but Nature herself in action" (Bacon 1994 40). Climactically, Bacon declares, "such men, true sons of learning, I invite to join me, if they will, so that we can pass by the outer halls of Nature, which any number of men have already trodden, to where at length the way into her inner chambers shall be revealed" (Bacon 1994 40). Though Wordsworth maintains the gendering of nature as female, he recasts her as a mother figure, departing from Bacon and from the dichotomy of conquering wooer and conquered beloved. In his poetry, Wordsworth's speakers approach nature in a manner that is attentive, respectful and receptive, and this receptivity has interesting phenomenological implications. Nature is active and the human subject is *in some manner* acted upon. In "Lines Written in Early Spring," nature assembles or "links" together – one might even say, constitutes – the soul of the poet: "To her fair works did nature link / The human soul that through me ran" (lines 5-6; LB 72). In "The Tables Turned," listeners are invited to, "Come forth into the light of things, / Let Nature be your teacher," on the assumption that, "One impulse from the vernal wood / May teach you more of man; / Of moral evil and of good,/ Than all the sages can." The speaker advises listeners about how to best profit from nature's influence: "Come forth, and bring with you a heart / That watches and receives" (lines 15-16; 21-24; 31-32; LB 104-05).

How does nature act upon humans, and how should humans approach nature? Clearly, for Wordsworth, the approaching human is in some sense passive or receptive, as the "wise passiveness" of Wordsworth's "Expostulation and Reply" suggests (line 24; LB 103-04), yet Husserlian phenomenology illuminates the quality of this receptivity more precisely. In particular, Husserl highlights the paradoxically *active* features of this passivity, which would be necessary for the achievement of Wordsworth's "heart / That watches and receives" (lines 31-32; LB 104-05). In sense experience there is, first of all, "a passivity *prior* to the activity," which forms an "active (receptive) apprehension" that awaits sensory phenomena. However, this active receptivity is also followed by "a passivity which is truly objectivating, namely, one which thematizes and cothematizes objects; it is a passivity which belongs to the act, not as a base but as act, a kind of *passivity in activity*" (EJ 107-08).

Though Husserl's description of a "passivity in activity" that "thematizes and cothematizes objects" employs a technical language that is not immediately accessible to non-specialists, there is, nonetheless, something distinctly Wordsworthian about this conception. In his explicit departure from Bacon, Husserl says that phenomenology aims to interrogate not nature but the perceiving subject's own "transcendental ego," i.e., the consciousness that is revealed when I bracket traditional assumptions about self and world and attend to my own mental activities. This section began with a discussion of Wordsworth's Prospectus and of the likeness between Bacon's "bridal chamber of the mind and the universe" and Wordsworth's "intellect of Man" that is "wedded to this goodly universe." Now it is possible to revisit this passage with a keener sense of the ways that Wordsworth is revising the Enlightenment agenda and anticipating the counter-Enlightenment tendencies of Husserlian phenomenology. In outlining his plan for *The Recluse*, and in reacting against Bacon's own "Plan" for *The Great Instauration*, Wordsworth sings,

> … Paradise, and groves
> Elysian, Fortunate Fields – like those of old
> Sought in the Atlantic Main – why should they be
> A history only of departed things,
> Or a mere fiction of what never was?
> For the discerning intellect of Man,
> When wedded to this goodly universe
> In love and holy passion, shall find these
> 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: – and, by words

> Which speak nothing more than what we are,
>
> Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
>
> Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
>
> To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
>
> How exquisitely the individual Mind
>
> (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
>
> Of the whole species) to the external World
>
> Is fitted: – and how exquisitely, too –
>
> Theme this but little heard of among men –
>
> The external World is fitted to the Mind;
>
> And the creation (by no lower name
>
> Can it be called) which they with blended might
>
> Accomplish: – this is our high argument (lines 105-29; PW III.7-8).

Like Bacon's, Wordsworth's "spousal verse" envisions a "great consummation" between "the discerning intellect of Man" and "this goodly universe," yet with a marked difference: For Wordsworth, when the "discerning intellect" and "goodly universe" are "blended," there explodes into being a great "creation" – a *co*-creation – consisting of phenomena that human consciousness cothematizes in collaboration with the phenomenal world. Wordsworth holds onto the phrase "external World," and this seems to reinforce the old subject / object dichotomy and to imply the existence of an objective realm of truth or Forms. However, Wordsworth counteracts this assumption when he contends that sense experience is *not merely* a matter of "How exquisitely the individual Mind / … to the external World / Is fitted" – a fitting of mind to world that accords with Bacon's and Coleridge's metaphor of the mind as a mirror of nature – but that this fitting is in some sense reversible and certainly more reciprocal than it at first appears. Acknowledging that it is a theme "but little heard among men," Wordsworth contends that sense experience is also a matter of how exquisitely "The external World is fitted to the Mind." The mutual implication of intellect and universe indicates that perception is, for Wordsworth as for Husserl, a co-creative act. I am neither a passive receptacle of nature's stimuli, nor an active revealer of nature's hidden truths. The world that I experience is *created* by the interaction between my consciousness and its phenomena. Thus, one might combine the passages I quoted above from "Lines Written in Early Spring" and "The Tables Turned" in the following way: When in my encounters with the phenomenal world I first managed to bring with me "a heart / That watches and receives," only then "did nature link / The human soul that through me ran." With an attention that Husserl would later characterize as passivity in activity, Wordsworth actively watches and passively receives in such a way that the interplay of his consciousness and the phenomenal world constitute his "soul."

Wordsworth's concept of a soul that is formed (or "linked") through a union (or "wedding") between the perceiving self and the perceived world bears an unexpected likeness to Husserl's concept of the "transcendental ego." Though Husserl takes pains to distinguish the transcendental ego, who encounters "a bracketed 'world,' a mere phenomenon," from the soul or "pure spiritual being in abstraction from the body," who accepts the world as "given" (PA 319), Wordsworth (as the evidence in preceding paragraphs demonstrates) often makes similar distinctions that illuminate his unique conception of soul. Just as Husserl declares that the phenomenological epochê (or suspension of judgment) provides the transcendental ego with privileged access to *cogitata* (or object phenomena) and to the *cogitationes* (or mental activities) that disclose them (PA 319), so does Wordsworth, supplementing Bacon, declare that philosophers and poets should attend to the power of "the constitution and faculties of the mind" instead of merely asserting their authority "over the combinations of things in the material world" (PW I.325n). Just as Husserl declares that the phenomenologist "must pursue to its ultimate grounds what others, following the tradition, regard as scientifically grounded" (PA 317), so does Wordsworth declare that poetry must pursue a "truth which is its own testimony" instead of "standing upon external testimony" (PW I.139). While Husserl asserts that, "Philosophy, genuine science, aims at absolute ultimately valid truths which transcend relativity" (PA 316), Wordsworth asserts that poetry – which, "if genuine, is as permanent as pure science" (PW III.63) – aims at "truth, not individual and local, but general and operative" (PW I.139). Yet, strangely, both Husserl and Wordsworth indicate that this truth is best sought (in Husserl's words) by advocating the apparently "insane" notion that "the world exists only through an act of mine" (PA 321). Husserl seeks to describe the *cogitatum* (or object phenomenon) "exactly as it appears" (PA 321), and Wordsworth seeks to "treat things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*" (PW III.63), because each thinker, to some degree, conceives of the universe as a co-creation of consciousness and the phenomenal world. "We distinguish, ever faithful to what is given intuitively, between the pure or transcendental Ego and the *real psychic subject*, the psyche or soul," Husserl explains, because the soul is "connected in a real way with the respective human or animal Body" (and is, thus, in the natural attitude accepted as a given object), while as a transcendental ego, "I no longer have the world as 'given' to me in advance or with the status of straightforward existence" (his italics; Husserl 2002 128, 417). Curiously, Wordsworth, like Husserl, often resists the impulse to take the world as given in advance. Instead, he takes it as an appearance, and he takes his soul to be something that his consciousness and the phenomenal world have together created and are continually in the process of creating.

Husserl's concept of passivity in activity resonates with this affinity between the transcendental ego and the Wordsworthian soul. In resisting Bacon's realist assumptions, Wordsworth and Husserl posit a world that appears without assuming that world's existence, and in this way the Wordsworthian soul and the transcendental ego undermine the Baconian assumption that nature is out there waiting to be discovered and mirrored, wooed and conquered. Defying the traditional ascendency of activity over passivity (Biceaga xviii-xix), Husserl characterizes this co-creation of consciousness and world as a passivity in activity, indicating that the concepts of passivity and activity are far more flexible and far less opposed than thinkers have typically assumed (EJ 108). In making this claim, Husserl is departing from Kant, whose *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) defines "sensibility" as the receptive capacity that allows the subject "to acquire presentations as a result of the way in which we are affected by objects" and in which "objects are *given* to us" (his italics; B 33; CPR 72). Kant considers sense experience a

mere receptivity (CPR 72n9), but the concepts of the Wordsworthian soul and the transcendental ego suggest otherwise.

In his prose writings, Wordsworth, like Husserl, resists the traditional ascendency of activity over passivity and remains sensitive to the ways that these apparent opposites blend and complement each other. From the time that he described "all good poetry" as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" in his 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (PW I.126; 148), Wordsworth had indicated an awareness of the subtle interplay of passivity and activity that occurs in artistic creation. He warns that this "spontaneous overflow" can only find expression in a poet who possesses feelings formed by "habits of meditation" and a "more than usual organic sensibility" (PW I.126). The poet who possesses such habits and sensibility will be able to produce poetry with a curious blend of passivity and activity. According to Wordsworth, true poets experience "continued influxes of feeling" that "are modified and directed by our thoughts," and "if we be originally possessed of much organic sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits," the true poet will with a subtle mingling of passive and active forces create good poetry (PW I.126). Such passages suggest that Wordsworth's concept of "organic sensibility," anticipating Husserl's later investigations of consciousness, marks a radical departure from Kant's merely passive version of the concept. It appears as though the poet is neither wholly passive nor wholly active but both at once.

Wordsworth also illustrates his sensitivity to Husserl's concept of passivity in activity in his discussions of taste, indicating that the interplay of the passive and the active are as pronounced in the appreciation of poetry as they are in its creation. As Wordsworth observes in the Essay Supplementary, taste, like imagination,

> … is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive, – to intellectual *acts* and *operations* (PW III.81).

However, as Wordsworth also observes, taste is not entirely active either; it is "a passive faculty" which the cultured of modern Europe have, "by habits of self-conceit," perhaps unwisely "made paramount among the faculties conversant in the fine arts" (PW III.81). Thus, Wordsworth pronounces the need for a rounder, more robust faculty of taste that combines the best of the passive and the active. In judging qualities such as proportion and congruity, "the mind is" – fittingly, according to Wordsworth – "*passive*, and is affected painfully and pleasurably as by an instinct" (PW III.81). Yet for the perceiving subject to properly apprehend art, he or she must couple this passive instinct with "the exertion of a co-operating power in the mind," an "auxiliary impulse" without which "there can be no adequate sympathy" with "the pathetic and the sublime" (PW III.81). The apprehension of good poetry, like the creation of it, requires a passivity in activity.

In addition to the ways that it resonates with Wordsworth's theories about the production and appreciation of poetry, Husserl's concept of passivity in activity also illuminates wonder's disparate roles in Wordsworth's poetry and prose as a passive aesthetic state and as an active epistemological attitude. As Edward S. Casey has observed, to be ambivalent about wonder (and about related aesthetic states such as admiration, surprise and astonishment) is to be

"emblematically modern in spirit" (Casey 2007 214). Wary that wonder might compromise the Enlightenment aim of transforming philosophy into a productive instrument of the sciences, Descartes aligned wonder with a naïve and infertile astonishment (Descartes I.353-56) – a coupling that the eighteenth-century founders of the field of aesthetics would later formalize. In the Essay Supplementary, Wordsworth reflects the Enlightenment's reservations about wonder when he speaks of a "blind wonderment" (PW III.74), which would be better described as astonishment insofar as it represents "a temporary baulking of the ability to explain, understand or predict" (Malpas 284). This passive, unseeing form of wonder is also evident in Wordsworth's poetry. For example, in "The Idiot Boy" (1798), Wordsworth's speaker speculates about the activities of Johnny and his horse:

> Perhaps he's turned himself about,
>
> His face unto his horse's tail,
>
> And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
>
> All silent as a horseman-ghost,
>
> He travels slowly down the vale
>
> (lines 322-26; Wordsworth 1969 103).

This is the mute, unproductive astonishment with which thinkers have conflated philosophical wonder since Descartes.

However, Wordsworth was also aware of the importance of an active philosophical wonder. Premodern thinkers such as Aristotle and Aquinas defined wonder as a pleasurable species of fear that results from the consciousness of ignorance and from the yearning to identify causes (Quinn 18-19). Desiring to understand that which puzzles me, I cultivate the active wonder that Socrates called the *arche* ('origin' or 'foundation') – and that contemporary writers have qualified as "the abiding, ever-intrinsic origin" (L 106), the "determining 'cause' or first principle" (Malpas 283) – of philosophical practice (155c-d; Plato 1957 43). Wonder is not merely how philosophy as a discipline began but how philosophical inquiry continually begins and perpetuates itself, and it is best understood as "an endless deferment of certitude," a "state of suspension between the grasped and the ungrasped" (Verhoeven 12, 26), which in antiquity finds expression in the Socratic elenchus and the skeptical epochê (or suspension of judgment). Revealing his awareness of philosophical wonder, Wordsworth notes in the Essay Supplementary that, "Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance" (PW III.74). Describing "The pleasure gathered from [studying] the rudiments / Of geometric science," the *Prelude* narrator highlights the active engagement of this reaction to ignorance in Book VI of the 1850 version of the poem:

> With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased
>
> With its own struggles, did I meditate
>
> On the relation those abstractions bear
>
> To Nature's laws, and by what process led,

> Those immaterial agents bowed their heads
>
> Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man
>
> (VI.121-26; Wordsworth 1969 530).

The speaker's "wonder" consists of an "ignorance" that is "pleased / With its own struggles," and these meditative struggles, though initiated by a fear of ignorance, eventually become pleasurable and worthy of cultivation for their own sake. Moreover, Wordsworth discerns that this philosophical wonder is not applicable only in traditional scholarly pursuits. In "Calm is the fragrant air" (1835), Wordsworth's speaker ponders the inquiry-stirring encounters not of geometry but of sense experience:

> Look for the stars, you'll say there are none;
>
> Look up a second time, and, one by one,
>
> You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
>
> And wonder how they could elude the sight! (lines 3-6; Wordsworth 1969 356).

In encountering the night sky, the speaker attempts to describe phenomena as they appear, wondering at or puzzling over the curiosities and idiosyncrasies of sense experience. The task of the poet, Wordsworth says, is to teach the "art of seeing" (PW III.74), and it was a similar tendency to wonder at the interplay between consciousness and the phenomenal world that inspired Husserl to found the field of phenomenology.

Many of the references to Wordsworth's writings in this essay derive from the Prospectus to *The Recluse* and from its prose companion, the Essay Supplementary – two texts that caused Wordsworth and his friends some distress after their publication for the combination of grandeur, hubris, and bitterness that they betrayed in their claims about Wordsworth's plans, talents, and reception. William Blake famously complained to Henry Crabb Robinson that reading the Prospectus "caused him a bowel complaint that nearly killed him" (Robinson 1967 15). According to Blake's other comments, this "complaint" appears to have been caused by the portion of the Prospectus in which Wordsworth's speaker claims to "pass" Jehovah "unalarmed" and in which he describes his own mind and "the Mind of Man" as formidable inciters of "fear and awe" (lines 91-99; PW III.7). Though touting Wordsworth as "the greatest poet of the page" and as "the *only poet* of the age," Blake wondered after reading this passage, "Does Mr. Wordsw[orth] think his mind can *surpass* Jehovah?" (Robinson 1967 6, 15, 5). According to Blake, while much of Wordsworth's poetry appeared to be "the work of divine inspiration," much of it also exhibited a propensity for "worship[p]ing the natural world" that Blake thought atheistic, since for Blake this world was "nothing real, but a mere illusion produced by Satan" (Robinson 1967 15).

Robinson knew better than to argue with Blake, and so do I. However, I would like to propose that this essay's phenomenological perspective on Wordsworth's writings illuminates an affinity between the two poets that Blake appears to overlook. At the conclusion of his Essay Supplementary, Wordsworth expresses his conviction that his poems "evince something of the

'Vision and the Faculty divine'" (PW III.84), and Blake reacts to this claim in his annotations by saying, "Imagination is the Divine Vision not of The World nor of Man nor from Man as he is a Natural Man but only as he is a Spiritual Man" (E 666). Interestingly, a phenomenological reading of Wordsworth's writings indicates that Wordsworth quite agrees. Wordsworth is not proposing that his divine vision is a vision of the external world, or of man as a natural object, or from man as a natural object; rather, he is proposing that his divine vision is the co-creation and consequence of a spiritual marriage between his consciousness and the phenomenal world. In Blake's *Jerusalem*, Los asserts, "If the Perceptive Organs close: their Objects seem to close also" (30.56; E 177), and Wordsworth's spiritual marriage complements Los's assertion by implying that the objects of the natural world open only when my perceptive organs open. Indeed, in a curiously (if underhandedly) orthodox Christian sense, both Blake and Wordsworth seem to think of the phenomenal world as one that is created out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) and created continually (*creatio continuo*). Blake once wrote, "God is Man & exists in us & we in him" (E 664), and if this is true then it should be no sacrilege to push Wordsworth's suggestions to their natural conclusion and to assert that (in Husserl's words) "the world exists only through an act of mine" (PA 321). In the passage from the Prospectus excerpted above, Wordsworth's speaker declares that once "the discerning intellect of Man" and "this goodly universe" have wedded, "groves / Elysian, Fortunate Fields," will be, "A simple produce of the common day" (lines 105-13; PW III.7). These words suggest that a complete appreciation of this co-created universe would make Elysian, prelapsarian fields the "simple" fruit of even the most "common" human experiences. Though the common and the familiar conceal the wondrous in everyday existence, Wordsworth and Blake, like Hegel, Coleridge and Shelley, sought to dissolve or remove the "film of familiarity" that obstructs my everyday perceptions and to unveil the extraordinary appearances and events that remain cloaked by the most ordinary (PS 18; BL II.7; DP 533).

In speaking of 'Wordsworth's Phenomenological Experiments,' I do not of course mean to suggest that Wordsworth 'discovered' phenomenology or achieved in his writings anything approaching the nuance and specificity of Husserl's interrogation of consciousness. However, according to Coleridge, Wordsworth's earliest poems, conceived as "experiments" (PW I.116), aimed to reveal "the wonders of the world" by "awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom" (BL II.7). In a similar vein, Husserl's followers Eugen Fink and Maurice Merleau-Ponty concluded that Husserl's phenomenological reduction – the central procedure of his method – was akin to a "'wonder' in the face of the world" (POP xv), acknowledging that in a historical sense phenomenology aims to renew the premodern emphasis on a philosophical wonder that one can actively cultivate. While astonishment "*befalls*" me, the "emergence from astonishment," according to Fink, "is not a passive occurrence" (PPH 23, 25). Rather, it is "the creative *force of wonder*" that allows me to actively engage in inquiry (PPH 25). According to Husserl, the phenomenological reduction involves a "change in attitude" that brackets (or puts "out of action") the "actuality of all of material Nature" so that I can describe phenomena *as they appear* without the intrusion of preconceived assumptions about myself as a 'real' subject among 'real' objects (HIL 13, 15). Wordsworth and Husserl both at times conceived of their epistemological attitudes and practices as departures from the realist and idealist assumptions of thinkers like Francis Bacon, and it is remarkable that Wordsworth and Husserl should have reacted against these Baconian and empiricist tendencies in such a similar manner. Nearly a century before the founding of phenomenology, Wordsworth posited a visible universe that is co-created by the collision of human consciousness and the phenomenal world, suggested that

these two are uniquely and reciprocally fitted to each other, and imagined that his role as a poet should be not to penetrate the surface of nature and discover her secrets but to cultivate an attitude of passivity in activity that would allow him to simply and faithfully describe the appearances that the marriage of self and world have produced.

e) Wordsworth as Philosopher

> Working in philosophy – like work in architecture in many respects – is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things. (And what one expects of them.)
>
> ~ Wittgenstein[113]

Earlier in this chapter, I said that Wordsworth did not try to meet Coleridge's standards for *The Recluse*, and this is not exactly true. Wordsworth's Preface to *The Excursion* presents the poem – the second, of such epic length, which Wordsworth had produced – as the second part of the three-part *Recluse* (PW III.5). Clearly, then, Wordsworth did in some sense try to meet Coleridge's demands, and did in some sense succeed in producing something that to his mind fulfilled the plan he and Coleridge had devised for the three-part epic. Yet in both *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, we see Wordsworth resisting the kind of philosophizing Coleridge wants to see.

This chapter's second section began with Coleridge's reaction to *The Excursion*, and it is fitting to here recall Francis Jeffrey's reaction to the same poem, particularly his discussion of 'Wordsworth's system.' Jeffrey's review begins with the notorious ejaculation, "This will never do!" According to Jeffrey, Wordsworth's *Excursion* appears to have been composed according to some "peculiar system," which Jeffrey attributed to "a settled perversity of taste or understanding" (Jeffrey 457 and 459). In the same years, after Leigh Hunt had told Byron that (in Byron's words) "his style was a system, or *upon system*, or some such cant," Byron said no more to Hunt, averring in a letter to a friend that "when a man talks of system, his case is hopeless" (BLJ VI.46; quoted in Siskin 2009 104). By contrast, in the Preface to his first published installment of *The Recluse*, Wordsworth denied that it was his "intention formally to announce a system" (PW III.3). Likewise, in his 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, he had denied that he "always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived" (PW I.124-26), though of the poems in the collection he promised that "each of them has a worthy *purpose*" (PW I.124) – a promise that leaves open the possibility that in many cases he did not know his "purpose" until the poem was well underway, or finished, and that the poem may even then have had a purpose that he sensed but could not explain. In the same Preface, Wordsworth called for poems so "naturally arranged" that apart from the regularity of their meter they might be difficult to distinguish from prose (PW I.132), adding in 1802 that "the Poet's art" is "not formal, but indirect" (PW I.140). Resisting any "formal" purpose or arrangement that is pre-determined, Wordsworth appears to speak of "purpose" and of "natural arrangement" in the same way that Kant does when he asserts that a "dissector" would be incapable of "*proving* in any case that a natural arrangement – whatever it may be – has no purpose whatsoever" (CPR 651). In "The Tables Turned," Wordsworth's expresses his abhorrence for the way that "Our meddling intellect / Mishapes the beauteous forms of things," famously concluding the stanza with the vivid assertion that, "We murder to dissect" (lines 26-28; LB 104-05). He rejects Bacon's "plan to

look deep into the nature of the real world and to dissect it" (Bacon 1994 24). It should not then be surprising then that it was in measuring against the sort of "natural arrangement" to which Kant refers – and not against the sort of "arrangement" that Coleridge thought would be conducive to "the Totality of a System" – that Wordsworth gauged his success in poetry. His was a purpose no dissector or system-builder could explain or deny.

It is also fitting to acknowledge here, following Roy Park, that "Coleridge never improved upon Jeffrey's final judgment of *The Excursion* as 'an exposition of truisms.'"[114] Instead of complaining, as Coleridge does, of the legitimacy of composing speeches in verse and allowing them to be spoken by characters and not in the author's own person, Jeffrey observes that in *The Excursion* Wordsworth's kind of philosophizing appears to be the rendering of platitudes and commonplaces in verse. Such, perhaps, was what came to mind when Wordsworth sought to obey Coleridge's desire to see him "deliver upon authority a system of philosophy" (TT I.307). In the sense that in their second collaboration on a book Wordsworth and Coleridge failed to achieve a unified vision, one might be tempted to judge *The Excursion*, and consequently *The Recluse*, as a failure. Whether the kind of philosophizing Coleridge demanded *could* ever be distilled into poetic form is an open question. I doubt that it should.

Yet before Wordsworth could begin work on his three-part epic, he thought it necessary to prepare the way by composing a separate yet related work, and he outlined its relationship to *The Recluse* in his Preface to *The Excursion*:

> The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently mature for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church (PW III.5).

Wordsworth's emphases on the "biographical" and on a particular attention to "his faculties" is telling, as chapters three and four respectively will suggest, because, as Wordsworth's *Prelude* amply illustrates, the writing of one's life is never complete, nor is the attention to mental faculties made possible by a practice that Husserl, following Brentano, called intentionality. If Wittgenstein is right, and if philosophy really involves "working on oneself" and on "one's way of seeing things," then Wordsworth's nuanced attention to his own life, to his memories of that life, and most strikingly, to the faculties of remembering and imagining that disclose that life and give those 'memories' shape, may make some readers think of *The Prelude* as one of the greatest philosophical works ever produced of a very particular kind. Wittgenstein's suggestion cuts to the center of this particular kind of philosophizing when he says philosophy is a way of working not just on "one's way of seeing things" but on "what one expects" of that way of seeing. As chapters five, six and seven will show, Wordsworth's attention to mental faculties, to their limits and to their blendings is presciently acute, as is evidenced in the fact that he sometimes exhibits a greater sensitivity than Sigmund Freud (no minor philosopher of the faculties!) to the differences between remembering, imagining and the grey area of confabulation that blurrily joins the two.

Though some have characterized *The Recluse* as Wordsworth's great failure, this study argues that it was not so much a failure as an aborted attempt – tinged, perhaps, with a bit of intentional or unintentional self-sabotage. At Coleridge's urgings, Wordsworth planned to write a systematic poem called *The Recluse* but found himself (from 1799 until his death in 1850)

writing a wondering autobiographical poem that would one day be called *The Prelude*, and in this he is something like the Benedictine monk who, according to legend, tried to produce white wine from black grapes and accidentally produced the first bottle of Dom Pérignon champagne. The monk thought the bubbles in his white wine were a sign of poor quality, but the world has since judged otherwise. In trying to produce a philosophical poem of one kind, Wordsworth accidentally produced one of a different kind entirely, demonstrating that poetry can be a form of writing that is "philosophic" in a sense that Coleridge had only vaguely envisioned.

3. Autobiographical Philosophy:

System as Aporia in Augustine, Wordsworth and Proust

a) Autobiography as System Supplement,

System as Autobiographical Aporia

As the previous two chapters have sought to demonstrate, the projected magnum opera of Wordsworth and Coleridge are fraught with the epistemological conflict between wonder and system. The plan for Wordsworth's unfinished *Recluse* (the three-part philosophical poem that Wordsworth and Coleridge first formulated as a collaboration) and the plan for Coleridge's unfinished *Opus Maximum* (the work Coleridge pursued on his own after leaving Wordsworth to finish *The Recluse*) were both shaped by Coleridge's conception of the system as an architectonic totality that can "unite the insulated fragments of truth" by "at once explain[ing] and collect[ing] the fragments of truth scattered through systems apparently the most incongruous" (TT I.248; BL I.244).[115] In a letter to Wordsworth, Coleridge foisted this ideal upon *The Recluse*, arguing that Wordsworth's lifework should exhibit not only "the Colors, Music, imaginative Life, and Passion of *Poetry*" but also "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574) – an expectation of comprehensiveness and completion that appears to accord with Wordsworth's description of the projected *Recluse* as "a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society" (PW III.5). Along similar lines, Coleridge's own magnum opus – a "system of Philosophy and Faith" rendered not in poetry but in prose – would articulate his "researches and reflections concerning, God, Nature and Man" (CL VI.714). However, these claims for the centrality of system (*qua* architectonic totality) in Romantic magnum opera run counter to the centrality of wonder in Romantic poetry and philosophy. As Coleridge repeatedly affirms, philosophy and poetry are alike, above all, in their shared attitude of wonder in the face of the world and its complexities (F II.74; BL I.81-82; AR 11). Thus, paradoxically, these magnum opera are, on one hand, modeled upon the ambitious goal of a totalizing system, and on the other hand, conceived with the notion that poetry and philosophy are united precisely in *resisting* such a totality – in defamiliarizing the familiar and in rescuing (as Coleridge puts it) "the most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission" (BL I.81-82). Respectively, chapters one and two have suggested that while Coleridge was an occasional advocate of the premodern emphasis upon wonder as the fundamental attitude of the inquiring philosopher, his friend and collaborator, William Wordsworth, was more consistently committed to this emphasis, as is illustrated by his apparent attempts to placate Coleridge's systematic aspirations in word while resisting them in practice, electing to instead cultivate an epistemological attitude of philosophical wonder. Though commentators have often presented the unfinished *Recluse* as Wordsworth's great failure, its unfinished state is, from the point of view of Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder, precisely as it should be.

To fully appreciate this paradox, one must examine the ways that Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, departs from the epistemological attitude of *The Recluse* – the projected systematic poem that *The Prelude* was initially supposed to supplement and ended up replacing in Wordsworth's oeuvre and reception. Here again wonder's resistance to system manifests itself. In addition to its consequences for the study of Romantic magnum opera in general and for the study of Wordsworth's *Recluse* in particular, this epistemological conflict (as

this chapter will show) cuts to the center of the problem of Romantic autobiography, raising questions about the relationship between autobiography and system in works such as Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Coleridge's *Biographia*.[116] A curious fact about these two works is that both were undertaken with the assumption – whether a steadfast belief or a convenient rationalization – that the writer who is "prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy" (TT I.307) might choose to commence this authoritative system by first or simultaneously producing a less-serious-because-less-universal piece of autobiographical writing. As I will further examine below, William Wordsworth conceived of his long autobiography on the growth of his mind as a "preparatory" poem that would serve as a kind of "ante-chapel," "portico," or "appendix" to the "gothic church" structure of the systematic poem that Coleridge encouraged him to produce (PW III.5; EY 594; EY 440). Along similar lines, Samuel Taylor Coleridge – author of that peculiar generic hybrid of autobiography, philosophy and criticism that we call the *Biographia Literaria* – had fittingly, years earlier, scribbled in a notebook, "Seem to have made up my mind to write my metaphysical works, as *my Life*, & *in* my Life – intermixed with all the other events / or history of the mind & fortunes of S. T. Coleridge" (CN I.1515). Though both writers entertained the idea that the creation of a personal autobiography and of a universal system could be sequentially or integrally co-dependant, the unfinished state of their magnum opera suggests that they were each incorrect in imagining that the narrative and descriptive writing practices of autobiography would so naturally give way to or intermingle with the explanatory writing practices that are necessary to produce a system of general and universal application. Their shared error links the conflict between wonder and system to several other affinities and distinctions that this chapter will bring together, such as the tri-partite affinity between wonder, aporia and autobiography as well as the distinctions (some commonplace, others less so[117]) between autobiography and system, subjectivity and objectivity, particularity and universality, description and explanation, and indeterminacy and determinacy.

To concretely demonstrate the relationship between wonder and autobiography and their shared resistance to totalizing system, it is instructive to consider *The Prelude* within the context of the great predecessor and successor texts in a sub-genre of autobiography that I would like to call autobiographical philosophy.[118] Augustine's *Confessions* (398), Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1805[119]), and Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-27) are classic explorations of personal history and human consciousness that also share something peculiar in common. Though commentators have acknowledged each of these texts as stylistically groundbreaking creative autobiographies, these commentators have overlooked the fact that these three texts share an explicit desire to cease describing and narrating particular subjective experiences and become something quite different: explanatory systems of universal value. An examination of this shared feature reveals a curious pattern: Each of these three texts forwards itself 1) as an apprenticeship piece that, in and through its particular subjective descriptions, will prepare the way for a universal system or treatise, and 2) as an apology that attempts to prove the speaker is justified in aspiring toward this systematic aim. Yet most significantly, 3) each of these three texts ultimately require readers to discard these two earlier conceptions and accept the autobiography as a philosophical work in its own right. Though the autobiography initially presents itself as a *supplement* in which the speaker defends his qualifications and demonstrates that he has undergone the necessary apprenticeship for the production of a system of universal value, the autobiography ultimately replaces or *supplants* the system to which it was supposed to be a mere supplement and presents itself as a philosophical work of a different kind altogether, filling the void that the system has left behind.[120] Suddenly, the autobiography has become

primary and the culminating systematic work has become an expendable appendage that the speaker will either never complete or never commence. In aspiring to become a universal system that will explain objective and determinate truths, the autobiography (in the manner of an aporetical Platonic dialogue) reaches an aporia (or non-passage) and instead embraces a philosophy of wonder that attends to and describes the particular and indeterminate phenomena that appear to the human subject[121] – an embrace which, like that of Poe's gothic tales and of twentieth-century phenomenologists, attempts to attend to the indeterminate as a "positive" phenomenon.[122]

An analysis of these three autobiographies gives way to the conceptual narrative that I have attempted to encapsulate with the section title, 'Autobiography as System Supplement, System as Autobiographical Aporia': Initially understood as a supplement to a universal system, these three autobiographies eventually supplant the projected system and acknowledge the leap from the subjective to the objective as neither desirable nor possible. Conceived as a path *toward* system, autobiographical philosophy is ultimately defined by its inherent resistance *to* system and by its demonstration that any writer who strives to pass safely from a descriptive narrative (directed toward subjective, particular, indeterminate phenomena) into an explanatory system (directed toward objective, universal, determinate truths) will encounter an aporia – an experience of nonpassage that can occur in any number of ways:[123] as an endless path; as a dead end; or as the end of space altogether, which one might experience if it were possible to reach the end of our expanding universe and confront the 'non-space' outside its borders.[124] This system-supplanting aporia represents a breach of the literary contract between these three autobiographies and their readers, and it calls for a reconsideration of the relationship between autobiography and system as well as between the other paired terms (e.g., subjectivity/objectivity) I have been discussing. In the case of each of these pairings, autobiographical philosophy – a detotalizing form of philosophizing that is uniquely autobiographical – illustrates that the first term, characterized by its indeterminacy, cannot and should not be given the kind of determinate expression that would result in explanation or discovered truth. Instead, guided by a philosophy of wonder that suspends judgment and resists system, these three examples of autobiographical philosophy attend to the indeterminate or (in a word that Wordsworth and Proust both employ) "unreasoning" phenomena that occur when one contemplates the life of the mind.

The next three sections will suggest that the autobiographies of (b) Augustine, (c) Wordsworth, and (d) Proust each encounter an aporia under different circumstances, which might, respectively, be understood as aporia as endless path, aporia as dead end, and ironical aporia. Initially conceived as a brief introduction to the more universal work to follow, the autobiographical portion of Augustine's *Confessions* (hereafter "C") takes on a life, breadth and depth of its own, resisting closure, until the speaker's haste forces him to pass over portions of his life story in order to move on to the more serious and universal exegetical work that he hopes will follow, only to find that his grand plan of annotating the holy scriptures presents itself as an impossible task, an endless path, and causes him to humbly cut short his exegesis and grant to his autobiographical narrative and to his succeeding reflections on indeterminate phenomena such as time, memory and the unconscious a greater place than he had perhaps intended. Wordsworth's autobiography reaches its aporia when the very prospect of leaving narrative and description behind in order to "deliver upon authority a system of philosophy" (TT I.307) presents itself as an impossible leap, a dead end or abyss, leading him to consciously or unconsciously sabotage

his plans for *The Recluse* by continually revising *The Prelude* and dwelling in its wondering recesses. Proust's autobiography, *À la recherche du temps perdu* – which, literally translated, means *In Search of Lost Time* and which Moncrieff creatively translated with the Shakespearean title *Remembrance of Things Past* (hereafter "RTP") – reaches its aporia ironically, with the speaker Marcel knowing all along, it seems, that no systematic work of universal value will succeed his novel and that his novel is, in fact, a great philosophical work of a unique kind. Finding tiresome any effort to explain in abstract language the cause of his profound sensory experiences and of his involuntarily produced memories, Marcel instead revels in attempting to describe the layers of indeterminate phenomena that present themselves to him and his readers. As the concluding section and first landing place (e) will show, the notion of a detotalizing wonder that resists system finds repeated historical confirmation in the metaphor of the gothic cathedral that inspires wonder with its immensity while ultimately remaining incomplete, like all truly poetical and philosophical inquiries. This section will explore Wordsworth's reasons for abandoning his gothic church metaphor a year after he had first articulated it. While the gothic church structure suggests the totality of a system, the replacement metaphor that leads him to categorize his poems in terms of mental activities exhibits a greater resonance with his philosophy of wonder.

b) Augustine's Aporia as Endless Path

Augustine's *Confessions* begins as an autobiography and transforms into something like a treatise, so as an example of autobiographical philosophy it has peculiar significance. Scholars have long been preoccupied by the text's notoriously inharmonious structure, calling it an autobiography primarily because one wishes to call it something and because a majority of its pages (Books 1 through 9) together represent one of the exemplary instances of autobiography in late antiquity.[125] Yet while the literary scholar is prone to puzzle over the generic relationship between the two (or more) parts and to interpret the allegorical conventions of this creative (i.e., "more-or-less fictional") autobiography,[126] the theologian and philosopher tend to focus their attention on its second part (Books 10 through 13), which largely consists of reflections upon time and memory, the self and the passions, recorded by a historical personage named Augustine of Hippo who wrote at a time when the ancient world had nearly ended and when the middle ages had nearly begun. Commentators have offered numerous schemas and explanations for the text's enigmatic structure,[127] but I would like to center my analysis on one offered by Pierre Courcelle, who considers not merely what the text is but what it sought to become. Courcelle asserts that several factors (among them, the uneven structure of the work, the speaker's exasperated references to the slow progress of its composition, and the enigmatic abruptness with which the book *stops* just after the speaker has offered an explication of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible) indicate that Augustine never finished the *Confessions* and that he had intended to write a grand systematic exegesis to which his autobiography would serve as a mere prelude.[128] Implicit in Courcelle's conclusions is the assumption that Augustine conceived of his autobiography as 1) an apprenticeship or preparation for this grand exegesis and as 2) an apology or defense of his fitness to graduate *from* narrating and describing the subjective particulars of his personal life *to* interpreting the general and universal truths of the scripture. However, Courcelle's hypothesis also implies that 3) Augustine experienced the composition of the *Confessions* as a passage that ultimately became a kind of non-passage or aporia – an endless path that would not allow him to proceed from point to point in the timely manner he desired. Employing Courcelle's analysis as its basis, this section will speculate upon the reasons why

such a passage from description and narration to universal explanation was not possible in the *Confessions*. Ultimately, it will argue that Augustine's speaker experienced an aporia because he was consistently distracted and waylaid by an attraction to the positive skeptical epochê (or suspension of judgment) – a technique through which he could better attend to the unreasoning emotions of his life-narrative and the indeterminate phenomena of human consciousness.

As an example of autobiographical philosophy, the *Confessions* initially forwards its autobiographical narrative as a mere apprenticeship piece – a preparation for the more universal kind of writing that will follow. Augustine's speaker alludes to the preparatory role of his autobiography in moments when he speaks of the two tasks that he has in view: the cleansing confessional autobiography and the explication of God's sacred word that he can commence only after his soul has been cleansed. For example, in one passage, the speaker beseeches God to "forgive my sins and grant me the grace to understand those words, as granted him [Moses], your servant, the grace to speak them" (XI.3; C 256). Theologically, this notion of engaging in a preparatory cleansing ("forgive my sins") before commencing work that would have a more universal appeal ("the grace to understand" the words of the scripture) is rooted in the Catholic conception of confession as a sacrament that prepares the soul to meet its Maker through the intercession of a priest. The text of the *Confessions* implies that the speaker (perhaps because he is a priest) can serve as both confessor and intercessor by engaging whole-heartedly in the autobiographical act. As powerful and transformative as this act is, however, the text presents the genre of autobiography as an ancillary and even parasitic mode insofar as it lacks the health and wholeness that can only come from doing the systematic work for which the cleansing ritual has prepared the speaker. As David Burrell implies in his analysis of the *Confessions*, the personal act of producing an autobiography is naturally secondary to the generalizing act of producing a treatise:

> The closest Augustine comes to anything like a theological treatise can be found in the final three chapters of the *Confessions*. It is as though he dare not undertake anything so risky as the interpretation of Scripture until he has brought himself to an awareness of where he stands and whence he has come (Burrell 334).

According to Burrell's reading, the speaker's preparations are necessary because of how "risky" the task of interpretation can be, presumably because of the possibility of committing an unintentional heresy like so many heresiarchs. In casting Augustine's nine-book autobiography as a preparation for a four-book treatise – or, in some sense, as a John the Baptist who, preparing the way for the Christ, is unfit to tie the Messiah's sandals – Burrell implies that the systematic treatise is the nobler form, the true moment and fulfillment of divine communion, even though the autobiographical portion of Augustine's *Confessions* is more extensive, more structurally coherent and more complete.

A second example of the apprenticeship function of the *Confessions* also leads directly into a discussion of the second feature of autobiographical philosophy: its apologetic nature.[129] Not surprisingly, the presentation or framing of the autobiography as an apprenticeship piece leading *toward* a later work and the rhetorical mode in which the speaker *defends* his ability to produce that later work are two features of autobiographical philosophy that are deeply related and that often occur in the same passages. Yet these two features are nonetheless distinct. One of the clearest examples of the apprenticeship function of the *Confessions* appears in Book IX when Augustine's speaker announces, "time could never suffice for me to set down on paper all

the blessings which you bestowed upon me, particularly at that time, since I must hurry on to tell of greater things" (IX.4; C 185). Given that Book IX is the final book of the autobiographical narrative in the *Confessions*, the speaker's comment would seem to indicate that the "greater things" to come will be different in kind from the preceding text and that the speaker conceives of the text's autobiographical narrative as a prelude to something "greater." But precisely what "greater things" does the speaker have in mind? After exploring in Book X the role that mental faculties such as perception and memory have played in the formation and nature of his present self, he reveals his plan to engage in a task that he deems "greater" than what has until then occupied him:

> I have long been burning with desire to *contemplate your law* and to confess to you both what I know of it and where my knowledge fails; how far the first gleams of your light have illumined me and how dense my darkness still remains and must remain, until my weakness is swallowed up in your strength (XI.2; C 254).

Here Augustine proposes to commence a new kind of confession: a confession not of his past life or even of his present life but of his present knowledge of and confusions regarding the meaning of God's law as it is articulated in the scripture. As Augustine's editor notes, this is a desire that Augustine shares with the poet of the Psalms, who cries, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (KJV Psalms 119.18). In a similar manner, Augustine's speaker cries, "Do not close your door to those who knock: do not close the book of your law to me," and he pleads, "O Lord, perfect your work in me. Open to me the pages of your book" (XI.2; C 254). These imperatives exhibit enough hubris to incite the question: Why does Augustine's speaker feel justified in making the same demand of God that the Psalmist (traditionally identified as King David, slayer of Goliath, father of Solomon) has made? It here becomes clear that the speaker's preceding interrogations of his past life and of the faculties of his conscious mind have given him enough confidence to make this very self-assured demand – one somewhat mitigated by the speaker's concession that there are and will remain many things he does not know and that what he does know he owes to God's "strength" and to the "gleams" with which God's light has "illumined" the object of his contemplations (XI.2; C 254). In this way, the autobiographical portion of the *Confessions* has not merely prepared the way for the more universal work to follow; it has also imbued the speaker with the sense that he is justified in making demands of God. After relating his past sins and his present ambitions, the speaker is not merely lowering himself by confessing the ways of one sinful man to God; he is also raising himself by defending and declaring that man's fitness to justify the ways of God to man.

Presenting itself as an apprenticeship and apology for the more systematic work, autobiographical philosophy reaches an aporia that prevents the desired passage into system and that forwards itself as a replacement. As Courcelle's theory suggests, the *Confessions* encounters an aporia in the sense that it represents an endless path. The continual and unintentional growth of Augustine's autobiography – which Augustine's speaker, declaring his haste to proceed as early as Book III, most likely thought would be brief – substantially modified (and in some sense, displaced) the treatise-like portion of the text that was slated to follow. Even after the autobiographical narrative has concluded, the speaker commences a description of human consciousness that (as I will further discuss below) often dwells upon indeterminate phenomena such as unconscious materials, only to commence his systematic exegesis of the scripture in the final book of the *Confessions*. Already in antiquity, then, one can sense the push

of autobiography against system, and one can observe the logic of supplementarity at work. Initially conceived as an expendable appendage to Augustine's aim of systematically explaining the underlying meanings of God's word, Augustine's descriptive and introspective life-narrative resists the passage into explanation, supplanting the speaker's systematic plans with a detotalizing form of philosophy and spotlighting the gulf that separates wondering autobiography from totalizing system.

This epistemological tension between autobiography and system does not find expression merely in theories about the text's inharmonious structure; it also finds expression in the speaker's profound ambivalence about inquiry and the inquisitive mode of skepticism. From his earliest years as a student, Augustine distinguished himself from his peers by exhibiting great skill at translation, recitation and rhetoric (I.15; C 36), eventually founding his own school of rhetoric in Rome (V.8; C 99-101). He was thus predisposed to admire the argumentative and rhetorical skills of the Academic skeptics, who refused to assent to an opinion in part because, according to Cicero's account of the words of Carneades, an "audience should be guided by reason and not by authority" (Cicero, *Academica*, 2.59-60; HP 269). Yet the religious authorities of Augustine's age viewed his chair of rhetoric as a "chair of lies" that fuels "the insane warfare of the courts" (IX.2; C 182-83). Under the emperor Julian, "a law had been passed to prohibit Christians from teaching literature and rhetoric" (VIII.5; C 164). Thus, Augustine was forced to deal very carefully with rhetoric and with the skeptical attitude that bolstered the questions of rhetoricians. He respected what he could not ultimately accept.

In Book V of the *Confessions*, the speaker recalls that in his younger days he found the epistemological attitude of the ancient skeptics compelling. Invoking the Academic school of skepticism that had preceded him by some six centuries, he confesses, "I began to think that the philosophers known as Academics were wiser than the rest, because they held that everything was a matter of doubt and asserted that man can know nothing for certain" (V.10; C 104). According to Pine-Coffin's translation of the *Confessions*, Augustine's speaker even describes his employment of the skeptical suspension of judgment as a "hovering between one doctrine and another" (V.13; C 108) – a formulation that bears a striking resemblance to Coleridge's later description of the imagination as "a middle state of the mind" that consists in a "hovering between images," in resisting the fixating tendencies of the understanding, and in remaining "unfixed and wavering between them [images], attaching itself pe[r]manently to none" (SL 64-65; CLL.I 311, 319). As the section on the epochê in chapter one noted above, Coleridge's conception of a "hovering" imagination bears much in common with "the creative *force of wonder*" that Eugen Fink distinguishes from a merely passive astonishment and cites as an analogue of the phenomenological reduction (PPH 25; his italics). Augustine's respect for the aporetical practice of "hovering" between doctrines bespeaks a deep sensitivity to philosophical wonder and to the aporias that such an epistemological attitude typically produces.

However, the underlying logic of Augustine's narrative makes clear that in confessing his past admiration for Academic skepticism he is also distancing himself from this attitude, showing that Arcesilaus and Carneades – the Academic skeptics who took their inspiration from Socrates's open-minded, aporetical skills of refutation and sustained inquiry (HP xix) – were yet another example of the false idols that can obstruct the path to the true Savior of Christianity. Though respectful of a positive skepticism, Augustine is also quite explicit about his allegiances and about his predetermined resistance to truths that do not conform to Christian doctrine. In

opposition to the Socrates who in Plato's *Phaedrus* is willing to accept the guidance of any source that is "telling the truth," whether such guidance comes from "an oak or even a stone" (275 B-C; Plato 1995 80), Augustine's speaker admits, "I ought not to have been content with what the philosophers said about such things, even when they spoke the truth. I should have passed beyond them for love of you, my supreme Father, my good Father, in whom all beauty has its source" (III.6; C 60). While Augustine's speaker seems to appreciate the aporetical practice of "hovering" between doctrines (V.13; C 108), he also advocates the apologetical practice of allowing religious faith to guide the course of a philosophical inquiry, and in this he anticipates Anselm's later formulation, "I believe in order to understand" (Anselm 53) – the classic *hýsteron próteron* (or 'Latter-Former') that would fuel the Christian philosophical speculations of the middle ages.

This is what the *Confessions* say; yet it is interesting to observe that this is not always what the *Confessions* do. The text animates a constant waffling between the respectful and committed attitude of the positive skeptic, who contemplates indeterminate phenomena and remains "hovering between one doctrine and another" (V.13; C 108), and the narrowly prescribed, dogmatic attitude of the apologist who is unwilling to consider non-Christian notions or to question the Creator.

Though Augustine's speaker attempts to distance himself from skepticism in general, he also regularly adopts the inquisitive rhetorical mode of questioning. For example, the first five chapters in Book I of Augustine's *Confessions* are filled with open-ended questions. At times Augustine employs a merely rhetorical mode, posing questions that the text implicitly or explicitly answers for himself and his audience. Yet at other times he employs an inquisitive mode, posing a series of questions to which neither he nor his audience can offer definitive answers. Sometimes these series pose metaphysical questions that inquire into the sort of existence a soul has before its birth (I.6, 26); sometimes they pose questions about his past that only the divine mind could know, such as what sins he committed as an infant (I.6; C 27), why God determined that he should be baptized later in life instead of earlier (I.11; C 32), and why God endowed him with rhetorical skills (I.17; C 38). The speaker finds that his *Confessions* offer him a forum for interrogating his life and his world and for pondering phenomena and events that he has found inexplicable.

Ultimately, however, Augustine's speaker feels compelled to suppress this inquisitive rhetorical mode, worried that his curious nature will transform his autobiographical confession into an inquisition in which the speaker interrogates God about what he does not know instead of confessing to God what he does know and should have done. One can trace this decision to suppress the inquisitive mode quite clearly in the text. In Book III, Augustine's speaker, analyzing the emotions an audience feels during a stage performance, feels driven to ask a number of questions to which he does not know the answers:

> … if no one likes being sad, is there just the one exception that, because we enjoy pitying others, we welcome their misfortunes, without which we could not pity them? If so, it is because friendly feelings well up in us like the waters of a spring. But what course do these waters follow? Where do they flow? Why do they trickle away to join that stream of boiling pitch, the hideous flood of lust? (III.2; C 56).

Returning to the theme of the complexity and ambivalence of human emotion in the succeeding book, Augustine's speaker takes up the question of "why tears are sweet to the sorrowful," asking,

> How then can it be that there is sweetness in the fruit we pluck from the bitter crop of life, in the mourning and the tears, the wailing and the sighs? Does their sweetness spring from hope, the hope that you will hear them? When we pray, this is truly so, because it is the purpose of prayer to reach your ear. But is it also true of sorrow for the things we lose and mourning such as then became my cloak? I had no hope that he [my late friend] would come to life again, nor was this what I begged for through my tears: I simply grieved and wept, for I was heartbroken and had lost my joy. Or is weeping, too, a bitter thing, becoming a pleasure only when the things we once enjoyed turn loathsome and only as long as our dislike for them remains? (IV.5; C 76-77).

These words conclude the chapter, and the next chapter begins, "But why do I talk of these things? It is time to confess, not to question" (IV.6; C 77). With this determination, Augustine's speaker almost completely cuts off the inquisitive questioning mode that he had been regularly employing, suppressing it until Book X, when he has officially completed the confessions of his past sins and has begun to address his confessions of his present faith. From Book IV through Book IX, there is only one notable exception in the speaker's resolve to suppress this inquisitive questioning mode (all other question sequences in these books employ the rhetorical mode[130]), and it is interesting to observe that he relaxes his self-suppression in a moment when he once again broaches the fascinating subject of ambivalent emotion, asking,

> How can one soul contain within itself feelings so much at variance, in such conflict with each other? How does it balance them in the scale? Suppose that I like a certain quality in another man. Is it not inconsistent to loathe it in myself and reject it, since this can only mean that I detest it? (IV.14; C 84).

Together these passages suggest not merely the speaker's ambivalence about the rhetorical techniques of the Academic skeptics but also a deep engagement with the complexities of human emotion that would later lead Freud to appropriate the word 'ambivalence' for his own technical psychological purposes. Though on the surface it would appear as though the speaker of the *Confessions* discusses his earlier respect for the skeptical "hovering between one doctrine and another" only so he could reveal this epistemological practice as an error (V.13; C 108), he is continually distracted from his aims of confessing his sins and praising God by a penchant for an inquisitive mode of questioning that he simultaneously condemns as sinful and unbecoming of a humble confessor. The speaker knows that he should not be "content with what philosophers said" and should instead pass "beyond them for love of you, my supreme Father" (III.6; C 60), yet, like Coleridge's "hovering" imagination, he keeps pondering indeterminate emotions and asking unanswerable questions, remaining "unfixed and wavering between them" (SL 64-65).

In a text that is notoriously inharmonious and that (profoundly, if accidentally) reaches an aporia that illuminates the chasm between systematic (or explanatory) and wondering (or descriptive) philosophizing, the speaker is driven to attend to the indeterminate in precisely those moments when he is determined to explore the mysteries of human consciousness. It is relevant, in this connection, to remember that Augustine was among the first thinkers to acknowledge the existence of unconscious or subconscious materials. Sometimes he makes important

observations on this subject while narrating his life-story. In debunking the practices of astrologers, Augustine's speaker finds himself developing a concept of the unconscious workings of the human mind, exclaiming,

> It was not surprising, then, that the mind of man, quite unconsciously, through some instinct not within its own control, should hit upon some thing that answered to the circumstances and the facts of a particular question. If so, it would be due to chance not to skill (IV.3; C 74).

According to legend, the "Eureka" moment of Archimedes arrives not when he is poring over books in his study but when he slips into the comforting waters of his bathtub. The mind continues to work through a problem even when one does not consciously entertain it, especially in moments of relaxation or sleep, and Augustine declares that such 'discoveries' are "due to chance not to skill." As Nietzsche puts it, anticipating (and perhaps directly influencing) Freud, "*It* thinks; but that this 'it' is precisely the famous old 'ego' is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an 'immediate certainty'" (Nietzsche 1966 24). Such recognitions of unconscious thought would lead Freud to famously claim that, "*the ego is not master in its own house*" (his italics; DPP 143). Moreover, quite a few of the speaker's important insights about unconscious materials appear in the treatise-like portion of the *Confessions*, suggesting that even once the text has attempted to leave the subjective and the indeterminate behind in order to make objective claims and pronounce determinate truths, the text cannot make the leap from description and narration to explanation, from wondering autobiography to universal system. In Book X, the presence of unconscious activities in the human mind lead Augustine's speaker to suggest that, because "I cannot understand all that I am," it must therefore be true that, "the mind is too narrow to contain itself entirely" (X.8; C 216). A contemporary gothic novel called *House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski hinges upon the bizarre phenomenon of a house that is larger on the inside than it appears on the outside, filled with cavernous halls and immense dark open spaces, and Augustine's paradoxical notion of a mind "too narrow to contain itself entirely" strikes a similarly eerie note, instilling the sense that the mind is larger than itself. In the next chapter, Augustine's speaker undermines the common modern assumption that the unconscious is a realm or place in the mind, an attic or basement to which one must merely acquire the right key:

> But these are not the only treasures stored in the vast capacity of my memory. It also contains all that I have ever learnt of the liberal sciences, except what I have forgotten. This knowledge it keeps apart from the rest, in an inner place – though it is wrong to speak of it as a place… (X.9; C 216).

The forgotten knowledge is somehow present yet not actually present – rememberable yet not technically remembered – and the specter life of this knowledge makes it tempting to conceive, inaccurately, of these thoughts as stored in a hidden place. Yet Augustine's speaker also acknowledges the power of this spatial metaphor, declaring, "The wide plains of my memory and its innumerable caverns and hollows are full beyond compute of countless things of all kinds" (X.17; C 224). Augustine's wondering attention to the indeterminate phenomena of human consciousness is, as the following sections will corroborate, the primary preoccupation of autobiographical philosophy.

c) Wordsworth's Aporia as Dead End

Whether Augustine himself considered the *Confessions* finished or unfinished,[131] Courcelle's and Burrell's theories about the text highlight the uneasy relationship that exists between autobiography and system. In characterizing the autobiographical portion of the *Confessions* as an apprenticeship that kept extending, surprising and frustrating its speaker, Courcelle's theory finds an interesting parallel in the composition history (in this case, historically verified) of another creative autobiography. While the structure of the *Confessions* led Courcelle to speculate that Augustine might have meant to write a far longer work, the manuscript history of *The Prelude* (corroborated by the poet's letters and prefaces and by the poem's text and title) confirms that William Wordsworth entertained systematic ambitions that he persistently postponed and finally abandoned. While Augustine's *Confessions* represents an aporia or non-passage in the sense of an endless path, Wordsworth's efforts to leap from autobiography to system represent an aporia of a more traditional kind: a dead end or uncrossable gulf, as one experiences at the edge of a cliff or at the ebbing and flowing shoreline of an ocean.

After the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was published in 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge began work on another collaboration, which they hoped would result in the first genuine philosophical poem. As legend has it, Coleridge was tasked with supplying the system; Wordsworth, with rendering it in verse (WR xiv). The poem would be called *The Recluse*, and its three epic parts, addressing "Man, Nature, and Society" (PW III.5), would absorb the labors of Wordsworth's life. In a letter to Coleridge in March 1804, Wordsworth declares himself "very anxious" to have Coleridge's "notes for The Recluse" – an anxiety that only increases weeks later when Coleridge suffers an "attack" upon his health, leading Wordsworth to confess to Coleridge that he would trade "3 fourths of my possessions for your letter on The Recluse," which would assuage his fear that he might "survive" Coleridge and live on without the "memorial" Coleridge had promised to leave behind (EY 452 and 464). Wordsworth conceived of the "preparatory" poem he had drafted by 1805 – itself of epic proportions, at approximately 8,000 lines – as merely an "appendix" or "ante-chapel" to his lifelong project, which aspired to the scale of a "gothic church" (EY 440; PW III.5). [132] But his project did not proceed as planned. By 1809, still lacking Coleridge's promised "notes," Wordsworth had completed only the first book of the first part. He shifted his attention to the second part and found his labors more productive. Yet this second part, *The Excursion* – the longest single poem that Wordsworth published in his lifetime – was not well received. Even Coleridge, his friend and collaborator, confessed to Wordsworth a certain disappointment after reading it. "In the very Pride of confident Hope," Coleridge wrote to Wordsworth, "I looked forward to the Recluse, as the *first* and *only* true Phil. Poem in existence" (CL IV.574). Coleridge chose to compose much of the 1815 letter to Wordsworth in the past tense, feeling obliged to explain what his expectations had been and why they still remained unfulfilled. Yet this stylistic choice also creates the impression that his hopes had faded and that he was no longer confident in Wordsworth's ability to complete the great philosophical poem, even though Coleridge had himself failed to deliver the promised "notes" that were meant to provide the systematic basis for *The Recluse*. In years to come, as *The Recluse* failed to take shape,[133] Wordsworth found himself revising and expanding his verse autobiography. He continued working on it until his death in 1850, polishing a poem that he had once considered a mere appendix to his true lifework, his three-part epic. Wordsworth's model

for his unfinished epic, the gothic church, thus began to have ironic implications, because gothic churches took centuries to build and often remained unfinished.

In its history, this "appendix" or "ante-chapel" has gone by several names, yet the name that was finally affixed to it presents the poem not as a mature work but as an apprenticeship piece. The poem's speaker periodically addresses a learned "friend," and Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy confirm this friend's identity in their letters and journals, where they speak of "the poem to Coleridge." Wordsworth also refers to it as "a Poem on my own earlier life" and as "Growth of the Poet's Mind." After Wordsworth's death in 1850, his wife Mary settled upon the title *The Prelude*, because (as Wordsworth's nephew Christopher Jr. explains) she thought it "desirable to mark its relation to 'The Recluse'" and because "the appearance of this poem, *after* the author's death, might tend to lead some readers into an opinion that it was his *final* production, instead of being, as it really is, one of his *earlier* works" (NCP 539). In truth, the 1850 edition of *The Prelude* is the work of Wordsworth's later years as well as his early years. Though he had, indeed, completed a full draft of the poem by 1805, he also labored to revise it in the final decades of his life. One naturally suspects that these renewed efforts might have derived from a growing recognition that *The Prelude*, and not *The Recluse*, would be his last great legacy. The year 1832 offers evidence of this suspicion. Though editions of *The Excursion* between 1814 and 1832 had appeared with the subtitle, 'BEING A PORTION OF THE RECLUSE,' this note was omitted in subsequent editions, perhaps indicating that Wordsworth was no longer confident that he would complete the larger poem (PW III.10). In the same year that Wordsworth might have decided to make this alteration, Wordsworth's daughter Dora records: "Father is particularly well and busier than 1000 bees. Mother and he work like slaves from morning to night – an arduous work – correcting a long Poem written thirty years back and which is not to be published during his life – 'The Growth of his own Mind' – The 'ante-chapel' as he calls it to the 'Recluse'" (NCP 536). He revised and supplemented the poem on and off for many years, and if, in "correcting" it, he and Mary worked "like slaves from morning to night," it seems disingenuous to classify the poem as a product merely of Wordsworth's early years. In calling the poem *The Prelude* (instead of, for instance, "Growth of the Poet's Mind"), Mary presents the poem as a kind of absence – a something that is not quite the whole thing.

This sense of incompletion is also inherent in the poem itself, which reinforces the notion that it is merely a precursor to a later systematic project. In the opening lines of *The Prelude*,[134] the speaker debates his choice of subject. Though his poetic inspirations usually derive from "present joy" (I.56; PP 38), he now wishes to fasten upon "some determined aim" (I.124; PP 42), "some noble theme" (I.139; PP 42), better suited to engage and fulfill his talents. In the verse paragraphs that follow, he considers a number of possible subjects: a British theme (I.177-80; PP 44-46) or a chivalric one (I.181-84; PP 46); a tale of old Europe's "natural heroes" (I.185-201; PP 46), or of men who "Suffered in silence for the love of truth" (I.201-19; PP 46-48), or "Some tale from my own heart" (I.220-28; PP 48). He confesses that his "last and favourite aspiration" is to compose

> … some philosophic song
>
> Of truth that cherishes our daily life,
>
> With meditations passionate from deep

> Recesses in man's heart … (I.229-33; PP 48).

Yet he remains uncertain about the subject of the poem he has just begun. He feels his talents squandered by indecision (I.238-271; PP 48-50), and he asks,

> Was it for this […]
>
> O Derwent, travelling over the green plains
>
> Near my 'sweet birthplace', didst thou, beauteous stream,
>
> Make ceaseless music through the night and day
>
> Which with its steady cadence tempering
>
> Our human waywardness, composed my thoughts
>
> To more than infant softness, giving me
>
> Among the fretful dwellings of mankind
>
> A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
>
> Which nature breathes among the hills and groves? (I.271, 277-285; PP 50-52).

In this petition, Wordsworth's speaker implicitly chooses his subject. As preparation for the "philosophic song" of epic scope that he will eventually pursue, he decides that he will describe the experiences that made him fit for such an undertaking. At the end of Book I, he expresses this plan more explicitly, announcing that he will record "the story of my life" (I.667; PP 72), temporarily postponing his plans to compose a "work / Of ampler or more varied argument" (I.670-71; PP 72). This autobiography in verse will serve as a preparation or apprenticeship to prepare the way for the argument in verse.

Moreover, as in the case of Augustine's *Confessions*, it is also apparent that in its earliest form Wordsworth conceived of *The Prelude* as a classical apology. In the manuscripts and letters that document William and Dorothy Wordsworth's bleak winter in Goslar, Germany in 1798-99, Wordsworth affirms this quite explicitly. As early as March 1798, Wordsworth had already begun to tell his friends, "I have written 1300 lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility; its title will be *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man and Society*" (EY 214). Nine months later and two months after his arrival in Germany, however, Wordsworth's letter to Coleridge of December 1798 suggests that he has veered off course:

> Dorothy has written the other side of this sheet while I have been out. She has transcribed a few descriptions. You will read them at your leisure. She will copy out two or three little Rhyme poems which I hope will amuse you. As I have had no books I have been obliged to write in self-defence. I should have written five times as much as I have done but that I am prevented by an uneasiness at my stomach and side, with a dull pain about my heart (EY 236).

Enclosed in this letter are two "descriptions" (quite opposed to the system's general tendency toward explanation) that would eventually appear in *The Prelude*, among them the well-known "elfin pinnace" episode in which Wordsworth's speaker describes a boyhood moment of transgression during which he went for a joyride in a boat borrowed without permission (I.372-427; PP 56-58). Wordsworth explicitly presents his descriptions as exercises in "self-defense," and this admission opens up the possibility that his impulse to defend himself and that the "uneasiness" in his stomach, side and heart might have the same cause. Against what must Wordsworth defend himself and why does he feel so uneasy?

There might be any number of possible reasons why Wordsworth conceives of himself as writing in "self-defense": He and Dorothy feel anxious about money and thus choose to settle in a dismal Goslar where they cannot visit others without unaffordably hosting others in return. Thus secluded, they endure one of Goslar's coldest winters on record, suffering keenly from Coleridge's absence, from the general failure of their plans to see Germany at his side, and from the knowledge that Coleridge, living as one on the same financial annuity that William and Dorothy live on as two, thrives socially and intellectually in Ratzeburg and Göttingen, while they – enviously, in all likelihood – must remain indoors together for months at a time and try not to sulk.[135] Moreover, Wordsworth's failure to discourse with native Germans and study his German dictionary suggest that he is consciously or unconsciously avoiding his plans to learn the language and commence German translation work upon his return to England (EY 221). As Coleridge puts it in a letter to his wife Sara Coleridge, Wordsworth while in Goslar "seems to have employed more time in writing English [tha]n in studying German," and "might as well have been in England as at Goslar, in the situation which he chose" (CL I.459).

These biographical details suggest any number of fears, frustrations and anxieties against which Wordsworth might have felt obliged to defend himself, and to these one might add one more: Given that Wordsworth is addressing Coleridge when he speaks of writing "in self-defense," it seems reasonable to assume that he might feel obliged to defend himself *to Coleridge* and might be anxious about the epic poem "of considerable utility" which he and Coleridge had begun to plan and upon which he was making no progress. Instead, he is writing autobiographical "descriptions" that digress into self-expostulations, such as the famous "was it for this" passage that would, by the time of the 1805 *Prelude*, clearly indicate that in these writings he is confessing his fears that he has been squandering his talents and ignoring his vocation. In this light, it becomes apparent that Wordsworth's "uneasiness," quite apart from his German translation ambitions, might have more to do with his failure to achieve his poetical ambitions and with his sense that these "descriptions" do not fulfill the requirements of the projected *Recluse*. Eventually, he strikes a compromise with himself – one that is apparent in his later conception of *The Prelude* as a "preparatory" poem to *The Recluse* (PW III.5) – telling himself that this autobiographical poem is a necessary rite of passage that he must undergo before commencing work on *The Recluse*. He will still complete his great philosophical poem; yet he must write his autobiography first. Instead of chastising himself for interrupting his noble aspiration of producing the first great philosophical poem, he reconceives *The Prelude* so that it can be understood not as an interruption of but as a defense and explanation of the great work to come. At its earliest inception, *The Prelude* is a classical apology that will allow him to justify, to others and to himself, that he is capable of producing the great systematic poem with which Coleridge has tasked him – "a literary Work that might live" (PW III.5).

However, as it happened and as the history of *The Recluse* makes clear, Wordsworth's primary work of "ampler or more varied argument" remained largely incomplete at the time of his death in 1850 (I.670-71; PP 72). The state of Wordsworth's *Recluse* led early commentators to describe the unfinished poem as "Wordsworth's great failure" (Minto), but given the poem's history and given Wordsworth's apparent efforts (detailed in chapter two) to sidestep Coleridge's demand for a poem that would exhibit the "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574), one might instead suggest that rather than failing to complete *The Recluse* Wordsworth might have consciously or unconsciously sabotaged his three-part epic, recognizing that its completion would not satisfy his sense of what a philosophical poem should be. Curiously, it was in 1832, the same year during which Wordsworth may have decided to omit his claim that *The Excursion* was "A PORTION OF THE RECLUSE" (PW III.10) and during which Wordsworth and his wife were "busier than 1000 bees" working on *The Prelude* (NCP 536), that Coleridge announced "a poem does not admit argumentation" (TT I.307). Perhaps the long poem of "ampler or more varied argument" remained Wordsworth's great aspiration even at the end of his life, or perhaps by 1832 Wordsworth and Coleridge had both acknowledged to themselves that their paradoxical vision for a systematic poem had been misguided. While Augustine tacked his philosophical musings on at the end of his *Confessions*, creating an uneasy balance and disunity that has puzzled scholars for centuries, Wordsworth completed his autobiography and continued to revise it throughout his life, jettisoning the systematic plans Coleridge had encouraged. This betrays Wordsworth's preference for the sustained attention of wonder over the closure of knowledge – a preference for one kind of philosophizing over another, for the love of wisdom over the love of system.

That *The Prelude* exhibits *some kind* of philosophical method is apparent even to Coleridge, who in a letter refers to the poem as Wordsworth's "philosophico-biographical Poem" (CL II.1104). Yet what does this designation mean exactly? In what kind of philosophizing does *The Prelude* engage? According to the sub-genre of autobiographical philosophy that this chapter highlights, the poem, by sustaining intellectual engagement and suspending judgment, grapples with unconscious materials and attends to indeterminate phenomena in a manner that advances the explorations of human consciousness found in Augustine's *Confessions*.

Wordsworth's *Prelude* not only underscores the existence of unconscious materials, it also suggests that these materials provide grounds for a complete reassessment of Enlightenment attitudes about inquiry and knowledge production. To take an example that is already at hand, Wordsworth's speaker, in the "Was it for this" passage quoted above, asserts that the river of his boyhood, the Derwent, "composed my thoughts / To more than infant softness" (I.271, 281-82; PP 50-52). The speaker here suggests that an external object might, beyond merely featuring in thoughts or influencing them, actually *compose* thoughts, which suggests that the traditional subject/object dichotomy in which the thinking subject reflects upon external objects can or should be understood as reversed in the same way that Nietzsche's polemical "*It* thinks" would indicate (Nietzsche 1966 24). In the same passage, the speaker also sings of how the Derwent instilled in him,

> Among the fretful dwellings of mankind
>
> A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
>
> Which nature breathes among the hills and groves? (I.283-285; PP 52).

The speaker is grateful that the Derwent has left him with such a deep appreciation for nature's "calm," and the parallelism of the second line suggests that the speaker equates his "knowledge" of this "calm" with "a dim earnest" – an unusual definition that departs strikingly from the reigning Enlightenment definition of knowledge as something clear and distinct. If in speaking of "a dim earnest" the speaker conceives of this "earnest" as a 'token of what is to come,' he implies both that this "dim" knowledge is never fully lit (i.e., fully grasped) and that the pursuit of knowledge requires active, "earnest" intellectual activity. Later in the same book, the speaker makes another reference to a "dim" knowledge that helps to clarify this conception. In the aftermath of the speaker's clandestine boat ride, during which "a huge cliff / As if by a voluntary power instinct, / Upreared its head" and "Strode after me," he then finds that, "my brain / Worked with a dim and undetermined sense / Of unknown modes of being" (I.406-08, 412, 418-20; PP 58). Redefined as "a dim earnest," knowledge is a vague and obscure *yet deeply felt* sense of things – a "dim and undetermined" or indeterminate awareness of something sensed yet not easily articulated. As part II of this study will demonstrate, this sensitivity to the indeterminate frequently emerges in *The Prelude,* revealing, for instance, insights into the phenomenon of childhood amnesia and into the differences between remembering, imagining and the grey area of confabulation in between. Ultimately, the priorities of *The Prelude* call into question the Enlightenment obsessions with the clear and distinct and with totalizing knowledge, suggesting that (as Merleau-Ponty has said) "indeterminate" perceptions should be understood as "positive" phenomena and not as temporarily blurry images soon to be righted (POP 14).

In Book V. of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's speaker challenges the assumptions of the "mighty workmen of our later age / Who with a broad highway have overbridged / The froward chaos of futurity" (V.370-2; PP 190). His feelings, in making this announcement, are rather ambivalent. Depending upon whether one interprets this 'bridging' as a 'deliverance from the abyss' or as a 'sweeping under the rug,' one might understand their "overbridging" of "chaos" as having a positive impact or a negative one.[136] However, according to Wordsworth, these mighty workmen – be they scientists, mechanics or industrialists – are inattentive to the subtleties of human experience. He admits that such a mighty workman is capable of "deep experiments" (V.340; PP 188), and that "in learning and in books / He is a prodigy" (V.319-20; PP 186). Yet where and upon what has this broad highway been laid? In their jaded and all-knowing disdain for wonder, these mighty workmen, these overbridgers of chaos, would attempt to reason away what occurs naturally as a result of a wisdom beyond reason:

> Sages who in their prescience would control
>
> All accidents, and to the very road
>
> Which they have fashioned would confine us down
>
> Like engines – when will they be taught
>
> That in the unreasoning progress of the world
>
> A wiser spirit is at work for us.
>
> A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
>
> Of blessings and most studious of our good,

Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours? (V.380-88; PP 190).

Blinded by progress, believing in a mechanistic ideal that will one day account for all accidents, the "mighty workmen" (or "Sages") have ignored the possibility that "in the unreasoning progress of the world / A wiser spirit is at work for us" (V.384-5; PP 190).

Yet what is this "wiser spirit"? Wordsworth's speaker declares that there is "A better eye" and a less restrictive "road" than these "Sages" observe, and in making this claim, he indicates his epistemological stance. In one sense, he is highlighting the limits of *vision* in scientific inquiry. His ironic reference to these "Sages" resonates with Aristotle's assertion that the eyes of scientists attend only to what they assume must be the case "by necessity," while "what admits of being otherwise escapes observation" (Aristotle 1999 88). As Schiller explains, nature's diversity is lost upon those who observe the world in this way, "because we are looking for nothing in her [nature] but what we have put there," and "because we do not allow her to come forward to meet us, from without, but rather strive with impatiently anticipating reason to go out from within ourselves to meet her" (Schiller 70n1). In addition to complaining with Blake that this kind of vision is like peering at the world through the "narrow chinks" a "cavern" (E 39), Wordsworth's speaker indicates that it also restricts the *activity of inquiry* in the manner of Blake's "mind-forg'd manacles" (E 27). "[T]o the very road / Which they have fashioned," Wordsworth's speaker complains, these "Sages" would "confine us down / Like engines" (V.381-83; PP 190). This mechanistic "engine" of inquiry confines the thinker to an instrumental reason that is directed toward premature judgment, knowledge acquisition and system construction. Though Wordsworth's writings are sometimes interpreted as anti-rationalist, this interpretation hinges on a premature acceptance of Enlightenment assumptions about inquiry. As an alternative to these assumptions, the speaker declares his faith and trust that an "unreasoning progress" and "wiser spirit" are "at work for us" even in "hours" that *appear* "unfruitful." Far from encouraging idleness, he is encouraging thinkers to resist the Enlightenment cravings for closure, acquisition and production that "control" and "confine" intellectual inquiry and to instead affirm the premodern love of wisdom that resides in wonder.

As the remaining chapters of this study will demonstrate, Wordsworth's *Prelude* urges us to see the world through the "better," preconscious and instinctive "eye" that operates unbeknownst to us in "what seem our most unfruitful hours" (V.386-8; PP 190). In urging this, the speaker of *The Prelude*, like that of the *Confessions*, advocates a wondering attention to the indeterminate phenomena of human consciousness. As the *Confessions* suggest, a man can, "quite unconsciously, through some instinct not within its own control," happen to "hit upon some thing that answered to the circumstances and the facts of a particular question," and such occurrences most likely occur "due to chance not to skill" (IV.3; C 74). Likewise, Wordsworth's speaker declares that not even the most knowledgeable people can "control / All accidents," and that these self-styled repositories of knowledge should accept, "That in the unreasoning progress of the world / A wiser spirit is at work for us" (V.380-81, 384-5; PP 190). It might be said without exaggeration that the first five books of *The Prelude*, upon which part II of this study will focus, are devoted to describing this "unreasoning progress," this "wiser spirit," illustrating Maurice Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that, "The will to apply reason to what is taken as irrational is a progress for reason" (Merleau-Ponty 1964a 29). This devotion to "unreasoning" phenomena also aligns *The Prelude* with the greatest creative autobiography of the succeeding century.

d) Proust's Ironical Aporia

Augustine's *Confessions* and Wordsworth's *Prelude* find their clearest expression as examples of autobiographical philosophy when juxtaposed to the ironic utterances of Marcel, the speaker of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. Though it is perhaps impossible to definitively prove that Wordsworth's prolonged attentions to *The Prelude* and his frequent neglect of the projected *Recluse* suggest a conscious or unconscious form of self-sabotage, and though it is ultimately unnecessary from a literary critical perspective to confirm Wordsworth's intentions about or his final estimation of his own work, it is nonetheless striking that what commentators have called "Wordsworth's great failure" is, according to the logic of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, something more like a great success. While one might facilely characterize Wordsworth's efforts as a "failure" because they resist closure and completed form, one might also view them as an admirable example of sustained inquiry.

At the end of the "Combray" section of *Swann's Way*, as at the end of Book I of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, the speaker confesses his wish to write not the semi-autobiographical text one is reading but a great "philosophic" work (I.228-34; PP 48; RTP I.195; see also RTP I.188-89). The speaker, Marcel, admits that he was convinced, even at a young age, that "it was high time to decide what books I was going to write," and he confesses,

> … as soon as I asked myself the question, and tried to discover some subject to which I could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value, my mind would stop like a clock, my consciousness would be faced with a blank, I would feel either that I was wholly devoid of talent or that perhaps some malady of the brain was hindering its development (RTP I.188-89).

Explicit here, in Marcel's early conception of what it means to be "a man of letters" (RTP III.944), is that such a man must discover a subject that "could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value" to his readers. If he does not discover such a subject, he feels his talents are being squandered. It is often in reflection upon such moods that Marcel recalls how, "utterly despondent, I renounced literature" (RTP I.195). Yet this never lasts long. A few hours or months later, he will find himself accosted with the pleasure of some unexpected sensory experience – something ordinary such as an encounter with "a gleam of sunlight on a stone, the smell of a path" (RTP I.195) – and these impressions fill him with a sense of purpose and resurrect his literary ambitions. Like Wordsworth's speaker, Marcel believes he needs to discover "a philosophic theme for some literary work," and like Wordsworth's speaker, his search for this theme repeatedly instills him only with "the sense of my own impotence" (RTP I.195). Therefore, like readers of Augustine's *Confessions* and of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, readers of the Proust novel are invited to conceive of the autobiographical narrative they are reading as a mere apprenticeship that prepares Marcel for the serious philosophical work to follow.

However, it is here where Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* begins to depart from the autobiographies of Augustine and Wordsworth, since Proust's text is more conscious of itself and of its true, if latent, aspirations. Though Marcel, like Augustine and Wordsworth, presents the novel we are reading as an apprenticeship to a great work of systematic philosophy that will espouse abstract and universal truths, he never quite seems convinced that he will begin this work or that he possesses the learning that would allow him to complete it. *In Search of Lost*

Time offers an ironic counterpoint to the earnestness of Augustine and Wordsworth – a kind of backwards apology in the classical sense. Throughout the novel, instead of explaining why he is capable of, justified in or divinely sanctioned to undertake his great philosophical work, Marcel repeatedly demeans his own abilities and renounces his literary aspirations. However, the reader begins to harbor a sneaking suspicion that the arc and artfulness of the narrative contradict Marcel's disavowals of his own talent. Eventually, readers glean from Marcel's self-deprecating manner and from his mesmerizing introspective eloquence that the present work might, indeed, be the great explanatory work that the speaker is always putting off. This suspicion is finally confirmed in the novel's final pages, where Marcel announces his intention to commence the work that the reader has nearly finished reading. In Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, then, the speaker's autobiography is from its earliest pages an *implicit* justification of itself as a philosophical work, even as the speaker *explicitly* doubts that he will ever begin this work, let alone complete it. While Augustine's and Wordsworth's speakers each earnestly seek to justify their fitness to produce a great philosophical work, Proust's speaker is aware, from the novel's first sentence, that his creative autobiography *is* his great work of philosophy and not a supplement to it. Yet he is also aware that the only justification for forwarding a creative autobiography as a work of philosophy must be inherent to the autobiography itself – must appear to readers not as an explanatory argument of universal validity but as a description that resonates with readers and instills in them, as it instills in himself, a feeling that he is unable to explain or articulate. It is with this descriptive approach that Marcel offers a kind of philosophizing that resists system.

Unlike Augustine's *Confessions* and Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is conceived as a detotalizing work from the very beginning. To defy system and explanation is precisely its intention, as emerges gradually through Marcel's discussions of the philosophical attributes of Bergotte's novels. Marcel declares that in his early life he conceived of his favorite novelist Bergotte's writings as "mirrors of absolute truth" (RTP I.104), confessing that he would rejoice anew each time it was "suddenly revealed to me that my own humble existence and the realms of the true were less widely separated than I had supposed" (RTP I.104). In expressing his belief in "absolute truth," the young Marcel at first seems to present himself as an essentialist – as one who believes that the truths of the world are out there, hidden and waiting to be discovered. Curiously, however, the truths which the young man rates as "absolute" are the banal details of everyday life. For example, he is shocked to find that one of Bergotte's novels contains a "joke about an old family servant" that happens to be "the same joke I had often made to my grandmother about Françoise," his family's own longtime servant. Initially, he imagines that Bergotte's novels articulate "a whole system," but he later finds he is deluded in making this assumption – deluded, it would seem, due to the dominance of the concept of system in early twentieth-century philosophy. Just as in the 1814 preface to *The Excursion* (examined in chapter two) Wordsworth says that from the "clear thoughts, lively images and strong feelings" contained in the poem, "the Reader will have no difficulty extracting the system for himself" (PW III.6), so does Marcel claim that Bergotte's novels "would express a whole system of philosophy, new to me, by the use of marvelous images" (RTP I.101). Yet is there such thing as a "system" composed of "images"? Marcel eventually begins to recognize that the peculiar kind of system he is talking about – not a system at all, as it happens – has little in common with the traditional kinds of systems that preoccupy most philosophy classes. Of Bergotte and his novels, Marcel says,

> More than anything else I cherished his philosophy, and had pledged myself to it in lifelong devotion. It made me impatient to reach the age when I should be eligible for the class at school called "Philosophy." But I did not wish to do anything there but exist and be guided exclusively by the mind of Bergotte, and if I had been told then that the metaphysicians to whom I was actually to become attached there would resemble him in nothing, I should have been struck down by the despair of a young lover who has sworn lifelong fidelity, when a friend speaks to him of the other mistresses he will have in time to come (RTP I.105).

Bergotte's system, constructed "by the use of marvelous images" in his novels – like Wordsworth's system, extracted from the "clear thoughts, lively images and strong feelings" of *The Excursion* – has little to do with the concerns of metaphysicians and with the systems that preoccupy most philosophy courses. Consequently, Marcel's wish to "discover some subject to which I could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value" has become more difficult to fulfill (RTP I.188). What philosophical subject should he pursue if his study of philosophy in university has not resonated with his preconceived notions about "the class at school called 'Philosophy'" (RTP I.105)?

Contemporary French philosopher Pierre Hadot would not be surprised by the dejection of the young Marcel who finds his preconceived notions about philosophical activity incompatible with the kind of philosophizing that is evident in most university classrooms. As Hadot observes, most teachers initiate their students into the study of philosophy by introducing them to "*philosophies*" or "philosophers' systems" – a pedagogical practice that runs directly counter to the ancient conception of "*philosophia*" (Hadot 2002 1-2). The young Marcel has deluded himself into thinking that systems can be composed of "marvelous images," and this delusion results from a failure to distinguish philosophies of wonder that emphasize the epochê (or suspension of judgment) from philosophies of system that emphasize judgment. This failure rises into relief when one looks more closely at the moments that have made him want to discover this "philosophic theme for some great literary work" (RTP I.195). The young Marcel is caught between explanation and description. He harbors two conflicting desires: On the one hand, there is his desire to produce a "great literary work" endowed with "a philosophical significance of infinite value" (RTP I.195, 188), and on the other hand, there is his desire to describe the world of the senses and the life of the mind:

> How often, after that day [when Mme de Guermantes smiled at me], in the course of my walks along the Guermantes way, and with what an intensified melancholy, did I reflect on my lack of qualification for a literary career, and abandon all hope of ever becoming a famous author […] Then, quite independently of all these literary preoccupations and in no way connected with them, suddenly a roof, a gleam of sunlight on a stone, the smell of a path would make me stop still, to enjoy the special pleasure that each of them gave me, and also because they appeared to be concealing, beyond what my eyes could see, something which they invited me to come and take but which despite all my efforts I never managed to discover (RTP I.194-95).

The young Marcel longs to become "a famous author," but even when he feels inspired, he cannot discover the true source of his inspiration, which lay concealed, he believes, within "the smell of a path." He feels driven to identify a "philosophic theme" that would allow him to explain the world and make his name as an author, but he cannot even explain the mundane

sensory encounters of everyday experience – the sole experiences that inspire him to write.[137] In particular, Marcel yearns to revel in the "special pleasure" that each of these sensory appearances seems to be "concealing." As it happens, in the paragraphs that follow, he finds himself spontaneously producing a piece of writing. In an epiphanic moment, a new sensory encounter – in this case, with the twin steeples of Martinville and the complementary relationship of a third steeple in Vieuxvicq – fills him with a "special pleasure," an "obscure pleasure," which leads him to believe the steeples somehow "seemed at once to contain and to conceal" some inaccessible reality that he senses within them (RTP I.196-97). After describing this encounter on borrowed paper during a bumpy coach ride, the young Marcel feels his mind to be so "entirely relieved" that he sings for joy (RTP I.198-99). The sense of fulfillment that suffuses his body after composing this simple description is completely unexpected.

The young Marcel characterizes this conflict between literature and writing – and indirectly, also the conflict between philosophies of system and philosophies of wonder – in terms of the concept of "discovery." Ironically, the young Marcel consistently fails to "discover" both his literary theme and the source of his creative inspiration: He cannot "discover" the "subject" that would "impart a philosophical significance of infinite value" to his literary productions and vouchsafe him literary fame (RTP I.189); nor can he "discover" the "something" which the "gleam of sunlight on a stone" seems to be "concealing" (RTP I.195). The first failed discovery he attributes to a "lack of talent" (RTP I.194); the second, to a lack of inclination. For certainly, he is convinced, these sensory impressions could be of little use to the aspiring author:

> It was certainly not impressions of this kind that could restore the hope I had lost of succeeding one day in becoming an author and poet, for each of them was associated with some material object devoid of intellectual value and suggesting no abstract truth. But at least they gave me an unreasoning pleasure, the illusion of a sort of fecundity, and thereby distracted me from the tedium, from the sense of my own impotence, which I had felt whenever I had sought a philosophic theme for some great literary work (RTP I.195).

The "mass of disparate images" that have impressed themselves upon the young Marcel – "the play of sunlight on a stone, a roof, the sound of a bell, the smell of fallen leaves" – leave him with an "unreasoning pleasure" (RTP I.195-96). Like the "unreasoning progress" of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Marcel's "unreasoning pleasure" serves as the basis for his yearning to create – a yearning that Wordsworth's speaker explicitly opposes to the instrumentalizing tendencies of the "dwarf man," that "prodigy" for whom "All things are put to question" (V.384, 295, 320, 341; PP 186-90). Ironically, these impressions strike the young Marcel as precisely *not* the right material for a great literary work. Yet following Wordsworth's avowal that we should not "murder to dissect" (WPW 377), the young Marcel also resists the temptation to analyze his experience of the steeples in an effort to explain it: "I did not know the reason for the pleasure I had felt on seeing them upon the horizon, and the business of trying to discover that reason seemed to me irksome" (RTP I.197). The young Marcel in a flight of insight observes that the business of explanation yields no satisfaction. Finally, the young Marcel has stopped trying to "discover" things, and hopefully, by this point, so have Proust's readers.

From its earliest pages, readers have guessed that the mature Marcel's aim is to enable "a vision that appeals not to our eyes only but requires a deeper kind of perception and takes possession of the whole of our being" (RTP I.153). His aim is not to spout a system but to explore "the life of the mind" (RTP I.200). By the end of the novel (if not long before), readers

have accepted the novel's implicit message: that the discovery of the "reason" or explanation for Marcel's special pleasures is insignificant in comparison to Marcel's ability to recollect and relive these pleasures through artful description. If some readers have missed this implicit message, the mature Marcel, at the end of the novel, is finally willing to explicate:

> A writer reasons, that is to say he goes astray, only when he has not the strength to force himself to make an impression pass through all the successive states which will culminate in its fixation, its expression. The reality that he has to express resides, as I now begin to understand, not in the superficial appearance of his subject but at a depth at which that appearance matters little (RTP III.916).

In the early pages of the novel, the young Marcel is determined "to discover some subject to which I could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value" (RTP I.188), but by its conclusion, Marcel the speaker, whose ironic musings have enthralled us throughout the novel, concedes that what is important to the writer is not "the superficial appearance of his [or her] subject" but the endurance that allows him or her to push this subject "through all the successive states which will culminate in its fixation, its expression." Its "expression" is not its "discovery" or explanation but its description. While Marcel complains of a merely descriptive literature that "severs all communication of our present self both with the past, the essence of which is preserved in things, and with the future, in which things incite us to enjoy the essence of the past a second time" (RTP III.921), he offers in its place a form of description that takes the object not as explainable but as an occasion for the exploration of the writer's mind, dwelling particularly in the space between the remembered and the imagined. The "impression" that the writer forces to "pass through" all its "successive states" resides less in the object than in the thinking subject (RTP III.916): "…every impression is double and the one half which is sheathed in the object is prolonged in ourselves by another half which we alone can know" (RTP III.927).

For attentive readers, these nuances are present as early as the novel's "Overture," where Marcel speaks of the famous cup of tea which, pierced by the dipped madeleine, commences the speaker's involuntary memory:

> It is plain that the truth I am seeking lies not in the cup but in myself. […] I put down the cup and examine my own mind. It alone can discover the truth. But how? What an abyss of uncertainty, whenever the mind feels overtaken by itself; when it, the seeker, is at the same time the dark region through which it must go seeking and where all its equipment will avail it nothing. Seek? More than that: create. It is faced with something which does not yet exist, to which it alone can give reality and substance, which it alone can bring into the light of day (RTP I.48-49).

The notion that the mind does not merely "seek" in "the dark region" of mind the meaning that it senses beneath the threshold of consciousness, but that it must in some sense "create" that meaning, is among the great paradoxes of human existence. It troubles the boundaries that we are wont to draw between remembering and imagining, verified truth and unverified belief, and it suggests that even the most fact-driven scholarly productions are in some sense fictional creations of the mind. It is also an admission that (as Augustine's *Confessions* suggest) the mind is somehow larger than itself, and that (as Wordsworth's *Prelude* suggests) there is a wise, unreasoning spirit at work in us during even those hours that seem most unfruitful. According to the founding premises of autobiographical philosophy, this mind, which creates not only my

present self but also my past (and indeed, my entire identity), cannot explain its impressions. No mind – truly and accurately – could. Rather, the mind should aim to describe these impressions, and it should concede up front that every new description is partly a representation of the object and partly a creation of the mind. Introspection cannot result in system; it must abide in wonder.

e) First Landing:

From the Gothic Church of 1814 to a New Metaphor in 1815

> In long books of this kind there are parts which there has been time only to sketch, parts which, because of the very amplitude of the architect's plan, will no doubt never be completed. How many great cathedrals remain unfinished! The writer feeds his book, he strengthens the parts of it which are weak, he protects it, but afterwards it is the book that grows, that designates its author's tomb and defends it against the world's clamour and for a while against oblivion. ~ Marcel, *Time Regained* (1927)[138]

An autobiographical philosophy that abides in wonder and resists system is inevitably characterized by aporia. Whether this aporia occurs accidentally or intentionally, it nonetheless occurs. The autobiographical enterprise initially conceived as a path toward system, eventually reaches an impasse. Yet isn't this the way of poetic language? "The poem must resist the intelligence / Almost successfully," Wallace Stevens once wrote. With a single line break, Stevens' poem incites questions: Does a poem resist the intelligence *until* it succeeds, or until it *almost* succeeds, only to fall short? Does the mind leave the poem with a feeling of realization or of deprivation? By the time the mind has gotten this far, perhaps success and failure are beside the point. Poetry makes the world strange, and so, it would appear, does autobiographical philosophy, which, initially aiming at systematic completeness, eventually discards this aim as neither desirable nor possible.

Even Marcel – the speaker of the seven-novel Proustian epic that culminates with *Time Regained* – conceives of his grand architectural plans as, in some sense, unfinished, like so many great cathedrals. Due to the "the very amplitude of the architect's plan," he says, parts must be merely sketched, while others must be entirely omitted. And how could this not be so? What creative autobiography could be truly complete? Perhaps only a speaker capable of narrating his or her life story from the grave could truly capture its final moments – and even then, there would be the details that memory had failed to carry forward, and the question of whether the specter life lived in the grave would require further narration. As the autobiographies of Augustine, Wordsworth and Proust suggest, no life story can be completely told. The autobiographical enterprise is characterized by surplus and impasse – by a plethora of details and the recognition that most of them must remain uncaught by the sieve of the mind and unwritten by the pen.

The lofty aspiration to produce a great cathedral, whether architectural or literary, inevitably gives way to fears and disappointments. Following the invocation of the "prophetic Spirit" in his Prospectus, Wordsworth's speaker confesses his hope,

> … that my Song

With star-like virtue in its place may shine,

Shedding benignant influence, and secure,

Itself, from all malevolent effect

Of those mutations that extend their sway

Throughout the nether sphere! (lines 146-51; PW 8).

The speaker's anxiety about the "security" of his "Song" – coupled with his enigmatic reference to the "mutations" (criticisms? distortions of intent?) that the poem might sustain and the "malevolent effect" of such mutations – recalls Marcel's observation that, "The writer feeds his book, he strengthens the parts of it which are weak, he protects it, but afterwards it is the book that grows, that designates its author's tomb and defends it against the world's clamour and for a while against oblivion" (RTP III.1089). At first the creator worries for the life of his work, hoping that this supplement to himself will be able to live on its own.[139] Eventually, however, the creation replaces its creator, the production supplants the once-living body and the now-homeless animal spirit that has produced it. Marcel elsewhere speaks of how reincarnated spirits can be immured in inanimate objects, dwelling there, living a trapped and muted half life (RTP I.622), and perhaps he has something like this in mind when he observes that an author's book, an inanimate object, eventually "designates its author's tomb," prolonging the life and imprisoning the soul of the author who made it.

Unfortunately, in Wordsworth's case, the "Song" of "star-like virtue" received sobering reactions from contemporary commentators. The first and only portion of *The Recluse* published in his lifetime – the part prefaced by the very Prospectus in which he expressed fears for his long poems security – received a famously witty shellacking in the *Edinburgh Review* from Francis Jeffrey, which Wordsworth was most likely too wary to read first hand. There Jeffrey bases his criticism of the *Recluse* plan upon Wordsworth's claim that *The Excursion* "*belongs* to the second part of a long and laborious Work" (my italics; PW III.5). Misquoting the phrase but illuminating its latent meaning, Jeffrey complains that *The Excursion* "is but '*a part of the second part*, of a *long* and laborious work' – which is to consist of three parts!" (Jeffrey 458). The history of *The Recluse* suggests that Jeffrey's criticism, though flippantly expressed, is valid in its challenge to the overzealous ambition that led Wordsworth to publicly announce a three-part, church-structured epic, having completed, after nearly twenty years, not even one of the three sections of the nave in its entirety.[140] More earnestly, Jeffrey bemoans his unshakeable feeling that *The Excursion* represents a "ruin" of sorts, a mere shadow of the dignity, originality and promise of Wordsworth's early poems, saying that, "while we collect the fragments [of *The Excursion* that reveal Wordsworth's former talents], it is impossible not to mourn over the ruins from which we are condemned to pick them" (Jeffrey 468). Though Wordsworth might have known Jeffrey's review of *The Excursion* only by reputation, the historical record shows that Wordsworth read, and found disconcerting, a review that appeared in *The Examiner*, authored by his younger protégé and friend, William Hazlitt.[141] In one comment, Hazlitt combines Jeffrey's skepticism about the scope of Wordsworth's projected magnum opus with Jeffrey's sense that the long poem has become a kind of ruin, expressing his fears that *The Excursion* will eventually prove itself to be, "one of those stupendous but half-finished structures, which have been suffered to moulder into decay, because the cost and labour attending them exceeded their use or

beauty" (H XIX.9; Bromwich 161). The thought of his *Recluse* as a "stupendous but half-finished structure," one "moulder[ing] in decay," must surely have haunted Wordsworth – the thought that "the cost and labour" consumed in producing such a structure could exceed its "use or beauty," even more so. However, such an aporia, such a "half-finished" standstill, is the inevitable consequence of an autobiographical philosophy that aspires toward the systematic. Incapable of making the transition from description and narration to explanation, it must supplant explanation and its preferred genre, the system.

Perhaps due to his fears that Jeffrey's "ruins" and Hazlitt's "stupendous but half-finished structure" would be his only legacy for posterity, Wordsworth began in the year after the publication of *The Excursion* to organize his shorter poems according to a different metaphor. Though Wordsworth's gothic church metaphor had certain nationalistic undertones in Regency England of which Wordsworth would have been aware,[142] he would ultimately choose to abandon this metaphor and to organize his *Poems* of 1815 according to places, moods, and mental faculties such as fancy, imagination, and remembering (via the category, "Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood"). If he had persisted in conceiving of his oeuvre as a gothic church, these "minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public," might, "properly arranged," have been presented so as "to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices" (PW III.5-6). However, Wordsworth does not arrange them as such himself. The question thus arises: What is the relationship between these two metaphors, if indeed there is one? In *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (1984), Kenneth R. Johnston suggested this shift in metaphor is not "necessarily a scaling-down or shift in his intentions," since both metaphors are, in some sense, "organic," if one observes that the gothic church metaphor "intended to convey an image of unity-in-diversity, of different styles and structures accreted over long periods of time from common materials by anonymous workmen" (WR xxiii). In his later article of the same title in *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth* (2003), Johnston revises this account somewhat. There he labels the early metaphor as "architectural" and the later one as "organic," noting that the change marks a shift from "a clearly defined, quasi-religious monument or edifice, to that of an on-going, private, secular process of life." Johnston adds that, "the difference between the two [metaphors] is impossible to chart exactly" (Johnston 2003 72), but one of the aims of these first three chapters has been precisely to chart this shift and offer a way to understand it in terms not of the historical conflict between the religious and the secular but in terms of the epistemological conflict between wonder and system.

Since the 'Epistemological Turn' in philosophy, when thinkers such as Descartes and Locke sought to make philosophy a practical and productive handmaiden to modern science, the love of knowledge has eclipsed the love of wisdom and the ideal of a systematic totality has overshadowed the premodern emphasis on wonder as the fundamental attitude of the inquiring philosopher. Dismissing wonder as a naïve and infertile sibling of astonishment,[143] Descartes helped to invalidate the epistemological attitude that perpetually resists totalities by way of the skeptical epochê (or suspension of judgment) – the guiding force of a philosophy conceived not as a mode of production but as a way of life. The binary of wonder and system is a natural one (as the introduction to this study aimed to show), precisely because wonder and system *are* both organic. Modern philosophers such as Descartes and Locke instituted a totality-centered way of philosophizing centered upon the concept of system as a static and artificial *whole* (or totality), and in so doing, they helped to supplant the concept of system as a dynamic and organic *process*

(or method), which centers upon a wonder that consists in a perpetual cycle of breaking and combining, analysis and synthesis – a hovering between doctrines and metaphors. Generally speaking, this first landing marks a shift away from the consideration, in part I, of the concept of *The Recluse* as a totality, and toward a consideration, in part II, of a long autobiographical poem in which the speaker's steadfastly attends not merely to phenomena but to the mental faculties that disclose those phenomena. This attention bears a striking resemblance to the Scholastic concept of intentionality as it was appropriated by Sigmund Freud and Edmund Husserl – a point of contact between the founders of psychoanalysis and phenomenology made possible by the influence of a shared teacher, Franz Brentano.

Like other practitioners of the peculiar sub-genre of autobiography that I am calling autobiographical philosophy, Wordsworth commenced *The Recluse* with systematic philosophical ambitions only to find that his "preparatory" autobiographical poem had supplanted these ambitions. Coleridge too harbored systematic philosophical ambitions, and perhaps he sabotaged his own magnum opus in the same manner that Wordsworth seems to have done. As the history of his *Biographia Literaria* – initially conceived as a brief preface on the principles of criticism that would precede a projected book of poems (Engell 59) – would suggest, Coleridge, too, was fooled into thinking that autobiography can prepare the way toward – or be intermingled with – system (CN I.1515). As the inharmonious (and perhaps *in both cases*, incomplete) structures of Augustine's *Confessions* and Wordsworth's *Recluse* would indicate, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to make the leap from the autobiographical mode of writing that consists of narration and description toward the generalizing and universalizing mode of writing that proposes an explanation to philosophical problems that is comprehensive enough to be called a 'system.' Even Marcel, the speaker of a seven-novel epic, confesses that his own story remains, to some extent, incomplete, exclaiming, "How many great cathedrals remain unfinished!" (Proust III.1089). The aporia that the human subject faces in introspection – in the exploration of what Marcel calls "the life of the mind" (RTP I.200) – is inevitable.

Yet in a late poem like "Cathedrals, etc.," which was included among Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, one can see why the aging poet might have entertained the hopes of finishing his gothic church. The cathedral instills in its congregants a humble sense of each human creature's frailty and insignificance beside the grandeur of a God who seems to hover above and fly about within those immense soaring buttresses, intimating an eternal place and an immortal life that might surpass this earthly one. It would be something indeed "to construct a literary Work that might live" (PW III.5), in the same way that such a cathedral lives, and to instill in attentive readers the experience of…

> Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
>
> And mount, at every step, with living wiles
>
> Instinct – to rouse the heart and lead the will
>
> By a bright ladder to the world above (WPW 354).

Part II. Wordsworth's "Philosophic Song":

Poetry, Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology

Interlude:

Professional Prejudice, Poetic Prescience, and the 19th Century Disciplinary Conflict over Mental Faculties

a) Arnold as Critic:

Mental Faculties as Disciplinary Property

> In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty. The most unfailing herald, companion and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is Poetry.… Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World.
>
> ~ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry* (1840)[144]

> It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature.… And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough.
>
> ~ Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864)[145]

Romanticist and historicist walk into a bar. Historicist yells, "No, no, no, no, no! No one steps outside of history! No mind transcends the spirit of its age!" Romanticist says, "Then explain the prescience of poets! Isn't your claim a bit *idealistic*?! A thought can be thought at one time and one time only?!" They grab each others throats, turn red, topple over and writhe on the sawdust floor. The big bouncer bounces them.

This scenario presents a chicken-and-egg problem. Does the age incite the thought or does the thought incite the age? If the romanticist cries that the thought incites the age, the historicist cries that the age was pregnant with all the factors necessary for the birth of such a thought. The romanticist yells, "Genius!"; the historicist yells, "Genius *loci*!" And so on *ad infinitum*. To further complicate this insoluble problem, we observe that the debate re-inscribes the same old dichotomy: nature and nurture, unique self and transformative culture. The romanticist thinks that genius is innate; the historicist thinks it culturally constructed. Yet both stances assume the dualism of an independently existing mind that resides in a communally engaged body. The romanticist assumes that the self influences the age, and the historicist assumes that the age influences the self, yet both stances assume the same framework, the same two nodes, disagreeing only over which node directs more energy towards the other.

In its assumption that I am a self – discrete and indivisible – and that I run around influencing and being influenced by other discrete and indivisible selves, this dualistic framework also underlies the recent trend toward interdisciplinary work in academia. In this case, the 'discipline' is the discrete entity that runs around influencing and being influenced by other disciplines. While this interdisciplinary trend explicitly appears to defy abstract dichotomies and resist a rigid disciplinarity, it also implicitly re-affirms these divisions insofar as the attempt to transcend disciplinary boundaries requires scholars to first identify (and thus, re-entrench) those boundaries. Having crossed into a foreign discipline, I must foreground my status as a novice and bracket my conclusions as dependent upon the external verification of that discipline's experts. My findings are, paradoxically, at once evidence of a shared purpose across disciplines and evidence of the ultimate impossibility of authentic interdisciplinary work (unless one can acquire two or more doctorates and remain adequately steeped in the proliferating scholarship in two or more specialty areas). In short, the best one can hope to be is a skilled interdisciplinary diplomat, a naturalized citizen of one nation who occasionally visits another.

Of course, by pitting the romanticist against the historicist, the opening paragraphs to this section re-impose yet another abstract dichotomy. People's views are rarely so univocal. If one envisions romanticism and historicism at opposite ends of a continuum, one might feel attracted more toward one side than the other. But one is wise to remain close to the center. At the extremes these views become mere caricatures. One might argue, for instance, that romanticism is *about* creating a continual interplay between the caricatures of historicism and romanticism described above. Shelley declares – perhaps our stereotypical romanticist has forgotten! – that even Wordsworth's 'Poet' is an indivisible mixture of self and community: "A Poet, is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others, and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both" (PU 208). Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* reaffirms this claim, demonstrating that great works of imagination combine inspiration and response. Even William Blake – who at times describes genius ("Intuition," "Con-Science," "Spiritual Perception") as a kind of God-inspired automatic force of creation – nonetheless concedes that the painter's genius is squandered without a lifelong dedication to copying the great masters.[146]

Yet if our brawling romanticist drifts too far toward one extreme, our brawling historicist drifts too far toward the other. No system is perfectly predictable, and history too must have its anomalies. By taking inflexible positions, one often reveals more about one's own prejudices than one reveals about the world. Consider the skeptical assertion that only someone who attended university could have written the works of Shakespeare.[147] In its effort to explain Shakespeare's genius as a direct consequence of his having been exposed to the proverbial 'best thinking of his time,' this claim falls on the historicist side of the spectrum. Yet such claims require us to ask: Is Shakespeare's output explainable in any context? Can we identify a moment in space and time – a house and its furnishings, parents and their children, students and their teachers, a playhouse and its players – that would make the emergence of such talent predictable? Few could imagine such a world. Except, well, Shakespeare; a few others. Keats considered Shakespeare the quintessential humanist precisely because Shakespeare could like a "camelion" enter into so many compelling characters without giving any significant indication of his own character (KSL 147-48). What personal background would allow a person to gain an intimate knowledge of so many different kinds of people? Is it even possible to create so many unique characters without recourse to imagination?

The epigraphs above encapsulate the opposing perspectives of this chicken-and-egg problem. Though Shelley resists an account of history in which innate genius is the sole mover, he nonetheless argues that there are "two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination" (DP 510), and that acts of imagining can allow artists and thinkers to anticipate the creations of later ages. In affirming the "unacknowledged" role of poets in general and of his generation in particular (DP 535), Shelley finds a natural antagonist in Matthew Arnold, who suggests that the artists of Shelley's generation "did not know enough" (FC 262). While Shelley believes in the genius of poets, Arnold believes that poets must read more books to cobble together the poems that would encapsulate the best thinking of their day. Indeed, it seems possible that Arnold might have had Shelley in mind as he composed certain passages of "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time."

Their disagreement begins with a point of relative agreement that quickly dissolves. Shelley concedes that to the poet's "internal powers" must be added "such external influences as excite and sustain these powers" (PU 208), and Arnold agrees that "for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment" (FC 261). Yet Arnold is more adamant about the limitations of the artist, and he employs the word "creation" in a narrower sense than Shelley does. According to Shelley, "Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are in one sense the creators and in another the creations of their age" (PU 208). By contrast, Arnold sharply distinguishes the work of "creative literary genius" from "the business of the philosopher" (FC 260-61). While Shelley grants poets the power not only to persuade and inspire but also to break apart existing institutions and influence the creation of new world orders, Arnold urges poets to wait patiently while philosophers, scientists and critics create the knowledge that will determine the course of human events. Though Wordsworth – an old friend of Arnold's father, who was headmaster of Rugby School and then Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford – assisted the future critic with his studies at university (according to Leon Gottfried, the young Arnold was "a rather indifferent student"), and though Wordsworth felt extremely gratified when his protégé was elected fellow at Oriel (Gottfried 7-8), this did not stop Arnold the critic from years later claiming that Wordsworth "should have read more books" (FC 262).

At the root of the tension between Shelley's and Arnold's views is the proper division of the mental faculties and the question of the professions to which these distinct faculties can be said to properly belong. Shelley defines reason as "the principle of analysis" (or breaking), endowing it with the role of world-discloser, and he defines imagination as "the principle of synthesis" (or combining), endowing it with the role of world-organizer. Yet Shelley adds, "Reason is to Imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance" (DP 510-11). Reason is a mere "instrument" of the imagination's "agency," a mere form ("body") of the imagination's content ("spirit"). As the brief discussion of Shelley in this study's introduction indicates, Shelley's formulation suggests that analysis and synthesis occur together in a perpetual cycle, one reinforcing and reinvigorating the other. While Shelley asserts that, "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the Imagination'" (DP 511), he does not exclude the possibility that the poet might engage in both analysis and synthesis, performing the full cycle of discovery and creation.

Arnold, by contrast, insists upon the poet's limitations, arguing that, "creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas; that is rather the business of the philosopher: the grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery" (FC 260-61). Arnold's claims here are somewhat contradictory. Though Arnold assures his readers that "free creative activity" is "the highest function of man," he paradoxically argues that for literary artists creation means working with existing materials (FC 260). In other words, "free creative activity" is neither free nor creative; it is a form of organization that depends upon external resources.

These related distinctions between creation (or 'discovery') and mere organization and between analysis and mere synthesis have a rich and contentious lineage. Arnold's view of poetic creation resembles the view of divine creation that Augustine denounces in the *Confessions*, when he complains of those who "say that you [God] did not make them [the beings and things of the universe] from material which you had yourself created, but that they had already been made elsewhere from other materials, and that you merely assembled them and pieced them together and welded them into one" (XIII.30; C 341) – a form of making that Coleridge calls 'fashioning' as opposed to true 'creation' (BL II.83-84). By extension, Shelley might complain that Arnold's view of poetic creation represents not even a shadow of the divine *creatio ex nihilo*, in which God "created the matter from absolutely nothing and the form of the world from this formless matter," and all of this "in one act" (XIII.33; C 344). Arnold's views find a second intriguing parallel in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), which, according to John Dewey's neo-Hegelian reading, failed to achieve its fullest potential because Kant could not imagine a reason that could both analyze and synthesize. Mistakenly, according to Dewey, Kant assumes that while it is natural for reason to analyze, it can synthesize "only upon condition that material be given it to act upon" (Dewey 40). Like the Kantian reason, poets can, according to Arnold, only synthesize if they are given the material from without; moreover, Arnold denies that poets have the power to analyze (or "discover"). He does not, like Shelley, think that the poet can cut to the center of things, break them apart and create other things that are brand new. Moreover, like the Kantian faculty of reason, Arnold's poet can only synthesize if it receives pre-existing "materials" from the external world. "The creative power," Arnold says, "works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready" (FC 260). This readiness, according to Arnold, depends not upon the poets themselves but upon the readiness of thinkers to announce new truths. Only then should poets begin to render those truths in verse.

Rather than arguing that either Shelley or Arnold is 'right,' this interlude aims to serve as a transition between Part I and Part II by identifying and challenging some of the prejudices that underlie Shelley's and Arnold's debate – prejudices similar to the ones that motivate educational institutions to divide academic knowledge into separate disciplines and to harbor different expectations for each of them. While the next section (a) will explore the professional agendas of Shelley and Arnold within the broader context of the division of knowledge that Socrates introduces in Plato's *Theaetetus*, the section that follows (b) will briefly examine a moment in Arnold's poetry when he presciently arrived at a theoretical solution to a scientific mystery that the geological community would not arrive at for decades. In "To Marguerite, in Returning a Volume of the Letters of Ortis" (later retitled, "To Marguerite: Continued"), Arnold the poet inadvertently undermines Arnold the critic, demonstrating that poets *can* creatively analyze and

need not wait for philosophers, scientists and critics to deliver newly discovered ideas for them to organize.

These contrasting sections will prepare the way for chapter four, which suggests that in prescribing different mental faculties to different professions and in denying that poets might create new ideas, Arnold judges too hastily. In particular, the chapter will argue that this hastiness calls for a re-examination of Arnold's rejection of Wordsworth's philosophy in light of the important differences between the collections and accompanying prefaces of Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815 and Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879). Countering Arnold's claim that Wordsworth's philosophy was an "illusion," chapter four will defend Wordsworth's efforts to organize his *Poems of 1815* according to mental activities, preparing the way for succeeding chapters on Wordsworth's attention to remembering, confabulation, and imagining.

b) Arnold as Propagandist:

Criticism, Cosmopolitanism and the Division of Knowledge

Shelley's *Defense of Poetry* and Arnold's "Function of Criticism" are both manifestos that attempt to promulgate particular views and that are motivated by particular agendas. Shelley first drafted his *Defense of Poetry* in response to an essay by Thomas Love Peacock called "The Four Ages of Poetry" (1820), in which Peacock had disparaged not only the poets of Shelley's day but also poetry in general, proclaiming that "as the sciences of morals and of mind advance towards perfection, as they become more enlarged and comprehensive in their views, as reason gains the ascendancy in them over imagination and feeling, poetry can no longer accompany them in their progress, but drops into the background, and leaves them to advance alone" (Peacock 329). Peacock's views (if they are his views[148]) greatly resemble those which Arnold would convey nearly half a century later. Thus, in his *Defense of Poetry*, Shelley's aim was to exonerate both his profession and that profession's primary faculty, the imagination. With the goal of valorizing poetry, he inverts Peacock's hierarchy, granting imagination the ascendancy over reason.

Though Arnold's "Function of Criticism" declares "disinterestedness" as the "rule" by which the course of English criticism should be determined (FC 269-70), his essay, like Shelley's, reflects a particular interest or agenda.[149] Arnold's aim was to defend and redefine criticism and to endow his new critics with greater authority and purpose. Given the popular view of criticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this was no easy task. "Criticism is a study by which men grow important and formidable at very small expense," Samuel Johnson once drolly remarked. "He whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of critick" (Johnson 328). As an esteemed-yet-unprolific poet turned critic, Arnold could not have taken comfort in Johnson's characterization, which describes not only Arnold's personal situation but also the commonly held assumptions about periodical reviewers in Arnold's day. Alongside the great literary works published in these periodicals were columns filled with contemporary responses. While some reviewers spoke with temperance and objectivity, others forwarded ad hominem attacks or groundless generalities that could be as influential as they were ungenerous. Periodical editors and reviewers often used literary texts as platforms from which to express their own personal, economic or political views. For instance, while Peacock's "Four Ages of Poetry" is quite persuasive, it is worth noting that he published his polemic against poetry only after failing as a poet and going to work for the East

India Company (DP 509). To counteract the belief that most critics have ulterior motives, Arnold was forced to engage in a kind of rhetorical juggling act, applying and redefining terms as he saw fit.

One rhetorical redefinition occurs in Arnold's treatment of his political position. While describing the "proper work of criticism" and forwarding himself as one of its practitioners, Arnold also distances himself from contemporary periodical reviewers whose political allegiances he considers improper (FC 274). Yet when Arnold claims, "the English critic, therefore, must dwell much upon foreign thought" (FC 283), one observes (with the advantage of hindsight) that Arnold is as politically interested as the reviewers he criticizes. To their 'naturalized' and 'provincial' English nationalism, he prefers a more 'cultured' European cosmopolitanism – a preference that is far from disinterested. James Joyce's "The Dead" offers a modernist example of Arnold's cosmopolitanism in the figure of Gabriel Conroy, who has an affinity for the galoshes then worn on the Continent and who, though a Dubliner, gives preference to bike rides across France, Belgium and Germany, where he can practice his European languages, over tours of Galway and western Ireland, where he can practice his Irish (or Gaelic). Conroy's continental leanings elicit the passive-aggressive ridicule of a young Irish nationalist named Miss Ivors, whose sentiments mirror the English nationalism exhibited by many of the nineteenth-century's periodical writers. Arnold's views, like Conroy's, could have been characterized by his countrymen as unpatriotic and elitist – and without question, politically motivated.

Another rhetorical redefinition occurs in Arnold's description of criticism itself, which involves a double equivocation. While explicitly advocating criticism, he also assigns to criticism a definition and method that British readers would have associated not with reviewers but with another field entirely. According to Arnold, when it follows "the law of its own nature," criticism enjoys "the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind," taking place in a "pure intellectual sphere" where one can "forget the pressure of practical considerations" (FC 270-71). Criticism is, therefore, another word for what the ancients called philosophy, a desire for wisdom that requires leisure and remains unfettered by the practical demands of productivity and sectarian prejudice.[150] In a single maneuver, Arnold redefines criticism in a way that displaces a class of people who have previously been called critics (reviewers), while also displacing a class of people who have never been called critics (philosophers).

In view of this (if intentional, rather deft) rhetorical maneuver, one can better appreciate Arnold's dispute with Shelley. Though Arnold explicitly concedes that, "The critical power is of lower rank than the creative," a few sentences later he claims that "creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas; that is rather the business of the philosopher" (FC 260-61). Since, upon Arnold's definition, the roles of philosopher and critic apparently overlap, Arnold has described the poet as dependent upon the critic, just as Shelley has, contrarily, described reason as dependent upon the imagination.

Such maneuvers aren't exactly new. Shelley and Arnold have neatly and cleverly assigned certain kinds of mental activity (reason, imagination, analysis, synthesis…) to certain classes of professionals (poets, philosophers, scientists, critics…), based on their personal preferences. They are playing name games – naming and renaming, defining and redefining, as they see fit. Their rhetorical maneuvers are a common response to epistemological problems.

Shelley and Arnold fall (or cleverly lead their readers) into a trap much like the one into which Socrates leads Theaetetus in Plato's dialogue of the same name. In the dialogue, Socrates has, as usual, stumbled upon "a minor issue" that he would like to pursue with Theaetetus (145d). In this case, the minor issue involves a slight confusion over "what knowledge in fact is" (145e). Theaetetus's first response to this question is a response that any naïve member of a university community might give: to speak of "kinds of knowledge" (146d), just as Shelley and Arnold have done. Socrates quickly dismantles this response:

> But the question, Theaetetus, was not 'What are the objects of knowledge?', nor 'How many branches of knowledge are there?' We didn't ask the question because we wanted a catalogue, but because we wanted to know what knowledge is. Am I talking nonsense? (146d).

Theaetetus enthusiastically declares that Socrates is most certainly not talking nonsense, yet Socrates hasn't exactly been fair. He has led his witness. Moments earlier, as their conversation begins, Socrates asks Theaetetus if they should believe their friend, Theodorus, who has claimed that Socrates and Theaetetus bear a certain facial resemblance (144d-145b; 143e). While Theodorus is a geometer, Socrates indicates that it is artists whom we esteem for their knowledge about the contours of faces. He and Theaetetus, therefore, agree that if someone is not "backed by" the proper knowledge and speaks without "authority," then one should have "no particular reason to listen to him" (144e-145a). But what constitutes authority? Does it require knowledge of particular facts, engagement in particular mental activities, apprenticeship in particular professions? Would a reclusive artist of moderate talents be as skilled at perceiving and interpreting faces as a clever politician who regularly strolls the agora? Every day human beings recognize and occasionally misrecognize faces. These recognitions often occur without reflection and across great distances. As a high-school lacrosse player, I could instantly distinguish my teammates from a hundred yards away, without numbered jerseys, based on their figures and movements. If Theodorus has known Socrates since they were young men, it is possible that he is regularly tempted to mistake Theaetetus for the Socrates he knew many years ago. Just as a maker of shoes would know and notice different things about shoes than one who merely paints them, so would a portrait painter know and notice different things than one who merely recognizes them. Yet each of these is a kind of knowledge. We recognize faces by identifying and distinguishing innumerable features, some of them nameless or unconscious, in a complicated series of nuanced perceptions. Socrates's claim that only artists have the authority to determine facial resemblances prepares the way for Theaetetus's first error in speaking of specialized kinds of knowledge – an error that, in certain moments, leads Shelley to bestow the powers of the creative imagination upon poets and that leads Arnold to bestow the power to create new ideas upon philosophers, scientists and critics.

In a very real sense, the first false start in the history of epistemology was the division of knowledge into disciplines.[151] Once one has constructed these disciplines, one naturally seeks to associate each with particular mental activities, practices and facts and settle upon a course of study that will ensure their acquisition. However, our naturalized academic attitudes often lead us to speak matter of factly about disciplines and about crossing disciplinary boundaries as if these boundaries were real – as if we had not, in fact, created them. In view of Socrates's announcement in *Theaetetus* that "I have no knowledge" (157c), there is reason to assume that when he says only artists can judge facial resemblances, he is voicing not his own belief but a

disputable possibility. He may even be trying to get Theaetetus to disagree with him. However, Arnold (and to a lesser extent, Shelley) seems convinced that only certain classes of professionals are capable of certain kinds of mental activities. While Shelley considers both poets and philosophers creative thinkers, Arnold contends that it is the province of philosophers, not poets, to discover new ideas. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein says, "People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea *that these have something to teach them* – that does not occur to them" (CV 36e). In its challenge to common disciplinary assumptions, Wittgenstein's comment implies that while Shelley's interdisciplinary view is closer to the truth, Arnold's strict disciplinary view has been more persuasive. However, it is curious that Arnold, of all people, should be so sectarian, since he belongs to that small class of great English poets (including Sidney, Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Eliot and a few others) who also made great and lasting contributions to the history of literary criticism and theory. Is it so impossible to imagine that poets have recourse to the same mental faculties as critics, philosophers and scientists? Apparently, Arnold would contend that he was unlikely to create a new idea while acting as a poet.

b) Arnold as Poet:

Mental Faculties as Human Faculties

"To Marguerite, in Returning a Volume of the
Letters of Ortis," by Matthew Arnold[152]

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour —

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain —
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire? —

A God, a God their severance rul'd!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

Though Arnold demeans the creative powers of poets, one can observe, in a poetic exchange between him and John Donne, the foundational moments of a theory that would not gain common acceptance among scientists until the middle of the twentieth century. In his *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (1623), John Donne famously declares, "No man is an *Iland*, intire of itself; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*."[153] In Matthew Arnold's poem, "To Marguerite, in Returning a Volume of the Letters of Ortis" (1852), the speaker reverses Donne's claim by contending that we *are* islands precisely in our felt isolation from each other. We dwell forever at a distance from other people, "With echoing straits between us thrown." Yet, simultaneously, we islands also feel a peculiar "longing like despair," sensing inexplicably that at some point in the past, "we were / Parts of a single continent." We despair that our islands further shift and isolate us; we long to see "our marges meet again"; and we question and curse the God who "their severance ruled."

At the time of this poem's composition, there was little debate about how and when the Earth's surface began to look as it now looks. On the classical model, the cosmos is eternal, perfect and permanent. Just as pre-Galilean scientists believed the moon was a mountainless sphere, just as pre-Copernican scientists believed Earth was at the center of the solar system, so did most scientists in Arnold's time believe that the continents had always been in the same place. Proposed by James Hutton in 1785 and further articulated by Sir Charles Lyell in his three-volume *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), the principle of uniformitarianism – the prevailing geological theory of Arnold's day and a still pertinent one in our own – states that the shaping forces of the Earth are uniform, occurring slowly but surely at the same rate and in the same manner that they always have.[154] This principle provides a more sober scientific alternative to the catastrophism of deluge and divine intervention (Noah's ark, Moses's parted sea) that had influenced accounts of the Earth's development in the centuries before Lyell persuaded scientists that uniformity should be the anchoring concept in the field of geology. Lyell wrote volumes in opposition to claims such as Arnold's, which explained the Earth's history with recourse to vague intuitions, mysterious forces and dramatic events.[155]

In succeeding decades, however, geologists would begin to identify parallel land formations as well as identical fossils and life forms at opposite ends of what Arnold calls the "umplumbed, salt, estranging sea." Thus, about six decades after the publication of Arnold's poem, an American geologist, Frank Bursley Taylor, and a German meteorologist, Alfred Wegener, independently arrived at a theory that today's children learn about in grade school: continental drift. Wegener's extended account of this theory, *The Origins of Continents and Oceans* (1915), demonstrates that Arnold's intuitions were correct and that the poem contains a curiously literal moment of prescience, anticipating a later scientific discovery. We were once part of a single continent, and our longing for union or fusion with other beings has a geological precedent – one that nicely complements Aristophanes's anthropomorphic myth in Plato's *Symposium*, which says that, "Each of us, then, is a 'matching half' of a whole, because each was sliced like a flatfish, two out of one, and each of us is always seeking the half that matches him" (191D; Plato 1989 27). Indeed, an explorer of polar ice caps, Wegener had a bit of the poet in him. Just as Milton coined the word "pandemonium" to deepen our sense of the chaos that

followed Satan's revolt and consequent loss of paradise, so did Wegener give his super-continent a name: Pangaea (or 'All-Lands'). Though the Taylor-Wegener theory of continental drift was highly controversial and did not gain common acceptance in the United States until the 1950s and 60s – a century after the publication of Arnold's poem – the scientific community ultimately confirmed Arnold's intuitions when geologists recognized that paleomagnetic research and the discovery of spreading seafloors suggested that the theories of continental drift and plate tectonics are compatible (Cohen; Oreskes 1999 and 2001).

Had other people before Arnold had similar intuitions about the origins of continents and oceans? To my knowledge, none were as strangely accurate as Arnold's. In her subtle and learned reading of Arnold's poem, Kathleen Tillotson associates the geological metaphor with Collins's "Ode to Liberty," which "Saw Britain lin'd to its adverse strand" (Tillotson 356); Coleridge's "Cristabel," which shows two who "stood aloof, the scars remaining / Like cliffs which had been rent asunder" (Tillotson 358); and Wordsworth's "native continent" (Tillotson 355; see the 1805 *Prelude,* V.558-62). Though Arnold might have had these other poems in mind, they do not presage the Taylor-Wegener theory as poignantly and accurately as the claim that all islands were once part of a single continent.

Was Arnold's idea really so very radical and original? Of Arnold's metaphor, Tillotson says, "the reader of 1852 who had been brought up on Lyell could accept the statement [about continents] as a scientific one" (Tillotson 356). However, given that Lyell's most basic and pervasive principle is uniformitarianism, it seems unlikely that any attentive reader of Lyell would have accepted Arnold's description as scientific. As Wegener observes, before he and Taylor had announced their theories, the scientific community had "taken for granted that the continental blocks – whether above sea level or inundated – have retained their mutual positions unchanged throughout the history of the planet" (Wegener 8).[156] According to Lyell and previous geologists, the present arrangement of the continents had most likely occurred when "intermediate continents" fell beneath sea level as a result of a gradual shrinkage or contraction of the earth (Wegener 8). Just as "a drying apple acquires surface wrinkles by loss of internal water," Wegener illustrates, so did the earth, according to the contraction theory of Lyell and preceding geologists, experience a gradual sinking of intermediate continents that had always been arranged and connected to other land masses as they are today (Wegener 9). According to Lyell's theory, this rising and sinking of continents occurred in a constant cycle, and he pointed out that the bodies of water scattered throughout the earth's continents most likely represented "deposits from former seas" (Wegener 9).

Though the phrase "continental *drift*" might sound to contemporary readers like a gradual process, Lyell would surely have labeled the Taylor-Wegener theory as too dramatic a change and as anathema to the principles of uniformitarianism. He might even have viewed it as another example of the catastrophism that people often attributed to the earth's history. Indeed, related theories that preceded the Taylor-Wegener theory each presupposed catastrophic events. As early as 1881, geologists had presented theories of continental formation that might be seen as precursors to that of Taylor and Wegener, but one of these theories proposed, for example, that continental drift had occurred after the moon had been ripped from the Earth, leaving a gash that formed the Pacific basin before settling into its own orbit. The Taylor-Wegener theory of continental drift would have seemed less far-fetched to Lyell than the moon-ripping scenario, but only slightly.[157]

If one accepts the originality of Arnold's metaphor, one might argue that he arrives at it and that Wegener arrives at his controversial theory precisely because they are *not* geologists. Arnold is, of course, a poet. Wegener was involved in multiple fields, including astronomy, meteorology, geophysics and geography. He was comparatively ignorant of geology, in which he had received no formal training. Neither thinker was inculcated by geologists or subject to the geological prejudices of their generations. This might have granted each thinker a fresh, unfettered perspective.

"Science," Henry Adams says, "needs time to reconstruct its instruments, to follow a revolution in space; a certain lag is inevitable" (Adams 376). Yet in the case of continental drift, this lag affected geologists who were trained to make particular assumptions about the world, and it did not affect the imaginative powers of a poet. In the same chapter, "The Grammar of Science," Adams comments upon the ground uniformitarianism had already been forced to surrender by 1903: "The fact was admitted that the uniformitarians of one's youth had wound about their universe a tangle of contradictions meant only for temporary support to be merged into a 'larger synthesis,' and had waited for the larger synthesis in silence and in vain" (Adams 378). Waiting for "a 'larger synthesis'" meant waiting for someone to merge in one grand narrative everything they thought they knew and everything they could not yet explain. What they needed, ironically, was precisely the opposite: an analysis, a breaking apart, which would allow them to glimpse not only the breaking apart of Pangaea but also the breaking apart of the prevailing theory in their discipline.

Though Arnold the critic argues that "the grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery" (FC 261), Arnold the poet was capable of glimpsing more than the critics, scientists and philosophers of his day when it came to the question of the Earth's continental formation. Arnold the critic suggests that poets are uniquely capable of offering the kind of larger synthesis or grand narrative for which the uniformitarians waited. Ironically, instead of engaging in synthesis and following his own advice about the poet's proper role, Arnold the poet performed an intuitive analysis of the Earth's surface that also revealed the fissures and flaws of the nineteenth century's rigid uniformitarian stance. Ludwig Wittgenstein once said, "It's only by thinking even more crazily than philosophers do that you can solve their problems" (CV 5e), and it would appear that the same goes for the problems of other disciplines.

In "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," Arnold paradoxically implies that while wearing the hat of the critic he can create, analyze and discover, but that wearing the hat of the poet forces him to engage in a mere synthesis or refashioning of materials that have already been created. However, his poetry suggests that training in a discipline is not always the best way to solve its problems. While discoveries often occur in the way and from the person that one would expect, this is not always the case. Preconceptions about disciplines and professionals can calcify precisely those underlying assumptions that should be challenged. Revising the Cartesian cogito, Nietzsche declares, "a thought comes when 'it' wishes, and not when 'I' wish" (I.17; Nietzsche 1966 24). Anticipating Freud's theory of the unconscious, Nietzsche suggests that thoughts simply come, regardless of time and place, regardless of training. Who is to say whence or wherefore thoughts come? Who is to say that they can come only to those who are wearing the right hat?

Part II of this study, "Wordsworth's 'Philosophic Song,'" aims to complicate disciplinary assumptions by examining Wordsworth's attention to mental activities in general as well as his attention to two particular mental faculties that overflow disciplinary boundaries: imagining and remembering. Arnold's imaginings allowed him to anticipate a particular geological theory. But more importantly, such examples of prescience offer models for the kind of innovative thinking that can produce paradigm shifts. Such examples of prescience suggest that divisions based on 'content' are insignificant beside the shared faculties (or 'forms' of thought) that unite all embodied minds. If one emphasizes the role of shared faculties in mental life and not the assumed content of separate disciplines, the idea of 'interdisciplinary work' becomes redundant. All mental engagements are interdisciplinary if they share the structure of the cogito: the human being conscious of something and of the mental activity that gives that something to consciousness.

4. Wordsworth and Arnold as Editors:

From the Intentionality of Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815

to the Generic Order of Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth*

a) Philosophy, Popularization and

the "Natural" Ordering of Poems

> Wordsworth classified his poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental physiology. He has poems of the fancy, poems of the imagination, poems of sentiment and reflection, and so on. His categories are ingenious but far-fetched, and the result of his employment of them is unsatisfactory. Poems are separated one from another which possess a kinship of subject or of treatment far more vital and deep than the supposed unity of mental origin which was Wordsworth's reason for joining them with others.
>
> ~ Arnold, Preface to *Poems of Wordsworth*[158]

Arnold's conception of mental faculties as disciplinary property (as examined in the interlude) expresses itself not only in his work as a critic but also in his work as an editor. Given Arnold's suggestion in "The Function of Criticism" that the poet is not so much a creator as a fashioner or echoer of extant ideas, it is not surprising that he should have shown little regard for Wordsworth's efforts to categorize many of his poems according to mental activities from 1815 onward. It is with the words in the epigraph to this section that Arnold, in the preface to his edition of the *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879), justifies his preferred categories for the arrangement of Wordsworth's poems as well as his dismissal of Wordsworth's own logic of organization. This dismissal is accompanied by several others. For example, though today's Wordsworth specialist might name the first two books of *The Prelude* and "The Ruined Cottage" section of *The Excursion* as among Wordsworth's most important productions – along, perhaps, with the "Immortality Ode," "Tintern Abbey" and "Michael"[159] – Arnold asserts that, "The *Excursion* and the *Prelude*, his poems of greatest bulk, are by no means Wordsworth's best work" (W 42). Given that discussions of Wordsworth's philosophy had and have tended to focus on these two long poems and on their relation to his plans for *The Recluse*, this dismissal of Wordsworth's long poems is surely driven in part by Arnold's conviction that Wordsworth's poetry "is the reality," and that "his philosophy, – so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of 'a scientific system of thought,' and the more that it puts them on, – is the illusion" (W 48). As chapter two argued, the notion that Wordsworth's poetry offers, purports to offer, or should have offered "a scientific system of thought" – views held by Stephen, Arnold and Coleridge respectively – is extremely misguided. Nonetheless, though in his Preface to *The Excursion* Wordsworth explicitly rejects the strict arrangement ("*formally* to announce") and the explicitly articulated purpose ("formally to *announce*") of the system as a genre (my italics; PW III.6), Arnold contends that Wordsworth attempted to present his readers with a "formal philosophy" and that "we cannot do him [Wordsworth] justice until we dismiss" it (W 48). Among the "corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth," according to Arnold, is Wordsworth's suggestion that "the high instincts and affections" derive from childhood – from

"a divine home recently left" that is "fading away as our life proceeds" – an idea which, in Arnold's opinion, "has no real solidity" and is, as a hypothesized instinct that is supposedly common to all human beings, "extremely doubtful" (W 49-50). While I will deal with Arnold's premature dismissal of the "cornerstone" of Wordsworth's philosophy (as articulated in the "Intimations Ode" and in Book V of *The Prelude*) in chapter five, the aim of this chapter is to suggest that Arnold's dismissals of Wordsworth's 1815 organization, of Wordsworth's longer poems, and of Wordsworth's philosophy demonstrate an inattentiveness to Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder.

Despite this inattentiveness, it must be said that Arnold's edition of Wordsworth's poems achieved precisely what it was designed to achieve. In the volume's influential preface, Arnold is quite explicit about his wish to make Wordsworth's poetry popular among the general populace, and in this task he succeeded admirably. With nearly 4,000 copies sold in the first five months, half a dozen editions during Arnold's lifetime, and a total of thirty-nine printings in the eighty-five years that followed its initial publication (Gottfried 73), Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth* did as much as or more than Wordsworth's own editions to instill in the reading public a deep sense of the worth of Wordsworth's words. Indeed, after all of Wordsworth's efforts to teach the public the taste required for a true appreciation of his poetry, the poet might, though pleased by this posthumous rebirth, also have felt a little resentful that Arnold could, with a single book and preface, accomplish what he, with several books and several prefaces, had accomplished with less dexterity, savvy and success.[160] Arnold's aim was to give Wordsworth "a fair chance before the world," and his method was, "To exhibit this body of Wordsworth's best work, to clear away obstructions around it, and to let it speak for itself" (W 44). In Wordsworth's own editions of his poems, there had been, according to Arnold, mainly two kinds of "obstructions" that prevented readers from observing Wordsworth's merits as a poet: first, that the poems "of high merit are mingled with a mass of pieces of very inferior work," a mass which Wordsworth had continued to publish with "evident unconsciousness of its defects" (W 42), and second, that Wordsworth had "classified his poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental physiology" that readers and Arnold himself found difficult to comprehend (W 42-43).

This chapter will address the second of Arnold's so-called "obstructions." Its task is neither to demonstrate that Wordsworth's own method of classification is 'better' than Arnold's (a task that would require claims of 'objective merit' that would be largely subjective), nor to offer close readings of particular poems with the aim of explaining why Wordsworth categorized them as he did (a task that would consume an entire book[161]), but rather to show that Wordsworth's classification scheme itself, even if in some instances too forcefully imposed upon particular poems, nonetheless reinforces the epistemological attitude that I am calling his philosophy of wonder. In jettisoning Wordsworth's arrangement and in replacing it with a predictable generic arrangement, Arnold overlooks Wordsworth's innovative efforts to attend to mental activities that overflow disciplinary boundaries – efforts that renew the Scholastic concept of intentionality and that anticipate later appropriations and revisions of this concept in the writings of Franz Brentano, Sigmund Freud and Edmund Husserl. Wordsworth's own preface to his *Poems* of 1815 suggests that poems might be arranged not merely according to genre or to subject but also according to "the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them" (his italics; PW III.28), and so this chapter will begin with a section (b) that discusses a few parallels between Wordsworth's arrangement and Brentano's own classification of mental

activity and his renewal of the Scholastic concept of intentionality. These parallels will lead naturally into a consideration in the succeeding section (c) of an innovation upon Brentano's philosophical method at which Freud and Husserl independently arrived – namely, the coordination of the Scholastic attention to mental activity and the skeptical epochê (or suspension of judgment) – an innovation which Wordsworth's 1815 prefaces vaguely foreshadow and which, as ensuing chapters will attempt to illustrate, also finds expression in the epistemological attitude of the first five books of Wordsworth's *Prelude*.

Though Arnold dismissed the organizing categories that Wordsworth designed for his *Poems* of 1815 as "artificial" and "far-fetched," arguing that the traditional genre-based categories he prefers are more "natural" (W 43), I argue that the case is quite the opposite. Aiming to popularize Wordsworth's poems by arranging them into ready-made categories that require no reflection on the part of the reader, the author of *Culture and Anarchy* has re-defined nature as culture, asserting that his traditional arrangement is more "natural" simply because it has been extant since its first articulation in antiquity. Wordsworth's classification scheme is not "artificial," as Arnold claims, but rather *philosophical* in its resistance to the familiar and to the "commonly received plan of arrangement" that non-philosophers such as Arnold would prefer (W 42-43). Indeed, Wordsworth's more demanding and thought-provoking categories *are* "natural" –certainly more natural than Arnold's – insofar as they are modeled not on the artful and artificial forms writers have produced but on the natural activities of mind that have produced them. This brings Wordsworth into conversation with later philosophers of consciousness such as Brentano, Freud, and Husserl, all of whom attend to the mental activities that overflow disciplinary boundaries.

b) Wordsworth's and Brentano's Classifications of Mental Activity

From its very inception, Wordsworth's 1815 arrangement of his poems was beset with criticisms and provoked misunderstanding even among those closest to him. After perusing Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815 at the time of its publication, Henry Crabb Robinson observed in a journal entry that, "His [Wordsworth's] classification of his poems displeases me from an obvious fault, that it is partly subjective and partly objective" (HCR I.165). Having first heard in 1812 of Wordsworth's plan to organize his poems according to mental activities,[162] Crabb Robinson appears surprised that this "subjective" organizing scheme should be combined with "objective" categories such as subject and genre without any apparent effort to distinguish them. Glossing this comment, David Duff has recently noted that Crabb Robinson's early criticism cuts to "the core of the problem of the 1815 edition," since Wordsworth has left it to the reader to reconcile the poet's "subjective, perceptual classification system" with his "objective, *generic* classification system." Duff asserts that readers are left with …

> no sense that it might be possible to conceive of genres organically, as forms of consciousness, as Schiller had done and as other German theorists, and even some English theorists (including Coleridge), had done. When speaking of genre, Wordsworth rejects the notion of organic form, reverting instead to the old mechanistic metaphor of genres as "moulds" into which "content" is poured. When explaining his psychological categories, however, he adopts a theory of poetry that is so organic as to dispense altogether with the notion of form (Duff 89).

Crabb Robinson's and Duff's assertions are well taken, as Wordsworth appears to leave the work of reconciling these divergent categories to his readers.

However, in his preface to the 1815 edition, Wordsworth does suggest an organizing logic for the *Poems* that one might make more of than previous commentators have made. According to Wordsworth,

> … poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality (PW III.28).

To Wordsworth's suggestion that these three categories of poems – predominant mental faculty or "power," genre or "mould," and subject – might be given unified expression when presented according to the chronological stages of human life, commentators such as W. J. B. Owen have responded that "some of the classes are quite irrelevant to the notion" (PW III.24). The sections that organize Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815 proceed in the following order: Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood (1), Juvenile Pieces (2), Poems Founded on the Affections (3), Poems of the Fancy (4), Poems of the Imagination (5), Poems Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection (6), Miscellaneous Sonnets (7), Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty (8), Poems on the Naming of Places (9), Inscriptions (10), Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age (11), Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems (12), "ODE. – Intimations, &c" (13) (Wordsworth 1989 613-20). To Owen's mind, though the stages of "the 'beginning' and 'end' are more or less satisfactory treated" – here Owen appears to be offering a slight revision of Arnold's claims that the categories are generally "unsatisfactory" (W 43) – Wordsworth's classes of "'Fancy', 'Imagination', 'Sentiment and Reflection', 'Miscellaneous Sonnets', 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty', 'Poems on the Naming of Places', and 'Inscriptions' bear no marked relation to the postulated 'middle'" of Wordsworth's plan (PW III.24n1; see also Owen 154-55). I would like to suggest, however, that by bringing Wordsworth's own categories into dialogue with Brentano's classification of mental phenomena, the 1815 organization becomes more intelligible than the criticisms of Crabb Robinson, Duff and Owen would indicate.

Brentano's three classes of mental phenomena bear more than a passing likeness to those of the ancient skeptics. According to Plutarch's *Against Colotes* (1122a-f), the ancient skeptics said there are "three movements in the soul, that of presentation, that of impulse, and that of assent." The "presentation" is the phenomenon that appears to consciousness; the "impulse" is what "naturally leads man toward what is presented"; and the "assent" is the determination of the presentation's truth or falsehood. Arguing that this assent is most often a "premature assent" – a belief that one knows what one does not in fact know – the ancient skeptics eschewed the formation of "opinions," which they construed as "a kind of yielding" and a sign of epistemological "weakness," and cultivated the *impulse* of inquiry without yielding to the temptation to judge (HP 272). These categories of presentation, impulse, and assent parallel Brentano's own categories of presentation, phenomena of love and hate, and judgment. In each

case, the first category refers to the phenomenal appearance that presents itself to consciousness, the second refers to the emotional response that the subject feels toward the presentation, and the third refers to the subject's tendency to classify, qualify, affirm, or deny the presentation through an exertion of the faculty of judgment. As Brentano notes in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874), his choice of categories accords with that of "modern authors" who affirm the "trichotomy of presentation, feeling and will (or whatever they choose to call them)" (Brentano 1973 197). In a later lecture entitled, *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889), Brentano attributes this tripartite division to the third of Descartes' *Meditations* (Descartes I.25-26), which, according to Brentano, lists the three fundamental classes of mental activity as ideas (*ideae* or *Vorstellungen*), a category that "embraces concrete impressions, those for example which are given to us through the sense, as well as every abstract conception"; emotions, which add to the presentation a relation either of "inclination or disinclination," of "love or hate"; and judgments, which add to the presentation "a relation either of recognition or rejection" (Brentano 1902 13-14). Given the debt that Descartes owes to the ancient skeptics for his method of radical doubt or suspended judgment, it appears likely that Descartes and Brentano also owe their tripartite division of mental activities to these ancient predecessors.

After identifying the parallels between Brentano's classification of mental phenomena and that of the ancient skeptics, however, it also becomes clear that Brentano's concept of judgment is more inclusive and nuanced, most likely because he has refined it in accordance with the Scholastic concept of intentionality.[163] As Locke had noted in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), judgments can occur as a result of "settled habit," beneath the level of conscious awareness, so that I might take as a perception what is in fact a judgment (II.IX.9; Locke 146). Acknowledging this habitual tendency, Brentano observes that the judgment's "acceptance (as true) or rejection (as false)" even "occurs in cases in which many people would not use the term 'judgement,' as, for example, in the perception of mental acts and in remembering" (Brentano 1973 198-99). How can one identify and interrogate these habitual judgments if one is not normally conscious of them as such? To grapple with this habitual tendency, Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* famously appropriates the concept of intentionality, renewing a premodern concept that would serve as a formative influence on twentieth-century phenomenology:

> Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity (Brentano 1973 88).

In this early discussion of intentionality, Brentano mingles two interrelated aspects of the concept: first, intentionality refers to "the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object" in the human mind – i.e., to the not exactly real (it is not the "thing" known) and yet not exactly unreal (it still, as something known, in some sense exists) manifestation of objects of knowledge that people experience as thinking subjects every day; and second, intentionality refers to the directedness or self-observing attention of the human subject toward the object phenomenon, which might be given either in the mind or in the apparent external world. In the first case, the concept of intentionality invites us to question the ontological nature of concepts that exist in the mind. In the second case, it invites us to question the epistemological manner in which human

subjects approach phenomena in everyday experience and in philosophical inquiry.[164] Though some commentators have attempted to downplay Brentano's contribution to the modern understanding of intentionality,[165] and though later in his career Brentano would alter his account and begin to advocate a realist view of perception,[166] the probable influence of the passage above on phenomenological thinking should nonetheless be noted. In particular, Husserl would have been struck by the early Brentano's suggestion that intentionality involves a "direction toward an object" – or toward, in Husserl's clarifying phrase, "object phenomena" (HIL 11) – and that such directedness need not be concerned with the reality of the external "thing" that the natural attitude takes for granted as existent. As Brentano reaffirms in *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, the Scholastic concept helps the subject to examine "an intentional relation to something which, though perhaps not real, is none the less an inner object of perception" (Brentano 1902 12). Indeed, according to Brentano, it is due precisely to this concept of "intentional relation" that "the number of fundamental classes of mental phenomena" can be "fixed" (Brentano 1902 13). To the initial appearance or "presentation" can be added an "intentional relation" of either "recognition or rejection" (judgment) or of "love or hate" (emotion) (Brentano 1902 14). The concept of "intentional relation," therefore, helped Brentano to broaden his concept of judgment so that it could account for even those recognitions and rejections that occur instantaneously when the subject engages in perceiving, remembering and imagining.

One way to re-imagine – and perhaps in this way, to dissolve – some of the criticisms that Crabb Robinson, Duff, and Owen have leveled against Wordsworth's organization of the *Poems* of 1815 is to interpret Wordsworth's categories in terms of Brentano's classes of mental phenomena. In his analysis of the 1815 categorization, Genre W. Ruoff notes in passing that, "Wordsworth is involved in what we might now call a phenomenological analysis of his own canon, an endeavor which, one might think, should have generated more sympathy among modern critics than it has."[167] This chapter proposes to take up Ruoff's suggestion and flesh it out. Is it necessarily true that Wordsworth has thrown subjective and objective categories together willy nilly, as Crabb Robinson asserts (HCR I.165); or that Wordsworth has failed to consider the possibility that one could "conceive of genres organically, as forms of consciousness," as Duff contends (Duff 89); or that a number of Wordsworth's categories are, as Owens argues, "quite irrelevant" within the larger context of the chronology of human life (PW III.24)?

Already in Owen's criticism, for example, one can hear an implied retort to the criticisms of Crabb Robinson and Duff. While Owen considers the middle age categories "irrelevant" to the model of human life that Wordsworth has proposed, he suggests that the concluding sections of the 1815 collection – Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age (11), Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems (12), "ODE.--Intimations, &c" (13) – represent a "more or less satisfactory" treatment of the "end" of Wordsworth's chronology (PW III.24n1). It makes sense, therefore, to work backwards from the ending that Owens commends toward the middle that he deems untenable with an eye for what in Wordsworth's organizational scheme commentators are willing to accept and what they feel compelled to reject. On its surface, this ending culminates with a subject category filled with poems that reflect a certain period of life, a genre category filled with poems that fit a certain form or "mould," and finally, a category in which a single poem stands alone, which could represent a genre category (ode), a subject category (a hybrid of the periods of childhood and the afterlife), or a mental activity category (poems of imagination, presumably).

Perhaps Owen views this conclusion as satisfactory treatment of the end of human life for the matter-of-fact reason that Wordsworth follows the old-age subject section with a genre section consisting of poems that mourn the dead or nearly dead. Yet wouldn't it be more adequate to suggest that Wordsworth's account of the end of human life is satisfactory because it achieves a certain *mood*, functioning as a more focused expression of the "Moods of My Own Mind" section that had appeared in *Poems of 1807*? For example, Wordsworth includes at the end of the "Old Age" section two poems, a "Sonnet" and an "Inscription," each of which he might have placed in the sonnet and inscription genre sections that appear earlier in the volume, but for the fact that they resonate with the mood and subject of the "Old Age" section. If mood is the unifying force in these concluding sections, then the "Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems" category might be viewed not as an "objective" genre designation, as Crabb Robinson and Duff contend, but as a subjective mental-state designation, which achieves the mood or emotional response that is most proper to the presentations or phenomena of old age and death. From this perspective, it would appear that Wordsworth does indeed appreciate the view that genres present "forms of consciousness," though Duff argues he does not (Duff 89).

By extension, one might suggest that this view of the elegiac not merely as an objective genre category but rather as a subjective mood category raises questions about Owen's own criticisms of Wordsworth's 1815 organization. Owen claims that the categories of "'Fancy', 'Imagination', 'Sentiment and Reflection', 'Miscellaneous Sonnets', 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty', 'Poems on the Naming of Places', and 'Inscriptions' bear no marked relation to the postulated 'middle'" of Wordsworth's plan (PW III.24n1), yet one might already, building upon the preceding paragraph, suggest that the "Poems on the Naming of Places" and "Inscriptions" sections certainly offer a natural progression toward the mood of the old age and elegy sections. The mature adult, conscious of having left the waxing and entered the waning period of human life, becomes more committed to leaving behind some trace that will ensure his or her posthumous survival, and that is precisely the natural human impulse that the naming and inscription sections seek to satisfy and document. Furthermore, if one can suggest that the elegy as a genre achieves a certain mood, perhaps the same might be said of the sonnet. The dozens of poems that Wordsworth categorizes as "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty" would already seem to suggest that Wordsworth views the sonnet as a genre peculiarly suited to this theme, and surely any poet's treatment of the theme of liberty must be said to create an elevated mood. Moreover, one might argue that the theme of liberty flows naturally into the succeeding sections on place-names and inscriptions insofar as all three categories suggest a concern with the future – the first marking a concern for the legacy that a nation can leave behind for its future citizens, the second and third marking a concern for the personal traces a lone individual can leave behind as evidence of his or her past existence. In this light, the apparent mishmash of the "Miscellaneous Sonnets" section, which precedes the "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty," takes on a new meaning, for these poems fall where they do in the organization of the volume not merely because they are *not* primarily about liberty but also because, apart from their outward form as sonnets, a number of them, such as "The World Is Too Much with Us" and "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," bear a likeness to the poems in preceding sections that Wordsworth has classified according to the faculty predominant in their composition (fancy, imagination, etc.) It is natural that Wordsworth should have wished to highlight his substantive contribution to the history of the sonnet as a genre in English literature, yet to the extent that he could do so, he maintained this emphasis while respecting the overall trajectory of his 1815 organization.

This, in turn, brings us to the first volume, which contains the sections relating to childhood and early adulthood. Owen admits to being as satisfied by the organization of the beginning of the first volume as he is by the conclusion of the second, so it would appear that the introductory categories – Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood (1), Juvenile Pieces (2), Poems Founded on the Affections (3) – meet with his approval. The most conspicuous omission from Owen's list of the unsatisfactory categories subsumed in "the postulated 'middle'" of Wordsworth's plan is the category, "Poems Founded on the Affections." Apparently, Owen thinks it quite fitting to associate the affections with childhood, and yet quite unusual to conceive of the categories that follow – "Fancy," "Imagination," and "Sentiment and Reflection" – as those that would proceed sequentially after the development of the affections. [168] Yet if the imagination is a faculty of a higher order than the fancy, as Wordsworth contends, it should be no surprise that it would succeed the fancy in human development. Moreover, if, as Wordsworth's own poetic development has seemed to suggest, the poems of imagination (many of which were composed during the early period of Wordsworth's career that commentators have called "the Great Decade") should be followed by poems that narrate the more abstract reflections of a maturing poet – reflections at times reminiscent of the "wise saws" of middle age that appear in the fifth of Jaques' seven stages of man in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* – this should not be surprising. One of Jeffrey's most stinging yet incisive criticisms of Wordsworth's *Excursion* was that it reads like "an exposition of truisms" and seemed a mere shadow of the poet's former imaginative greatness (Jeffrey 461), so it seems only logical that "Poems Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection" should follow the "Poems of the Imagination." In the Preface of 1815, Wordsworth speaks of "the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination" (PW III.33), yet as Crabb Robinson records in an 1812 journal after conversing with Wordsworth, the imagination depends upon "the capacity of the *sensible* produced to represent and stand in the place of the abstract intellectual conception" (HCR I.93). For the poet "to exhibit his abstraction nakedly would be the work of a mere philosopher" (HCR I.90), and this naked exhibition of abstraction began to intrude more and more into Wordsworth's poetical productions as he aged.

With these broad brushstrokes in view, it seems at least plausible to suggest that, instead of being labeled either "subjective" or "objective" (HCR I.165; Duff 89), Wordsworth's 1815 categories might more appropriately be labeled according to one or more of Brentano's three classes of subjective mental phenomena, the presentation (Childhood, Old Age, etc.), the emotional reaction to the presentation (Affections, Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty, Poems on the Naming of Places, Inscriptions, Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems), and the judgment of the presentation (Fancy, Imagination, Sentiment and Reflection, etc.). Moreover, it seems likely that Wordsworth, in order to categorize his 1815 poems in a manner congruent with Brentano's later classes of mental phenomena, might have intuitively begun to cultivate an awareness not merely of presentations but of the manner in which his consciousness has been directed toward them, as the Scholastic concept of intentionality invites.

c) Wordsworth's, Freud's, Husserl's Union of Intentionality and the Epochê

Interestingly, an analysis of the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," composed as an accompaniment to the "Preface of 1815," does not merely reinforce Wordsworth's suggestion that the organizational patterns of the 1815 volume coincide with the developmental patterns of human life; it also illuminates Wordsworth's intuitive efforts to unite the Scholastic concept of

intentionality with the skeptical epochê as two later students of Brentano, Sigmund Freud and Edmund Husserl, would later do. Beginning with a discussion of youthful prejudices and progressing through discussions of more learned (and according to Wordsworth, more dangerous) prejudices, Wordsworth identifies and undermines various conceptual hang-ups that can obstruct one's view of the worlds of inner and outer perception and that psychoanalysis and phenomenology would later methodically explore. Admittedly, Wordsworth's 1815 treatment of these prejudices – youthful, religious, systematic, etc. – is largely determined by his own efforts to rationalize the reading public's neglect of and the critic's biting rejection of his poetical works. Yet the polemical intentions of his essay should not prevent us from observing that these are the reflections of a thinker who is deeply committed to keeping his eye "steadily fixed upon his object" and to identifying and eradicating any possible obstructions to this attention (PW III.73). While the Preface of 1815 lays out the different organizational schemes that Wordsworth considered for the *Poems* of 1815 and offers an extended analysis of his own distinction between fancy and imagination as manifest in specific poems, the Essay Supplementary, in addition to its "hasty retrospect of the poetical literature" of England during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries (PW III.67-80), also offers a penetrating analysis of the role that prejudices play in obscuring the apprehension of a rich and complex phenomenon: the written poem.

The preceding section helps to highlight Wordsworth's skills as a classifier of mental phenomena, yet what Freud and Husserl would later realize – and what Wordsworth, on some level, appears to have sensed – is that merely classifying such phenomena is not adequate to the demands of a truly philosophical descriptive method. As Coleridge and Keats observed, poets and philosophers share an epistemological obligation to rescue "admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission" (BL I.282, 82) and to dwell "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" (KSL 41-42).[169] Yet how, precisely and methodically, can one succeed in doing this? Wordsworth, Freud and Husserl each observed that it is due to entrenched prejudices that truths lose their vitality and that people reach irritably for facts instead of dwelling voluntarily and attentively in a state of uncertainty. I can only avoid falling prey to these prejudices, which are sedimented in my mind as 'common sense,' by thinking with an uncommon sense. I can only remove these prejudices by suspending judgment, defamiliarizing the familiar, and analyzing (or breaking down) the recalcitrant convictions of tradition.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud refers to his modernized version of the skeptical epochê as a "suppress[ion] of the critical faculty" (ID 134). Though in his "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy" – often referred to as "Little Hans" (1909) – Freud concedes that his psychoanalytical practice depends upon his ability to "suspend judgment" and accept that it is not possible to "'understand' a medical case straight away" (LH 17-18), his decision to speak of the epochê as an "abandonment of the critical function" highlights the joint epistemological agenda of poets, philosophers and psychoanalysts as defamiliarizers of the familiar (ID 135). Invoking one of Wordsworth's German contemporaries, Freud echoes Friedrich Schiller's claim that "critics" are "ashamed or frightened of the momentary and transient extravagances of a truly creative mind and whose longer or shorter duration distinguishes the thinking artist from the dreamer" (ID 135). While the dreamer *in*voluntarily suppresses this critical faculty, the "thinking artist" does so voluntarily, attending to the "rush" of ideas and suppressing the judgment's compulsion to curb, qualify or reject them. Why does the

critical faculty attempt to curb, qualify and reject, and why must it be suspended? "We criticize," Freud declares, "what we do not understand. And in doing so, we make things easy for ourselves" (LH 21). Because it is adults who are, consciously or unconsciously, most concerned with making things easy for themselves, Freud suggests that children are in some ways more capable of engaging in the difficult, often disturbing and even world-shattering work of psychoanalysis. As justification for this claim, he generalizes, "the unreliability of what children say is derived from the power of their fantasy, just as the unreliability of what adults say is derived from the power of their prejudices" (LH 85). If one believes, as Freud does, that, "Nothing is arbitrary when it comes to the psyche" (LH 85), then the fantasies of children are far preferable to prejudices of adults when it comes to the work of psychoanalysis. In his later work, *An Autobiographical Study* (1935), Freud reiterates this reliance upon the epochê, noting that psychoanalysis was founded upon the practice of "intentionally keeping my critical faculty in abeyance so as to preserve an unprejudiced and receptive attitude towards the many novelties which were coming to my notice every day" (AS 36).[170]

Instead of advocating the *suppres*sion of a way of thinking to circumvent prejudice, Husserl advocates the *suspen*sion of one.[171] Though the first manifestations of Husserl's phenomenological method emerged in his *Logical Investigations* (1900-01), during the same year as Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Husserl's most pronounced innovations upon Brentanian intentionality and the skeptical epochê would not appear until the publication of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913), where he would list his conception of the Cartesian cogito in "the *pregnant* sense" (I 72; also 68) and his suspension of the natural attitude as features of phenomenological method. Indeed, it almost seems as though Husserl – with his frequent references to the phenemenologist's field of study as that of "waking consciousness," of the "natural waking life," and of the "'*waking*' Ego" (I 53, 57, 72) – is suggesting that he and Freud, the analyzer of dreams, were mapping out complementary or proximal terrain.[172] Just as Freud showed a frequent (if inconsistent) awareness of the need to attend to mental faculties themselves and not merely to the phenomena they brought to light,[173] Husserl took pains to distinguish the cogitatio (or disclosing mental processes) from the cogitatum (or disclosed phenomenal objects) so that the phenomenologist could approach Brentano's concept of intentionality with more specific foci (I 69). Brentano's characterization of intentionality as a "direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing)" was a crucial insight (Brentano 1973 88), yet Husserl supplemented this notion with the imperative that the cogitatio must itself serve as a phenomenon if the phenomenologist is to properly advert his or her attention to this object-disclosing act. Even more importantly, building upon Brentano's distinction between objects and things (Brentano 1973 88), Husserl observes that a truly rigorous suspension of judgment requires something more than the skeptical epochê. As the first stage of the phenomenological reduction, Husserl advocates a suspension, bracketing, or parenthesizing of what he calls the "natural attitude" – an attitude which, though containing many learned assumptions, all human beings naturally exhibit unless they consciously and thoroughly alter their thinking. This first stage of the phenomenological reduction requires subjects to suspend beliefs that are grounded not only in common sense but also in the laws of science, bracketing even the basic human assumption that the world around them is real.[174] In enacting the phenomenological reduction, the subject does not merely doubt the "*factual being*" of the world, "as though I were a skeptic"; the subject also completely resists "*any judgment about spatiotemporal factual being*" (I 61). As Husserl would add to this passage in 1929, the phenomenological epochê requires the phenomenologist to

bracket or put out of bounds "the world which is continually given to me beforehand as existing," as "real in a naively straightforward way" (I 61n30). The phenomenological reduction, therefore, does not merely suspend judgments about facts; it suspends judgments about factual being and existence itself, so that it can enter a purely descriptive space. In a manuscript from 1927, Husserl explains that the skeptical epochê and the phenomenological reduction together function as necessary features of a phenomenological method that exorcises the prejudices still latent in Brentano's empirical method:

> The *phenomenological reduction* is at first needed as a fully conscious exposure of the purely psychical sphere. Also needed, however, is the epoche regarding all methodical pre-convictions about how a sphere of 'facts' is to be treated scientifically, i.e., regarding the manner of description, classification, and the like. […] One may not, like Brentano, regard descriptive psychology from the outset as an analogue of descriptive natural science, in which already prejudices are contained which conflict with the peculiar essence of the psychical (Rollinger 49).

This passage makes clear that Husserl viewed his appropriation of the skeptical epochê and his extension of it in the phenomenological reduction as efforts to eradicate the prejudices that Brentano's descriptive psychology left unchecked. In fact, Husserl characterizes the phenomenological epochê less as a "refraining from judgment" than as a refraining from "belief" (I 59 and n24), bringing him intriguingly close to this study's Coleridge-inspired definition of Romantic wonder as a suspension of belief and disbelief.

In the opening paragraph to his Essay Supplementary, Wordsworth distinguishes five classes of poetry readers, the first four of which are prone to prejudices that must be suspended: "the young," for whom, "Poetry is, like love, a passion"; the domesticated and business-oriented, for whom poetry is "only an occasional recreation"; the fashionable, for whom it is "a species of luxurious amusement"; the middle aged, who "resort to poetry, as to religion," for protection against triviality and consolation from affliction; and the leisure class, who, having cultivated an interest in "general literature," have found in poetry something that can be "comprehended *as a study*" (his italics; PW III.62). Though in all of these classes of readers, "Critics abound," Wordsworth declares that the only opinions of "absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work" (PW III.62), are to be found in the fifth class – the leisure class that approaches poetry not as a passion or a recreation, not as an amusement or a consolation, but as an object of study. Of course, as one of Crabb Robinson's journal entries makes clear, Wordsworth is well aware that a Byron poem with "a coarse and palpable assertion of the nature of solitude" and "an epigrammatic conclusion" is more likely to gain "general circulation" than a Wordsworth poem in which "the feeling is involved and the thought clothed in poetic shapes" (HCR I.93). Resolved, however, upon "breaking the bonds of custom," upon "overcoming the prejudices of false refinement," and upon "creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished" (PW III.80), Wordsworth chooses to unearth the prejudices of those who do not approach poetry as a study.

In the paragraphs that follow, which offer a detailed analysis of the prejudices sedimented in the minds of his public, Wordsworth focuses on four classes of readers, which for the most part correspond with the four classes of unreliable readers just mentioned. The first two classes, the young and the business-oriented, he addresses directly. The young are readers whom Wordsworth wishes to protect. Their thoughts, "little disciplined by the understanding," their

feelings, prone to "revolt from the sway of reason," are in danger of extreme "delusion," since "the appropriate business of poetry" is to "treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*" (PW III.63). However, while no "philosophical remark" could prove "injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident," Wordsworth hopes that his remonstrance will instead help the young to cultivate "a more discreet and sound judgment" (PW III.63). The adult, business-oriented class of readers is, Wordsworth admits, likely to strike the public as less prone to foolishness. However, Wordsworth insists that, though their "understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs," their eye and ear for poetry remains untrained (PW III.63). Since they are wont to find pleasure in poems that resemble those they enjoyed in their youth, "such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style" (PW III.64). Endearing as this tendency is, however, Wordsworth regrets that these more long-standing prejudices, now entrenched, will be more difficult to countermand, since they will not profit from the greater freshness and susceptibility to novelty that is common among the young. As components of the natural poetry reading attitude, both sets of prejudices can, however, receive correction with training in the proper appreciation of verse.

The third prejudice that Wordsworth addresses corresponds to the fourth class of readers, the middle aged who "resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life" (PW III.62). In speaking of religious prejudices, Wordsworth may well have in mind the novice Unitarian critic, Patty Smith, a friend of Catherine Clarkson who suggested to Catherine that Wordsworth's *Excursion* was profanely pantheistic. To Patty (via Catherine), Wordsworth's letter declared, "One of the main objects of the Recluse is, to reduce the calculating understanding to its proper level among the human faculties. – Therefore my Book must be disliked by the Unitarians, as their religion rests entirely on that basis" (MY II.189). While the defective poetic sensibilities in the first two classes of readers are due to an untainted and underdeveloped understanding of the arts, the problem with this third class of readers is due to an overdeveloped religious understanding that intrudes into the act of reading poetry where it does not belong. In his description of this class of readers in the Essay Supplementary, Wordsworth declares that, "as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly […M]en who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves" (PW III.64-65). Among this class of readers, "if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns," then "the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book" (PW III.65). This tendency leads Wordsworth to complain of "those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal," and which create believers who, "being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings," feel obliged "to supply by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting in the constitution of the religion itself" (PW III.65). The prejudices of this third class of readers will be more difficult for the phenomenologically inclined subject to bracket and render harmless as components of the natural poetry reading attitude, since members of this class not only fail to draw *from* poetic texts what is present in them (exegesis) but also insist upon reading *into* texts what is *not* present in them (eisegesis). In this they are something like the scientists who, according to Schiller, find nothing in Nature but what they have "put there" and who, striving "with impatiently anticipating reason, "do not allow her [Nature] to come forward to meet us" (AE 70n1).

The fourth and final prejudice that Wordsworth interrogates is that which he observes in the class of critics who have attacked his poems in the press. Implicit in his analysis of this prejudice is a gibe at his most outspoken critic, Francis Jeffrey, who Wordsworth, having earlier skipped over the third of the five classes of readers mentioned in the introductory paragraph, appears to tacitly throw into that class of readers who approach poetry as a "fashionable pleasure" and a "luxurious amusement" (PW III.62). Indeed, while Jeffrey's criticism is far more incisive and serious than such a gibe would suggest, it also rests upon the basic assumption that the creative writer's duty is not to instruct but to entertain – an attitude reinforced by Jeffrey's witty, flamboyant prose style. Yet if Wordsworth's polemic begins by implying that Jeffrey's criticism is merely fashionable, it goes on to claim that this is not its worst attribute. As in the case of the religious prejudices that Wordsworth has just exposed, Jeffrey's prejudice is more dangerous than those of the young and the business-oriented because, "to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold" (PW III.66). Interestingly, Wordsworth is in 1815 directing at Jeffrey precisely the criticism that Jeffrey had in 1814 directed at Wordsworth: that his work had been perverted by the love of system. Prefiguring the same error Arnold would later make (W 48), Jeffrey complains that Wordsworth is presenting his readers with some sort of system even though Wordsworth has in the preface to the same work explicitly refused to "formally to announce" one (PW III.6). "This will not do!" Jeffrey famously begins his review of *The Excursion.*

> It [the poem] bears no doubt the stamp of the author's heart and fancy: But unfortunately not half so visibly as that of his peculiar system. His former poems were intended to recommend that system, and to bespeak favour for it by their individual merit; – but this, we suspect, must be recommended by the system – and can only expect to succeed where it has been previously established (Jeffrey 457).

Though it had been in the fashion among poets such as Leigh Hunt to say that they composed their poems according to some system (BLJ VI.46), Wordsworth explicitly denies that such is true of his own poems, and Jeffrey either does not or will not believe him. In return, Wordsworth argues that it is not himself but Jeffrey whose "understanding has pledged its credit to uphold" a system, and that it is this system that perverts everything upon which Jeffrey brings it to bear (PW III.66). Interestingly, Jeffrey's own words do offer some evidence that he is a lover of system, since he suggests that what bothers him about *The Excursion* is not that Wordsworth might have composed the poem according to a system but that Wordsworth's system has not been "previously established" in a manner that would allow his poems to be sufficiently "recommended by the system." In any case, whether Wordsworth has Jeffrey in mind or not, critics such as the unnamed one Wordsworth describes either apply "false principles" or, "if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of seeing when it ought to yield to a higher order" (PW III.66). Does this "sound rule," which can ultimately, like Blake's "mind-forg'd manacles" (E 27), fetter or hinder one's perceptions, not resemble Freud's critical faculty and Husserl's natural attitude? Wordsworth urges that those "censors" who are "supported by system" should bracket their prejudices and learn that there are times when a preconceived rule or belief must "yield to one of a higher order" (PW III.66), and his call resembles that of the twentieth-century's two great sciences of subjectivity, psychoanalysis and phenomenology.

d) Wordsworth, Arnold and *The Prelude*

Wholly apart from Wordsworth's prose writings, however, it is Wordsworth's thirteen-book autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, which can convince readers that Wordsworth is a poet-philosopher, despite Arnold's best efforts in the preface and organization of his *Poems of Wordsworth* to dissuade the public from thinking of him as such. Though the speaker of the 1805 *Prelude* declares himself unskilled at the art of "class[ing] the cabinet / Of sensations" (PP II.220-29) – demeaning his own skills with the aim of praising those of the "friend" (Coleridge) to whom he addresses the poem – it is clear from the table of contents of Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815 that the poet Wordsworth has begun to feel more comfortable with such classifications, a change that helps to explain the acute observations that the *Prelude* speaker has, perhaps unconsciously, already begun to make about human consciousness and about the faculties of remembering and imagining in particular. As the remainder of this study will make clear, Wordsworth's *Prelude* exhibits a sensitivity and commitment to observing and describing mental activity that has not been sufficiently acknowledged – which is not, of course, to say that it hasn't been acknowledged. Shortly after the posthumous publication of *The Prelude* in 1850, an anonymous reviewer for *Graham's Magazine* took special note of Wordsworth's insightful attentions to human consciousness and to the mental faculties that disclose the phenomenal world. "We believe," this reviewer wrote,

> that few metaphysicians ever scanned their consciousness with more intensity of vision, than Wordsworth was wont to direct upon his; and in the present poem he has sub[tly] noted, and firmly expressed, many new psychological laws and processes. The whole subject of the development of the mind's creative faculties, and the vital laws of mental growth and production, has been but little touched by professed meta[phys]icians; and we believe 'The Prelude' conveys more real available knowledge of the facts and laws of man's internal constitution, than can be found in Hume or Kant (NCP 554).

It was a prejudice of Wordsworth's and his reviewer's age (one evident in Wordsworth's own writings[175]) that one would speak of "laws" and "metaphysics" even in reference to subjects such as human consciousness and psychological states. In our age, by contrast, one is perhaps more prone to agree with Derrida that, "The difference between empirical and essential must continue to assert its rights" (Derrida 1976 117). What is most striking and significant about *The Prelude* from a philosophical point of view is not any metaphysical doctrines that it might espouse or any system that might be assembled from such doctrines but the epistemological practice that it models. Wordsworth engages in a descriptive procedure that attends not merely to phenomena but also (as the reviewer notes) to the mental faculties that disclose those phenomena. Rather than seeking to construct a systematic whole consisting of abstractions, his philosophy of consciousness in fact suspends scientific and common sense assumptions that would hinder his view of "the unreasoning progress of the world" and the "wiser spirit is at work for us" even "in what seem our most unfruitful hours" (PP V.380-88).

Leon Gottfried's sympathetic examination of Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth* and its preface concludes with an important reminder. It is Gottfried's hope that,

> … perhaps by seeing Arnold's popularization of Wordsworth in its context of his lifelong effort to spiritualize the materialized upper class, to humanize the brutalized lower class,

> and to refine the vulgarized middle class, we may become somewhat less ready to condemn and more inclined to understand, if not to excuse, some of the simplifying tendencies of his preface for which he has been so roundly criticized (Gottfried 72).

Given how many readers Arnold introduced to Wordsworth's poetry, it would be myopic to sneer at Arnold's simplifying efforts and his democratic aims. Yet it is also helpful to remember what these efforts and aims left on the cutting room floor. While Arnold was determined to clear away the "obstructions" that would obscure the reading public's recognition "that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton," in fact "the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time" (W 44 and 40), Wordsworth was determined to clear away the obstructions that would obscure his own view not only of his past, of his feelings, and of the phenomenal world but also of the mental faculties that gave him access to these internal and external perceptions and of the psychological states that shaped and shaded his experience of them. Arnold was concerned with encouraging the public to recognize Wordsworth's contribution to the history of literature in the English language, and Wordsworth was concerned with this as well. He wanted positive reviews and public recognition as much as any published writer – perhaps more. However, he did not want these things so badly that he was willing to sacrifice the peculiarly philosophical nature of his poetic vision.

5. Wordsworth's 'Native Continent':

Childhood Amnesia, Interdisciplinary Research,

and the Formation of the Unconscious in *The Prelude*

a) Wordsworth's Divine Homes

> Even the 'intimations' of the famous Ode, those cornerstones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth, – idea of the high instincts and affections coming out in childhood, testifying of a divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds, – this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind; it has no real solidity. The instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty had no doubt extraordinary strength in Wordsworth himself as a child. But to say that universally this instinct is mighty in childhood, and tends to die away afterwards, is to say what is extremely doubtful.
>
> ~ Arnold, Preface to *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879)[176]

Alongside his dismissal of Wordsworth's philosophy, long poems, and 1815 organization of the shorter poems (which I examined briefly in chapter two and at greater length in chapter four), Arnold also dismissed what he called the "cornerstones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth" – the "intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood" that Wordsworth in 1815 announced as the explicit subject of a poem he had in 1807 simply called, 'Ode.' In his assessment of Wordsworth's *Ode*, Arnold nicely identifies three "high instincts" that Wordsworth intertwines in his description of childhood: a tacit awareness of a "divine home recently left"; a "delight in Nature and her beauty"; and an outpouring of natural "affections" that have their genesis in these two other high instincts and that link the child with the divine and with the Book of Nature's expression of the divine on earth. Arnold believes that these high instincts do not possess enough "real solidity" to possess "the character of poetic truth of the best kind," and he finds "extremely doubtful" the notion that they are "universally" pronounced in all children. Taking the poem's 1815 title as his interpretive guide, he does not appear to notice that there is, in Wordsworth's great *Ode*, more than one "divine home recently left."

Illuminating Wordsworth's tendency to modify his vision and his conception of himself while in the process of modifying his poems, Peter J. Manning has observed that while "the *Ode* may have begun in 1802 as a poem about growing up, it is completed in 1815," with the excision of its Virgilian epigraph and with the addition of a new title and epigraph, "as a poem about the possibilities of immortality" (Manning 81). The 1815 *Ode* emphasizes the divine home that preceded the speaker's human birth, but the 1802 *Ode* (particularly in the first four stanzas that Wordsworth composed months before the others[177]) began as a poem about another lost divine home: childhood itself. Setting aside the question of whether Wordsworth's intimations of heaven and of an immortal soul are universal and solid in the way of "poetic truth of the best kind," this chapter will demonstrate the universality and solidity of Wordsworth's more protracted treatment of this second divine home in the first five books of *The Prelude*. After a brief discussion of the bifurcation of and slippage between these two divine homes in the *Ode*,

this chapter will offer a broad interdisciplinary backdrop against which to examine Wordsworth's efforts to remember the divine home of childhood that he in the earliest drafts of *The Prelude* called "unrememberable" (CP 115, 124). Ultimately, it will reflect the ways that Wordsworth's attention to the phenomenon of childhood amnesia anticipated the findings of fields as varied as introspective psychology, phenomenology, and cognitive science.

Wordsworth's *Ode* is a poem about forgetting. Yet what has been forgotten? Certainly, Wordsworth's speaker contends that he has lost touch with his certainty in the immortality of his soul. He declares,

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
>
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
>
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
>
> And cometh from afar:
>
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
>
> And not in utter nakedness,
>
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
>
> From God, who is our home:
>
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy! (lines 58-66; WPW 460).

Paradoxically, the poem presents the awakening of birth as a falling to sleep. Offering a version of Socrates's claim that learning is recollection, the speaker contends that this birth is an unlearning or forgetting. What goes to sleep is the knowledge of that previous life which birth, like the "setting" of "our life's Star," has darkened. This birth severs our direct connection with – and discontinues our residence in – the God who is "our home."

Yet this is not the only death or 'passing' in the *Ode*, which begins with the adult speaker's assertion that with the onset of adulthood, "there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth" (lines 18; WPW 460). The adult speaker is now *at two removes* from his divine dwelling in God; he is severed not only from the heaven of his previous existence but also from the heaven of his childhood. In this way, the *Ode* animates a subtle shifting of subject; a waffling between a mournful longing for the pre-human certainty and comfort of immortal life and a mournful longing for the period of human childhood during which every "common sight" seemed "Apparell'd in celestial light" (lines 2, 4; WPW 460). If childhood is a sleep and a forgetting of a previous divine existence, then adulthood is a sleep and a forgetting of a divine childhood (line 58; WPW 460), and this is one reason why the speaker refers to adulthood as a "prison-house" that at the end of childhood "begin[s] to close / Upon the *growing* Boy," once the period of childhood is coming to an end (my italics; lines 67-68; WPW 460).

In the *Ode*'s next stanza, another reference to forgetting condenses these two divine homes. The speaker declares that mother earth – that "homely Nurse" – does

…all she can

To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,

Forget the glories he hath known,

And that imperial palace whence he came (lines 81-84; WPW 461).

Though the speaker initially describes the "Inmate" or prisoner as a "Foster-child," the word "Man" elides the word "child," and this elision resonates with the speaker's assertion in the previous stanza that "the prison-house" encloses people only at the conclusion of childhood (line 67; WPW 460). When the speaker says that Nature, "with something of a Mother's mind," attempts to distract the "Inmate Man" with "pleasures of her own" and help him to "Forget the glories he hath known" (lines 79, 82, 77, 83; WPW 461), the "glories" that the "Inmate Man" no longer possesses are twofold; he has lost the glories of his existence before birth, and he has lost the glories that children still possess and that for adults "hath pass'd away" from the earth (line 18; WPW 460). Ultimately, adults lose not only the consolations of their "home" in God, but also the consolations of being soothed by their "homely Nurse" (lines 65, 81; WPW 460-61). Two divine homes, located in a divine father and in a holy mother, become one when adults are denied access to both.

What Wordsworth's *Ode* and *Prelude* share is a profoundly ambivalent resignation about the trade-offs that one makes in traveling from the "native continent" of childhood to the world of common sense, custom and sounder reasoning that is characteristic of adulthood. Wordsworth does not merely value childhood because the child is temporally closer to the "divine home recently left," and therefore better able to sense the reality of his immortal soul. Rather, it is Wordsworth's extended title of 1815 that retroactively imposes this reading upon the poem, offering one example of Wordsworth's tendency to modify not only poems but also himself and his vision throughout the process of *re*vision. Regardless of what the extended title suggests, Wordsworth also values childhood because it too is a "divine home recently left." While the speaker of the *Ode* contends that mother earth encourages the "Inmate Man" to forget "that imperial palace whence he came" (lines 82, 84; WPW 461), the speaker of *The Prelude* suggests that childhood too presents itself as a kind of palace. Childhood itself "sits" upon "a throne," endowed with "more power than all the elements" (V.531-33; PP 198). Yet whence does this "power" derive?

Wordsworth's answer to this question cuts to the core of a mystery that has provoked wonder and speculation since antiquity: the phenomenon of childhood amnesia. Wonder is, according to Thomas of Aquinas, a desire for knowledge that occurs when an effect has an unknown cause,[178] and in "On Memory and Recollection" – a short work composed by the writer who Aquinas called "the Philosopher" – Aristotle is already pondering not only the cause of memory but also the cause of the weak memories of children (Aristotle 2007 23, 31). With the nineteenth-century founding of the profession of psychology, this mysterious phenomenon became the site of a remarkable interdisciplinary collaboration. Introspective psychology and psychoanalysis, phenomenological psychology and cognitive science have all attempted to explain the cause of the curious haze, blank or blockage that people experience when they struggle to recall their earliest childhood. In his revolutionary resistance to the prevailing assumption of Jamesian introspection that psychology is the study of thoughts and feelings that

one consciously acknowledges as one's own, Sigmund Freud formulated a theory of the unconscious that led him to construe childhood amnesia as a form of repression (i.e., as a blockage that can be unclogged). Unlike Freud, whose efforts to explain the phenomenon were determined by the developing architecture of his theory of the unconscious, Erwin W. Straus in the 1960s engaged in a phenomenological description of the activity of remembering that led him to conclude that childhood amnesia might occur because young children lack the sense of personal identity that would allow them to create memories (i.e., childhood is a blank, or at best a haze, as a result of child development). This is precisely the conclusion at which the studies of cognitive scientists arrived at the end of the twentieth century, having approached the mystery not with a subject-centered description but with the objective measurements of quantitative research and brain mapping. To these disciplinary interventions can be added another: that of the poet. William Wordsworth is one poet whose attentions to the activity of remembering – and whose poetically articulated theories about the cause of childhood amnesia – anticipate Straus's phenomenological descriptions as well as the findings of contemporary cognitive scientists, and his insights have remained largely unacknowledged by scholars.[179]

Once the next section (b) has provided some background about interdisciplinary research and about Wordsworth's preoccupation with childhood education and child development, the section that follows (c) will survey the major statements of Freud, James, Straus, and cognitive science on the subjects of memory and childhood amnesia. Though Freud never managed to provide a clear and compelling explanation for childhood amnesia, cognitive scientists have succeeded in doing so through a closer attention to different forms of memory and to the typical stages in which these forms of memory develop. This section will conclude with a consideration of the role that self-consciousness plays in episodic memory and the role that a less self-conscious awareness plays in other forms of memory, such as implicit (or procedural) memory and explicit (or declarative) memory. The succeeding section (d) will consider whether Wordsworth can further illuminate the mystery of childhood amnesia. Ultimately, it will suggest that this curious phenomenon, far from being *caused by* some form of repression, is in fact a *cause of* the formation of the unconscious. Though Freud's theoretical model led him to assume that childhood amnesia occurs because of repression, Wordsworth's descriptive approach allowed him to show that the period of childhood serves as a rich terrain for the exploration of unconscious materials precisely because the child's unselfconscious experiences and as yet undeveloped sense of personal identity produce obscurely felt memories that can never be accurately recollected. The conclusion (e) will round out the chapter by reflecting upon Wordsworth's association of childhood with "power" and by considering how Wordsworth's and Freud's treatments of this power differ.

b) Disciplines, Methods, Systems

Each of the different methods that this chapter brings together has its own advantages and limitations, so it is striking that they should have dovetailed over the course of two centuries despite such different assumptions and practices. However, it is also important to avoid conflating these methods and to acknowledge their respective disciplinary roles. One conspicuous feature that distinguishes Wordsworth's and Straus's descriptions of childhood from the research of cognitive scientists is that cognitive scientists base their research on observing and surveying child subjects, while Wordsworth and Straus examine the phenomenon of childhood amnesia by recollecting and describing their own lived experiences of remembering

and of childhood. Moreover, though the descriptive methods of the poet and phenomenologist have quite a bit in common, Husserl's phenomenological method would have dictated that Straus engage in a pure (i.e. unprejudiced) description of the phenomenon before him. As chapters two and four have sought to demonstrate, Wordsworth made notable strides in the realms of pure description and the bracketing of prejudice. He even hailed his efforts to describe "things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*" as a practice that is as "permanent as pure science" (PW III.63). However, there is also evidence suggesting that he might have entered into his descriptions of childhood with a particular agenda that was grounded in his beliefs or prejudices about child development and childhood education.

In Book V of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's speaker contrasts "real children" with "the dwarf man" who is "a child" and yet "no child" (V.436, 294-95; PP 194, 186), and this assertion led David V. Erdman to suspect that Wordsworth might have composed some of his descriptions of childhood with the polemical intention of derailing the sterile, mechanistic system of early childhood education that Thomas Wedgwood had devised. During brief visits to Alfoxden and Nether Stowey in late 1797 (Erdman 1956a 433), Wedgwood attempted to enlist Wordsworth and Coleridge as "superintendents" in a nursery that was designed to cultivate child geniuses and "anticipate a century or two upon the large-paced progress of human improvement" (Erdman 1956a 430-31). By 1811, Wordsworth would become a proponent of the teaching methods (or in Wordsworth's words, "the plan") of Dr. Andrew Bell (MY I.514-515), an educational reformer whose books Wordsworth began reading in 1808 (MY I.269; Wu 1995 20-21) and who Wordsworth in 1811 brought as a guest teacher to the Grasmere school where his son John was a student (MY I.514-515; Foakes 194-95). Despite numerous similarities between the two most popular educational methods in early nineteenth century England, Wordsworth, like Coleridge, appears to have given preference to Bell's educational methods over those of Joseph Lancaster, whose books he had also begun reading in 1808 (MY I.278; Foakes 195; Wu 1995 130). Yet, as R. A. Foakes has shown, even at the time when Coleridge was planning and delivering his passionate lecture in advocacy of Bell's methods, Wordsworth in Book 9 of *The Excursion* could not do more than describe school children as "thriving prisoners" (IX.260; WPW 692; Foakes 202-03). This oxymoronic phrase suggests two things: that as late as 1808 Wordsworth had ambivalent feelings about the traditional educational practices and the new educational systems of his day, and that his descriptions of childhood in *The Prelude* may have been influenced by a desire to liberate the "growing" children of the *Ode* from the "prison-house" in which their adult teachers confined and inculcated them (lines 67-68; WPW 460).

However, as previous chapters have attempted to demonstrate, Wordsworth's attitudes should not be taken as accidental merely because they are reactive. In fact, Wordsworth's reactions are quite measured and predictable, indicating a quality of thought that is his own. This study's chapter progression was meant to highlight a distinct pattern in Wordsworth's writings. After chapter one had examined the epistemological tension inherent in Coleridge's divided emphases of wonder and system, chapters two and three sought, respectively, to demonstrate the resistance to system evident in Wordsworth's prose writings and in his poetic autobiography. In keeping with this pattern, Wordsworth's reaction against Wedgwood's educational scheme was also motivated by a resistance to system.

In mid-March of 1797, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to a friend regarding the "system" she and William had adopted over the past year and a half in educating young Basil Montagu, then

four: "You ask to be informed of our system respecting Basil; it is a very simple one, so simple that in this age of systems you will hardly be likely to follow it. We teach him nothing at present but what he learns from the evidence of his senses" in his encounters with "the sky, the fields, trees, shrubs, corn, the making of tools, carts, &c" (EY 180; Erdman 1956b 490). In other words, "in this age of systems," William and Dorothy have decided that the best approach to childhood education is to resist system and its confining regularity.

Six months later, in mid-September of 1797, Wordsworth would have his first encounter with Wedgwood and, most likely, with Wedgwood's educational scheme. In stark contrast to William's and Dorothy's approach to educating Basil, "*System* is," as Erdman notes, "the core idea" in the organization and administration of Wedgewood's projected nursery, which plans to provide infants and young children with (in Erdman's words) "a series of progressive impressions systematically and pleasantly administered"; "a curriculum tightly systematized with all the great trees of knowledge approached from the roots and all the waking hours applied productively"; and an atmosphere in which "the superintendent's or teacher's job is to control the flow of rational (i.e., progressively arranged) stimuli in such a way that the child's senses and brain receive new impressions in the most rational (i.e. assimilable) order and quantity" (Erdman 1956b 488). In a particularly disturbing passage of the letter in which he describes his plan to William Godwin, Wedgwood asserts that, "the child must never go out of doors or leave his own apartment." Instead, infants must reside in nurseries with "plain grey walls" surrounded by "hard bodies" that are "hung about them so as continually to irritate the palms as they happen to come in contact" (Erdman 1956a 431). His reason for thus imprisoning his infant pupils? "Let us suppose ourselves in possession," he says, "of a detailed statement of the first twenty years of the life of some extra-ordinary genius: what a chaos of perceptions! If one were ignorant of the resulting produce, idiocy would certain[ly] suggest itself as the only possible one" (Erdman 1956a 430). Though, contrary to his expectations, exposure to this "chaos of perceptions" does *not* result in idiocy, Wedgwood would nonetheless like to perform his educational experiments and see if he can systematically produce the kinds of people he thinks best suited to advance the progress of human civilization.

Any reader of the first five books of Wordsworth's *Prelude* can imagine how repellent Wordsworth would have found these plans, and it makes sense that he would have reacted against them. When Wedgwood proposed to Godwin that Wordsworth and Coleridge might be suitable teachers (or "superintendants") in his future nursery of genius, he knew them only by reputation, and thought Wordsworth might well be the more suitable choice because he had the sense that Coleridge was more of a "religionist" (Erdman 1956a 431). However, given the striking differences between Wordsworth's and Wedgwood's views about child development, childhood education and what constitutes "progress,"[180] one can easily imagine how Wordsworth might have responded to Wedgwood's petition and why Wedgwood might have confessed after their first meeting that he had formed "but an indifferent opinion" of Wordsworth (Erdman 1956a 434).

The centrality of system in this discussion of education – and indeed, the apparent conflict between Wedgwood's love of system and Wordsworth's preference for a wondering attitude that resists system and remains open to sense experience – is particularly interesting given the date of this meeting. In late 1797 and early 1798, Wordsworth would begin his collaboration with Coleridge on a long philosophical poem. Six months after his first encounter

with Wedgwood, he would announce that he had already "written 1300 lines," that he would in a totalizing systematic gesture "contrive to convey most of the knowledge of which I am possessed," that the poem would in accordance with the dictates of Enlightenment philosophy be "of considerable utility" to the world, and that "its title will be *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*" – a title about as comprehensive and totalizing as anyone could reasonably expect (EY 212, 214). However, though Wordsworth began this poem before the close of the eighteenth century, it would remain unfinished at his death half a century later, and (as chapters two and three have argued) this is most likely because Wordsworth could not ultimately reconcile himself to Coleridge's expectation that *The Recluse* should exhibit not only "the Colors, Music, imaginative Life, and Passion of Poetry" but also "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574). Though Wedgwood's system is not a totality in the sense of a concrete production that is complete and comprehensive, it certainly bears the markings of a totalizing system insofar as it is designed to control every variable and exclude all accident. Wordsworth rails against just such totalizing efforts when he satirizes those "Sages who in their prescience would control / All accidents," thus failing to observe that "in the unreasoning progress of the world / A wiser spirit is at work for us" (V.380-81, 384-85; PP 190). If Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder (*qua* resistance to system) first manifested itself in response to external stimulation, Wedgwood's aim of a systematic nursery and Coleridge's aim of a systematic poem could have provided just that. Yet these stimuli need not have biased and distorted Wordsworth's descriptions to have prodded his thinking and focused his attentions.

Reactive thinking is not necessarily derivative or unoriginal. In fact, innovative thinking often expresses itself as a flight from other thinking – sometimes as a flight from the shoulders of giants. Approximately two centuries before Freud, in reaction against Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Leibniz wrote *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (published posthumously in 1765), a work in which he described the vague yet poignant intuitions one can sometimes experience when one senses something indistinctly – quasi-perceivings that he called apperceptions – and these descriptions were among the first intimations of an unconscious.[181] Wordsworth's own descriptions – in this case, descriptions of childhood and of adult efforts to recall childhood, written partly in reaction to the educational schemes of his day – are, I would argue, of the same order as those that Leibniz offers, illuminating essential features of the activity of remembering that had remained largely unnoticed.

It would not have surprised Freud that a poet might make a substantive contribution to a scientific inquiry. Though he was sometimes mistakenly cited as the discoverer of the unconscious,[182] and though a conquistador rhetoric occasionally crept into his accounts of psychoanalysis,[183] he also had the sense to correct this misconception and clarify his contribution. "The poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious," he says. "What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied."[184] However, *the extent* of Wordsworth's contributions to and preemptive revisions of Freud's own scientific inquiry might have surprised Freud somewhat. When one attends to Wordsworth's descriptions of childhood and of memory in his long autobiographical poem of 1805, one begins to recognize that while Wordsworth had no interest in the production of a "scientific method," he also does much more than merely recognize the existence of unconscious materials.

The goal of this interdisciplinary study is not to give one thinker, activity or discipline priority over another. "What does discovery mean," Goethe asks, "and who can say that he has discovered this or that? After all it's pure idiocy to brag about priority; for it's simply unconscious conceit not to admit frankly that one is a plagiarist" (Whyte v). Instead of quibbling over precedents, one should consider whether other activities – in this case, poetic practice – can provide practicing psychologists, philosophers and scientists with some useful ideas about the phenomenon of childhood amnesia and about how to access, integrate and interpret unconscious materials.

c) Childhood Amnesia in Freud, James, Straus and Cognitive Science

Even in his earliest explorations of consciousness, Freud expresses a fascination with the phenomenon of childhood (or "infantile") amnesia, the curious black-out phase that blots the first years of personal human histories. "It is only," he observes in "Screen Memories" (1899), "from the sixth or seventh year onwards – in many cases only after the tenth year – that our lives can be reproduced in memory as a connected chain of events" (S 303-04). In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), he repeats this claim (TE 40). His particular interest in the *Three Essays*, as in many of his works, is "the significance of the years of childhood in the origin of certain important phenomena connected with sexual life" (TE 42). Yet his interest in the period of childhood is also more general. He believes it plays a crucial role in the formation of all unconscious materials, and he suggests that "the very same impressions that we have forgotten have none the less left the deepest traces on our minds, and have had a determining effect upon the whole of our later development" (TE 39). Though Freud claims that "*The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*" (his italics; ID 647), it is clear that for Freud the interpretation of dreams is one road and the exploration of childhood is another. Indeed, they often intersect.

Though Freud never offers a comprehensive explanation for childhood amnesia, he assumes that it is caused by some form of repression. Relying upon Occam's razor, he assumes that childhood amnesia and hysterical amnesia will most likely have a single explanation, asking, "what are the forces which bring about this repression of the impressions of childhood? Whoever could solve this riddle would, I think, have explained *hysterical* amnesia as well" (TE 40; also S 304). In his *Autobiographical Study* (1935), Freud explains that his theories about child sexuality in the *Three Essays* derive from an analysis of adults, and that he was led to the period of childhood as a result of his efforts to locate the underlying causes of adult neuroses (AS 42, 35). Freud saw his theories of child sexuality confirmed a few years later, when he observed the behaviors and wrote the case study of a boy called 'Little Hans' (1909). At the ages of four and five, Hans exhibits great cleverness and insight, an impression heightened by Freud's keen analyses of the boy's responses. It is, therefore, quite astonishing to read in Freud's postscript (1922) that when he meets the boy years later, at age nineteen, Hans confesses that "when he read his own case history it was like reading about a stranger." Freud interprets this as a natural response to the unearthing and conscious integration of repressed unconscious materials. "Thus, far from preventing him from forgetting these events, the analysis itself had been forgotten" (LH 121-22). Once I confront and come to terms with the disturbing memories I have repressed, I can then forget about them. This renewed acquaintance with Hans may well have driven Freud to speculate further about the cause of childhood amnesia. In "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924), he voiced a tentative explanation, arguing that the

child's turn away from the Oedipus complex is "more than" a simple repression. Because the "prohibition against incest" is so strong and because the loss of the child's first love object is so great, the dissolution of the Oedipus complex "is equivalent, if it is ideally carried out, to a destruction and an abolition of the complex." Indeed, if it is merely repressed and not completely destroyed, it is sure to manifest itself with pathological symptoms (DOC 177). While Freud, in 1916, had proudly stated that repression "is a concept which could not have been formulated before the time of psychoanalytic research," it seems that its central role in psychoanalysis convinced him that there was no other way to explain childhood amnesia (Freud 1997 104). He concludes that this phenomenon must involve an even more radical form of repression.

However, William James, a contemporary of Freud and a major figure in the early movement of introspective psychology, points toward a different way of understanding childhood amnesia. In his chapter on memory in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), James says,

> Memory requires more than mere dating of a fact in the past. It must be dated in *my* past. In other words, I must think that I directly experienced its occurrence. It must have that 'warmth and intimacy' which were so often spoken of in the chapter on the Self, as characterizing all experiences 'appropriated' by the thinker as his own (his italics; W. James I.650).

According to James, human beings can have memories only if they have histories and think of themselves as beings who dwell between pasts and futures. The first of James's five characteristics of thought is: "Every thought tends to be a part of a personal consciousness" (W. James I.225). He elaborates, "It seems as if the elementary psychic fact were not *thought* or *this thought* or *that thought*, but *my thought*, every thought being *owned*" (his italics; W. James I.226). According to James, to create memories I must exhibit, in my mental life, the divided self of an artist, who has experiences while observing them from a distance. In Nancy Meyers's film, *The Holiday*, Kate Winslet's character, Iris, complains, "You're supposed to be the leading lady in your own life, for God's sake!" William James – and his brother, Henry[185] – would have appreciated the heightened self-awareness of this statement. As a divided self, I act as both character and camera, living in the present and recording that present so that I can later replay it in my mind. With this double consciousness, I can remember things about myself and say, 'That happened to me. That was my experience and no one else's.' The major difference between the divided self of writers is that while they're in the moment (or not long afterwards), they also exclaim, 'This is some good material!'

Freud would most likely have seen William James as the major representative for the kind of psychology that he was rejecting. James asserts that psychology begins when the subject can think of every thought as "*owned*" and as "part of a personal consciousness" (W. James I.225-26). Against this claim Freud forwards a direct counter-tenet: "*the ego is not master in its own house*" (his italics; DPP 143). According to Freud, the thoughts that most affect my behavior *own me*, often without my awareness. The work of analysis involves becoming aware of these thoughts and feelings and attempting to regain ownership of them in some sense. In speculating about the origins of this idea, Freud looks past his predecessors in psychology and cites poets and philosophers as his forebears. Though he offers Schopenhauer as an example (DPP 143), his omission of Nietzsche is palpable. While James claims that thoughts are owned,

Freud claims, "Thoughts emerge suddenly without one's knowing where they come from" (DPP 141), echoing Nietzsche's revision of the Cartesian cogito: "a thought comes when 'it' wishes, and not when 'I' wish, so that it is a falsification of the facts of the case to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think.' *It* thinks; but that this 'it' is precisely the famous old 'ego' is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an 'immediate certainty'" (his italics; I.17; Nietzsche 1966 24). Because on Freud's model the unconscious thoughts of this *it* are in control, he decides that he must explain childhood amnesia not by moving toward James's theory of owned thoughts but by moving farther away, toward a form of repression that is even more radical.

In his essay "Remembering and Infantile Amnesia," included in his book *Phenomenological Psychology* (1966), Erwin W. Straus offers a phenomenological description of the activity of remembering that aligns him with James' point of view. Straus begins the essay with praise for Aristotle's early essay on the subject of memory, and he cites a passage from Aristotle that resembles James' claim about "*owned*" thoughts that are "part of a personal consciousness" (W. James I.225-26). "Whenever someone actually remembers," Aristotle says, "he must say within himself, 'I formerly heard (or otherwise perceived) this,' or 'I formerly had this thought'" (Straus 60). The centrality of the 'I' in Aristotle's description of the activity of remembering is clearly crucial for Straus. After outlining competing accounts of memory and of childhood amnesia that appear in Aristotle, Hobbes, and Freud, Straus engages in a series of descriptions that culminate in the recognition that what young children lack that adults possess is the sense "of a stabilized preserving order, of a schema in which events are to be registered in order to be recalled in later days" (Straus 73). Thus, Straus concludes, the man who remembers "is a human being who forms his life history within the temporal horizon of personal time" (Straus 73). If one lacks this "schema" or "preserving order" that records one's "life history within the temporal horizon of personal time," no memories can be made.

Recent studies in cognitive science have demonstrated that James and Straus provide a better way of thinking about childhood amnesia than Freud does. Though James does not specifically address the question of childhood memory, his claim that my memories "must be dated in *my* past" goes straight to the center of the problem. If one accepts James's first tenet, one finds that, according to recent studies in cognitive science, children have no memories – or more specifically, no episodic memories. They are conscious of what goes on around them; they learn tasks and facts; they make insightful observations that garner praise and lead parents to brag about their mental capacities. What they lack is the sense that all of these characteristics represent *them* as people. In their own minds, young children do not have abstract identities that they are in the process of defining, revising and maintaining. They are pleased when we praise them and when they see us smile, because when the adults are happy good things happen. But this does not mean that they see their praiseworthy actions or their personal experiences as part of some unique history. Their lack of such abstract assumptions about their own identity and about other people's judgments of them is precisely what makes young children so carefree and happy and what makes older children so nervous and self-conscious, as they learn to become selves. In recent decades, cognitive science has identified a number of different types of memory; for our purposes, it will suffice to name three forms of memory: implicit (or procedural) memory; explicit (or declarative) memory; and episodic (or autonoetic) memory. Let's describe these forms of memory within the context of an extended example:

> I'm at my little nephew's fourth birthday party. Adults standing around, chatting; kids, running, laughing, scuttling across the floor. Mikey, the birthday boy, has just enthusiastically ripped open his presents, eliciting smiles, laughter and even some applause. He has now been left alone to explore his new possessions. His mother and father are off doing adult things – cleaning up the wrapping paper, serving drinks, preparing dessert. Mikey picks up a toy car he has just received and pushes it, but it doesn't really go anywhere. It is mechanical, and while I'm pretty sure how it works, he's not. He looks at me uncertainly. "Follow me, big man," I say. I lead him into the dining room, where there are hardwood floors; I get down on my knees (more carefully than I used to); and I point to the car. Hesitantly, he hands it to me. In three quick strokes, I rub the car's wheels against the wood; I make eye contact with Mikey; and I place the car on the floor. It takes off, speeding forward without being pushed. Mikey chases the toy, returns and hands it to me again. I nod and give him a repeat performance. Then he's done with me. He races off to show the other boys what he's learned to do. I feel moderately pleased with myself and my good deed for the day. About a half hour later, Mikey's back in the dining room, and I'm pleased to escape the conversation in which I've unwittingly become entwined. I step toward Mikey and point toward the car. He doesn't hand it to me. Instead, he performs the same task I taught him, watches the car race off, and looks up at me proudly. I wonder if this is his way of thanking me.

The first form of memory that one observes in this example is implicit memory, which is task oriented. I twice demonstrate how the car works, and Mikey can now perform the same operation without assistance. The second form of memory that one observes is explicit memory, which is more self-aware than implicit memory. A bit misleadingly, it is also called declarative or semantic memory, yet it does not necessarily involve the use of language (Tulving 12-13). While implicit memory involves knowing *how* to do something, explicit memory involves knowing *that* you know it. Studies have shown that monkeys exhibit explicit memory and pigeons do not (Hampton 291). When Mikey takes the toy car and goes off to show his friends how to use it, he exhibits some form of explicit memory. Children who *can say how* they learned something demonstrate a more advanced form of explicit memory, which represents a step toward the development of episodic memory. For instance, in one study, a group of three-, four- and five-year-old children were asked questions about the contents of a drawer. They all learned what object was in the drawer, and they were all able to remember what object it was. But while most of the five year olds were able to remember how they learned what was in the drawer (e.g., some were told, others saw it, etc.), few of the three year olds could say (Gopnik, A. and P. Graf; cited in Tulving 31). In a similar study, four- and five-year-old children were taught a list of unfamiliar color names. Later that day, those who could remember the color names were asked when and how they had learned them. Many of the four year olds and a few of the five year olds claimed to have "always" known the color names (Taylor, M., B. Esbensen and R. Bennett; cited in Tulving 32). The memory faculties of children develop gradually: They learn facts about the world; then they learn to recognize certain events as distinctive; finally, they begin to think about all their experiences as worthy of recollection, envisioning their lives as a continuous stream of experiences. Surprisingly, most of the acts of remembering that children exhibit when they are young require only nonepisodic forms of memory (Tulving 29-30).

Thus, I must sadly concede the possibility that between me and Mikey, I am the only one who exhibits episodic memory. I see a nice symmetry in the fact that Mikey later demonstrates how to use the car for my benefit – especially since it occurs in the very room where we had once met, as teacher and student. Yet what Mikey remembers is less certain. He has learned how to do something and he knows that he has learned it, but this does not mean that he recalls where, when or from whom he learned it. Surely, this seems amazing to us, who are so used to looking at the world through *our own* eyes, because it is impossible to look at it through anyone else's. I am proud to have taught Mikey how to use his toy car, because I remember the moment when he was briefly alone and confused in a world of things and I was able to assist him. But the odds are that on his fourth birthday, Mikey does not experience the world as I do. When researchers began to notice that the memory of children could be explained with nonepisodic forms of memory, they realized that the relatively late development of episodic memory offered a clear and simple explanation for the mystery of childhood amnesia – far clearer and simpler than Freud's suggestion that the trauma of the Oedipus complex results in a destruction of the complex and of all the childhood memories associated with it (Perner, J. and T. Ruffman; cited in Tulving 32).

Freud would surely have been thrilled to see many of his theories about mental life confirmed by quantitative research and brain-scanning technology, yet on the subject of childhood amnesia, the findings of cognitive science would most likely have led him to two conclusions: He had been too quick to assume that childhood amnesia and hysterical amnesia were likely to have the same source, and he had once again allowed an enthusiastic investment in his theory of repression to narrow his powers of observation. He had been forced to make a similar admission in his *Autobiographical Study*, in which he rejected his earlier theory that many or most patients had endured real seductions during their childhoods (AS 36-7). In the same study, he explains, "It is possible to take repression as a centre and to bring all the elements of psychoanalytical theory into relation with it" (AS 32). It would seem that this emphasis on repression, at times, limited Freud's vision.

Yet it should here be noted that the same assumption which, on the subject of childhood amnesia, led Freud into error had elsewhere led him to success. Many of Freud's most compelling and influential theories, particularly those relating to child sexuality, rely upon two novel assumptions: that the thoughts and feelings of children are more sophisticated than has been commonly assumed (S 304), and that the desire for knowledge is intimately and originally intertwined with sexual desire (TE 60). These claims find compelling corroboration in the case study of Little Hans, whose speculations eventually lead him to a number of impressive insights, among them that babies do not, in fact, come from storks.[186] We can appreciate Freud's amazement when the little boy, confessing his jealousy and malice toward his sister, exasperates his father by saying, "it is a good thing [to have discovered these feelings], though, so that we can write and tell the Professor" (LH 57). Hans recognizes more than his father that by coming to terms with his socially unacceptable thoughts, he is doing the difficult work of analysis. Freud exclaims, "Bravo, little Hans! I could not hope for a better understanding of psychoanalysis from an adult" (LH 82). In this way, we, too, find ourselves admiring the mental faculties of the little boy who Freud calls "our young research scientist" (LH 105). A few pages later, Freud admits, "I know that I am assuming a great deal as regards the reasoning powers of a child of four or five, but I am allowing myself to be guided by recent discoveries and do not consider myself bound by the prejudices of ignorance" (LH 109). Freud's high assessment of Hans's

intelligence results in some remarkable insights, and Hans certainly seems to live up to Freud's expectations. Yet even if Hans's reasoning powers are acute, this does not mean he has begun to think about himself and his experiences in the peculiar episodic way that adults do. Like most people, Freud assumes that Hans would later be able to remember the important role that "the Professor" played in his early history. We cherish the delightful, heartening interactions we have had with young children, and we find it difficult to accept that we are the only ones who are likely to remember them.

d) Wordsworth's Theories of Childhood Amnesia and the Unconscious

Freud called Shakespeare "the greatest of poets" (Freud 2003c 326), and he profited from reading Goethe's autobiography (Freud 1981a 146-56). Given his consistent preoccupation with the subject of childhood amnesia, one cannot doubt that he would have also gained much inspiration from Wordsworth's thirteen-book autobiographical poem of 1805 – particularly from its first two books, which address the speaker's childhood, and from its fifth book, which with "Books" as its explicit subject returns to the period of childhood once more. Freud finds it significant that Goethe's autobiography recounts only a single memory from his earliest childhood (Freud 1981a 147), and he devotes nearly ten pages to interpreting and contextualizing Goethe's recollection. In contrast to Goethe, Wordsworth devotes the first two books of *The Prelude* to his fragmented recollections of early childhood, reconstructing scenes and creating lush, luxuriant atmospheres with an intermingling of remembering and imagining that has a magical quality. Underlying Wordsworth's reconstructive efforts is a keen awareness of the relationship between selfhood and memory. Following Augustine's assertion that the "power of memory" both "is my mind" and "is my self" (C 223) as well as Hume's assertion that memory is "the source of personal identity" (Hume 261), Wordsworth likewise acknowledges the unbreakable bond between remembering and personal identity, singing, "each man is a memory to himself" (III.189; PP 112). Far from merely repeating what others had said, however, Wordsworth attends to the role of personal identity in the activity of remembering in such a way that his descriptions can help to deepen and clarify the current understanding of childhood amnesia. In the speaker's steadfast effort to recollect his own childhood, he draws quite close to the possible cause of this mysterious phenomenon – a cause that would elude Sigmund Freud and that would only find adequate treatment in the phenomenological psychology of Erwin W. Straus and in the research of contemporary cognitive scientists such as Endel Tulving.

Toward the end of Book I of the 1805 *Prelude*, the speaker becomes preoccupied with which details of his past he can remember and which he has forgotten – a self-reflexive theme that emerges in a subtle fashion. Book I commences with the speaker's introduction and contemplation of his choice of subject (as briefly examined in chapter three) and proceeds through descriptions of the speaker's boyhood revels as "naked savage," "fell destroyer," "plunderer," "favoured being," and clandestine borrower of an "elfin pinnace" (I.271-427; PP 50-58). These are followed by reveries centered on the seasons, addressing "November days," "the frosty season," and the earth's "diurnal round," until the speaker observes that he could long continue to "pursue this theme," noting "every change / Of exercise and play to which the year / Did summon us in its delightful round" (I.428-524; PP 58-64). Yet this announcement serves two contrary functions: Though the speaker is explicitly declaring that he could apply himself to this "theme" for some time, he is simultaneously removing himself from the engrossed state of reverie that would have allowed him to continue doing so and instead draws the attention of his

listeners to the activity of remembering itself. "Unfading recollections!" (I.517; PP 64), he exclaims later in the same verse paragraph. In the one that follows, he addresses the "lowly cottages in which we dwelt" directly, asking them,

> … Can I forget you, being as ye were
>
> So beautiful among the pleasant fields
>
> In which ye stood? Or can I here forget
>
> The plain and seemly countenance with which
>
> Ye dealt out your plain comforts? (I.528-32; PP 64).

These questionings likewise serve two contrary functions: Readers must discern whether the speaker is employing the rhetorical questioning mode, indicating that such forgetfulness is improbable, or the inquisitive questioning mode, indicating that the speaker is wondering whether he will indeed forget these "lowly cottages" and other former dwelling places. Though the speaker initially appears to be affirming the strength of his recollections and the unforgettability of his past experiences, these assurances also have the very different consequence of foregrounding for the first time the fallibility of memory. In the four verse paragraphs that follow (I.571-640; PP 66-70), the speaker confronts the fallibility of memory directly, confessing the hopes and misgivings he harbors with regard to his self-appointed task of describing his childhood. This passage provides compelling evidence that Wordsworth is not merely a poet and autobiographer but also a thinker who is deeply committed to describing and contemplating the activity of remembering.

In the first of these four verse paragraphs, the speaker again refers to his inability to forget something – a recurrent phrase that has begun to function like a motif in a musical composition – yet he paradoxically declares himself unable to forget certain experiences the origins of which he is unable to clearly remember:

> Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
>
> How nature by extrinsic passion first
>
> Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand
>
> And made me love them, may I well forget
>
> How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
>
> Of subtler origin – how I have felt,
>
> Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,
>
> Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
>
> Which seem in their simplicity to own
>
> An intellectual charm – that calm delight

Which (if I err not) surely must belong

To those first-born affinities that fit

Our new existence to existing things,

And in our dawn of being constitute

The bond of union betwixt life and joy (I.571-585; PP 66-68).

While acknowledging the diligence with which he has sought to describe his conscious recollections of those moments when "nature by extrinsic passion" imprinted "beauteous forms or grand" in his mind and kindled his affection for them (I.572-73; PP 66), the speaker also declares that he cannot "well forget" certain "other pleasures" and "joys / Of subtler origin" that he *also* cannot well remember (I.574-76; PP 66). Ultimately, the subtle origins of these pleasures and joys are difficult, perhaps impossible, to locate precisely. The speaker describes a feeling of "intellectual charm," of "calm delight," which *seems to* derive from "those first-born affinities that fit / Our new existence to existing things" (I.580-83; PP 68). Yet in his parenthetical qualification ("if I err not"), the speaker also concedes that this feeling is unverifiable. Like the "feelings" of "unremembered pleasure," which the speaker of *Tintern Abbey* thinks may "have no slight or trivial influence / On that best portion of a good man's life" (lines 31-33; WPW 164), the *Prelude* speaker affirms the reality and the significance of past experiences that he *feels* but cannot recollect with any certainty.

While admitting that the recollections of early childhood are often dim and indeterminate, the speaker also distinguishes his views of this hazily remembered period from those of someone like Thomas Wedgwood. It is precisely during "that tempestuous time" of early childhood (I.577; PP 66), which Wedgwood describes as a "a chaos of perceptions" (Erdman 1956a 430), that Wordsworth's speaker believes people first begin to experience the "hallowed and pure motions of the sense / Which" – far from resulting in "idiocy," as Wedgwood's reasonings would have led him to suspect (Erdman 1956a 430) – "seem in their simplicity to own / An intellectual charm" (I.578-80; PP 66-68). During these tempestuous years when consciousness first forges the bonds between self and world and between things, thoughts, and words, the child also experiences the formation of the sensibility that will later transmit feelings of intellectural charm and pleasure.

In the second verse paragraph, the speaker alters the 'cannot forget' motif slightly by setting out to describe something that he can affirmatively 'remember,' yet close examination reveals that he is again claiming to remember a dimly felt experience that he cannot specifically recollect. He even suggests that he might have been "unconscious" of this experience as it occurred:

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth

And twice five seasons on my mind had stamped

The faces of the moving year – even then,

A child, I held unconscious intercourse

With the eternal beauty, drinking in

A pure organic pleasure from the lines

Of curling mist, or from the level plain

Of waters coloured by the steady clouds (I.586-93; PP 68).

In saying that the earth had "stamped / The faces of the moving year" upon his mind (I.586-87; PP 68), the speaker employs the classical concept of the engram or memory trace, which says that anything I can remember was somehow impressed or imprinted, engraved or inscribed upon my mind (Straus 59-60). Yet Wordsworth's account of memory is traditional only on the surface. Though the opening declaration, "Yes, I remember" (I.586; PP 68), leads readers to expect a recollection that is clearer and more distinct than the indeterminate origins of adult pleasures and intellectual charms that the speaker had discussed in the previous verse paragraph, this expectation is disappointed. As is clearer in the 1850 version in which "twice five seasons" is changed to "twice five summers" (I.587; PP 69), Wordsworth's speaker is reflecting upon his tenth year, and during that year he claims to have "held unconscious intercourse / With the eternal beauty…" (I.589-90; PP 68). In claiming to "remember" a childhood experience of which he was "unconscious" (I.586, 590; PP 68), the speaker raises questions: What level or degree of consciousness is necessary to remember something? Can I remember as an adult an experience that I was unconscious of as a child? Thomas Hobbes once pithily defined remembering by saying, "To perceive having perceived, this is remembering" (Straus 60). If Hobbes's definition is correct, can I remember having perceived something (e.g., "intercourse / with the eternal beauty") which I was not conscious of perceiving at the time? Indeed, doesn't perception (as opposed to mere sensation) imply some degree of conscious awareness? These questions imbue the opening line, "Yes, I remember," with an ironic shade. After all, the statement, "I remember," inspires conviction; the statement, "Yes, I remember," raises doubts.

In the verse paragraph that follows, the speaker expands upon what he means by "unconscious intercourse / With the eternal beauty" (I.589-90; PP 68), suggesting that adults can gain awareness of the phenomena with which they had "unconscious intercourse" as children if they open themselves up to the power of familiar places:

The sands of Westmorland, the creeks and bays

Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell

How when the sea threw off his evening shade

And to the shepherd's hut beneath the crags

Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,

How I have stood, to fancies such as these

(Engrafted in the tenderness of thought)

A stranger, linking with the spectacle

No conscious memory of a kindred sight,

And bringing with me no peculiar sense

Of quietness or peace – yet I have stood

Even while mine eye has moved o'er three long leagues

Of shining water, gathering as it seemed

Through every hair-breadth of that field of light

New pleasure like a bee among the flowers (I.594-608; PP 68).

The verse paragraph begins with the speaker's personifying declaration that the "sands of Westmoreland" and "creeks and bays / Of Cumbria's rocky limits" can "tell" something (I.594-95; PP 68). This suggestion is richly ambiguous. It is, first of all, unclear whether these natural phenomena can "tell" in the sense that they can discern or in the sense that they can themselves speak. Moreover, if readers assume they are both discerning and speaking, the message of these natural phenomena is somewhat obscured by the speaker's syntax and by the series of 'told' impressions that he joins together with the word "How." The sands, creeks and bays first tell the speaker what the sea has thrown off ("his evening shade") and sent ("sweet notice of the rising moon"), only to then tell him that he has "stood, to fancies such as these / (Engrafted in the tenderness of thought) / A stranger…" (I.599-601; PP 68). As in the preceding verse paragraph, the parenthetical note is crucial because this one, like the previous one, runs counter to the sense of the words that surround it. How can the speaker be "A stranger" to "fancies" that are "Engrafted in the tenderness of thought"? Apparently, the "sands of Westmoreland" and "the creeks and bays / Of Cumbria's rocky limits" deliver a mixed message, discerning and communicating to the speaker that he has seen them before (for they are "Engrafted in the tenderness of thought") but also that he has no conscious recollection of having seen them (for he is or once was to them "A stranger, linking with the spectacle / No conscious memory of a kindred sight"). The speaker suggests that these specific natural phenomena are somehow engrafted to his consciousness – somehow part of him, like marrow – even if he cannot consciously remember them. Moreover, he implies that specific places such as Westmoreland and Cumbria have the capacity to invoke past experiences of which there is no conscious memory trace. The verse paragraph concludes with the indication that these unremembered experiences of places have, above all, provided the speaker with "New pleasure."

In the thirty-one-line verse paragraph that follows – the last of the four at the end of Book I that I have been analyzing – the speaker offers a more detailed explication of the cause and the significance of these unremembered pleasures. What gradually becomes clear is that Wordsworth's poetically articulated theory of remembering centers on the notion of a divided self. In order to create conscious memories, I must not only experience the moment but observe myself experiencing it. Unremembered experiences occur in undivided (or unselfconscious) moments. When these moments are suffused with pleasure, the speaker calls them "fits of vulgar joy":

Thus often in those fits of vulgar joy

Which through all seasons on a child's pursuits

Are prompt attendants, mid that giddy bliss

Which like a tempest works along the blood

And is forgotten, even then I felt

Gleams like the flashing of a shield. The earth

And common face of nature spoke to me

Rememberable things – sometimes, 'tis true,

By chance collisions and quaint accidents

(Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed

Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain

Nor profitless if haply they impressed

Collateral objects and appearances,

Albeit lifeless then and doomed to sleep

Until maturer seasons called them forth

To impregnate and to elevate the mind (I.609-24; PP 68-70).

A "vulgar joy" is the unremembered joy of an undeveloped mind. To those who believe, as the speaker does, that "the mind of man" can become "A thousand times more beautiful than the earth" (XIII.446-47; PP 536), such joys are of questionable value. In one sense, a vulgar joy – a moment of "giddy bliss, / Which like a tempest works along the blood / And is forgotten" (I.611-13; PP 68) – is a wasted joy. Yet in another sense, the speaker believes – and here is the locus of his attention to the unconscious – that vulgar joys are neither forgotten nor wasted. Even in the past moments that he can no longer remember, the speaker insists, "I felt / Gleams like the flashing of a shield"; even then, "nature spoke to me / Rememberable things" (I.613-14, 616; PP 68-70). Children who are in "unconscious intercourse / with the eternal beauty" (I.589-90; PP 68) can still in some sense remember their experiences, for while they are initially "lifeless," they are "doomed to sleep" only "Until mature seasons [have] called them forth" (I.589-90, 622-24; PP 68-70). The speaker appears to advocate some version of the engram or memory trace theory of remembering when he says that "chance collisions and quaint accidents" have "impressed / Collateral objects and appearances" upon his mind (I.617, 620-21; PP 70), but the remainder of the verse paragraph (I.625-40; PP 70) makes clear that these are not memories in the ordinary sense. They are not "impressed" or inscribed in the conscious mind so that they can be recalled; rather, they are inscribed in the unconscious so that they can be vaguely yet poignantly felt:

And if the vulgar joy by its own weight

> Wearied itself out of the memory,
>
> The scenes which were a witness of that joy
>
> Remained in their substantial lineaments
>
> Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
>
> Were visible, a daily sight. And thus,
>
> By the impressive discipline of fear,
>
> By pleasure and repeated happiness
>
> So frequently repeated – and by force
>
> Of obscure feelings representative
>
> Of joys that were forgotten, these same scenes
>
> So beauteous and majestic in themselves,
>
> Though yet the day was distant, did at length
>
> Become habitually dear, and all
>
> Their hues and forms were by invisible links
>
> Allied to the affections (I.625-40; PP 70).

In describing "obscure feelings representative / Of joys that were forgotten" (I.634-35; PP 70), the speaker emphasizes that the memories young children make are more likely to be felt in later life than to be consciously recollected. Sometimes a vulgar joy is so "weighty" (i.e., complete and unconscious) that it "Wearie[s] itself out of the memory" (I.625-26; PP 70), but the speaker implies that one can in some sense remember these unselfconscious moments later in life with the introduction of an external stimulus (e.g., seeing a photograph of or hearing an anecdote about the day in question).[187] As is evident in these verse paragraphs, the speaker emphasizes the importance of another kind of stimulus that can kindle remembering – one that is peculiarly relevant to his interest in describing nature's ministries: He can remember forgotten joys that have occurred in locations that "to the eye / Were visible, a daily sight" (I.629-30; PP 70). If he cannot conjure his own memories, the Derwent, the sands of Westmorland and the creeks and bays of Cumbria will conjure them for him. In this way, Wordsworth's speaker attributes a particular significance to the relationship between place and the unconscious. Scenes that "at length / Become habitually dear" are, in turn, "Allied to the affections" (I.637-38, 640; PP 70). If as an adult I depart from the places where I spent my childhood, I am less likely to remember those early years. But if I return to those places again and again once my capacities for recollection have fully developed, then I will intensify the drift of those "obscure feelings" of early childhood that are "by invisible links / Allied to the affections" but that have, for the most part, been lost (I.634, 639-40; PP 70).

The Prelude contains helpful advice for the adult who would like to better remember his or her childhood, but this advice also stirs questions: How do the scenes and sensations of these unselfconscious joys become wearied out of memory (consciously forgotten), and how do they become allied to the affections (unconsciously remembered)? As Book II helps to further clarify, Wordsworth's *Prelude* indicates that unconscious materials originate during a period of childhood amnesia, before we have begun to reason and create episodic memories. As a child, I had experiences, but I did not think of them *as* experiences. I witnessed complicated interpersonal situations, but I was unable to analyze them with reason, to represent them with language, or to understand them as contributors to a personal identity or self-recorded history. However, this does not mean that these experiences 'did not phase me' or 'left no trace.' When I was faced with conflicts or disturbing visions as a child, I became confused, upset or angry (i.e., I knew *something* was wrong), but I could not understand these conflicts (i.e., I did not know *what* was wrong). According to Wordsworth's speaker, I can remember *how* I felt during the period of childhood amnesia, but I cannot remember *what* made me feel that way. Things happened to me, but I did not process these happenings as events:

> I deem not profitless those fleeting moods
>
> Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
>
> That they are kindred to our purer mind
>
> And intellectual life, but that the soul –
>
> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
>
> Remembering not – retains an obscure sense
>
> Of possible sublimity, to which
>
> With growing faculties she doth aspire,
>
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
>
> That whatsoever point they gain they still
>
> Have something to pursue (II.331-41; PP 92).

As at the end of Book I, where the speaker invokes the "force / Of obscure feelings representative / Of joys that are forgotten" (I.633-35; PP 70), the speaker here describes "fleeting moods/ Of shadowy exultation" and "an obscure sense / Of possible sublimity" that can provide the human subject with a limitless source of introspective material so that "whatsoever point they gain they still / Have something to pursue" (II.331-32, 337-38, 340-41; PP 92). The "growing" of one's "faculties" (i.e., of my capacity to reason, remember, imagine, etc.) has two related consequences: When I attempt to recollect the years of childhood amnesia, my "soul" can, with few exceptions, remember only "how she felt" and not "what she felt"; yet when I try to reconstruct that what by extrapolating upon that vague how, I often find that my early years are suffused with a strange resonance and power (II.338, 335; PP 92).

So how does Wordsworth's poetically articulated theory of the unconscious differ from Freud's theory? The conclusion of this chapter will more closely examine the significance that Wordsworth's speaker attributes to unremembered feelings, considering the possible benefits of "feeling still / That whatsoever point they [our faculties] gain they still / Have something to pursue" (II.339-41; PP 92). For now it will suffice to note that the speaker does not represent unconscious thoughts and feelings as menacing because he does not assume that they are repressed. The mind, "Remembering how she felt, but what she felt / Remembering not" (II.335-36; PP 92), requires external assistance to recall past moments of "vulgar joy" (I.625; PP 70). Such joys can (as "what she felt") be wearied out of conscious memory and yet (as "how she felt") be "in their substantial lineaments / Depicted on the brain" (II.335, I.628-29; PP 92, 70). These depictions on the brain are not necessarily repressed traumas; they are simply unselfconscious experiences. According to Wordsworth's speaker, the unconscious endows my present moments with "calm delight" and "shadowy exultation" (I.580, II.332; PP 68, 92), suffusing my consciousness with the mysterious aura and allure of unconscious materials that I can sense but cannot grasp. While theoretically moments of unselfconscious joy can occur during any period of human life, the speaker knows that such moments are characteristic of childhood and unlikely to occur after I have begun to reason and create episodic memories. When I come home, I tell my wife about what has happened to me since I last saw her. Like most people, I am constantly constructing and reconstructing my own personal history. Yet from the period of childhood amnesia, before I began to think about my life in this way, I retain only shadowy remembrances of how I felt and occasional, brightly illuminated moments that burst forth from what is otherwise a dim, unremembered past. In his essay on "Screen Memories" and in the theory of repression that pervades his works, Freud draws attention to these rare, brightly illuminated memories from childhood and encourages readers to consider why these particular moments have emerged from the haze of childhood amnesia. He speculates that these seemingly insignificant memories might have surfaced not because of what they in themselves are but because they are connected to traumatic memories that I have repressed. However, Wordsworth provides a provocative theory about how the unconscious is formed, which neither depends upon a theory of repression nor excludes it. On Wordsworth's view, childhood is the dominant source for our unconscious thoughts and feelings, and his reason for this is quite simple: As children we have not yet learned to make the kinds of memories that result in a sense of personal identity. Thus, Wordsworth's theory of childhood amnesia revises and supplements Freudian psychoanalysis in two related ways: It indicates that childhood amnesia, rather than being an *effect* of repression, is in fact a *cause* of the formation of an unconscious. Though Freud thought childhood amnesia a probable consequence of repression – and later, more strongly, of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex – *The Prelude* presents the period of childhood amnesia as one during which memories are inscribed as unconsciously felt and not as consciously recollected. The child's unselfconscious and undeveloped sense of personal identity cause not only the period of childhood amnesia but also the formation of unconscious materials.

Wordsworth provides a more elaborate description of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of childhood experience and adult experience in the fifth book of *The Prelude*, which extends his descriptions of how the unconscious is formed and how child development affects that formation. The title for this section, "Books," is quite fitting because the act of reading can play an important role in the growth of a child's capacities to reason and create episodic memories. Wordsworth is an advocate of reason and knowledge, but not at the cost of

wonder and passion, which he calls "highest reason in a soul sublime" (V.40; 172). Nowhere is this clearer than in his critique of the "dwarf man":

> My drift has scarcely
>
> I fear been obvious, for I have recoiled
>
> From showing as it is the monster birth
>
> Engendered by these too industrious times.
>
> Let few words paint it! 'Tis a child – no child,
>
> But a dwarf man! … (V.290-95; PP 186).

Marking the center of the fifth book (lines 290-388 of a 637-line book; PP 186-90), this passage describes the "dwarf man" as a "prodigy," both "in learning and in books,"who does "deep experiments" (V.319-20, 340; PP 186-88). He is among the "mighty workmen of our later age / Who with a broad highway have overbridged / The froward chaos of futurity" (V.370-72; PP 190). These details encapsulate Wordsworth's extended allusion to Book X of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which Satan's monster births, Sin and Death, "pave a broad highway or bridge over chaos," linking earth and hell (Milton 229). While the dwarf man has certain talents, he is largely a negative force in modernity. Just as Blake prefers "Enthusiastic Admiration" to Bacon's first principle of "Unbelief" (E 647-48), so does Wordsworth's speaker complain that, according to the dwarf man, "All things are put to question" (V.341; PP 188). The dwarf man's debunking cynicism is a perversion of the love of wisdom, which involves a sense of wonder in the face of the world. He absorbs each "little drop of wisdom" into the "dimpling cistern of his heart," and "old granddame earth is grieved to find / The playthings which her love designed for him / Unthought of" (V.344-48; PP 188). Yet Wordsworth suggests a remedy for this sobering situation, which is latent in his initial reference to the dwarf man as both "child" and "no child."

In contradistinction to the cynicism and instrumental reason of the dwarf man, Wordsworth's speaker forwards the passion and "power" of "A race of *real* children" (my italics; V.431-49; PP 192-94). Though he notes that a richer supply of books might have improved upon their growth (V.433-35; PP 192), these "real children" are always true to their momentary feelings:

> A race of real children, not too wise,
>
> Too learned, or too good, but wanton, fresh,
>
> And bandied up and down by love and hate;
>
> Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy,
>
> Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds (V.436-40; PP 194).

A few paragraphs after he has honored them with this diverse list of character traits, Wordsworth's speaker discusses this "race of real children" in terms of childhood memory and the unconscious:

Our childhood sits,

Our simple childhood sits, upon a throne

That has more power than all the elements.

I guess not what this tells of being past,

Nor what it augurs of the life to come,

But so it is. And in that dubious hour,

That twilight when we first begin to see

This dawning earth, to recognize, expect,

And, in the long probation that ensues,

(The time of trial, ere we learn to live

In reconcilement with our stinted powers),

To endure this state of meagre vassalage,

Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,

Uneasy and unsettled – yoke-fellows

To custom …(V.531-45; PP 198-200)

In the context of this discussion of memory, childhood amnesia and the formation of the unconscious, it becomes clear that the "power" of childhood derives precisely from its presence below the threshold of consciousness. Power is the unconscious itself – the unremembered past that incites "fleeting moods / Of shadowy exultation" and imbues each moment with an "obscure sense / Of possible sublimity" (II.331-32, 336-37; PP 92). Of course, if the unconscious is formed during the child's unselfconscious interactions with nature and her ministries of pleasure and fear, then for Wordsworth, nature, childhood and the unconscious are inseparable. They each have a share in what he calls "power," which has a locus (the unconscious), a being (the child), a temporal location (the period of childhood amnesia) and a world (nature). Wordsworth's speaker also suggests that the formation of the unconscious slows or stops with the end of the period of childhood amnesia. He is acutely aware of this temporal location's outer limits, mourning "that dubious hour, / That twilight when we first begin to see / This dawning earth, to recognize, expect…" (V.536-38; PP 198). As we relinquish the "power" of childhood, we become "yoke-fellows / To custom," and we must "learn to live / In reconcilement with our stinted powers" (V.533, 544-45, 540-41; PP 198-200).

Wordsworth's account of the transition from childhood to adulthood in Book V of *The Prelude* exemplifies the renewal of philosophical wonder that manifested itself in the writings of many of his contemporaries. When Wordsworth's speaker calls adults "yoke-fellows / To custom" (V.544-45; PP 198-200), he implies that they might recognize the assumptions and practices that restrict them; break the "yoke" of "custom," just as Blake's speaker in "London"

implies that adults might break their "mind-forg'd manacles" (E 27); and reclaim their "power" by cultivating an epistemological attitude modeled upon that of the child – an attitude of openness and suspended judgment, which resembles Coleridgean "*negative* faith" (BL II.134) and Keatsian "*Negative Capability*" (KSL 41), and which Wordsworth in *MS. Y* of *The Prelude* describes as a "thoughtful wonder" (line 36; NCP 501). While Wordsworth's speaker in this 1804 manuscript describes young children as "startled into notice" and as consumed by the conflicting passions of "admiration" and "agitat[ion]," "fear" and "Enjoyment," adults, by contrast, eventually find that appearances, "Become familiar, agitate us less" (lines 22, 1, 18, 50-51, 18; NCP 501). Wordsworth's speaker in *MS. Y* offers a detailed description of the individual who has the ability to break through this "yoke" of "custom" (V.544-45; PP 198-200), removing the "film of familiarity" that Coleridge and Shelley say obscures the wonders of the world and of our being (BL II.7; DP 533). After Wordsworth's speaker has dismissed the capacities of the "Untutored minds" that can only feel delight in the face of nature if they encounter the kinds of "vivid images" and "strong sensations" that the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* labels as "violent stimulants" (lines 120-22; NCP 503; PW I.128), and after he has dismissed the capacities of the "Vulgar impostor" who is "unawed" by nature and who takes "his own person, senses, faculties" as "Centre and soul of all" (lines 130-34; NCP 503), he offers a description of the ideal inquiring subject. Of this subject, the speaker declares,

> In speculation he is like a child –
>
> With this advantage, that he now can rest
>
> Upon himself. Authority is none
>
> To cheat him of his boldness, or hoodwink
>
> His intuitions, or to lay asleep
>
> The [unquiet] stir of his perplexities (lines 162-67; NCP 504).

Wordsworth's ideal inquirer has the epistemological openness of the child and the intellectual acuity and mindfulness of the adult. Disavowing the dictates of "Authority," this inquirer speaks with "boldness" and follows his or her "intuitions," like the self-reliant individual of whom Emerson would later write in homage. Neither a negative skeptic nor a pawn of popular opinion, Wordsworth's inquirer engages with the world as it appears and refuses "to lay asleep" the "perplexities" that "stir" his or her mind.

In challenging the instrumentalizing tendencies of the dwarf man and in valorizing the "power" and "thoughtful wonder" of child consciousness, Wordsworth enters into dialogue with twentieth-century philosophers of wonder such as Freud and Husserl, "illuminat[ing] their own practice[s]" in precisely the way that, according to Julia Kristeva, truly singular artistic works are prone to do (Kristeva 1996a 91). *The Prelude* encourages readers to defamiliarize the familiar – an act which Freud and Husserl would later forward as the fundamental feature of their respective methods. In attempting to suppress (or suspend) the narrowed and recalcitrant assumptions of the critical faculty (or natural attitude),[188] Freud and Husserl cultivate a "thoughtful wonder" (lines 36; NCP 501). Indeed, they could hardly find a more poignant and concise poetic synopsis of their own methods than that offered in *MS. Y* of *The Prelude*. Just as psychoanalysis and phenomenology advocate a bracketing of traditional prejudices, so does

Wordsworth's inquirer flout any "Authority" that would "hoodwink / His intuitions" and "lay asleep" his active mind (lines 164-67; NCP 504).

The description of a "race of real children" in Book V of *The Prelude* offers an example of the child's ability to, consciously or unconsciously, flout authority. These children are "not too wise, / Too learned, or too good" – three traditional ideals in adherence to which people "hoodwink" their "intuitions" (lines 165-66; NCP 504) – "but wanton, fresh, / And bandied up and down by love and hate" (V.436-38; PP 194). In giving way to love and hate with equal freedom, such children are, according to Freud, capable of greater sincerity than adults, whose critical faculties often prevent them from confronting their emotions:

> These contradictory feelings, of whose simultaneous presence adults normally only become aware when they are passionately in love, and which tend to suppress each other until one of them succeeds in covering up the presence of the other altogether, are able to coexist peacefully in the heart of a child for quite some time (LH 93).

Though most adults tend, consciously or unconsciously, to "suppress" any feelings of love or hate that their authority figures or internalized monitors might deem unacceptable, children have not yet learned to stifle their thoughts and feelings. The adult who is like a child in his or her speculations has the advantage of pondering with a "thoughtful wonder" those contradictions, "intuitions" and "perplexities" that the typical adult would prefer to "lay asleep" (lines 36, 166-67; NCP 501, 504).

Wordsworth's speaker in *The Prelude* is deeply sensitive to the benefits of adult consciousness. He likens the differences between childhood and adulthood to the difference between two continents, and just as (following Geoffrey Hartman) one might view Wordsworth as "the only writer to carry forward a *pastoral culture* as a fully modern poet" (FQC 71-72), so might one view Wordsworth as the link between these two temporal continents and the preserver of the isthmus that dwells between them:

> It might demand a more impassioned strain
>
> To tell of later pleasures, linked to these,
>
> A tract of the same isthmus which we cross
>
> In progress from our native continent
>
> To earth and human life – I mean to speak
>
> Of that delightful time of growing youth
>
> When cravings for the marvelous relent,
>
> And we begin to love what we have seen;
>
> And sober truth, experience, sympathy,
>
> Take stronger hold of us, and words themselves
>
> Move us with conscious pleasure (V.558-68; PP 200).

Curiously, Wordsworth distinguishes childhood, "our native continent," from "earth and human life," implying that children are not human in the same manner that adults are. Cognitive scientist Endel Tulving has made similar observations, commenting upon the particular role that episodic memory plays in being human and upon the peculiar deficiency of this form of memory in children. If all humans lacked the mental ability to travel in time, remembering their pasts and imagining their futures, then according to Tulving, "we would no longer be human as we understand humanness" (Tulving 17). One would be right to question the utility and legitimacy of the category of 'humanness' if it did not apply to children, yet Wordsworth is as open to this sort of questioning as Tulving. Associating childhood with the ecstatic, unselfconscious life of the animal, as he does in *Tintern Abbey* (lines 73-74; WPW 164), Wordsworth implies that only when "we begin to love what we have seen," only when we acquire the ability to create memories, do we begin to live the life of the mind ("sober truth"), the life of the self ("experience") and the life of love ("sympathy"). Only then do we begin to appreciate the power of words, a development no poet could fail to appreciate.

After describing what is lost in leaving childhood and what is gained in reaching adulthood, Wordsworth's speaker mourns his departure from the "native continent" and reminds his readers of that continent's value:

> …I am sad
>
> At the thought of raptures now for ever flown;
>
> Even until tears I sometimes could be sad
>
> To think of, to read over, many a page –
>
> Poems withal of name – which at the time
>
> Did never fail to entrance me, and are now
>
> Dead in my eyes as is a theatre
>
> Fresh emptied of spectators (V.568-75; PP 200).

In this passage, Wordsworth admits that he, too, knows what it is like to remember the importance of his theme but feel it no longer (IV.475-78; PP 166) – a sensation that would also serve as the basis for the opening lines of his great *Ode*. With the growth of our critical faculties comes the sense of loss that one feels in recognizing that repetition is not possible. With divided selves, we are all angst-ridden philosophers, nostalgic for an unselfconscious past that we can only vaguely remember.

e) The Power of the Unconscious

This chapter began with an epigraph from the preface to Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879), the nineteenth-century commentary upon Wordsworth's poetry which more than any other succeeded in undermining Wordsworth's contention that in his poetry he was doing something philosophical. In addition to dismissing Wordsworth's longer, more philosophical poems and Wordsworth's 1815 classification of the shorter poems according to mental activities, Arnold also denied that Wordsworth's characterization of childhood in the great *Ode* might be

universally applicable among human beings. Though Wordsworth's childhood might have endowed him with intimations of immortality, high instincts and a particular delight in nature, these characteristics are, Arnold indicates, most likely peculiar to Wordsworth. According to Arnold, Wordsworth's idea that childhood testifies to "a divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds, – this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind; it has no real solidity" (W 49-50). Yet Arnold assesses the truth and solidity of Wordsworth's idea with reference only to its otherworldly aspects and without reference to its suggestion that the divine is manifest in earth and human life. In allowing Wordsworth's expanded, 1815 title of the *Ode* to guide his interpretation, Arnold overlooks the ways the *Ode* subtly divides its attention between two divine homes – the heaven of a previous existence in the divine and the heaven of a divine childhood. This chapter has sought to demonstrate the universal significance of the divine home of childhood in the forging of instincts, faculties and sensibility and in the formation of unconscious materials which, as a result of an amnesia that precedes the development of personal identity, can be obscurely felt but not accurately recollected in later life. Wordsworth's poetry indicates that the forgotten residence in God that precedes human birth is only slightly more inaccessible, mysterious and powerful than the divine home of childhood, and his nuanced attention to the activity of remembering resembles the philosophical endeavors of twentieth-century phenomenologists such as Erwin W. Straus and Edward S. Casey.[189] Writing nearly a century before the emergence of phenomenology and psychoanalysis and a century and a half before the emergence of cognitive science, Wordsworth's descriptions of remembering and childhood amnesia are universal in a way that Arnold could not have envisioned.

The speakers of the *Ode* and of *The Prelude* illustrate that the "power" of childhood derives from its inaccessibility to adults, and they both suggest that one reason childhood is inaccessible to adults is that adulthood is overshadowed by social burdens and recalcitrant attitudes. The speaker of the *Ode* describes adulthood as "the inevitable yoke" and "earthly freight" of a soul that allows "custom" to settle upon its shoulders "with a weight, / Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!" (lines 127-31; WPW 461). Likewise, the speaker of *The Prelude* describes adulthood as a "long probation" that follows childhood, a "state of meagre vassalage" in which one lives, "Uneasy and unsettled – yoke-fellows / To custom…" (V.539, 542, 544-45; PP 198-200). The heavy frost of custom not only weighs upon the shoulders of adults; it also obscures their vision. With the yoke of custom comes the scripted answers of common sense that tell people what is possible and impossible, true and untrue, there and not there. When the wondering, open-minded attitude of the child is lost, childhood itself is lost. Indeed, so is the entire phenomenal world. As Los puts it in Blake's *Jerusalem*, "If the Perceptive Organs close: their Objects seem to close also" (30.56; E 177). When we shut our eyes to the world around us, it shuts itself off from us. Only an attitude of thoughtful wonder can expose it to our eyes once more.

In addition to this tacit suggestion that the loss of child-like openness leads to the loss of childhood memories of the past and sense experiences of the present, the speaker of *The Prelude* also forwards a more specific hypothesis about why childhood is inaccessible to adults: Children are too unselfconscious to create the kinds of episodic memories that are common among adults who have accurate memories. Anticipating the later insights apparent in William James's introspective psychology, Erwin W. Straus's phenomenological psychology, and Endel Tulving's cognitive theories about memory, Wordsworth's speaker suggests that the period of

childhood amnesia occurs because the sense of personal identity necessary for the creation of conscious memories has not yet developed. Consequently, the speaker indicates that adult efforts to reproduce early childhood memories tend to yield obscurely felt memories instead of consciously recollected ones. In this way *The Prelude* exceeds even Freud's generous expectations about the insight of poets into the study of childhood amnesia, remembering, and unconscious materials.

To some extent, Freud acknowledges that poets can have profound insights of scientific significance. He credits the poets with discovering the unconscious and with identifying childhood as a period crucial to the formation of unconscious materials:

> What poets and students of human nature had always asserted turned out to be true: the impressions of that early period of life, though they were for the most part buried in amnesia, left ineradicable traces upon the individual's growth and in particular laid down the disposition to any nervous disorder that was to follow (AS 35).

Conceiving of himself as a scientist and analyst, Freud cannot help but emphasize childhood's role in the formation of nervous disorders. As he understands it, psychoanalysis is a talking cure and a "scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied." By employing this method, one can explore the unconscious, encounter the origins of nervous disorders, grapple with them, integrate them and again become healthy. Influenced by his successes as an analyst, Freud naturally tends to speak of unconscious materials as if they were shipwrecks on seafloors that must be located and exhausted of their resources – exhausted of their power over us. Consequently, in "'A Child Is Being Beaten'" (1919), he sets for psychoanalysis an impossible task, asserting that "analytic work deserves to be recognized as genuine psycho-analysis only when it has succeeded in removing the amnesia which conceals from the adult his knowledge of his childhood from its beginning" (CBB 183). By 1935, he had been forced to revise this claim and to concede that many of his patients's 'remembered' seductions were in fact fantasies (AS 36-7). His goal of "removing the amnesia" that veiled their childhoods had begun to seem too ambitious. Enthralled by the theory of repression that helped him to understand how people can forget, he failed to attend closely to how people manage to remember in the first place. As Straus incisively observes, "Fascinated by the problem of forgetting, he [Freud] closed his eyes to the wonder of remembering" (Straus 63).

One benefit of Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem is that it takes as its subject "the wonder of remembering" itself (Straus 63). More significantly, the poem exemplifies this wondering attitude and opens our eyes to its intellectual possibilities. Though the defamiliarizing efforts of Wordsworth's *Prelude* are less rigorous and methodical than those of Freud and Husserl, they are, in at least one sense, more compelling. Since *The Prelude* is not motivated by any end game such as the reaching of transcendental subjectivity or objective truth, the poem *performs* the epistemological attitude that it advocates: a truly thoroughgoing, positively skeptical and non-productive exercise of philosophical wonder for its own sake. Less compelled to dictate where a given inquiry should lead, Wordsworth's speaker revels in the wonder of remembering in a way that few introspective psychologists or psychoanalysts, phenomenologists or cognitive scientists would be capable of doing. As Schiller observes, most inquiries are biased by the "widespread and almost insurmountable tendency toward teleological judgements" (AE 70n1). Yet this is a tendency from which poets are more or less immune.

Another benefit of *The Prelude* is that it provides us with a different way of thinking about the study of the unconscious and about what Straus calls "the problem of forgetting" (Straus 63). Surely, psychoanalysis has helped people to uncover, confront and overcome many traumatic experiences, and surely Wordsworth's prolonged explorations of his own mind demonstrate that the faculties of remembering and imagining have afforded him great interest, enjoyment and fulfillment. But, as he suggests in autobiographical poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, for Wordsworth, the "little, nameless, unremembered" experiences of one's past are not merely there to be uncovered (line 34; WPW 164). They also "may have had no trivial influence / On that best portion of a good man's life" (lines 32-33; WPW 164). These unremembered experiences, sensed yet not grasped, enrich one's life and abide as a source of power and sustenance, refining one's faculties and encouraging one's growth. They instill in one's soul…

…an obscure sense

Of possible sublimity, to which

With growing faculties she doth aspire,

With faculties still growing, feeling still

That whatsoever point they gain they still

Have something to pursue (II.331-41; PP 92).

In short, one's unremembered experiences endow one's life with a sense of purpose. According to Wordsworth, the vague sense of these past moments, just beneath the threshold of consciousness, contributes to that

… blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world

Is lighten'd (lines 38-42; WPW 164).

While conscious awareness might be the solution to some problems, it might be the cause of others. Like a poem that yields many interpretations, life remains meaningful only insofar as one can sense that there is something unremembered beyond one's grasp. Maybe the unexamined life is not worth living. But for Wordsworth, a life devoted to constant examination, without ever appreciating the "burthen of the mystery," the "sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused" (lines 38, 96-7; WPW 164), is not worth living either.

6. Atmospheric Imaginings:

Wordsworth, Freud and the Thickened

Imaginings of Reconstructive Memory

a) Wordsworth, Freud and the Study of Remembering

In light of recent findings in cognitive science, which indicate that childhood amnesia might result from the comparatively late development of episodic memory (months and sometimes years after the developments of procedural or implicit memory and declarative or explicit memory),[190] it becomes easier to identify where Freud's speculations about childhood amnesia might have gone awry. Logically, he saw a connection between the forms of amnesia he witnessed in children and in neurotics, and he conjectured that they might both result from repression. This led him to forward the improbable notion that all or almost all childhood memories are dissolved with the dissolution of the Oedipus complex (DOC 177). Had Freud been able to consider the findings of cognitive scientists who suggest that the period of childhood amnesia ceases when the capacity for episodic memory develops, he would have observed that the mechanism of repression was no longer the simplest and most logical solution to "the problem" of childhood amnesia and that neurotic amnesia most likely has a different cause.[191] Consequently, he might have avoided not only his linkage between the Oedipus complex and childhood amnesia but also his emphasis on real seductions (or repressed sexual traumas) as well as his later confession that this emphasis had been an error and that many of these seductions were fantasized and not remembered.[192]

As late as 1919, Freud claimed that "analytic work deserves to be recognized as genuine psycho-analysis only when it has succeeded in removing the amnesia which conceals from the adult his knowledge of his childhood from its beginning (that is, from about the second to the fifth year)" (CBB 183). When one considers the burden Freud took upon himself in setting a goal that recent studies in cognitive science suggest is unachievable, one begins to wonder if Freud was, through the phenomenon of suggestion, inadvertently pressuring his patients to imagine the seductions he thought might be at the root of their neuroses. Before his admission of error in his *Autobiographical Study* (1935), he was occasionally inattentive to the differences between the mental activities of remembering and imagining, tending to assimilate and conflate them when his theories about consciousness invited him to do so.

The aim of this chapter is two-fold: to cultivate a fruitful dialogue between Wordsworth and Freud on the subjects of remembering, imagining, and the gray area of confabulation that blends these two mental activities, and in so doing, to reflect some of Wordsworth's contributions to the psychoanalytic study of consciousness. Freud sometimes referred to consciousness and to mental activities such as remembering and imagining as forms of "internal perception" (S 308; DPP 141). Yet strictly speaking, as Edward S. Casey's pioneering phenomenological descriptions of *Imagining* (1976) and *Remembering* (1987) demonstrate, these mental activities are not forms of perception. Admittedly, our rememberings and imaginings would be poor in images and other sensory elements if there were no such thing as perception; yet as mental activities, the three operate autonomously, producing distinct phenomenal experiences.[193] Though Freud occasionally speaks of "internal perception," his psychoanalytic

approach does not grant perception primacy over other mental activities in the way that Merleau-Pontian phenomenology, for example, does. For Freud as for Wordsworth, the two primary modes of consciousness are remembering and imagining. Can Wordsworth, one of the poets who 'discovered' the unconscious before Freud,[194] help us to refine and supplement Freud's descriptions of remembering and imagining?

At this point, I should distinguish between two general categories of remembering in which the analysand (or 'patient') engages on the Freudian model: reproductive (or what Proust calls "involuntary") memory and reconstructive memory. Though it might be difficult to categorize all instances of remembering into these two general categories, they will nonetheless prove useful in this chapter, which examines the extent to which the activity of imagining can participate in reconstructive memory and lead to a hybrid form of remembering and imagining that psychiatrists, neurobiologists and cognitive scientists have called 'confabulation.' Though the term relates not merely to the production of false memories but also to misperceptions and other kinds of awareness errors[195] – and though confabulation typically manifests itself as a symptom of some kind of mental or physical illness such as schizophrenia, amnesia, senile dementia, syphilis, alcoholic Korsakoff psychosis, and other forms of psychosis (Schnider 46-48) – the term can also be used to describe the production of false memories in people who have no apparent mental or physical ailment and are, by all appearances, 'normal' or 'healthy' (Schnider 52; Hirstein 7; French). Of particular interest to psychotherapists of all kinds is the finding that normal subjects are more likely to produce confabulations as a result of external pressure, whether this pressure take the form of questioning (as occurs when one offers an eyewitness report to lawyers and law enforcement) or of subtle suggestion (as can occur in the clinical setting).[196] Researchers have discovered that "false memories in normal people are often produced by the very processes that normally function to help us reconstruct memories as we recall them" (Hirstein 7), and this means that "confabulations can also be induced in healthy subjects when they are pushed to retrieve memories with more details than those they have actually stored" (Schnider 52; see also Burgess and Shallice 1996). This suggests that reconstructive memory can, for better and for worse, possess an imaginative component.

Remembering and imagining exhibit numerous qualities that distinguish them as mental activities. Casey distinguishes between them by characterizing the comparative "autonomy" of each. While imaginings (as "'passing' reveries") are characterized by a *thin* autonomy – an "etherealizing, evaporating tendency" that makes them unlikely to "precipitate themselves into our subsequent life in any lasting way" – rememberings are characterized by a *thick* autonomy that is weighty and hefty in the sense that they tend to leave an "unresolved remainder" (Casey 2000 266). Rememberings stick with us, perplex us, console us, and fill us. As Wordsworth's *Prelude* puts it, "each man is a memory to himself" (III.189; PP 112).[197] Among their many distinguishing characteristics, according to Casey, rememberings are "resistant to conceptual understanding (for example, when I cannot understand why a given memory obsesses me so much); sedimented in layers (as occurs when an entire set of memories clusters around a particular place)…" They also exhibit "a concentrated emotional significance, ranging from feelings of regret or nostalgia to the sheer pleasure of recognizing a long, absent friend; a coarsely textured surface (i.e., as a result of the overlay of successive remembering); a closely packed or 'thickset' format (e.g., filled up with detail)" (Casey 2000 265-66). Each of these distinctive qualities would typically allow the subject to tell whether he or she is remembering or imagining.

The study of confabulation opens up fascinating terrain for further study precisely because it blurs several of the boundaries that would normally make rememberings and imaginings so distinct. This chapter will suggest that through a peculiar form of 'atmospheric imagining,' confabulations become difficult to distinguish from genuine memories. Such imaginings produce an extrapolated past on a remembered stage, and they are thus suffused with the layering and thickness, the concentration of emotion and detail – in a word, the *atmosphere* – of rememberings. While, as Casey rightly observes, our imaginings are normally "surrounded by a mere 'margin' of indeterminacy," there is instead "an entire atmosphere" that "permeates what we remember" (Casey 2000 ix). As Casey notes, one thing that distinguishes rememberings from imaginings is the "involvement of the self in the atmosphere." Since we are "actively projecting what we imagine, we are much less prone to be drawn into its atmospheric embrace" (Casey 2000 328n35). Confabulations, however, present a unique exception. They are difficult to distinguish from genuine memories precisely because, though partially or wholly fabricated, they nonetheless contain the familiar atmosphere from the past that permeates rememberings and because the confabulator is encircled by that atmosphere in a way that resembles the experience of the rememberer. Cobbling together various remembered experiences in familiar places in an effort to reconstruct the past, I can unconsciously create the kind of atmosphere that would normally suffuse only a remembered experience.[198]

The concept of confabulation offers a productive point of contact between the writings of Wordsworth and Freud. Though Freud's emphases on repression and real seductions in the clinical setting might suggest to some that he was inattentive both to the distinction between remembering and imagining and to the occasional slippage that can occur between them in confabulation, this is not so. Rather, he was *inconsistently* attentive. His tendency to conflate remembering and imagining occurs in direct correlation to his greater or lesser emphasis on the mechanism of repression, which gives priority to acts of remembering. If the analyst and analysand adopt a similar attitude, they can – even when the work of therapy involves analyzing a dream or fantasy – feel driven to think of these phenomena as means toward the end of accessing and confronting repressed experiences. After the next section (b) shows Wordsworth's discerning attention in *The Prelude* to the subtle differences between remembering and imagining and to the risks of confabulation, the section that follows (c) will examine Freud's attention to the same differences and risks in three texts that span his career: "Screen Memories" (1899), "The Wolfman" (1918) and *An Autobiographical Study* (1935). Ultimately, this chapter will illuminate some of the ways that Wordsworth's and Freud's insights into mental activities create a kind of spontaneous cross-pollination that reveals Wordsworth's insight into the phenomenon of confabulation as well as Freud's occasional overemphasis on the phenomenon of repression in moments when he conceives of himself as a scientist who seeks objective discoveries. The conclusion (d) will suggest some ways that this philosophical dialogue between Wordsworth and Freud helps to inform Wordsworth's self-modifying poetic practice as well as Freud the scientist's occasional yearning to make the leap from his novel conception of psychical reality toward the verifiable realm of objective reality – a leap that Wordsworth and Freud are, as autobiographers, less inclined to make.

b) Wordsworth's Views on Remembering, Imagining and Confabulation

All remembrance of things past is fiction.

~ Hemingway[199]

Echoing Shakespeare's sonnets ("When to the sessions of sweet silent thought / I summon up remembrance of things past...") as well as C. K. Scott Moncrieff's creative rendering of the title of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27),[200] the epigraph above is among the unpublished omissions from the short-story memoir in which Hemingway strove to represent, more than three decades after the events in question (and nearly a century before Woody Allen's rendering of them), the life he lived and the people he knew in Paris during the 1920s. Hemingway's words are provocative, even contradictory. If all remembrance of things past is fiction, does that mean that all memories are 'made up'; are nothing more than unreliable fabrications and wish fulfillments? The Proust narrator himself, in another Modernist text, seems to suggest as much in the famous madeleine episode. "What an abyss of uncertainty," he observes, "whenever the mind feels overtaken by itself; when it, the seeker, is at the same time the dark region through which it must go seeking and where all its equipment will avail it nothing." As if to correct himself, the speaker then exclaims: "Seek? More than that: create" (Proust I.49). Sought *by* the mind in the dark regions *of* the mind, these memories only seem like they are sought; they are in fact created by the mind that seeks them. In the preface to his memoir, Hemingway seems to agree with this claim, and he also provides his readers with a way to understand the relationship between fact and fiction, verifiable truth and *created* truth: "If the reader prefers, this book may be regarded as fiction. But there is always the chance that such a book of fiction may throw some light on what has been written as fact." Hemingway's words tread tenuously upon the at times indiscernible line between fact and fiction, suggesting that his creative autobiography, though fictionalized, might nonetheless illuminate accounts of the past that have been *written as* fact. (Notably, he refuses to say that they *are* fact.) Perhaps aware that the words 'fact' and 'fiction' both, at their origins, mean 'made,'[201] Hemingway's words imply that ultimately each individual must decide what counts as fact and what counts as fiction. If the creative autobiographer can "throw some light" on what has been taken as fact, then the attempt *to imagine the past* (i.e., to reconstruct what cannot be clearly remembered) can, in some sense, reflect the truth of that past, even if that truth is unremembered and unverifiable.

The autobiographical writings of Modernist writers like Hemingway and Proust find a natural precursor in those of a Romantic writer like William Wordsworth. Posthumously published with the title, *A Moveable Feast* (1964) – invoking Hemingway's claim that, "Paris is a moveable feast" because "it stays with you" long after you have lived there and left it behind – Hemingway's memoirs of Paris resonate with Wordsworth's account of the benefits of his 1798 visit to Tintern Abbey, which the speaker believes will provide him with "life and food / For future years" (lines 64-65; WPW 164). Both writers assign a particular importance to the phenomenon of place, and both view their remembrances of things past as a form of sustenance and as a source of delectable future pleasures. Moreover, Wordsworth is just the sort of Proustian (or Proust, just the sort of Wordsworthian) writer who voluntarily seeks the past in "the dark region through which it must go seeking" – and creating (Proust I.49). In the "Prospectus" to *The Recluse*, which was attached to the 1814 preface to *The Excursion*, Wordsworth's speaker proclaims,

> … Not Chaos, not
>
> The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
>
> Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out

> By help of dreams – can breed such fear and awe
>
> As fall upon us often when we look
>
> Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man –
>
> My haunt, and the main region of my song (lines 93-99; PW 7).

Determined to brave even the "darkest pit of lowest Erebus" so that "the Mind of Man" will remain his "haunt," Wordsworth's speaker inspired John Keats to declare that Wordsworth's "Genius is explorative of those dark Passages" that intermingle in the circuitous, synaptic web that makes up the "Chamber of Maiden Thought" (KSL 90). Reflecting the words of their premodern ancestor, Augustine of Hippo, who declared that, "The wide plains of my memory and its innumerable caverns and hollows are full beyond compute of countless things of all kinds" (X.17; C 224), these three modern autobiographers enter the dark passages of the mind in search of lost time that they must recreate or create, uncover or invent.

Perhaps the most fertile parallel between these Modernist creative autobiographies and Wordsworth's own posthumously published, poetical autobiography is the degree to which these writers trouble the boundaries and the grey area of confabulation that dwell between the activities of remembering and imagining. The remainder of this section will concern itself with the autobiography that Wordsworth's executors called *The Prelude*, and it makes sense to begin by observing that Wordsworth was troubling these boundaries even in the first drafts of the poem, more than half a century before it was finally published. In chapter five, I examined a series of four verse paragraphs that appear toward the end of Book I of the 1805 *Prelude* (I.571-640; PP 66-70), noting that in these lines the speaker frequently calls attention to his rememberings as such and in this way foregrounds his heightened self-awareness of the autobiographical act. In the earliest existing manuscript of the poem that became *The Prelude* – manuscript JJ, which was first recognized as such in 1931 and first published in full in 1959 (Parrish 6) – Wordsworth drafted the first three of these four verse paragraphs (I.571-608; PP 66-68), which in Stephen Parrish's helpful reading text for JJ take up more than fifty lines (lines 118-170; CP 126-27). As chapter three explained in greater detail, Wordsworth composed these first lines of *The Prelude* while he and Dorothy were marooned in Goslar, Germany, during a time when he should have been either studying German or moving forward on his and Coleridge's plans for a philosophical poem that would be called *The Recluse*. Instead, he found himself writing "descriptions" that he – guilt-ridden because of the more formidable tasks he was avoiding – conceived as written "in self-defense" (EY 236). In these early drafts of the three verse paragraphs pertaining to remembering that would ultimately appear in Book I of the 1805 *Prelude*, Wordsworth's speaker refers to "childhood" as a period filled with "rememberable days" (lines 129-31; CP 126), and he exclaims, "Yes, I remember when the changeful earth / And twice five seasons on my mind had stampd / The faces of the changeful year" (lines 144-46; CP 127). The speaker's premature protests that he can remember – in particular, his conspicuous double affirmation ("Yes, I remember…") – have the perhaps unintended consequence of inviting readers to doubt his capacity to remember. And these self-conscious references to the activity of remembering are preceded, in his small Goslar notebook, by two related passages that he would ultimately omit from the poem. These passages demonstrate that at its very inception *The Prelude* was an autobiographical poem that confronted the possibility of confabulation and the impossibility of producing an autobiography that is accurate in all its details.

If Wordsworth had included the two omitted passages in the 1805 *Prelude*, they would most likely have appeared toward the beginning of Book I. On the same notebook page upon which Wordsworth first wrote of a "mild creative breeze" that would eventually become a focal point of the "glad preamble" (CP 117; I.43, PP 38),[202] Wordsworth also records a few lines that reflect the challenges of remembering:

what there is

Of subtler feeling of remembered joy

Of soul & spirit in departed sound

That can not be remembered (CP 117; lines 12-16, CP 123).

These lines represent a complete verse paragraph; they are not connected to any other lines that would make them less enigmatic either in the Goslar notebook or in Parrish's reading text of the JJ manuscript. As in *Tintern Abbey*, where the speaker sings of "feelings too / Of unremembered pleasure" and of "little, nameless, unremembered, acts / Of kindness and of love" (lines 30-31, 34-35; WPW 164),[203] the JJ manuscript records the speaker's concern with something "That can not be remembered." Yet the manuscript does not allow for a clear identification of what that unremembered thing is. Proximity suggests that it is most likely the "departed sound" that "can not be remembered," yet the string of four prepositional phrases ("Of…of…of…in…") also leaves open a number of alternative or additional possibilities: The unremembered thing might be the "subtler feeling" that underlies the "joy" that *can* be "remembered," and / or the "soul & spirit" of that "remembered joy," and / or the "soul & spirit" of the "departed sound," and / or some combination of these four possible antecedents. What is certain is that the JJ manuscript documents Wordsworth's preoccupation, on the very first manuscript page of *The Prelude*,[204] with being able to remember some details and unable to remember others – a preoccupation that is all too understandable for a poet who is consciously or unconsciously commencing a long autobiographical poem. This conundrum is much like the one that the confabulator faces, since people often unconsciously confabulate when they feel compelled to "retrieve memories with more details than those they have actually stored" (Schnider 52; see also Burgess and Shallice 1996). The speaker's preoccupations are even more striking in the second omitted passage.

Wordsworth's two-part *Prelude* of 1799 begins with the ardent repetition of a famously ambiguous question ("Was it for this…?"), and (as chapter three examined in greater detail) this question first arises in the 1805 *Prelude* after the speaker has contemplated various possible subjects for his poem and implicitly settled upon one of them: to write a poem on the growth of his mind and of his poetic sensibility. On the second page in the Goslar notebook – the same page upon which Wordsworth first wrote the words that would open the two-part *Prelude* of 1799 ("was it for this / That one, the fairest of all rivers…") – Wordsworth also recorded a "Was it for this" passage that would not find a place in any of the final versions of the poem – not the two part, the five book, the thirteen book, or the fourteen book. The phrase "Was it for this" appears twice in the first twenty lines of the two-part *Prelude* (lines 1 and 17; PP 8), yet in the Goslar notebook a third repetition of this motif appears interspersed between the other two:

Was [it] for this & now I speak of things

That have been & that are no gentle dreams

Complacent fashioned fondly to adorn

The time of unrememberable being (CP 115).

In the Goslar notebook, these lines are immediately followed by the second "Was it for this" passage that would make it into the two-part *Prelude* ("Was it for this that I a four years child"), and it is intriguing to speculate about why Wordsworth would ultimately cut this intervening passage.

One possible reason for the omission that readily presents itself is that the passage lacks the natural imagery and the details of the speaker's personal history that are so prevalent in the preceding and succeeding passages. The omitted "Was it for this" passage takes Wordsworth's listeners out of the reverie with which the poem begins and introduces more abstract considerations.

However, Wordsworth might also have objected to the passage because of the information it contains. In the Goslar notebook, he crossed out the second of the four lines in the passage ("That have been & that are no gentle dreams"), so that readers of the manuscript are faced with (at least) two possible interpretations, each directly contrary to the other. If one ignores the fact that the second line is crossed out, then the speaker is presenting these autobiographical lines as a factual history filled with actual remembrances ("things / That have been"). Yet the final line of the passage makes this a difficult interpretation to accept. In the phrase, "The time of unrememberable being," the manuscript appears to be offering a poetic description of what Freud and others have called the period of childhood or infantile amnesia, and the speaker would be contradicting himself if he claimed to be describing "things / That have been" or have occurred during a period that is "unrememberable." Presumably, the autobiographer should not try to record occurrences that he or she cannot actually remember. On the other hand, if one accepts the cross out as definitive and omits the second line from one's interpretation, then the passage presents a different contradiction. For if the speaker is describing "things / Complacent fashioned fondly to adorn / The time of unrememberable being" (CP 115), then the nascent autobiography he has just commenced is no longer an autobiography in the sense of a factual history. No longer filled with verifiable remembrances, this fictional autobiography would be filled with the speaker's imaginings of what his childhood *might* have been like.

Like so many confabulators, Wordsworth's speaker in the JJ manuscript yearns to "retrieve memories with more details than those [he has] actually stored" (Schnider 52; see also Burgess and Shallice 1996), and he consequently fashions inauthentic remembrances "to adorn" a time that he cannot clearly remember. Confabulations often allow people to "embellish" upon their real situations, endowing their pasts with "a positive, meaningful, and motivational aspect" (Schnider 207). Similarly, Wordsworth's speaker produces false memories that are "fashioned fondly" and "Complacent[ly]" in such a way as to fulfill his wishes and to support his self-conception as a poet. The main thing that distinguishes him from other confabulators is the conscious manner in which he produces these false memories. Left behind in wintry Goslar by his friend Coleridge, consoled by the autobiographical "descriptions" that he was writing "in self-defense" (EY 236), Wordsworth "fashioned fondly" his famous conception of himself as "A favor'd being," content "to adorn / The time of unrememberable being" with an image of himself as one for whom "spirits" had "open[ed] out the clouds / As at the touch of lightning / Seeking

him with gentle visitation…" (CP 115, 83, 115, 83). Embracing his penchant and propensity for imagining his past, he even began to think it possible to "make our infancy a visible scene / On which the sun is shining" (CP 81).

If Wordsworth did indeed set for himself the task of consciously confabulating false memories that would fill the gap left by the haze of childhood amnesia, then one can imagine a related reason why Wordsworth would have excised his reference to "The time of unrememberable being" from later versions of *The Prelude*. In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway writes of a craft-related theory he developed as a young man that Wordsworth might have taught himself as well:

> It was a very simple story called 'Out of Season' and I had omitted the real end of it which was that the old man hanged himself. This was omitted on my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood (Hemingway 63-64).

As if he were editing the JJ manuscripts on the same theory that Hemingway here articulates, Wordsworth omits the speaker's explicit admission that he is composing imagined reveries that are "fashioned fondly to adorn / The time of unrememberable being" (CP 115). As a result of this omission, many readers feel inexplicably yet irresistibly drawn into the almost magical atmospheres that Wordsworth creates to "adorn" not only his own childhood but all "unrememberable" childhoods (CP 115). In this way such readers are made to "feel something more than they underst[an]d" (Hemingway 64). Though the period of childhood amnesia cloaks people's earliest experiences and simultaneously bathes them in a hazy yet strangely comforting atmosphere, the confabulator can find consolation in a past which might have been and which presents itself with the textures, flavors and background that typically characterize rememberings.

In contrast to William Blake, who wrote in his annotations to Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1815 that, "Imagination has nothing to do with Memory" (E 666), *The Prelude* gives profound evidence of Wordsworth's recognition that the activities of remembering and imagining, while distinct, can be combined to remarkable effect to form atmospheric imaginings that twentieth-century psychiatrists and neurobiologists would call confabulations. The 1805 *Prelude* offers quite a few passages in which the speaker acknowledges his awareness of the possibility of confabulation – and even acknowledges a willingness to confabulate when these efforts serve a creative purpose.

The speaker of the 1805 version of the poem at least twice explicitly concedes that his present contemplations and intervening experiences might make it difficult to present his readers with an accurate account of his past experiences.[205] At the conclusion of Book III, which describes the speaker's residence at Cambridge, the speaker admits,

> Of these and other kindred notices
>
> I cannot say what portion is in truth
>
> The naked recollection of that time,

And what may rather have been called to life

By after-meditation (III.644-48; PP 138).

In this passage, Wordsworth's speaker implicitly acknowledges one of the problems that he must confront if he accepts the theory of poetic composition espoused in the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. In famously advocating "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," the Preface suggests that such an "overflow" is only palatable if tempered and deepened by "habits of meditation" that endow "descriptions" with a sense of "*purpose*" (his italics; PW I.126). The speaker of the Preface certainly seems to believe that the sense of purpose achieved by after-meditation is necessary, yet the speaker of the 1805 *Prelude* suggests, contrarily, that this after-meditation provides a sense of purpose at the cost of accuracy. Ironically, it appears that a truly spontaneous poetic composition would prove more accurate, if less stylistically desirable, as it would not admit the distorting influence of after-meditation.

In this first reference to the distortions of memory that can occur as a result of after-meditations or after-imaginings, Wordsworth's speaker also implies that he has difficulty distinguishing genuine memories from imaginings because the imaginings possess something of the thick autonomy that normally characterizes rememberings. These imaginings are not ethereal or evanescent in the way that most imaginings are; they have precipitated themselves in the mind of the subject and will continue to do so, especially now that they have been immortalized in verse. The layering and richness of detail that results from their being partially remembered will allow them to persist. Instead of being "surrounded by a mere 'margin' of indeterminacy," they possess the kind of atmosphere which, as Casey observes, typically only characterizes rememberings (Casey 2000 ix). They are what I would like to call 'atmospheric imaginings.'

The speaker's second explicit reference to the possibility of confabulation appears in Book VII of the poem, where he again concedes that he sometimes finds it difficult to determine where his rememberings end and where his imaginings begin. The reference emerges out of the speaker's invocation of places he has visited during his residence in London, such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh (VII.123; PP 256). He again employs the "Nor must we forget" motif that (as chapter five suggested) first emerges toward the end of Book I. In Book VII, he employs this motif as a way of hearkening back to other places he has visited such as, "The river proudly bridged, the giddy top / And Whispering Gallery of St Paul's, the tombs / Of Westminster," and so on (VII.129-31; PP 256). These meditations give rise to the speaker's recognition that when his "fond imaginations" of these places were replaced by "the real scene," this scene would sometimes produce a feeling of "disappointment" which, by a "courteous self-submission," he managed to suppress (VII.136, 139, 142-43; PP 258). Curiously, the speaker views this "courteous self-submission" as "a tax / Paid to the object by prescriptive right – / A thing that ought to be" (VII.143-45; PP 258), as if it were impudent and disrespectful for the imaginer to find fault with the thing imagined if that thing were thought to possess some sort of sacred (e.g., religious, national, historical) significance. It is especially interesting that the speaker should at this moment express the necessity of suppressing his imaginative capacity and of chastening himself for producing imaginings that are more lovely than the object imagined, because when line 143 continues in the succeeding verse paragraph, the speaker admits that he sometimes finds it difficult to distinguish rememberings from imaginings, facts from fictions:

Shall I give way,

Copying the impression of the memory,

(Though things remembered idly do half seem

The work of fancy) […?] (VII.145-48; PP 258).

Immediately after describing how he used to chasten himself if "the real scene" of something he had long imagined produced a sense of "disappointment" (VII.139, 142; PP 258), the speaker confesses that when "Copying the impression of a memory," he cannot be certain that the details of his memories are not in fact imagined; are not merely a "work of fancy" (VII.146, 148; PP 258). He is keenly aware of the possible intrusion of his imaginings into his rememberings, yet he has mixed feelings about these intrusive tendencies. In this instance, the unusual persistence of atmospheric imaginings appears to instill the speaker with doubts about what the intrusion of imaginings means for the autobiographical enterprise.

Two related examples of confabulation centering upon the figure of Coleridge emerge in Book VI of *The Prelude*. The first example – one that Beth Lau has noted in her survey of Wordsworth's anticipation of current memory research (Lau 680) – appears soon after the speaker catches himself distorting a memory by allowing other memories as well as his thoughts and feelings in the present moment to intrude into his account of the past. In the midst of recounting the "sundry wanderings" that he enjoyed one summer when he "roved" the English countryside, the speaker addresses the "friend" who he often invokes in *The Prelude,* recalling "the presence, friend, I mean / Of that sole sister, she who has been long / Thy treasure also, thy true friend and mine…" (VI.211, 208, 213-15; PP 218). In the next verse paragraph, the speaker reveals the identity of this "friend" as "Coleridge" (lines 213, 237; PP 218-20), telling this friend that…

O'er paths and fields

In all the neighbourhood, through narrow lanes

Of eglantine and through the shady woods,

And o'er the Border Beacon and the waste

Of naked pools and common crags that lay

Exposed on the bare fell, was scattered love,

A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam.

O friend, we had not seen thee at that time,

And yet a power is on me and a strong

Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there! (VI.239-48; PP 220).

The speaker's self-awareness in this passage is quite remarkable, and its anticipation of recent findings about the phenomenon of confabulation is rather striking. As Schnider observes, "Much research has shown that it is possible, and actually quite easy, *to implant* fictive elements into the record of an event and to manipulate the conviction subjects hold in their memories" (my italics;

Schnider 202). Having had many summer walks with Coleridge and having addressed Coleridge in the previous verse paragraph, the speaker finds it "quite easy" to "plant" Coleridge (or in Schnider's phrase, "to implant fictive elements") into his recollections of that particular summer. Yet Wordsworth's speaker also detects this inaccuracy, describing the allure of confabulation as something like the feeling of "a power" placed on him, "a strong / Confusion" stirring within him. The speaker's detection of his error also receives confirmation in studies of confabulation. Though normal subjects can be led to produce false memories during the retrieval process when influenced by the force of suggestion of an external monitor (in this case, the external force is the speaker's recent thoughts about Coleridge), normal subjects are also prone "to detect and correct false memories, especially when there is a marked discrepancy between the retrieved memory and new information" (Schnider 201). Wordsworth's speaker marks the "discrepancy between the retrieved memory and the new information" – i.e., his recognition that in the summer of 1787, which he is describing, he had not yet met Coleridge (Lau 680) – and like an accomplished philosopher of consciousness, he attends not merely to the mental phenomena he is describing but also to the activity of consciousness that brings these phenomena to light. Coleridge's imagined presence temporarily persists without detection because the speaker has infused this memory with the content of subsequent memories, endowing the false memory with an atmosphere that is typically characteristic only of rememberings. Yet a different kind of remembering – the speaker's recollection of facts such as the date of the walk and the date he would later meet Coleridge – corrects the false recollection that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Two verse paragraphs later, Wordsworth's speaker recognizes a second distortion of his recollections involving Coleridge. In the intervening verse paragraph, the speaker marvels at "How different is the fate of different men / Though twins almost in genius and in mind!" (VI.262-63; PP 220), and readers who have wondered at the coincidences (one might even, following Jung, say the acausal connections or synchronicities) of their existence will identify with the speaker's awe in acknowledging that his arrival at Cambridge only a few years before that of Coleridge was a bittersweet, near miss. The speaker therefore confesses that he occasionally imagines what it would have been like if he had met Coleridge at that earlier date:

> Though this retrospect
>
> Of my own college life I still have had
>
> Thy after-sojourn in the self-same place
>
> Present before my eyes, have played with times
>
> (I speak of private business of the thought)
>
> And accidents as children do with cards,
>
> Or as a man who when his house is built,
>
> A frame locked up in wood and stone, doth still
>
> In impotence of mind by his fireside

Rebuild it to his liking (VI.296-305; PP 222).

In the previous discussion of the possibility of confabulation in Book VI, the speaker catches himself in his memory distortion and corrects it. By contrast, in this instance, which is also grounded in his tendency to place his friend Coleridge in atmospheres where he does not belong, the speaker grants that confabulation is not merely a temporary error of the judgment; it is also an activity that adults, immersed in the "private business of the thought," can intentionally cultivate in accordance with the perennial human desire to contemplate what could have been. Though this is a desire that children unselfconsciously entertain, cursing their fate when dealt an inadequate hand of cards, it is also a desire that an adult will more or less consciously entertain, allowing himself to speculate in a way that would take "A frame locked up in wood and stone" and "Rebuild it to his liking" (VI.303, 305; PP 222). As in Book VII, where the speaker views his overzealous imaginings as cause for "courteous self-submission" (VII.143; PP 258), the speaker here labels the man's penchant for mentally "Rebuld[ing his] house to his liking" as something inadvisable – in this case, a kind of weakness or "impotence of mind" (VI.305, 304; PP 222). However, the interest of this passage is located less in the speaker's moral assessment of the confabulator than in his keen awareness of confabulation as a phenomenon. It is striking that the speaker here gives evidence of his awareness that the confabulator's wishes often play some part in producing the confabulation, just as confabulators sometimes "embellish" upon their past experiences (Schnider 207). Here *The Prelude* offers evidence that one can intentionally produce atmospheric imaginings, combining authentic remembrances that each contain their own content into a layered imagining that is suffused with a remembered atmosphere.

In Book IV, Wordsworth's speaker provides one further allusion to the phenomenon of confabulation – here in the form of an extended simile that offers a figurative illustration of the phenomenon of confabulation through a comparison to the activity of perceiving. The speaker approaches this extended simile with yet another repetition of the "Nor less do I remember" motif, in this case insisting that he can remember the moment in his life when his "love / For objects" first manifested itself (IV.222, 225-26; PP 152). After detailing some of the objects he came to love, such as the constellations and planets of the night sky, and after noting that these objects "had given way / In later youth to beauty" (IV.236-39, 244-45; PP 152-54), the speaker breaks out of these reveries and commences the next verse paragraph with a self-conscious retrospective that looks back upon the previous narrative and reflects upon the autobiographical act itself:

As one who hangs down-bending from the side

Of a slow-moving boat upon the breast

Of a still water, solacing himself

With such discoveries as his eye can make

Beneath him in the bottom of the deeps,

Sees many beauteous sights (weeds, fishes, flowers,

Grots, pebbles, roots of trees) and fancies more,

Yet often is perplexed and cannot part

The shadow from the substance – rocks and sky,

Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed

The region, and the things which there abide

In their true dwelling – now is crossed by gleam

Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,

And motions that are sent he knows not whence,

Impediments that make his task more sweet;

Such pleasant office have we long pursued

Incumbent o'er the surface of past time

With like success (IV.247-64; PP 154).

The man who "hangs down-bending from the side / Of a slow-moving boat" is the autobiographer who aims to give an accurate account of the past; the objects beneath the surface of the water represent what *really* happened, the verifiable facts of history; and the flitting, fleeting, indeterminate appearances that obstruct the observer's view of what *really* sits and stirs beneath the surface of the water represent possible causes for confabulation... At least, this is what the extended simile *seems* to suggest at first glance. In the speaker's announcement that the man is "solacing himself / With such discoveries as his eye can make" (IV.249-50; PP 145), the word "discoveries" appears to suggest an essentialist attitude – a correspondence theory of truth – as if the external world represents a reality the nature or essence of which it is the duty of the mind to properly mirror. However, as chapter two suggested, the prose writings of William Wordsworth do not echo this Enlightenment belief in the way that the writings of so many of his predecessors do. *The Prelude* is yet another Wordsworthian text that resists this dominant metaphor.

In figuratively intermingling the activities of perceiving and remembering in this extended simile, Wordsworth's speaker suggests remembering is a mental activity that requires one to consider the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. Wordsworth's speaker eagerly concedes that in addition to all the phenomena the subject perceives – "weeds, fishes, flowers, / Grots, pebbles, roots of trees" – the subject also "fancies more" than any of the senses can clearly detect (IV.252-53; PP 154). In perceiving the water and what it contains (or figuratively, in attempting to remember the past), the speaker finds it extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to adequately "part / The shadows from the substance" (IV.254-55; PP 154). In a striking departure from the Cartesian notion that indeterminacy is the imperfect manifestation of things that can ultimately be grasped clearly and distinctly, the speaker suggests that the indeterminacy (i.e., the obstructions or "Impediments" to Descartes' clear and distinct perceptions), far from being cause for frustration or regret, in fact "make his task more sweet" (IV.261; PP 154). The speaker suggests that he has attained a kind of "success" in his efforts to represent the past (IV.264; PP 154), yet given all the reservations he has made about the intricacies of human

remembrance, this is surely not the "success" of the essentialist thinker who believes he can perfectly mirror what *really* happened. After all, the speaker is all too aware that this 'reality' is sometimes "crossed by gleam / Of his own image, by a sun beam now, / And motions that are sent he knows not whence" (IV.258-60; PP 154). These three so-called obstructions (or "Impediments") to the apprehension of clear and distinct rememberings might generally be categorized as: the intrusion of the human subject's thoughts and feelings; the intrusion of present events (i.e., life above the water's surface) into apprehensions of the past (i.e., life below the water's surface); and the intrusion of motions, movements or influences the origins and perhaps even the presence of which the speaker is unaware. Far from claiming to have achieved the "success" of having accurately recorded the past, the speaker indicates that even with all these inaccuracies the activity of remembering is valuable in itself – not because it 'discovers' what is 'really there,' but because it creates a new sense of the past that the subject's past experiences, present thoughts and feelings, and present environment have together brought into being. The "Impediments" to perceiving and remembering are not "sweet" because they are removable, as the essentialist might believe, but because they are inevitable. Just as Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* exclaims, "We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon" (POP 14), so does the speaker of Wordsworth's *Prelude* suggest that, since we can never fully "part / The shadows from the substance," indeterminacy must also be recognized as a positive phenomenon in the activity of remembering (IV.254-55; PP 154). The speaker's embrace of indeterminacy demonstrates that he is content to conceive of himself as a confabulating autobiographer – a rememberer who inadvertently intermingles remembrances and imaginings as a result of countless internal and external influences.

Yet nowhere is the *Prelude* speaker's willingness to confabulate more evident than in Book II, where Wordsworth's speaker describes the origins of his own "infant sensibility" before advancing toward a description of his "creative sensibility" (lines 285, 379; PP 88, 94). This description of the speaker's infancy fulfills the creative ambition first announced in the JJ manuscript (CP 81) and formally announced at the end of Book I. Addressing the "friend" that much of the poem invokes, the speaker asks,

> … need I dread from thee
>
> Harsh judgments if I am so loth to quit
>
> Those recollected hours that have the charm
>
> Of visionary things, and lovely forms
>
> And sweet sensations, that throw back our life
>
> And almost make our infancy itself
>
> A visible scene on which the sun is shining… (I.657-63; PP 72).

The idea that autobiographical poets might "almost make our infancy itself / A visible scene" serves as a creative dare of sorts, which the speaker in Book II seems inclined to accept. Taking up this dare, the speaker follows the "Blest the infant babe" verse paragraph (II.237-80; PP 86-88) with a first-person account of his own infancy (II.280-303; PP 88-90). Describing how, "I

held mute dialogues with my mother's heart" and how, afterwards, "I was left alone / Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why / The props of my affections were removed" (II.283, 292-94; PP 88-90), the speaker not only confabulates based on what he *senses* his infancy was like; he also (as chapter seven will show) anticipates Freud's and Lacan's speculations about the origins of subjectivity and engages in a form of description that bears a remarkable resemblance to phenomenological method.

c) Freud's Views on Remembering, Imagining and Confabulation

Wordsworth's discussions of the phenomenon of confabulation in *The Prelude* can help to illuminate Freud's own attention to this phenomenon in texts that spanned his career. Throughout his adult life, Freud attended to the slippages that can occur between rememberings and imaginings, but his attention was inconsistent. While in "The Aetiology of Hysteria," Freud emphasizes the reproduction of true memories, in "Screen Memories" he concedes the people might unconsciously fabricate false memories. While two decades later, in "The Wolfman" and "A Child is Being Beaten," Freud emphasizes the need to remove the veil of childhood amnesia and reproduce the traumatic memories that one has repressed, two decades after that, in his *Autobiographical Study*, Freud once again reminds readers that people might unconsciously fabricate false memories. This inconsistency deserves closer inspection, which this section will pursue through an examination of "Screen Memories" (1899), "The Wolfman" (1918), and *An Autobiographical Study* (1935). By briefly surveying these texts, I hope to highlight two competing tendencies in Freud's work: On one hand, Freud emphasizes a psychical reality that can clear-sightedly acknowledge the grey area of confabulation that blurs the boundaries between the activities of remembering and imagining; on the other hand, he emphasizes an objective reality that ignores the occasional blurring of these complementary activities and that insists on the utility of psychoanalysis as a verifiable counterforce to the mechanism of repression.

In his essay on "Screen Memories," Freud is particularly attuned to the possibility of conflating the activities of remembering and imagining, and one way of explaining Freud's greater sensitivity to these mental activities is to note that this essay is among Freud's most autobiographical texts. Though Freud explicitly presents "Screen Memories" as a case study of and a dialogue with one of his patients or analysands ("The subject of this observation is a man of university education, aged thirty-eight"), scholars have revealed that Freud is both analyst and analysand and that the dialogue ("which," Freud says, "I have reproduced as accurately as possible") never, in fact, took place outside of the author's mind (S 309 and n, 302, 320). According to Peter Gay, Freud engaged in an "unprecedented [level of] self-analysis, more systematic and thoroughgoing than the frankest autobiographer's self-probing" (Gay xiii). It would, therefore, appear that for Freud, as for the speaker of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, there is something about the autobiographical act that makes one attentive to the differences between remembering and imagining.

Moreover, again like the speaker of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Freud is particularly aware of the difficulties the autobiographer faces in attempting to accurately describe the experiences of earliest childhood. In "Screen Memories," the inaccessibility of this period rightly makes Freud suspicious of memories that people associate with childhood. "We hear," he says, "that there are some people whose earliest recollections of childhood are concerned with everyday and indifferent events which could not produce any emotional effect even in children, but which are

recollected (*too* clearly, one is inclined to say) in every detail…" (his italics; S 305-06). In the years before German psychiatrists and neurobiologists would name and begin to analyze the phenomenon of 'confabulation' (Schnider 45-46; Hirstein 6) – a term conveying their sense that their patients, like "fabulists" or "fable tellers," were "creating fables when asked about their pasts" (Hirstein 6) – Freud in 1899 offers a remarkably salient insight into the confabulating mind. For in saying that some childhood memories are recollected "*too* clearly," he is implying that these memories exhibit a level of clarity that casts doubt on their authenticity, as if such clarity about childhood cannot, or cannot merely, be the work of memory. When one attempts to recall experiences from the period of childhood amnesia, one is, Freud suggests, likely to produce not genuine memories but atmospheric imaginings, which are suffused with all the details, flavors, textures and beings that dwelled in the childhood home that one recollects so clearly from later life.

The primary task of "Screen Memories" is to offer an extended illustration of a childhood memory that appeared "*too* clearly" to an adult in later years (S 309-20). When the analysand (who is also Freud) confesses that there is "something not quite right" about a scene he has been describing (S 312), readers get their first inkling that a childhood memory that is remembered "*too* clearly" is most likely a confabulation of some sort (S 305). The analysand describes a childhood memory in which he, a male cousin, and a female cousin together gathered dandelions in the countryside where he lived through his third year, until the two males together conspired to steal the female cousin's dandelions, rationalizing that she had gathered the best bunch. He goes on to relate how she ran in tears to a neighbor, how the neighbor consoled her with a large piece of fresh bread, and how the boys followed and received bread of their own (S 311). Yet something about this memory does not sit right with the analysand. "The yellow of the flowers is a disproportionately prominent element in the situation as a whole," he complains, "and the nice taste of the bread seems to me exaggerated in an almost hallucinatory nature" (S 312). In the remainder of the essay, the analyst and analysand discern that the intense, even hallucinatory experiences of color and taste are, in fact, the result of an intermingling of consciously and unconsciously associated fantasies that the analysand entertained during young adulthood. Ultimately, they conclude that the analysand had unconsciously transformed this fragmentary childhood memory into a platform for the expression of these fantasies. The yellow of the flowers is linked to the yellow color of the dress of a girl he secretly longed for when he was seventeen (S 313-14); the stolen bunch of flowers is a 'deflowering' of that girl and a fulfillment of his unexpressed desires (S 316); and the 'bread' that serves as his consolation prize represents the alternate route that these unexpressed energies took in the world of money (or 'bread'), work, and productivity (S 315).

As they make their way toward these conclusions, the analyst and the analysand also articulate a number of prescient insights about the phenomenon of confabulation. The analysand's memory, which the case study reveals to be at least partially fabricated, anticipates several of the topics that have arisen in the cognitive study of confabulation in recent decades. Modified and motivated by his or her adult fantasies and convictions, the analysand, initially convinced of the memory's authenticity, becomes doubtful. Yet the memory also includes familiar, extraneous details that lead the analyst to suspect that the memory might indeed be at least partially genuine, even if it has been unconsciously distorted or exaggerated so that it can also remain hospitable to associations that the analysand imposed upon it in later life. Some of the concerns about confabulation in "Screen Memories" come from the figure of the analysand.

For example, the analysand acknowledges that the authenticity of some of his memories is uncertain because he has often heard people describe the scenes remembered. "I feel uncertain whether I have had the mnemic image from the beginning," he says, "or whether I only construed it after hearing one of these descriptions" (S 310). In particular, the phrase "mnemic image" intuitively strikes one as a bit too technical for the analysand, and the comment could have tipped readers off to the fact that the dialogue might be, if not merely autobiographical, at least technically enhanced. However, these concerns about confabulation also come from the figure of the analyst, who represents Freud the scientist if not also Freud the thinking and feeling subject. In one passage, the analyst advises his patient by saying, "I can assure you that people often construct such things [phantasies] unconsciously – almost like works of fiction […] There is in general no guarantee of [the authenticity of] the data produced by our memory" (S 315). Finally, these concerns about confabulation also arise in the final section of the essay, which are spoken by a speaker more like the author himself. "Out of a number of childhood memories of significant experiences, all of them of similar distinctness and clarity," the speaker of the final section says, "there will be some scenes which, when they are tested (for instance by the recollections of adults), turn out to have been falsified" (S 321-22). Quite candidly, this authorial voice concludes the essay by saying,

> It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating to* our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of memories themselves (S 322).

In these passages, Freud shows a remarkable sensitivity to the dangers of confabulation. One of the most profound insights in the essay is the speaker's suggestion that the few fragmentary visions we have from childhood might, whether real or imagined, be 'remembered' precisely because they inform our fears and wishes, anxieties and desires of the present moment. Cognitive scientists corroborate the existence of this phenomenon, referring to it as "mood congruent retrieval" (Lau 677), meaning that I am more likely to remember events from my past when I am in a mood similar to the one I felt at the time of the remembered event.

However, even in this early essay that goes so far in acknowledging the possible role of confabulation in the work of psychoanalysis, one can also observe Freud's yearning to affirm the authenticity of the repressed memories that analysands produce. Interestingly, after announcing that, "There is in general no guarantee of the data produced by our memory," the analyst goes on to say that, "I am ready to agree with you that the scene is genuine" (S 315). In his effort to "agree" (at this point, he is no longer agreeing with the analysand, who has already expressed doubts about the authenticity of the memory), the analyst makes this concession largely on the basis of the fact that there are aspects of the memory – for example, the presence in the memory not only of the analysand but also of his male cousin (S 318-19) – that do not on the surface resonate with the content of the latent fantasy for which the memory serves as platform or expression. Of course, if this description were taken as a pure fantasy or dream, one could easily account for the presence of this male cousin if one were inclined to do so, speculating, for example, that the presence of a male cousin could serve either as a second self (e.g., a brazen, confident, id-inspired self who approves of the transgressive act) or even as an expression of

incestuous desire (e.g., a 'brother' who stands at closer familial proximity to the young girl and thus heightens the transgressiveness of the incestuous act). Does the mere presence of a second male prove that the memory is genuine, as the analyst suggests? Rather than observing that a confabulation might result in the production of 'repressed memories' that are inauthentic, Freud, rather too hastily, suggests that, "falsifications of memory are tendentious – that is, that they serve the purposes of the repression and replacement of objectionable and disagreeable impressions" (S 322). Instead of acknowledging the possibility that these "disagreeable impressions" might themselves be "falsifications," Freud suggests that the "falsifications" help to cover up the "disagreeable impressions" that serve as symptoms of repressed memories from early childhood. In this instance, he is determined that the 'truth' of his findings be objective and not merely psychical.

Freud signals the conclusion of the dialogue between the analyst and the analysand with a section break, and in the essay's concluding paragraphs he explains that this distorted memory represents one kind of screen memory among others (S 320). The different types of screen memories that Freud describes at the end of the essay foreshadow a later shift in his thinking about the relationship between remembering and imagining. While one category of screen memories, exemplified by the screen memory upon which the essay centers, consists of *childhood memories* that owe their peculiar clarity to later experiences with which the mind has unconsciously associated them, another category of screen memories consists of *memories from after childhood* that owe their peculiar power or weight to a childhood memory that the subject has repressed and that is in some sense *behind* (i.e., latent in or covered by) the remembered material (S 320). In both cases, the memory takes on a peculiar emotional resonance as a result of its connection with other memories that it cloaks or 'screens.'

Yet it is crucial to observe that these two distinct screen-memory categories betray very different attitudes toward the activities of remembering and imagining: While the first category shows how childhood memories can be distorted and endowed with disproportionate importance when the mind unconsciously associates them with fantasies or imaginings, the second category implies that memories of later life can serve as a key to uncovering repressed memories from earlier life. The first category indicates that recollections of early childhood are often unreliable and largely inaccessible, but the second category indicates that recollections of early childhood are not only accessible but also reliable when approached through the work of psychoanalysis. In short, the first category emphasizes psychical reality and the constant risk of confabulation; the second category emphasizes objective reality in the form of repressed memory retrieval and completely ignores the risk of confabulation.

Two years later, Freud would already begin giving greater attention to the second category of screen memories that emphasizes the unearthing of repressed memories and the reflection of an objective reality. As Strachey notes,

> It is a curious thing that the type of screen memory mainly considered in the present paper – one in which an early memory is used as a screen for a later event – almost disappears from later literature. What has since come to be regarded as the regular type – one in which an early event is screened by a later memory – is only barely alluded to here, though it was already the one almost exclusively dealt with by Freud only two years later, in [Chapter IV] of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (S 302).

Between Freud's 1899 essay on screen memories and his popular 1901 book on the psychopathology of everyday life, Freud had already made the crucial shift away from his emphasis on the risk of confabulation and toward his emphasis on the utility of a psychoanalytic method that can counteract the mechanism of repression and make objective discoveries.

Freud's emphasis on objective discoveries and real seductions is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the case study commonly referred to as 'The Wolfman,' which was actually titled, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918). Contrary to Strachey's suggestion, it is not at all "curious" (S 302) that in the years that follow his composition of "Screen Memories" Freud begins to focus his attention entirely on the type of screen memory that serves as both cover for and symptom of repressed memories from childhood, which he would in *The Wolfman* call the "primal scene" (W 227ff). This later preference is, quite simply, the result of Freud's overemphasis on the concept of repression and his frequent downplaying of the differences between remembering and imagining.

In *The Wolfman*, Freud once again mentions the risk of conflating rememberings and imaginings. In the opening pages of the case study, Freud concedes the dangers of suggestion and of memory distortion or confabulation, noting that, in child analysis, the analyst can "put too many words and thoughts into the child's mouth" and that, in adult analysis, the analyst must always "take into account the distortion and adjustment that takes place when, at a later date, we look back at our own past" (W 206). In a footnote, he strongly urges analysts not to ask older family members to fill in the gaps in an analysand's memory (W 215-16n2), which appears to further illustrate his awareness of the possibility that these interventions might induce distortions.

Yet in marked contrast to these sage warnings, Freud is also at times too willing to risk influencing the analysand's rememberings through suggestion and even by sharing his theories explicitly. For example, in the third section of the case study, which details various attempts at seduction that the analysand supposedly experienced and performed, Freud reveals his early suspicion that an analysis of the Wolfman's earliest childhood would allow him to "reconstruct" the fundamental elements of the analysand's castration complex (W 217). For the analyst to harbor this suspicion is one thing, but Freud goes on to assert,

> It is not in the least dangerous to put such reconstructions [*Konstruktionen*] to the analysand; they do no harm to the analysis if they are erroneous and in any case one does not give voice to them if there is not some prospect of coming closer to the truth in the process" (W 217).

Blatantly disregarding the possibility that an "erroneous" suggestion from a trusted analyst (indeed, one as dominant and persuasive as Freud himself) might induce the analysand to produce false memories, Freud declares himself completely willing not only to imply a possible course of inquiry but to explicitly propose his theory to the analysand. Why does he do this? Apparently, he is compelled by the "prospect of coming closer to the truth" (W 217). Less satisfied with the power of psychical reality than the analyst in "Screen Memories," the analyst in *The Wolfman* sets his sights on the verifiable truths of objective reality. Unfortunately, the findings of cognitive scientists suggest that, "false memories in normal people are often produced by the very processes that normally function to help us reconstruct memories as we recall them" (Hirstein 7). Though Freud is convinced that, "It is not in the least dangerous to put such reconstructions [Konstruktionen] to the analysand" (WM 217), the latest research suggests

that such "reconstructions" are certainly "dangerous" insofar as they can encourage the analysand to produce a false memory as well as a false reality founded upon that memory.

Though some readers might persist in hoping that the "truth" of which Freud speaks is psychical and not objective, this persistent hope begins to crumble two paragraphs later when he contends that the analysand's fantasies "were intended to erase the memory of an event which later offended the patient's sense of masculine pride, achieving this goal by replacing historical truth with its wished for opposite" (W 218). Though Freud's method of psychoanalysis is ingenious precisely because it need not concern itself with "historical truth," he insists that the analysand's later fantasies "were intended to erase the memory of an event" from the analysand's earliest childhood, even though these later life fantasies could just as easily have induced the unconscious to create or imagine that 'memory.' Leaning too heavily on his concept of repression, Freud gives preference to screen memories that hide the memories of earliest childhood and ignores screen memories that distort the memories of earliest childhood. Aware of these objections, Freud two paragraphs later announces,

> That his sister had seduced him was certainly no fantasy. Its credibility was strengthened by a piece of information he received in later, more mature years and had never forgotten. In a conversation about his sister, a cousin, more than a decade older, had told him that the could remember very well what a forward sensual little thing she had been. As a child of four or five she had once sat down on his lap and unfastened his trousers to take hold of his penis (W 219).

Freud forwards this anecdote as a historical verification of the analysand's supposed seduction by his sister when he was approximately four years old, as if the analysand's account of his cousin's story were proof that the analysand's sister had most likely also attempted to seduce him. Yet this supposed verification also gives cause for doubt. Could this cousin's story not have led the analysand to imagine that his sister attempted to seduce him at age four? Could the cousin's story itself be a fabrication that the analysand produced for Freud? When Freud later observes that the analysand during his years of puberty "ventured to approach her [his sister] with a view to physical intimacy" (W 220), one further wonders if all these incestuous memories of the analysand's earliest childhood might not represent the analysand's effort to explain to himself his desire to be intimate with his sister at age thirteen, whether he actually expressed this desire or merely entertained it. Which parts of the analysand's testimony are truly reliable?

Perhaps all of the analysand's 'memories' are authentic. Yet why does Freud *insist* that they are authentic, when he was so willing during his own self-analysis to concede that, "There is in general no guarantee of the data produced by our memory" (S 315)? Though Freud was deeply sensitive to the possibility of confabulation when acting as an autobiographer, he was, it appears, much less sensitive to this possibility when acting as a physician. When acting as autobiographer, he is quite content to elicit the subjective results of psychical reality; but when acting as physician, he demands the verifiable, objective results of the scientist. Having honed his ability to perform the epochê by "screening out his acquired convictions" (W 209), Freud claims to have opened himself up to the possibility that the Wolfman was producing authentic memories. After exhorting the analysand to "subject his memories to the most rigorous criticism," he felt fortified in the conviction that the memories the analysand produced were authentic ones. However, ultimately, since this was not his own autobiography as in "Screen Memories" but someone else's, he had to accept as valid the analysand's opinion that "he found

nothing improbable in what he had said" and the analysand's steadfast conviction that the analysand was "telling the truth" (W 209). Unfortunately, current memory research suggests that this conviction is no guarantee of authenticity.

About twenty years after the composition of *The Wolfman*, Freud himself came to acknowledge the unreliability of such convictions. Interestingly, he made this concession in another autobiographical text – his *Autobiographical Study* (originally published simply as his *Autobiography*) in 1935:

> Before going further into the question of infantile sexuality I must mention an error into which I fell for a while and which might well have had fatal consequences for the whole of my work. Under the influence of the technical procedure which I used at that time, the majority of my patients reproduced from their childhood scenes in which they were sexually seduced by some grown up person. With female patients the part of seducer was almost always assigned to their father. I believed these stories, and consequently supposed that I had discovered the roots of the subsequent neurosis in these experiences of sexual seduction in childhood. My confidence was strengthened by a few cases in which relations of this kind with a father, uncle, or elder brother had continued up to an age at which memory was to be trusted. If the reader feels inclined to shake his head at my credulity, I cannot altogether blame him; though I may plead that this was at a time when I was intentionally keeping my critical faculty in abeyance so as to preserve an unprejudiced and receptive attitude towards the many novelties which were coming to my notice every day. When, however, I was at last obliged to recognize that these scenes of seduction had never taken place, and that they were only phantasies which my patients had made up or which I myself had perhaps forced on them, I was for some time completely at a loss (AS 36).

Freud's account of this slippage between the activities of remembering and imagining is a candid one. He fully concedes that his conscious efforts to keep "my critical faculty in abeyance" might have opened him up to the idea that these seductions were real. However, his eagerness to affirm the role of repression as an objective mental reality led him to prematurely accept that this defense mechanism had caused certain 'memories' to disappear from conscious life. In entertaining this notion, he overlooked one of the most revolutionary aspects of his psychoanalytic method: its commitment to the psychical reality of the analysand.

d) Between Psychical Reality and Objective Reality:

Autobiography, Science and Psychoanalysis

> Childhood is less clear to me than to many people: when it ended I turned my face away from it for no reason that I know about, certainly without the usual reason of unhappy memories. For many years that worried me, but then I discovered that the tales of former children are seldom to be trusted. Some people supply too many past victories and pleasures with which to comfort themselves, and other people cling to pains, real and imagined, to excuse what they have become.

> I think I have always known about my memory: I know when it is to be trusted and when some dream or fantasy entered on the life, and the dream, the need of dream, led to distortion of what happened.
>
> ~ Lillian Hellman, "Julia"[206]

This passage – excerpted from Hellman's memoir of portraits, *Pentimento* – offers a fine summary of the difficulties that the autobiographer faces in attempting to accurately remember his or her childhood. A brief consideration of it will serve the dual purpose of summarizing some of the key concepts of this chapter and of encapsulating the ways that these concepts operate for the autobiographer, the scientist and the psychoanalyst.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, one might view the speaker of the excerpt as both self-aware and reticent. She turned away from her childhood, she says, "for no reason *that I know about,*" tacitly conceding that she might be only partially aware of what motivates her decisions. An analyst might view this admission as a sign of progress – a sign of the speaker's acknowledgement that, "*the ego is not master in its own house*" (Freud's italics; DPP 143). However, the speaker also anticipates – and resists – the by now commonplace assumption that "unhappy memories" are the reason she chose not to reflect upon her early history. An analyst might interpret this as a paradoxical indication that the analysand might indeed harbor unhappy memories and might feel uncomfortable confronting them. For example, if, while interpreting a dream, the speaker had dismissed a certain detail from the dream as unimportant, this would most likely elicit a question from the analyst about the possible meaning of this supposedly trivial detail. According to Freud, one often resists or dismisses topics that one unconsciously desires not to consider. Such responses can be symptoms of repression, which is the defense mechanism that protects us from ourselves by concealing from us and from others the painful or disconcerting details of our personal histories. When one commits to challenging and relaxing such defenses, one can encounter frightening memories and emotions, and Freud's 'talking cure' aims to bring them out into the open so that one can struggle with them and ultimately reconcile oneself to them. Freud called these struggles and reconciliations 'the work of psychoanalysis,' and this work cannot begin until one identifies and overcomes one's conscious and unconscious defenses.

Yet our speaker's defenses are formidable. Indeed, she believes that she has nothing to defend. She speaks with a hard-nosed candor, and she has done her homework. She seems to know how her analyst will interpret her reticence, so she begins by confessing that for years she herself was "worried" by her refusal to reflect upon her early history, knowing that such refusals are often thought to conceal repressed traumas. Her second layer of defense is even more sophisticated. In support of her claims, she incorporates a number of the founding insights of psychoanalysis. To alleviate her worries, she has done some research, and she has found that childhood memories are "seldom to be trusted." While some people exhibit a nostalgia for a past that never was, exaggerating the pleasures of childhood, others use the painful memories of their past as an excuse to avoid responsibility in the present. This tendency of certain personalities to compensate for their past unhappiness or their present sense of inferiority by producing inaccurate (or false) memories has been documented in the later research of cognitive scientists (Schnider 207). Along similar lines, the speaker suggests that most 'memories' are not memories at all; they are imaginings; or more accurately, confabulations: subtly interwoven

knots of remembering and imagining that are very difficult, perhaps ultimately impossible, to untie. It is as if the speaker proclaims: *Must we waste our time discussing happy or sad memories that have been exaggerated by nostalgia or self-pity? May we stop pretending that we can remember everything about our childhoods? I believe I can tell which of my memories are true and which are false, and you should trust me to tell the difference*.

In the two preceding paragraphs, I have tried to encapsulate two distinct yet integrally related epistemological attitudes that underlie Freud's psychoanalytic method: The first paragraph approaches psychoanalytic method with the aim of mirroring objective reality, and the second paragraph approaches psychoanalytic method with a keen awareness of the ways that psychical reality can depart from historical truth and take on a significance that is as emotionally weighty as it is objectively uncertain.

In the first of these two paragraphs, the analyst guides the analysand toward the recovery of painful, repressed memories that could, if necessary, in many cases be verified by third parties. Like shipwrecks on the seafloors of the unconscious, these repressed memories often derive, on Freud's approach, from the period of childhood. Indeed, I am surprised that in famously saying that, "*The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*" (his italics; ID 647), Freud makes no explicit mention of the exploration of childhood, which represents a second "*royal road*" that often intersects with the first. Freud affirms the tremendous significance of the period of childhood when he announces in 1919 that, "analytic work deserves to be recognized as genuine psycho-analysis only when it has succeeded in removing the amnesia which conceals from the adult his knowledge of his childhood from its beginning (that is, from about the second to the fifth year)" (CBB 183). Though he frequently suggests that the goal of psychoanalysis is to confront the analysand's psychical reality, his emphasis on "removing" the veil of amnesia that "conceals" the analysand's childhood suggests a more ambitious goal: to access the historical truths of earliest childhood that lay hidden in each person's consciousness. According to Freud the scientist, these historical truths are not merely sensed or felt, imagined or created; they are true in an objective sense, like the discovered artifacts of a ship that the defense mechanism of repression has caused to founder and fall beneath the surface that separates conscious and unconscious awareness.

In the second of these two paragraphs, however, Hellman's speaker gives the analyst and analysand reason to doubt the necessity and the possibility of this ambitious goal of making objective discoveries. Echoing the findings of psychotherapists like Freud, the speaker insightfully observes that in their recollections of childhood, "Some people supply too many past victories and pleasures with which to comfort themselves, and other people cling to pains, real and imagined, to excuse what they have become" (Hellman 112). Cognitive scientists have confirmed Freud's suspicion that, "There is in general no guarantee of the data produced by our memory" (S 315). Yet the marvel of Freud's psychoanalytic method is that, regardless of whether these memories are historically true, their psychical truth provides the analyst and analysand with ample ground for therapeutic work. As a 'talking cure,' psychoanalysis is a method of treatment that proceeds without the luxury of objective confirmation; its 'truth' is what *works* for the analysand (i.e., what proves therapeutic). This doesn't mean that Freud's concept of psychical reality is just a 'touchy feely' idea that is easily dismissed; rather, it represents another example of the epistemological attitude that Freud's American contemporaries, William James and John Dewey, advocated in their accounts of philosophical

pragmatism. As Richard Rorty explains, pragmatist philosophers aim to produce descriptions of the world that are "therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic," on the assumption that they should remain "skeptical primarily *about systematic philosophy*, about the whole project of universal commensuration" (Rorty 1979 5, 368). Freud's concept of psychical reality has its roots in a positive skepticism that remains intellectually engaged and that resists the Enlightenment yearnings to discover objective truths and incorporate them into a universal system. Put more simply, Freud's concept of psychical reality shows Freud to be a philosopher of wonder. When he speaks as an autobiographer, Freud – like Wordsworth and Proust, Hemingway and Hellman – does not allow the objective truth of his 'memories' to overshadow all other considerations. Instead, he takes for granted that, verifiable or not, these so-called memories provide a glimpse into the inner workings of his own consciousness and into the past as he experiences it from the vantage of the present.

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's speaker privileges psychical reality over objective reality in a way that Freud (especially Freud the autobiographer) would have found refreshing. Open to the possibility of confabulation – at times even eager to cultivate this blurring of the boundaries between remembering and imagining – the speaker exhibits a peculiar candor and flexibility about the creative act and its capacity to modify and enrich one's sense of self, past and present. In chapter five, I discussed the ways that Wordsworth's composition and revision of poems, such as the great *Ode*, seemed to modify his sense of personal identity. The *Prelude* speaker's willingness to confabulate adds a new layer to these considerations.

For example, Wordsworth commentators have often found fault with Wordsworth's tendency to modify his poems throughout his long life, as if such modifications (often informed by his deepening religious faith and his growing conservatism) represented a kind of poetical bad faith. Yet as Beth Lau has observed, "people commonly revise their memories of past experience to make them conform to their present moods and outlooks, even confidently attributing their present beliefs to their younger more liberal selves" (Lau 686). This so-called fault can in fact be understood as a striking anticipation of current memory research.

Along similar lines, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate that even from its first draft pages, the speaker of *The Prelude* embraces the distorting influences that often find expression in the autobiographical act. Whether or not it is objectively true that a child named William Wordsworth thought himself to be, or in some sense was, "A favor'd being," for whom "spirits" had "open[ed] out the clouds / As at the touch of lightning / Seeking him with gentle visitation…" (CP 83), the speaker's self-conception provided *The Prelude* with a shaping theme that also propelled the speaker's composition of the poem. Whether or not such a boy actually existed historically, the boy did exist in the present moment of the poem, and *The Prelude* is, thus, the record of such a boy as he existed in the speaker's psychical reality. Just as confabulations can function as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy (Schnider 208), so does the speaker of *The Prelude* find that the boy and the poem fulfill each other's promise, mutually bringing each other into existence. In *The Prelude*, the speaker's sense of personal identity is a dynamic and flexible expression of his ability to intermingle the activities of remembering and imagining to creative effect.

As the above passages indicate, Wordsworth's speaker in *The Prelude* turns his self-modifying poetic practice into an explicit feature of the poem itself. In his candid admissions, the speaker concedes that his reveries are "fashioned fondly to adorn / The time of

unrememberable being" (CP 115); that he "cannot say what portion is in truth / The naked recollection of that time, / And what may rather have been called to life / By after-meditation" (III.644-48; PP 138); that "things remembered idly do half seem / The work of fancy" (VII.145-48; PP 258). These admissions find expression a century later not merely in the self-conscious musings found in the creative autobiographies of Proust, Hemingway and Hellman, but also in the self-conscious musings of the analyst in Freud's "Screen Memories," who declares that, "people often construct such things [phantasies] unconsciously – almost like works of fiction" (S 315). Before early twentieth-century psychiatrists and neurobiologists had adopted the word 'confabulation' to characterize the curious phenomenon that people were "creating fables when asked about their pasts" (Hirstein 6), Wordsworth and Freud had begun to explore why and how this phenomenon occurs – not only in people with mental or physical ailments but in all people, not only by accident but, consciously or unconsciously, as a way of fulfilling their deepest wishes.

In particular, both Wordsworth and Freud appear to have arrived at the idea that when the thinking subject imagines or extrapolates against the backdrop of a remembered stage, he or she can produce imaginings that possess the details, the layers and the atmosphere that would typically inhere only in experiences of remembering. Yet in defining psychoanalysis in some moments as a kind of autobiography and in other moments as a kind of science, Freud found himself conflicted in a way that many philosophers of consciousness have been conflicted. Though one of the novel insights of psychoanalysis is the idea that psychical reality is *true* for the subject whether or not it corresponds to objective reality, this insight was not acceptable for the scientist who readers observe in *The Wolfman*, even as it was quite acceptable (and even profoundly important) for the autobiographer who in "Screen Memories" highlights the difficulties of producing memories – especially memories of early childhood – that are accurate and reliable. By contrast, Wordsworth – who was a poet and an autobiographer and made no pretensions toward the discovery of objective truths – was content to be, purely and simply, a philosopher of consciousness.

7. Phenomenological Imaginings:

Wordsworth's Reconstruction of

First Consciousness in *The Prelude*

a) Wordsworth, Husserl and the Philosophy of Consciousness

The aim of part II of this study has been to highlight moments in Wordsworth's prose and poetry that resonate with Brentano's, Freud's and Husserl's subsequent efforts to forge a science of subjectivity – a 'science' that is, according to the *objective* aspirations of the physical sciences, something of a misnomer. Insofar as these three thinkers each sought to ground his science in an attention to consciousness, to phenomena, and to the senses and mental activities that disclose phenomena, each of them is best understood not as an essentialist philosopher who aims to discover scientific truths but as a philosopher of consciousness who aims to describe, analyze and classify the experiences of consciousness. As Derrida observes, "Neither Descartes nor Husserl would," as philosophers of consciousness, "ever have suggested that they considered an empirical modification of their relationship with the world or with others as scientific truth, nor the quality of an emotion as the premise of a syllogism" (Derrida 1976 117). However, though much of the novelty and richness of each thinker's approach resides principally in its resistance to these aspirations toward transcendent, scientific truths, Brentano, Freud and Husserl each betrayed hopes that his science of subjectivity would provide a new basis for inquiring into the nature of objective reality. While Brentano's later work reverted back to traditional essentialist attitudes, Freud and Husserl each indicated that their methods of free association and the phenomenological reduction could provide not only a deeper appreciation for the irrational and the indeterminate but, ultimately, objective discoveries (and in Husserl's case, necessary foundations) for the physical sciences themselves. As all inquiry begins with the thinking *subject*, so would all inquiries into the *objective* truths of nature eventually see the necessity of a true science of subjectivity.[207]

Making no pretense toward the discovery of objective truths, William Wordsworth was more capable – in Keats's sense, more negatively, skeptically capable – of embracing the philosophy of consciousness. As Julia Kristeva has observed, a literary text that presents a truly singular aesthetic experience can offer psychoanalysts (and I would say more broadly, philosophers of consciousness) with not merely a rich basis for analysis but also with an enriching opportunity to "illuminate their own practice" (Kristeva 1996a 91). While in chapters five and six I illustrated some of the ways that Wordsworth's *Prelude* illuminates the concerns and practices of Freudian psychoanalysis and anticipates the findings of cognitive science, my aim in the present chapter is to show that the poem also illuminates the concerns and practices of Husserlian phenomenology. This is all in keeping with my more general aim of showing that Wordsworth's *Prelude* was "the First Genuine Philosophic Poem"(BL II.156) – not merely the "appendix," "portico" or "ante-chapel" to Wordsworth's projected *Recluse*, but the "philosophic song" itself (EY 440, 594; PW III.5; I.230; PP 48).

In *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (1984), Kenneth R. Johnston says that, "Both Wordsworth and Coleridge still conceived of philosophy as a logically integrated system of metaphysical articulations about the universe rather than the human-centered programs of psychology, history, or language that have become modern refinements of traditional

philosophy" (WR xiv). This study demonstrates that in his poetry and prose Wordsworth is a philosopher of consciousness who resists system – a thinker who, contrary to Johnston's claim, made every effort to resist Coleridge's demand that *The Recluse* be a "logically integrated system of metaphysical articulations about the universe." While Johnston insightfully observes that the "philosophical assertions" of *The Recluse* "are everywhere crossed by its author's self-consciousness, a fact that seems much less unphilosophical in the late twentieth century than it did in the late eighteenth century," he also asserts that *The Recluse* – which in his account includes *The Prelude* – is "more psychological and political than ontological and epistemological" (WR xiv). In presenting Wordsworth as a philosopher of consciousness who embraced philosophical wonder as the fundamental attitude of the inquiry, this study argues that Wordsworth's preoccupations in *The Prelude* are far more epistemological than Johnston indicates.

In the history of Western philosophy, Husserlian phenomenology represents perhaps the most rigorous and methodical attempt to interrogate the familiar and all the implicit assumptions that influence the activities of human consciousness. While Geoffrey Hartman has suggested that Wordsworth's poetry sometimes appears to record and animate a kind of "spontaneous phenomenology" (Hartman 1987 xxvi-xxvii), the next section of this chapter (b) will demonstrate (in the way that chapter two demonstrated about Wordsworth's prose) that *The Prelude* represents not merely a spontaneous phenomenology but a form of poetry that is peculiarly, and presciently, phenomenological. Taking Edward S. Casey's illuminating essay, "Literary Description and Phenomenological Method," as its basis, the section that follows (c) will reaffirm that *The Prelude* is Wordsworth's "philosophic song" by outlining some of the distinctively phenomenological characteristics that Wordsworth's *Prelude* exhibits and that most literary texts lack

b) Wordsworth's Reconstruction of First Consciousness

Wordsworth's descriptions of sense experience in *The Prelude* present a number of distinct parallels with Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology that deserve greater scrutiny. Without attempting to be exhaustive, one might nonetheless identify moments in *The Prelude* that anticipate Husserl's 1) concept of a phenomenal world (attention to things; distinctions between phenomena and Objects, empirical science and objective science); 2) phenomenological method (descriptions of the natural attitude and the phenomenological reduction of it); and 3) concepts of phenomenological determinacy and indeterminacy (perceptual faculties or cogitatio; constitution; inadequation; morphological essences). In this section, I will compare and contrast these concepts with a passage from Book II of *The Prelude*, drawing from lines 203 to 484. Where applicable, I will also observe certain ways that Wordsworth's attention to consciousness resembles that of a later phenomenologist like Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who in his phenomenological description attends to indeterminate phenomena more often than Husserl.

1a) Accounts of phenomenology often begin with Husserl's famous slogan, *zu den Sachen selbst* (or "To the things themselves!"), which Husserl formulates in explicit opposition to the Kantian thing-in-itself (I 35). Kant's thing-in-itself (or noumenon) is a theoretical construct, and Kant supposes it to be radically inaccessible in human experience, i.e., impossible to perceive or intuit as such. While Kant's thing-in-itself lies behind the perceived world of phenomena, Husserl's "things themselves" *are* phenomena. For Husserl, phenomena are

"simply there for me," "prior to any 'theory'" (I 51, 56). Instead of being radically inaccessible, they are precisely what I can access. Phenomena even include those experiences that the natural attitude requires us to call 'unreal.' According to Husserl, "Even intuitions in phantasy, therefore, are intrinsically intuitions of objects and carry 'object phenomena' with them intrinsically" (HIL 11). Phantasies are perceivable; therefore, they present "object phenomena" worthy of attention. Husserl firmly distinguishes between phenomena and Objects, arguing that the phenomenologist should concern him or herself with phenomena, not with the natural objects those phenomena supposedly represent (HIL 12-13). Husserl's distinction between natural objects and phenomena is implicit in the quotation about phantasy above, where he indicates that when the phenomenologist has "intuitions of objects," what is important to him or her is not that these objects are 'real' but that intuited objects "carry 'object phenomena'" for us to perceive and describe (HIL 11). It is Husserl's attention to phenomena (or immanent appearances) and not to Objects (or transcendent actualities) that allows the phenomenologist to avoid making assumptions commonly taken for granted by the objective sciences.[208] While the objective sciences allow themselves to proceed by a deductive and inductive method (e.g., dismissing phantasies as illusory), phenomenology offers a descriptive method that says a phenomenon "*offered* to us *in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being*, but also *only within the limits in which it is presented there*" (his italics; I 44). For Husserl, I can only be sure of what is given to us in consciousness. Phenomenology is, thus, the "science of consciousness," and its task is to describe (not to explain!) conscious experience, which occurs in two basic forms: "conscious processes" (or cogitatio) and the "immanent constituents of conscious processes" (or cogitatum), two components of the Cartesian cogito that Husserl cites as one of phenomenology's founding moments (HIL 13-14; also I 68-69). Phenomenology, thus, attends not merely to phenomena but to the acts of consciousness that make those phenomena accessible to us.

1b) Throughout *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's attention to the phenomenal world bears a certain resemblance to the attentions of the practicing phenomenologist. Like most poets, Wordsworth often refers to things (or objects) – particularly to those of the natural world, e.g, rivers, mountains, winds, etc. – yet Wordsworth's attention to things is more self-conscious than this. It is as though his poetic slogan, like Husserl's, is 'to the things themselves.' In the second half of Book II alone, Wordsworth speaks of "rural objects" (II.204; PP 84); of "A virtue which irradiates and exalts / All objects through all intercourse of sense" (II.259-60; PP 88); of "the minuter properties / Of objects" (II.301-2; PP 90); of "difference / Perceived in things" (II.318-19; PP 90). He observes "external things" (II.386; PP 94), "things that really are" (II.413; PP 90), and he senses a "great social principle of life / Coercing all things into sympathy" (II.408-09; PP 90). Yet perhaps more striking is Wordsworth's apparent awareness that these things (or objects) are not things but phenomena (e.g., forms, images, appearances), which are mediated by consciousness. He speaks of perceiving "In one appearance" all the attributes of "the same object" (II.248-49; PP 86); of "the forms" the mind "receives / In one beloved presence" (II.254-55; PP 88). Like Merleau-Ponty, he reminds us that there is a "visible world" (II.293; PP 90), and that there is what is "to the human eye / Invisible" (II.423-24; PP 96). Like Husserl, he seems bent on perceiving pure phenomena and on acquiring eidetic insights, striving to perceive the "form / Or image unprofaned" (II.315-16; PP 90-92) and the "essences of things" (II.345; PP 92).

2a) Comprehending the initial goals of Husserl's descriptive science is not the same as practicing phenomenology. Husserl calls for an attention to immanent phenomena and to the conscious faculties that allow those phenomena to appear, but what kind of attention? How do I see phenomenologically?

Phenomenological method begins with a suspension or bracketing of what Husserl calls the "natural attitude." It is "natural" not because I *must* persist in it, but because I will persist in it if I do not pursue the alternative Husserl proposes. In general terms, the natural attitude consists in a naïve acceptance of the natural world as 'objective' and 'actual.' Thus, it includes not merely the assumptions of common sense, which tell us what is 'real' and 'unreal,' but also the more abstract scientific bases for these views, the received truths of our world, which tell us what is 'possible' and 'impossible,' 'subjective' and 'objective,' etc. The natural attitude implies all these assumptions without my even noticing. In a politically correct world, I consider it offensive to be called 'prejudiced,' but prejudgment is a regular part of everyday life. In human experience, I think of myself as a 'real' person without, in fact, thinking about myself. I ignore the role that my perceptions play in initiating my world. I think of the things I see as 'factual,' and I forget that this basic assumption nonetheless implies a judgment about the world. The car that passes is 'real,' and its passing has 'really happened.' What these assumptions erase is me – my consciousness and my role in the continually occurring inception of the phenomenal world. Rarely do I attend to my own attentions. I 'see' only the objects I am seeing and not the seeing itself – not my participation in this appearance. "A person in the natural attitude," according to Husserl, "executes the acts of experiencing, referring, combining; but while he is executing them, he is looking not toward them but rather in the direction of the objects he is conscious of" (HIL 13). Husserl calls this attitude "natural" because it is my attitude if I do not alter it. As a descriptive science, phenomenology asks me to accept only what is simply presented to me through perception, refusing to make any of the deductive assumptions that the natural attitude requires of 'sane,' 'normal' people. Having an extremely high regard for the deductive capacities of the human mind, Husserl does not wish to abandon objective science or common sense. Yet while the scientist, attending primarily to what must be so "by necessity," creates an atmosphere in which "what admits of being otherwise escapes observation" (Aristotle 1999 88), the phenomenologist acknowledges that judgments implicit in my natural attitude toward the world can prevent me from observing phenomena than run counter to those judgments.

The heightened self-awareness of phenomenology is enacted by what Husserl calls the "phenomenological reduction," which occurs in stages. First, I must become aware of my "general positing" of the world "as a *factually existing* 'actuality'" in the natural attitude. Of course, this general positing of the natural attitude "does not consist of a particular act," but "lasts continuously throughout the whole duration of the attitude, i.e., throughout natural waking life" (I 57). Second, once I have become aware of this general positing, it "undergoes a modification" in which "*we, so to speak, 'put it out of action,' we 'exclude it,' we 'parenthesize it.*'" While the generally posited natural attitude "in itself remains what it is," I bracket it, an act which, "in a specifically peculiar manner, changes its value." This temporary change of value – the third and final stage of what Husserl calls the phenomenological reduction (or epochê) – involves "a certain refraining from judgment" (I 59). With this different vantage, according to Husserl, I can "discover a new scientific domain" (I 60), a science of pure consciousness, which is qualitatively different from previously existing sciences. Husserl outlines a range of phenomenological reductions that must occur if I am to practice his new science, and these

reductions include the parenthesizing of "any naïve ('dogmatic') science," any belief-based "actualities such as state, custom, law, religion," and "all natural sciences and cultural sciences" (I 131).

In "Eye and Mind," his celebrated essay on the aesthetics of painting, Maurice Merleau-Ponty provides an example of what a phenomenological reduction might look like in writing. "Science manipulates things," he begins, "and gives up living in them" (EM 121). With these words, Merleau-Ponty initiates a reduction of the natural attitude, for himself and for his readers.[209] Like Husserl, Merleau-Ponty calls attention to the affects that my assumptions – particularly, my scientific assumptions – have on my engagement with the phenomenal world. Merleau-Ponty's signature contribution to phenomenology, articulated in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, is that human consciousness is an embodied consciousness. Along similar lines, the first section of "Eye and Mind" urges us to question the detached and disembodied position of 'objectivity' that science has adopted: "Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to […] this actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts" (EM 122). Merleau-Ponty completes his reduction by observing, "Only the painter is entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees" (123). With this shift toward what the painter's unappraising eye can see, I enter the clearing opened by Merleau-Ponty's reduction. My "appraisals" represent what Husserl calls the "natural attitude," and Merleau-Ponty wants me to consider his descriptions of seeing and painting without the natural attitude's pre-judgments and distortions.

2b) Can only painters look upon the world without appraisal? One can fairly assume that Merleau-Ponty, speaking of the painter, does not mean to exclude other visual artists. Further, one might extrapolate upon Merleau-Ponty's claim and suggest that the musician, particularly the composer, might be as unappraising of sounds as the painter is of sights. But what of the poet? Like all artists, the poet's object phenomena enter through windows of sense, yet the poet's medium – language – is far more prejudicial than the physical instruments of the painter and composer. Poets also draw pictures and make sounds, but they do so with words, and words are freighted with implicit meanings. Can the poet compose outside the natural attitude? What if the poet were to begin a poem as Merleau-Ponty begins "Eye and Mind"? While Wordsworth's emphasis on the appearances of the phenomenal world is of some interest to the phenomenologist, it is far more curious to observe that Wordsworth seems to describe a natural attitude and, in so doing, to bracket it, allowing him to approach the world in a manner analogous to phenomenological method.

Like Merleau-Ponty, Wordsworth begins our passage with a description of the natural attitude, particularly of the scientific attitude. The word 'begins' should here be understood loosely, as it relies upon the framing of the passage. Wordsworth began his "Poem to Coleridge" at Coleridge's urging and often addresses the poem to Coleridge, his "friend," in the same way that "Tintern Abbey" is addressed to Dorothy, "My dear, dear Sister" (line 121; WPW 165). Yet in *The Prelude*, the speaker's references to his friend also function as an organizing motif, framing shifts in focus. He addresses his friend at Book II, lines 215 through 231, only to address his friend again in the final verse paragraph, lines 466 through 484. While he might intentionally introduce the "friend" for transitional and framing purposes, these changes of focus might also be an effect of the friend's personality attributes. Though the speaker considers his

friend a fellow devotee of solitude and nature (II.476-77; PP 100), he also thinks of this friend as more learned and philosophical than himself (II.215-16; PP 86). Thus, speaking of his friend seems to stir Wordsworth toward more philosophical reflections. In the wake of this double impact – the reoccurring friend motif and the philosophical musings that often result from this reoccurrence – Wordsworth's speaker offers a description of the natural attitude:

> …Thou, my friend, art one
>
> More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee
>
> Science appears but what in truth she is,
>
> Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
>
> But as a succedaneum and a prop
>
> To our infirmity. Thou art no slave
>
> Of that false secondary power by which
>
> In weakness we create distinctions, then
>
> Deem our puny boundaries are things
>
> Which we perceive, and not which we have made (II.215-224; PP 86)

Like the first section of Merleau-Ponty's "Eye and Mind," Wordsworth's speaker observes various prejudices that the natural attitude instills and how unwarranted, upon deeper examination, these prejudices are. Of science, Merleau-Ponty says: "it makes its constructs of things"; "it expect[s] through its constructions to get back into the world"; and "it must see itself as a construction based on the brute existent world" (EM 121-2). Similarly, the speaker says that science, "as a succedaneum and a prop / To our infirmity," teaches us to "create distinctions, then / Deem our puny boundaries are things / Which we perceive, and not which we have made" (II.219-20, 222-24; PP 86). Merleau-Ponty cringes at the tendency "to treat the scientist's knowledge as if it were absolute" (EM 122), and Wordsworth cringes at the notion of science as "our glory and our absolute boast" (II.218; PP 86). By asserting that science is a construct, Merleau-Ponty and Wordsworth attempt to bracket its assumptions and clear a space for experiences that those assumptions will obstruct. While Merleau-Ponty concludes his bracketing of the natural attitude by urging us to suspend our appraisals and see like the painter, Wordsworth urges us to suspend "our puny boundaries" and attend to the "things / Which we perceive" (II.223-34; PP 86).

Wordsworth's reduction, like Merleau-Ponty's, is an implied one. It consists in a bracketing of the natural attitude in a written text. While it would not be productive to attempt to map Wordsworth's reflections onto the three stages of Husserl's phenomenological reduction outlined above – stages that are themselves constructed and numbered in my attempt to describe the reduction clearly – it would seem more useful to, instead, identify other moments in which Wordsworth reiterates his position with regard to the natural attitude, reaffirming its suspension. There are such moments. Wordsworth speaks, for instance, of the poetic spirit with which some people, himself included, have been blessed:

… Such, verily, is the first

Poetic spirit of our human life –

By uniform control of after years

In most abated and suppressed, in some

Through every change of growth or of decay

Pre-eminent till death (II.275-80; PP 88).

Though Wordsworth's speaker at times refers to himself as "A favoured being" (I.364; PP 56), blessed with certain poetic gifts, it is crucial to observe that all people at some time possess the "Poetic spirit" he speaks of here – a spirit which, in later years, is "suppressed" (II.276, 278; PP 88). Particularly striking is the "uniform control" which, like the natural attitude, suppresses this poetic spirit (II.277; PP 88). For Wordsworth as for Husserl, 'nurture' is to blame, not 'nature.' Wordsworth speaks elsewhere in our passage of perceptions that elude the "common eye" and of the "common minds" of those who lack this poetic spirit (II.319, 405; PP 90, 96). Yet for Wordsworth and Husserl, this does not mean that anyone is at fault, nor that that these perceptions are permanently inaccessible. Narrowed horizons should be mourned, not mocked or disdained. Indeed, such narrowed horizons are the work of the natural attitude's "uniform control," and they can be remedied.

3a) Once the phenomenological reduction is performed; the natural attitude, suspended; what do I see? This is the million dollar question. Unfortunately, Husserl spends most of his time discussing what phenomenologists are supposed to do, not what they are supposed to see. Concerned in *Ideas* I. primarily with articulating his phenomenological method, Husserl does little actual description. Instead, he provides a vocabulary for describing the method and for assessing its results and limits. With the natural attitude bracketed, I direct my attention, simultaneously, toward phenomena (cogitatum) and toward the acts of consciousness that disclose those phenomena (cogitatio). Husserl calls this directedness or "intentionality." You can 'attend' to an object phenomenon, but when you 'intend' it, you are conscious of the phenomenon itself and of the phenomenon *as intended*. As a result of this heightened self-awareness, I become a subtler perceiver of phenomena. I begin to observe that there are various strata or levels in my intentional acts, and that I "constitute" object phenomena. I notice that phenomena appear within horizons, and that I can attend to one phenomenon and be tacitly aware of many others within that horizon, which I can then intend to and in this way render them more or less obscure.

Yet as Husserl says, phenomena "are penetrated and surrounded by an *obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality*" (his italics; I 52). Just as the horizon is ultimately "infinite" and "never fully determinable" (I 52), so do I begin to observe that my perceptual faculties have limits, even when attempting to perceive and describe a single object (I 94). I find that there are "certain categories of essences" that "can be given only '*onesidedly*,' in sequence 'many-sidedly,' but never 'all-sidedly'" (his italics; I 8); and that some phenomena, called "morphological essences," are "given precisely as fluid," as "concepts which are *essentially, rather than accidentally, inexact*" (his italics; I 166). While the term "adequation" indicates that one has described an object adequately, "inadequation" indicates that one has done so

inadequately (I 8-9, 94). Inadequation (or intentional incompleteness) is inevitable, since the world consists of infinitely overflowing horizons.

3b) Once Wordsworth's speaker has bracketed the natural attitude, his consciousness of the world, like that of the phenomenologist, becomes more refined and nuanced. He becomes aware of the conscious faculties (or cogitatio) that disclose his world, and he notices that "His organs and recipient faculties / Are quickened" by this awareness (II.252-3; PP 88). He has learned that people can become more "aptly skilled" in "class[ing] the cabinet / Of their sensations" (II.227-9; PP 86), and he speaks of "sensations which have been derived / From [the] beloved presence" of phenomena (II.257-8; PP 88), sensing that conscious faculties and perceived phenomena are co-consummating and co-dependant. Aware of himself not merely as an experiencer but as a constituter of phenomena, he becomes more deeply attuned to the subtle strata perceived outside the "uniform control" of the natural attitude. For instance, he describes how the "infant babe" (II.237; PP 86),

> Even in the first trial of its powers
>
> Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
>
> In one appearance all the elements
>
> And parts of the same object (II.246-9; PP 86).

More sensitive to the various elements of such appearances, Wordsworth's speaker opens himself to "nature's finer influxes," learning that his perceptions can become more "exact" and better attuned with "the minuter properties / Of objects" (II.298-302; PP 90). This openness enhances his perceptions in very different ways. His newfound subtlety provides access to "difference / Perceived in things where to the common eye / No difference is," yet it also provides access to an "observation of affinities / In objects where no brotherhood exists / To common minds" (II.318-20, 403-5; PP 90, 96). By rejecting the "puny boundaries" that science constructs and the "uniform control" of these boundaries, the speaker begins to feel that at times he has "conversed / With things that really are" (II.277, 223, 412-13; PP 88, 86, 96).

However, despite this heightened self-awareness of himself as a conscious subject, Wordsworth's speaker is also capable of accepting the more sobering limits of inadequation. He even identifies these limits as an opportunity for growth and unusual insight. Wordsworth senses that his world always contains something indeterminate and inaccessible, which continues to engage his senses. In such moments, he …

> … retains an obscure sense,
>
> Of possible sublimity, to which
>
> With growing faculties she [his soul] doth aspire,
>
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
>
> That whatsoever point they gain they still
>
> Have something to pursue (II.336-41; PP 92).

As with Husserl's "*obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality*" (his italics; I 52), the speaker acknowledges that no matter how refined his faculties become, their limits assert themselves once more, creating "fleeting moods / Of shadowy exultation" (II.331-32; PP 92). In such moments, as his growing faculties sense that "whatsoever point they gain they still / Have something to pursue," Wordsworth finds himself in possession of certain peculiar insights, as if intuiting "the latent qualities / And essences of things" (II.340-41, 344-45; PP 92). For instance, his attempts to remember his first perceptions of the world create in him a sense that as "a babe, by intercourse of touch, / I held mute dialogues with my mother's heart" (II.282-83; PP 88). Having vaguely recalled these experiences, he is brought to remember that …

> …a trouble came into my mind
>
> From unknown causes; I was left alone
>
> Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
>
> The props of my affections were removed,
>
> And yet the building stood as if sustained
>
> By its own spirit! (II.291-96; PP 90).

In a phenomenal world of touch, Wordsworth remembers "mute dialogues" and an "intercourse of touch" (II.282-83; PP 88). Consequently, he remembers, however obscurely, the moment when these sensations and affections were left undirected. With searching eyes that had once remained closed, Wordsworth was forced to acknowledge the "visible world" (II.293; PP 90).

These vague yet poignant rememberings (or imaginings[210]) sometimes lead Wordsworth's speaker to inexplicable insights and unusual associations. He speaks of an ability to observe "affinities / In objects where no brotherhood exists / To common minds" (II.403-05; PP 96), and he presents us with an example of this kind of affinity when he sings of the "infant babe" that…

> Along his infant veins are interfused
>
> The gravitation and the filial bond
>
> Of nature that connect him with the world (II.262-64; PP 88).

The speaker indicates that these two forces of attraction and forms of connection, "gravitation and the filial bond," both derive from "nature" and both "connect" or link the infant "with the world." In proximity to the concept of gravitation, several words in the passage evoke comparison and association with other phenomena and concepts in the physical sciences. In saying that these forces travel not merely 'in' but "Along his infant veins," the speaker evokes the image of blood coursing through the human body, supporting vital organs and sustaining life. Moreover, the suggestion that "gravitation and the filial *bond*" are "inter*fused*" within those veins evokes the concepts of chemical bonding and fusion. Yet is the speaker really saying that there is anything more than an analogical relationship between such different forces of attraction? It would seem that the first force, gravitation, is a physical phenomenon, and that the

second, the filial bond, is a cultural one. Our constructed disciplines – which Wordsworth might call "our puny boundaries" (II.223; PP 86) – surely demand that we distinguish them thus.

Then again, maybe Wordsworth's speaker is identifying a viable subject for future study in the physical sciences. In the decades that followed the publication of *The Prelude*, physicists would begin to speculate about forms of connection that could not be explained. Faced with evidence that objects at opposite ends of a galaxy could affect each other and that juxtaposition was not a prerequisite for physical interaction, these physicists would begin to wonder whether other forces might not be at work, whether electrons might not dwell at great distances from the bodies to which they supposedly 'belong.' As Valentine says in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*,

> People were talking about the end of physics. Relativity and quantum looked as if they were going to clean out the whole problem between them. A theory of everything. But they only explained the very big and the very small. The universe, the elementary particles. The ordinary sized stuff which is our lives, the things people write poetry about – clouds – daffodils – waterfalls – and what happens in a cup of coffee when the cream goes in – these things are full of mystery, as mysterious to us as the heavens were to the Greeks (Stoppard 68-69).

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's speaker makes an unusual juxtaposition, implying that the force of "gravitation" bears some resemblance to the bond of affection felt between parents and their children. Given that proximity is not necessary for celestial bodies to interact with each other, given how mysterious the "ordinary sized stuff" of everyday life has become for physicists, I wonder if there is something in Wordsworth's association of gravitation and the filial bond that physics might one day begin to explain. What happens *physically* between bodies that share a mutual sense of affection or sympathy, love or lust? What happens physically between human bodies that share the same blood? Just as scientists were surprised to discover that pheromones, the molecules used for communication between animals, allow the Asian elephant to mate with certain moths (Wyatt 1), so might scientists one day be surprised to find that filial affection is more than a concept, more even than a feeling or sensation, but a detectable, perhaps even measurable, physical manifestation of what happens between parent and child. Even if this never happens, the suggestion is an interesting one.

When Aristotle says that scientists observe, test and confirm only what must be so "by necessity" and that as a result of this tendency "what admits of being otherwise," unnecessary and unexpected, often "escapes observation" (Aristotle 1999 88), he draws attention to a sobering reality: What we think we know can prevent us from learning what we do not know. What we pay attention to can prevent us from seeing what we have never thought to pay attention to. Though scientists can and have stumbled upon phenomena that they had never thought to study, they can *truly* study only what they have a mind to study. This fact gives the use-less, non-productive, wondering descriptions of poets like Wordsworth and phenomenologists like Husserl an unexpected kind of utility.

c) Poetic and Phenomenological Practice

In his essay, "Literary Description and Phenomenological Method," Edward S. Casey outlines a number of key differences between the descriptive approaches of the literary writer and the practicing phenomenologist. Casey's example of literary description is a passage from

Marcel Proust's seven-novel epic in which plot, characterization and the typical attributes of narrative fade into the background, giving sway to the rich, sensual particulars of Marcel's rememberings. As an example of phenomenological method, Casey forwards a passage from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* in which the speaker and a person named Paul mutually experience a landscape (POP 471-72; LD 177-78). Neither description serves as an "explanation" or a "reconstruction" of a particular spatio-temporal moment (LD 178-80). However, the question of whether the descriptions also bear narrative qualities is more complicated. Though Merleau-Ponty's typical example of shared experience, "Paul and I," is not a reconstruction of a particular historical moment – e.g., a trip he and his friend Paul took – nonetheless, when Merleau-Ponty says things like, "My friend Paul and I point out to each other certain details of the landscape," the description begins to resemble a narrative (POP 471-72; LD 177-78). As Casey notes, "Just as we must reject any attempt to reduce description and narration to each other – much less time and space to one another – so we must also abjure the false dichotomizing to which these terms are all too often subject" (LD 200). While neither literary nor phenomenological description is particularly explanatory or reconstructive, they both bear narrative qualities – even if literature does so more frequently.

However, Casey also identifies a crucial distinction that one must draw between the two approaches, given that phenomenological description, unlike literary description, tends to be "*exemplary-suppositional* in status" (his italics; LD 181). While phenomenologists sometimes describe perceptual objects – as in Husserl's well-known description of a sheet of paper on his desk (I 69-73, 75) – more often they tend to perform what Husserl calls "free variation in imagination" (EJ 340-48; I 43-44, 94; LD 182 and n8). They begin with an example, and then they suppose things about it through acts of imagining. While Merleau-Ponty considers perception the primary faculty, Husserl reminds us that inadequation is an "essential necessity" of perceptual description (I 94). Instead, Husserl seems to grant acts of imagining primacy, particularly due to the role of free phantasy in the attainment of eidetic insight: "… one can say in strict truth, that 'feigning' [Fiktion] makes up the vital element of phenomenology as of every other eidetic science, that feigning is the source from which the cognition of 'eternal truths' is fed" (I 160; LD 182). Eidetic insight results primarily from the "feigning [Fiktion]" of "free variation in imagination"; i.e., "from examples which are concocted or suppositional" (LD 182). As Casey observes, the Proust passage does not exhibit this exemplary-suppositional quality: "The reader is not being asked to suppose actively that anything might be the case; nor is the narrated content presented as exemplifying anything, certainly not an eidetic insight and least of all an eternal truth!" (LD 182). Nonetheless, one might wonder whether other literary passages, written before or after Husserl, might exhibit the exemplary-suppositional quality that the Proust passage does not. Could a literary work possibly meet such a criterion? What would such a literary work look like?

For a literary description to resemble phenomenological method in this way, it would need not merely to avoid the conventions of narrative but also to appear "concocted and suppositional" in its approach (LD 182). More than even the Proust novel or Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Wordsworth's *Prelude* is an epic of consciousness that shuns the conventions of narrative. While the poem certainly contains narrative passages, such as the reconstructive narrative of the "elfin pinnace" episode (I.372-427; PP 56-58), it also, especially in its opening books, contains passages in which there is hardly any plot and rarely a character. On the whole, *The Prelude* rejects the qualities of narrative quite radically. Even more crucial to

this comparison of literary and phenomenological description is the status of Wordsworth's descriptive approach. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth blurs the distinction between the activities of remembering and imagining, and this tendency becomes important here. As I first suggested in chapter six and reaffirmed above, there is something remarkable about the speaker's effort to describe the infant's first consciousness of the world (II.237-80; PP 86-88) – an effort made even more remarkable when, in the succeeding verse paragraph, the speaker switches from third-person to first-person and attempts to reconstruct the formation of his own "infant sensibility" (II.280-303; PP 88-90). At the end of Book I, the speaker presents his readers with the possibility that, with sufficient effort, we might "almost make our infancy itself / A visible scene" (I.662-63; PP 72). He is well aware of the phenomenon of childhood amnesia and of the possibility of confabulation, as chapters five and six have demonstrated, so his attempt to make his own infancy a "visible scene" in Book II of *The Prelude* appears to be a self-conscious attempt to describe his infancy based on his vague sense of what it must have been like (too vague to even be labeled as rememberings), his subsequent observations of infants, and his adult attention to the phenomenal world and his mental activities. In other words, he is concocting, supposing and extrapolating, using the method that Husserl calls free variation of imagination. The passage from *The Prelude* that I examined in the previous section is, I would argue, one example of phenomenological imagining that appears in Wordsworth's poetry.

The Prelude is not a phenomenological study, but in certain passages it reads like one. Indeed, Husserl raised poetry to a privileged position in his newly founded science. In one of his rare yet evocative comments on literature (or *Dichtung*), Husserl suggests that literature, of all the arts, "tower[s] high above the products of our own phantasy," and that the words of poets could, "when they are apprehended understandingly, become converted into perfectly clear phantasies with particular ease owing to the suggestive power exerted by artistic means of presentation" (I 160). In Wordsworth's *Prelude*, readers encounter images and juxtapositions of a peculiar, insight-provoking richness. Yet Wordsworth's description of the infant's sensory world resonates so deeply with our own sense experiences, the poem provides us with more than the "suggestive power" (or springboard) that can propel us toward eidetic insight. It provides a peculiarly precise description of those insights – a clearing in which to encounter and rediscover certain lost and essential features of that phenomenal world.

According to the prevailing narrative, Wordsworth's career was overshadowed by his ambition to produce a long philosophical poem called *The Recluse*, a "gothic church" within the context of which *The Prelude* was supposed represent a mere "ante-chapel," "portico," or "appendix" (PW III.5; EY 594, 440). The *Prelude* speaker alludes to this plan in the introductory reflections of Book I, saying that his "last and favourite aspiration" was to compose…

> … some philosophic song
>
> Of truth that cherishes our daily life,
>
> With meditations passionate from deep
>
> Recesses in man's heart (I.229-33; PP 48).

He concludes Book I with what he considers to be a compromise. "[R]ather" than committing himself to a "work / Of ampler or more varied argument" (i.e., a "philosophic song"), he decides to record "the story of my life" (I.667-71; PP 72). How could he have known that so many philosophers would learn to distrust "varied argument" in the coming century? Did he ever suspect that his long autobiographical poem was a kind of "philosophic song" after all?

It would be inaccurate (and ridiculous) to claim that Wordsworth 'discovered' phenomenology. Husserlian phenomenology offers a highly detailed and specialized method that Wordsworth could never have articulated. Yet it also seems likely that in anticipating a number of the practices and even some of the language of phenomenology, Wordsworth's phenomenological approach was more than merely "spontaneous" (Hartman 1987 xxvi-xxvii). The parallels between Wordsworth's poetry and phenomenology are too pervasive for them to have been unintentional or accidental. He must have been at least somewhat conscious of what he was doing, and that there was something philosophical about it. The "friend" of *The Prelude* must have had an inkling of this as well (VI.213; PP 218). Though Coleridge expressed disappointment with *The Excursion* and demanded that *The Recluse* exhibit "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574), he also had the foresight to refer to *The Prelude* as Wordsworth's "philosophico-biographical Poem" (CL II.1104). Divided between the modern love of system and the premodern love of wisdom, he could not decide what philosophy should be. While he speculated the "the First Genuine Philosophic Poem" would possess the "matter and arrangement" of a totalizing system (BL II.156; CL IV.574), he was nonetheless aware that there was something philosophical about the long autobiographical poem his friend had produced. In observing that Husserlian phenomenology has its origins in philosophical wonder (PPH 23-25, 54-55; POP xv), Eugen Fink and Merleau-Ponty help us to see that Wordsworth's *Prelude*, driven by a positive application of the skeptical epochê, represents the culminating moment of Wordsworth's philosophy of wonder and of the broader renewal of philosophical wonder that arose in the writings of several of Wordsworth's contemporaries.

By observing that poetry and philosophy share a common basis in wonder, as Aristotle, Aquinas and Coleridge had done before them, Fink and Merleau-Ponty also highlight the distinctive contributions that poetic and phenomenological practice can make to the study of human consciousness. In their own ways, Wordsworth and Husserl each enable their readers to witness indeterminate phenomena and unregarded mental activities that often remain invisible and inarticulate in mental life. One cannot say by whom these faculties and phenomena were 'discovered' or 'invented.' One cannot say whether the age incites the thought, or whether the thought incites the age. But after reading Wordsworth's and Husserl's descriptions of consciousness, one glimpses the possibility of producing descriptions of other phenomena and mental activities that have not yet been explored.

Part III. Postmodern Romanticism

8. Wordsworth and DeLillo on the Suppression of Childhood Wonder

a) A Diminishing Lifeworld, Part I:

The Senses in Postmodern Culture

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

~ William Wordsworth (1807)[211]

The child is no longer father of the man. Or so might it seem to readers of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985). Wordsworth's child, whose reverent awe for nature expresses itself in an involuntary leaping of the heart when a rainbow appears in the sky, is the teacher and guide of the adult, and readers are tempted to assume that *White Noise* (through its adult characters) uniformly supports this view. Yet the text also contradicts this characterization of today's child in a number of striking ways. Before the mid-19th century – before the proliferation of trains, planes and automobiles, telephones, radios and televisions, computers, cell phones and the internet, space travel, genocide and weapons of mass destruction – it was apparently somewhat easier to forward the child as the human ideal of wonder, carefree curiosity and what Wordsworth calls "natural piety." DeLillo's *White Noise* challenges this idealization of the child, directly addressing the problem of wonder in a postmodern world. Furthermore, if one looks more closely at Wordsworth's characterization of the child in a poem such as "Anecdote for Fathers," one discerns that Wordsworth's view of the child is more complex than would appear to readers of "My heart leaps up" and of traditional scholarly accounts that ascribe to Romantic writers the view that children are repositories of visionary insights and natural truths. Ultimately, Wordsworth's concerns for the Post-Enlightenment child show quite a resemblance to DeLillo's concerns for the Postmodern child, and when one moves from DeLillo's account to Wordsworth's one witnesses the development of a shared narrative that centers on the themes of childhood, wonder, epistemology, sense experience and virtual reality. As I conclude my study of the role of wonder in the Romantic period in general and in Wordsworth's *Prelude* in particular, I would like to examine the ways that Wordsworth's treatment of the child foreshadows figurations of childhood in a contemporary text. By considering the dialogue that naturally occurs between these two accounts of childhood sense experience, one can better appreciate the ways that modern life has increasingly suppressed the human capacity to wonder.

The adult characters in *White Noise* repeatedly affirm Wordsworth's characterization of the child as father of the man. They share an unshakeable yearning to forget their fears and anxieties, and this yearning makes them thirst for the company of children. Yet do they see children for what they are or do they elevate the child to the status of noble savage and self-pleasing savant? The novel's speaker and protagonist, Jack Gladney, and his wife, Babette, feel that it is "great having all these kids around" (WN 80), and they are especially comforted by the presence of their newly walking, non-talking toddler, Wilder – a name that recalls Wordsworth's "coarser pleasures of my boyish days, / And their glad animal movements all gone by" (LB 112), if not Paine's "wilderness of turnpike gates" (Paine 38).

Wilder's relationships with his mother Babette and his step-father Jack are marked by an "ironic reversal," because they consider him a "protective charm" (LeClair 396), even as they repeatedly neglect their duties as parents, losing track of him multiple times throughout the course of the novel (WN 6, 34, 39, 114), in one case failing to prevent him from crossing six lanes of speeding highway traffic on his plastic tricycle (WN 322-24). In addressing his audience and his fellow characters, Jack frequently attempts to explain the comfort of Wilder's presence. "I liked being with Wilder," he informs his readers, adding that to Wilder (and one gleans, vicariously for himself when in Wilder's presence), "The world was a series of fleeting gratifications. He took what he could, then immediately forgot it in a rush of subsequent pleasure. It was this forgetfulness I envied and admired" (WN 170). In a conversation with Babette, he says of Wilder, "He is selfish without being grasping, selfish in a totally unbounded and natural way. There's something wonderful about the way he drops one thing, grabs for another." In Wilder's doings, Jack declares, "I see the spirit of genius at work" (WN 209). Babette, burdened with an overwhelming fear of death, also envies and admires Wilder's forgetfulness and now-ness, and she more than once admits that spending time with him is the only surefire cure for her fears (WN 209, 263).

However, Jack's continual effort to articulate the joy he takes in Wilder's company eventually induces readers to doubt the adequacy of these descriptions. Again broaching the question, Jack asks a fellow college professor, Murray Jay Siskind, why Wilder has such a soothing effect on Babette and himself. Murray responds,

> He doesn't know he's going to die. He doesn't know death at all. You cherish this simpleton blessing of his, this exemption from harm. You want to get close to him, touch him, look at him, breathe him in. How lucky he is. A cloud of unknowing, an omnipotent little person. The child is everything, the adult is nothing. Think about it. A person's entire life is the unraveling of this conflict. No wonder we're bewildered, staggered, shattered (WN 289-90).

To this explanation, Jack replies, "Aren't you going too far" (WN 289-90)? With children by their sides, these adults feel capable of perceiving "extrasensory flashes and floating nuances of being," of performing "magic act[s]" (WN 34) and "reckless wonder[s] of intelligibility" (WN 78). However, after processing Murray's speech, Jack himself becomes dubious about the reason for Wilder's soothing influence. His efforts to identify its cause, instead of providing him with a satisfactory explanation, ultimately lead him to question whether Wilder's experience of the world is as wonderful as he, Babette, and Murray have assumed. Is there a little wishful thinking implicit in their thoughts of Wilder – a little nostalgia for a primordial carelessness that was never theirs?

In chapter sixteen of *White Noise*, Wilder cries for the better (or worse) part of a day, and though the novel never explicitly states the cause of his behavior, the event forces Jack to consider the possibility that Wilder's life is not entirely carefree. Faced with Wilder's wails, Jack and Babette are naturally frantic, flummoxed, and desperate to ease their child's distress. Yet eventually, sitting outside the emergency room with Wilder, Jack stops feeling frantic and starts thinking of the child's ululations not as a problem to be solved but as a wonder to be appreciated. "As the crying continued," he confesses, "a curious shift developed in my thinking. I found that I did not necessarily wish him to stop…. It might not be so terrible, I thought, to have to sit here for four more hours, with the motor running and the heater on, listening to this uniform lament" (WN 78). Jack has begun to process Wilder's "uniform lament" as a kind of white noise that is distinct from the background noises (washing machines, TVs…) with which one would normally associate DeLillo's title. Death is one of the primary preoccupations of DeLillo's work,[212] and the "uniform lament" relates to another passage in *White Noise* where Babette asks, "What if death is nothing but a sound?" Running with Babette's question, Jack qualifies her suggestion, describing the kind of sound death would be: "Uniform, white" (WN 198). Discussing this passage in terms of Ernest Becker's claim that the fear of death is "all-consuming" even among infants (Becker 15; Bonca 467), Cornel Bonca argues that Wilder's experience is "a stirring revelation of the fear of death, a noise of great (and frankly, unpostmodern) pathos" (466). Eventually, Wilder stops crying, opting to drink a glass of milk instead, and Jack describes the way the family tiptoes around him…

> … with something like awe. Nearly seven straight hours of serious crying. It was as though he'd just returned from a period of wandering in some remote holy place, in sand barrens and snowy ranges – a place where things are said, sights are seen, distances reached which we in our ordinary toil can only regard with the mingled reverence and wonder we hold in reserve for feats of the most sublime and difficult dimensions (WN 79).

Bonca claims "the religious language Jack employs evokes his exalted feeling that sharing his death-terror with his son is a primordial human moment" (468).

However, contrary to Bonca's suggestion that Wilder and his step-father are sharing a "primordial" and "frankly, unpostmodern" emotional experience (466), one might instead emphasize several striking details that render the crying episode distinctly postmodern – or more accurately, post-apocalyptic. Jack feels a sense of "mingled reverence and wonder" when he imagines the "holy place" from which Wilder has returned (WN 79), yet one might also argue that Wilder has endured a traumatic and transformative revelation that his parents have failed to observe and that is peculiar to the present age. Though Bonca identifies the "holy place" to which Jack refers as "the place where death is confronted without the benefit of the protections the ego establishes against it" (468), Jack locates this "remote and holy place" more specifically when he identifies the "sustained, inarticulate and mournful sound" of Wilder's weeping as "expressions of Mideastern lament" (WN 77). Given that Wilder's step-father claims to have "invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968" (WN 4), it seems reasonable to assume that Wilder's "Mideastern lament" and his return from a "remote and holy place," while deeply associated with the primordial experience of death, might also refer to physical locations such as the Middle East, Israel and Jerusalem, which serve as reminders not only of human mortality but also of human brutality.

This assumption seems all the more plausible when one examines the potential causes for Wilder's crying. The chapter begins: "This was the day Wilder started crying at two in the afternoon. At six he was still crying, sitting on the kitchen floor and looking through the oven window, and we ate dinner quickly, moving around him or stepping over him to reach the stove and refrigerator" (WN 75). This is not the first time the reader witnesses Wilder transfixed by an oven. Earlier, Jack casually observes, "Denise was doing her homework in the kitchen, keeping an eye on Wilder, who had wandered downstairs to sit on the floor and stare through the oven window" (WN 27). In another scene, Wilder perplexes Jack and Jack's daughter Steffie when they observe his reaction (whether of fascination or terror) to another household object: "Wilder sat on a tall stool in front of the stove, watching water boil in a small enamel pot. He seemed fascinated by the process. I wondered if he'd uncovered some splendid connection between things he'd always thought of as separate" (WN 212).

Though Jack, Babette and Murray characterize Wilder as a naïve, egocentric, pleasure seeker, free of cares and of boundaries, the text certainly leaves room for another interpretation. The preoccupation with technology and consumer culture is pervasive in DeLillo's *White Noise*, and Wilder might simply be occupying himself by observing those household appliances that his height limitations allow him to view. Yet this does not explain why his observation of the oven becomes a cause for distress. It would appear that Wilder's fixations also show a significant overlap with the Nazi torture methods of the Holocaust (from the Greek *holokauston*, or 'burnt whole') – a word which (conspicuously, given Jack's obsession with Hitler) never appears in the text of the novel. What is the cause of Wilder's crying? "We are post-Auschwitz *homo sapiens*," declares George Steiner, "because the evidence, the photographs of the sea of bones and gold fillings, of children's shoes and hands leaving black claw-marks on oven walls, have altered our sense of possible enactments" (Steiner 158-59). As recounted in *The Black Book: The Nazi Crime Against the Jewish People* (1946), the psychological warfare section of the Supreme Allied Headquarters' thirteen-volume report on the German atrocities in France lists the putting of hands into boiling water among the tortures that Nazis performed (Jewish Black Book Committee 245). Could Wilder possibly have such associations in mind? While the artistic principles of verisimilitude might lead one to question whether a newly walking, barely talking child could be traumatized by a terrible recognition of the Holocaust, DeLillo's novels frequently challenge such principles, revealing extraordinary occurrences in ordinary life. If Becker suggests that the fear of death is "all-consuming" even among infants, then it seems plausible that DeLillo (a reader of Becker) might have wished *White Noise* to suggest that a mass-media consumer culture might be just as *all-consuming*, even among infants.

On every page, *White Noise* confirms the dramatic effects that a mass-media culture has on its citizens, and Jack himself implies that Wilder will not be as *wild* and innocent as his brother, Eugene. "The boy [Eugene] is growing up without television," Jack says, "which may make him worth talking to, Murray, as a sort of wild child, a savage plucked from the bush, intelligent and literate but deprived of the deeper codes and messages that mark his species as unique" (WN 50). Here Jack implies that in being deprived of those deeper codes and messages, Eugene will lack certain basic attributes of the species to which Wilder belongs. The possibility that Wilder has undergone some sort of trauma seems all the more likely when one remembers, with Stacey Olster, that Wilder's vocabulary, "stalled at twenty-five words at the beginning of the book," seems to "decrease steadily as the book continues" (Olster 91; WN 35-36, 264). The relationship between trauma and the failure of speech is fundamental. As Judith Herman

announces in the first sentences of her classic study, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), "The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word *unspeakable*" (Herman 1). Consisting of "nearly seven hours of serious crying," it seems possible that Wilder's "ancient dirge" may have been caused by his examination of an oven – a fact that neither of his parents (nor, to my knowledge, any commentators) have observed. While Jack is busy imagining that he and his step-son have been communing in an obscure and timeless realm of human mortality, Wilder may have been struggling with a vivid and terrible historical reality. If so, while Jack was worrying about what would become of him, Wilder was worrying about what type of being he had become.

Further evidence of Wilder's trauma appears when one examines the cessation of his crying, which also marks a diminution (if not a cessation) of his emotional engagement with the human world and of his ability to perceive and process his surroundings. While one might suggest that the former Wilder approached the world with the wonder, natural piety and heightened sensory engagement of Wordsworth's child, it appears that the new Wilder – like his older step-brother, Heinrich – instead approaches the world with the virtual engagement of the postmodern child. "We were halfway home when the crying stopped," Jack says. "It stopped suddenly, without a change in tone and intensity. Babette said nothing, I kept my eyes on the road. He sat between us, looking into the radio" (WN 79). Why the radio? Furthermore, why *into* the radio? The preposition implies that Wilder is not merely perceiving the radio but also looking (perhaps escaping) into it, out of himself and into an imagined realm, among the radio's wiring and moving parts; or that he is escaping into the virtual world that the radio projects and represents.

Wilder's initial fixation upon the radio appears in a subtler though equally puzzling form in the behavior of Jack's fourteen-year-old son Heinrich. Whereas Wilder experiences the radio as strange and fascinating, Heinrich instead experiences the radio as *more natural* than anything else. Readers witness this when Jack is driving Heinrich to school. "It's going to rain tonight," Heinrich comments. "It's raining now," Jack replies, gesturing at the glowing droplets on the windshield. "The radio said tonight," Heinrich counters (WN 22). Here, as elsewhere, DeLillo cleverly and succinctly dramatizes the work of a postmodern theorist.[213] In this case, one is hearing a riff from Jean Baudrillard, whose *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) gained additional popular attention when it appeared in Neo's hands in the opening scenes of *The Matrix* (1999).[214] Baudrillard claims that the omnipresent images of today's mass-media culture have gathered so much power and momentum that they have detached themselves from the realities they once represented, like moons that have broken away and found planetary orbits of their own. If Baudrillard is right, one might say that since World War II a Disney fantasy has come true: Like Peter Pan's rebellious shadow, representations have begun to float free of their referents, and these free-floating shadows have become endowed with lives of their own. Jack wants Heinrich to concede that it is *actually* raining, but Heinrich prefers to accept the radio announcer's representation of the day's weather. "Just because it's on the radio," Jack insists, "doesn't mean we have to suspend belief in the evidence of our senses" (WN 22-23). But Heinrich, ready with ample counterevidence, argues that our senses are as deceitful as any radio announcer, if not more so. He places his trust in the words of authorities and simulations – in the messages on the radio, the television and now the internet – instead of attending to the visions, tastes, scents, sounds and surfaces that filter themselves through his senses (WN 22-23). Though he is

technically a child, he is a child of technology – "a child" who, in Wordsworth's words, is "no child" at all but a "dwarf man." By 1805, Wordsworth had already glimpsed the threat of this dystopic modern individual, this "prodigy," who is skilled at manipulating tools and data and incapable of shuddering with awe in the face of nature.[215] Heinrich cannot teach his father to appreciate Wordsworth's rainbow because he himself cannot. To Heinrich, the rainbow is faint vapor and transient color. It interests him not as a dazzling phenomenon but as something he can explain, or explain away. He has lost his sense of wonder. A scholar and teacher, Jack is accustomed to radical thinking, but he is shocked by his son's rejection of sense experience. Ironically, it is not the child but the abstracted college professor who must now teach us how to feel.

For Heinrich to have begun to trust the virtual world over the sensory world, a dramatic transformation must have occurred in him, and readers of *White Noise* witness a parallel transformation in the aftermath of Wilder's crying episode. Following Wilder's fixation on the radio, he spends much of his time sleeping (WN 124, 128, 132, 155, 158, 182, 239, 242), and his heightened lethargy is most likely a symptom of decreased mental and emotional engagement. Yet in one of his few remaining wakeful appearances – among them, listening to radio broadcasts about the "black billowing cloud" with Heinrich in the attic (WN 115), dauntlessly descending the attic steps (WN 117), fixated by boiling water (WN 212), and riding his tricycle across a highway on a possible suicide mission (WN 322-24), all of them auguring injury or death – Wilder responds in an interesting manner to the appearance of his mother on a TV screen:

> Only Wilder remained calm. He watched his mother, spoke to her in half-words, sensible-sounding fragments that were mainly fabricated. As the camera pulled back to allow Babette to demonstrate some fine point of standing or walking, Wilder approached the set and touched her body, leaving a handprint on the dusty surface of the screen…
>
> … as soon as the program ended, the two girls got excited again and went downstairs to wait for Babette at the door and surprise her with news of what they'd seen.
>
> The small boy remained at the TV set, within inches of the dark screen, crying softly, uncertainly, in low heaves and swells… (WN 105).

As Olster observes, Wilder's failure to acquire language approaches autism (91), and it is interesting, first of all, to remember in this context that for an autistic child the 'disappearance' of another being can be extremely traumatic. When an autistic child watches someone leave a room, he or she might grieve as if that person were never coming back. It appears that Wilder experiences just such a loss when his mother disappears from the TV screen. However, one must also note a crucial detail here: Just as Heinrich experiences the radio announcer's forecast of rain as more real than rain itself, so does Wilder experience his mother's appearance on the TV screen as more real than his mother in person. Nowhere in the novel does Wilder whimper or cry when his actual mother leaves the room.

Therefore, one is forced to ask: What is Wilder's experience of the world? According to Bonca, one's life "is lived in virtually unbroken terror that it will end. How do we survive? By repression, of course – by personal and culture-wide denial of the death-fear" (466). While this is a reasonable assumption, steeped in a Freudian orthodoxy that has become naturalized, Robert

Jay Lifton's theory of "psychic numbing" offers a slightly different and more comprehensive explanation of Wilder's behavior. Lifton distinguishes psychic numbing from repression, arguing that while repression involves a temporary and unconscious forgetting of trauma that expresses itself in symptoms, psychic numbing consists in "an impairment of the symbolization process itself" (Caruth 160; FQC 130n12). As Geoffrey H. Hartman explains,

> If our inner life is affected by memory traces that take the form of images (magnified in dreams, fainter in ordinary consciousness), then the second-order yet superclear images of the new media, which so often focus on traumatic events, must cause some change, even disruption, in how we stay in touch with ourselves or use symbols to that end (FQC 101).

Such disruptions occur in cases of over-stimulation, a common feature of the postmodern age. Prophetically, Wordsworth reminded the readers of his 1800 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* that "the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants" (PW I.128). Confirming the negative effects of such stimulants, Georg Simmel, in his essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), suggests that "the incapacity to react to new stimulations with the required amount of energy constitutes in fact that blasé attitude which every child of a large city evinces when compared with the products of the more peaceful and more stable milieu" (Simmel 329). Freud confirms the claims of Wordsworth and Simmel, asserting in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) that "*Protection against* stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than *reception of stimuli*" (BPP 30; Lifton 166).

Each of these warnings appears not only before the atrocities of Word War II but also before the proliferation of the technologies of virtual reality that Wilder and Heinrich exchange for the modes of sense experience. It is telling that Simmel should choose to focus on the blasé attitude not merely of the city dweller but of the city-dwelling child – the world-weary, n'er-do-well, infantile product of modern urbanization – and Lifton's analyses suggest that we have not yet glimpsed the profound effects this age has had upon the wonder of the child. While in the introduction to his "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy" (otherwise known as "Little Hans"), Freud concedes that his analyses of the child reinforced the theories of childhood psychology that had emerged from his treatment of adults (LH 3-4), Lifton asserts that to understand childhood trauma one must do the reverse:

> Intense adult trauma can provide a model, at least in terms of understanding, for the more obscure and less articulated traumas of early childhood. This reversal was not unknown to Freud. And it is the basis for the image-model of the human being as perpetual survivor – first of birth itself, and then of 'holocausts' large and small, personal and collective, that define much of existence – a survivor capable of growth and change, especially when able to confront and transcend those 'holocausts' or their imprints (163-4).

Yet not all people are capable of aspiring toward the image-model of the survivor, and not all people can transcend the atrocities they witness in person or in their minds. Lifton describes psychic numbing as a "diminished capacity to feel" and a "diminution in [one's] sense of actuality" (173). In his characterization of Wilder's and Heinrich's experiences of the world, DeLillo presents his readers with precisely such a diminution – an exchange of feeling and actuality for numbness and virtuality.

b) A Diminishing Lifeworld, Part II:

Wonder in Post-Enlightenment Culture

You are a man; you understand.

You pick me up and you lay me down again.

You make the rules; you say what's fair.

It's lots of fun to have you there.

~ Neil Young, from "I am a Child" (1968)

Jack Gladney's interactions with Wilder and Heinrich in *White Noise* offer curious revisions of another interaction between a father and son, which appeared in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). There Wordsworth's characterization of the child is less idealized than a reading of only "My heart leaps up" would suggest. Furthermore, by exhibiting an awareness of the external forces that can diminish the natural wonder of the child, Wordsworth seems to anticipate the even more violent stimulants that would befall the postmodern child a century and a half later. In "Anecdote for Fathers, *Shewing How the Art of Lying May Be Taught*," Wordsworth's speaker describes a walk he once took with his five-year-old child (LB 68-69). He sets the scene thus:

I have a boy of five years old,

His face is fair and fresh to see;

His limbs are cast in beauty's mold,

And dearly he loves me.

One morn we stroll'd on our dry walk,

Our quiet house all full in view,

And held such intermitted talk

As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;

I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,

My pleasant home, when spring began,

A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear

To think, and think, and think again;

With so much happiness to spare,

I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim

And graceful in his rustic dress!

And oftentimes I talked to him,

In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race;

The morning sun shone bright and warm;

"Kilve," said I, "was a pleasant place,

"And so is Liswyn farm.["]

While invoking classic elements of a pastoral setting (lambs racing, the morning sun shining, the air clear and dry, his home in view, his child beautifully mannered, proportioned and attired – each element of country life in its proper place), the speaker also betrays a few details about himself: He enjoys talk that is intermittent and somewhat idle, presumably because it emerges from the whims and fancies of the present moment; yet he enjoys such talk precisely because it is a luxury that his mental habits and preoccupations do not often afford him. Typically, his thoughts ("To think, and think, and think again") not only intrude upon his happiness ("With so much happiness to spare") but also cause him actual suffering ("I could not feel a pain"), from which the pleasures of this particular moment have provided him a brief respite.

Yet not for long. In pondering two different places – the farm at Liswyn where he presently resides and the shore of Kilve where he had been a year before – the speaker has found himself describing *both of them* as "pleasant," and this will not do. A decision must be made. The poem continues:

"My little boy, which like you more,"

I said and took him by the arm –

"Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,

"Or here at Liswyn farm?"

"And tell me, had you rather be,"

I said and held him by the arm,

"At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,

"Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he looked at me,

While still I held him by the arm,

And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be

"Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so;

My little Edward, tell me why;"

"I cannot tell, I do not know."

"Why this is strange," said I.

Having described two places as "pleasant," the speaker apparently feels compelled to settle which of the two is *more* pleasant. Curiously, though this compulsive tendency to ask questions and answer them is a habit of his own mind, he attempts to impose this compulsion on the boy, whose name is Edward. The speaker also follows the first question ("which like you more…?") with a second one (where "had you rather be"?), applying physical pressure with each of the two questions. In asking the first question, the speaker "took him by the arm," and in asking the second, the speaker "held him by the arm" – a repetition that gives the gesture great weight.

The boy makes the decision that the speaker requires, but this is not the end of it. Now the speaker poses a third question, asking why Edward prefers the house by the shore at Kilve. The boy replies, "I cannot tell, I do not know," and the speaker finds this admission "strange," presumably because he thinks it strange to have a feeling or opinion without knowing its cause.

"For, here are woods and green-hills warm;

"There surely must some reason be

"Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm

"For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy, so fair and slim,

Hung down his head, nor made reply;

And five times did I say to him,

"Why? Edward, tell me why?"

The speaker lists the attributes of Liswyn farm ("woods and green-hills warm") and Kilve ("by the green sea") with the hope that one of these will strike Edward as the cause of his unfounded feeling. Like the speaker of Wordsworth's "We Are Seven," the adult continues to prod the child: *Why, why, why?! There must be some reason! Explain yourself! Be rational!* Finally, the boy relents. Seeing a weathervane on a roof nearby, he offers an 'explanation' that is apparently accidental.

His head he raised – there was in sight,

It caught his eye, he saw it plain –

Upon the house-top, glittering bright,

A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,

And thus to me he made reply;

"At Kilve there was no weather-cock,

"And that's the reason why."

In response to an external pressure, the child either naively or deceitfully identifies the weathervane as "the reason" for his preference. In view of the fact that Edward does *not* accept any of the speaker's suggestions as the basis for his preference (he might, for example, have replied, 'The house at Kilve is by the sea, / And there do I prefer to be'), it seems possible that Edward has willfully invented this "reason" as an act of defiance against the pressures the speaker has placed on him. However, whether Edward's resolution of the inquiry is disingenuous or not, it is in any case a false one. If the scientific method aims to form hypotheses and perform tests without influencing and corrupting the results of those tests, then one must concede that the speaker's manipulations of his experimental subject represent a gross misapplication of that method. By framing the inquiry with the assumption that one answer or the other *must* be the case and that no other possibility is conceivable, the speaker's conclusions can hardly be trusted.

In the poem's concluding lines, the speaker seems to recognize this misapplication of the scientific method:

Oh dearest, dearest boy! my heart

For better lore would seldom yearn,

Could I but teach the hundredth part

Of what from thee I learn.

The speaker claims to have learned a lesson. Fittingly, this poem, which urges readers to resist mental compulsions and premature assertions, does not explicitly tell readers what this lesson is. However, the poem's title, "Anecdote for Fathers, *Shewing How the Art of Lying May Be Taught*," offers a significant clue. The subtitle implies that Edward's choice of the weathervane is an example of the art of lying. Therefore, the speaker has learned that his insistence upon being given a reason for Edward's preference has induced Edward to invent one. What else might the speaker have learned? There are many possibilities: not to impose his internal compulsions on others; not to leverage his own power or advantage; not to pressure children without due cause; not to assume that every feeling or intuition *has* a cause, etc. Of course, Edward has learned a lesson as well, and the tension between the lessons learned by Edward and the speaker imbues the poem with its bittersweet mood. In the very moment that the adult has begun to appreciate and respect the child's 'pre-rational' state, the child has already been forced to become more 'rational.' On this layer, the poem mourns the loss of innocence and wonder that occurs when whimsical children are forced to transform into rational adults. Yet the poem also undermines these binary associations. It invites its readers to ask why the speaker finds it so "strange" that someone (not just a child) should say, "I do not know." Is a willingness to admit what one does not know so very strange? If a reader of the poem takes the distinction between pre-rational child and rational adult as a given, then that reader will merely ask whether the speaker was behaving very rationally when he made all these demands for rationality in a child. This interpretation of the poem treats rationality as the ideal while putting the speaker's rationality into question. However, according to a different interpretation, the poem puts rationality itself into question. It interrogates not only the speaker's compulsions but also the compulsions of an entire culture that is preoccupied with identifying causes, demanding reasons, and knowing why.

Heinrich's stance in *White Noise* is a logical consequence of Edward's lesson in "Anecdote for Fathers." What Edward and Heinrich have in common is an increasing dexterity when it comes to the art of lying. Edward demonstrates how quickly the pursuit of knowledge can transform into this art of lying – into the premature acceptance of an immediate and gratifying closure that demeans intellectual engagement. In demanding this closure, Wordsworth's speaker is unwittingly enforcing the explanatory agenda of the Enlightenment, and "Anecdote for Fathers" shows how this Enlightenment agenda has backfired. Just as the five-year-old boy of 1798 may ultimately learn to accept premature opinions formed by himself and those around him, so does the fourteen-year-old boy of 1985 learn to trust a mendacious virtual world of representations, rejecting not only the lived world of his senses but also, to some extent, the fact world of received scientific truth. Furthermore, the concessions Edward makes reluctantly, Heinrich makes willingly. Wordsworth's "Anecdote for Fathers" shows how the cycle begins (with a cultural compulsion to acquire knowledge), and DeLillo's *White Noise* shows how it ends (when the virtual technologies, invented through scientific innovation, finally replace the empirical, trial-and-error bases of scientific truth). And if Wilder's horror in the face of ovens is any indication, the lesson Edward has learned on a rural farm at the end of the 18th century is now being taught much, much earlier in life. It is, indeed, being spoon-fed to infants as they stare at (and eventually, into) the TVs in front of them.

The subtitle of "Anecdote for Fathers" encourages us to ponder the broader consequences of Edward's lesson in lying and Heinrich's faith in simulations. Together these two texts suggest that children ultimately learn to trust received truths over and above their own sensations, and this invites the question: When do we become experts at the "art of lying"? How does it show itself in our everyday thoughts and doings? What internal and external forces induce us to learn and perform this art? In what ways does it benefit or harm society or the individual? Though Wordsworth's notion of the child as father is paradoxical, his sense of how this child becomes an adult is fairly straight-forward. The child is father of the man because he has not learned the art of lying to others or, more importantly, to himself. The speaker of "Anecdote for Fathers" urges the child to identify reasons and causes, and before long the child will internalize these external pressures. Just as he will unconsciously begin to obey the self-imposed restrictions of the superego, so will he unconsciously begin to seek and accept convenient explanations that satisfy others and himself. Eventually, he will become conditioned to fear unanswered questions. Uncertainties will confront him as painful and hateful distractions from what he believes and from what he must accomplish. To relieve this tension, he will stop pondering and simply tell himself that he already knows.

"Anecdote for Fathers" presents a peculiar view of knowledge and its pursuit. What is Wordsworth's epistemology (or theory of knowledge)? Does it correspond with the epistemological views of other Romantic writers from the late 18th and early 19th centuries? A century and a half ago, Matthew Arnold authorized the opinion that the British Romantics were talented yet naïve devotees of sense experience who "did not know enough" (FC 262). In a sense, Arnold was on to something: These were writers who intentionally privileged the unknown – the *search for* wisdom – over and above the known; who urged their readers to sustain their commitment to the outside world voluntarily, instead of settling for an abstract closure that would rarely – or never – adequately characterize the phenomena under consideration. In short, these Romantic writers advocated wonder, a voluntary mental exertion that suspends judgment and sustains engagement. Arnold's claim that the British Romantics did not know enough parallels a claim of the late Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: "It may actually be said that Socrates knew nothing, for he did not reach the systematic construction of a philosophy." In a departure from the early work in which Hegel showed great respect for the positive skepticisim of a philosophy of wonder, Socrates's shortcoming leads Hegel in this later text to dismiss his method as "only a subjective form of dialectic, for real dialectic deals with the reasons for things" (HLHP I.398-99). Yet it is precisely this obsession with "the reasons for things" that Wordsworth, like Socrates, wishes to challenge, complicate and enrich. As a concrete symbol, Edward's weathervane reminds me that if in searching for "reasons" I treat all my "subjective" experiences as means toward the end of "real dialectic," I could overlook and even obscure or pervert the meanings and subtler features of those experiences.

In characterizing Edward as a teacher of lessons, "Anecdote for Father" does not suggest that Edward is a receptacle of absolute truth or (as a conventional view of Romanticism would suggest) of visionary insight. What it suggests is precisely the opposite. What makes Edward a wise philosopher is his willingness to say, "I do not know." In his *Apology,* Socrates narrates a story that concludes with the amusing admission that (as the oracle at Delphi had confirmed) there is no one wiser than himself. In making this claim, however, he is merely saying, "'I am

likely to be wiser than [other people] to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know'" (Plato 1981 27).

Wordsworth's child and Plato's Socrates share an epistemological openness that is most accurately characterized as a philosophy of wonder. How does such a philosophy express itself in practice? While a misguided skeptic might interpret the ancient philosophical epochê (or suspension of judgment) as a departure from the world and its concerns, the Romantics indicated that in its true spirit the epochê involves a heightened attention that resists both belief *and* disbelief. The misguided skeptic doubts everything, refusing to engage with other points of view; the Romantic refuses to *stop* engaging. The Romantic epochê, thus, marks a return to a philosophy of wonder that is positive in orientation. When the ancient skeptics first encouraged the suspension of judgment, they did so with the understanding that the lover of wisdom should be hospitable to the initial "impulse" of philosophical questioning without prematurely surrendering to the desire to "assert" or endorse any particular point of view.[216] Like Socrates,[217] they refused to state their opinions because an "opinion" (or an "assent to the ungraspable") is "a mark of imprudence and the cause of [moral] mistakes."[218] The word 'skepticism' is today understood as a denial of knowledge that is merely negative in orientation, but to the ancient Greeks who first used this word it simply meant 'inquiry.'[219] Resisting this merely negative skepticism, the Romantics remind us that at its roots, philosophy is the love not of finite knowledge but of infinite wisdom. Philosophy does not *content itself* with certitude; it is not a container to be filled but a sieve through which each possibility flows and is examined in turn.

In associating the child with a wise philosopher and the adult (and the false child or "dwarf man") with an unwise wielder of premature opinions, Wordsworth was neither first nor last among his Romantic contemporaries. Though he is unlikely to have read any of William Blake's poems before 1798,[220] Blake developed similar associations in his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789-94). Readers of Blake would be correct in associating wonder with Blakean "Innocence," which, as Kathleen Raine observes, is not ignorance but an active state of "unclouded, unhindered life" (Raine 58). Blake's *Songs* might well be a direct response to Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), which identifies the ignorance of children (or "naturals") as evidence that human beings are irrational at birth and only learn to reason as a result of experience. Blake complains that Newton and Locke "mock Inspiration & Vision" (E 660-61), and he objects to the trajectory of Locke's *Essay*, which implies that sensations and concrete particulars are important primarily because in experiencing them I eventually become capable of classifying them, generalizing about them and forming rational judgments. According to Blake, it is not the children who are ignorant but those who generalize. "To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit," he declares. "General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess" (E 641). While Blake's account of "Innocence" demonstrates a great reverence for the child's openness to *sense experience*, he demeans the form of "Experience" that encourages adults to 'be reasonable' and 'have some common sense.' According to Blake, this second form of experience *limits* sense experience: "For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" (E 39). Contrary to today's commonly held belief that experience broadens our viewpoint and enlarges our world, Blake believes that experience is world-narrowing and life-negating. He implicitly addresses these themes on the frontispieces of *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. In the first plate a cherub flies above a man's head as the man looks upward (plate 1); in the second, the man clutches the cherub's arms, and the cherub rests, willingly or unwillingly, on the man's

squared shoulders (plate 2). The adult in the frontispiece to *Songs of Experience* draws the child down onto the hard shoulders of the fact world, insisting, like the speaker of "Anecdote for Fathers," that intuition and imagination must eventually submit to the strictures of scientific rationality. In his later work, Blake vividly expresses the violence that experienced elders enact upon innocent children in a plate entitled "Aged Ignorance" (plate 3; E 265), which portrays a bearded man who is taking shears to the wings of a naked child. While "Anecdote for Fathers" portrays the art of lying as a supplement (or something learned), Blake's "Aged Ignorance" emphasizes that when the child learns the art of lying something significant is taken away (or unlearned). The plate's title and caption ("Perceptive Organs closed their Objects close") indicate that the experiences of the "Aged" instill "Ignorance," not wisdom, and that these experiences "close" off not only one's senses but also the phenomenal world that one's senses disclose. Blake often blames the explanation-driven sciences, embodied in the trio of Bacon, Newton and Locke, for these negative impacts upon human life.[221] His disdain for that great advocate of "Experience" is implicit in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790) where he writes of "a Dragon-Man" who is busy "clearing away the rubbish from a caves mouth" (40) – a disdaining echo of the moment in the *Essay* when Locke defers to "the incomparable Mr. Newton" and likens himself to an "Under-Labourer" who is merely "clearing Ground a little, and removing some of the Rubbish, that lies in the way of Knowledge" (Locke 10). According to Blake, Locke has become so preoccupied with clearing this narrow stretch of ground he has, ironically, failed to notice that he is still in Plato's cave.

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855-92) also yields suggestive parallels with Wordsworth's treatments of childhood.[222] One of the untitled poems of 1855 begins with these lines:

> There was a child went forth every day,
>
> And the first object he looked upon and received with wonder or pity or love or dread, that object he became,
>
> And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day . . . . or for many years or stretching cycles of years (138).

Contrary to the dualistic model of objective thought, which constantly reaffirms my role as a thinking subject with a privileged external relationship to other objects, Whitman's child *becomes* the object instead of observing it. It would be easy to assume that Whitman is describing a child's thoughtless ecstasies. However, though the child is in some sense positioned 'beside' or 'outside' himself, he is also experiencing a common feature of sense experience that is not only more natural but also more fundamental and responsible than the alternative presented by objective thought. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty notes, the dualistic model takes for granted that the object is *really* there – that "the object *is* in itself, or absolutely, without wondering *what* it is" (my italics; POP 237). Yet this 'objective' assumption, this faith in the reality of subject / object dualism, does not correspond with the way phenomena appear in the world. "If there is, for me, a cube with six equal sides, and if I can link up with the object," Merleau-Ponty says, "this is not because I constitute it from the inside: it is because I delve into the thickness of the world by perceptual experience" (POP 237). This act of delving can result in "a disclosure of the world," which Merleau-Ponty calls "radical reflection" or "wonder" (POP xxiii; xv). In this

state, Whitman's child feels an "Affection that will not be gainsayed," which leads him to question radically …

> . . . . The sense of what is real . . . . the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
>
> The doubts of daytime and the doubts of nighttime . . . the curious whether and how,
>
> Whether that which appears so is so . . . . Or is it all flashes and specks? (139).

With an immeasurable affection for beings and objects, the child attends to his world with the interested questioning of a philosopher. So "curious whether and how" is this child, he is even willing to concede that some appearances might prove to be mere "flashes and specks." Whitman here challenges another article of Cartesian faith: that all objects, properly perceived, are determinate. In an effort to counteract the Cartesian preference for the clear and distinct, Merleau-Ponty says, "We must recognize that the indeterminate is a positive phenomenon" (POP 7). In assuming that all objects are innately determinate, one gives priority to objective thought over lived experience. Unlike most adults, Whitman's child is willing to concede that the indeterminate is not merely a negative phenomenon that results from a momentary failure of one's perceptual organs. As in Wordsworth's and Blake's poetry, it is not some naïve or baffled idiocy that makes children insightful observers of the world. Rather, while adults carelessly judge and prematurely dismiss phenomena that deserve greater scrutiny, children are determined to question, experiment and remain attentive. Unfortunately, as children learn the art of lying, endure the severing of their wings, and succumb to believing that objects are 'real' and that flashes and specks are 'unreal,' their perceptual and intellectual horizons begin to diminish.

c) Romanticism and Postmodernity

> I think we feel, perhaps superstitiously,
>
> that children have a direct route to, have
>
> direct contact to the kind of natural truth
>
> that eludes us as adults.
>
> ~ Don DeLillo, in an interview (1988)[223]

In confessing his tendency to see children as repositories of some kind of "natural truth," DeLillo refers to a suspicion that many people harbor and that is often ascribed to the influence of Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Blake and Whitman. Yet as this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, poems such as Wordsworth's "Anecdote for Fathers," far from labeling the child as the bearer of natural truths, instead label the adult as the bearer of premature opinions. In their thirst to acquire knowledge and in their desperation to believe (and to have others believe) that they possess it, adults betray a compulsion to acquire knowledge that children have not yet been conditioned to feel. While commentators are accustomed to saying that Romantic texts exhibit a "faith in the insightfulness of childhood perception" and a faith in the possibility of "visionary moments" that are "typically premised on metaphysical assumptions of supernal truth" (Maltby 498-99, 506, 499), Wordsworth's "Anecdote for Fathers," instead, implies that Edward is (in

Lyotard's words) a natural postmodernist whose "incredulity toward metanarratives" is evident in his resistance to false truths (or "transcendental illusion[s]") (Lyotard xxiv, 81). Edward's lesson to Wordsworth's speaker does not amount to a bestowal of truth. Rather, in not wishing or needing to know what he does not know, Edward models for Wordsworth's speaker an epistemological practice that resembles the openness of the wondering philosopher. Those who take the child as the bearer of natural truths or visionary insights forget Blake's and Freud's diagnoses of the external and internal perceptions of adults: Children see the world more clearly than adults because their views are neither restricted by "mind-forg'd manacles" nor obscured by "the narrow chinks of [a] cavern" (E 27, 39), and children see themselves more clearly than do adults because the "contradictory feelings" that adults commonly repress "are able to coexist peacefully in the heart of a child for some time" (LH 93). Children do not know the truth; yet they feel compelled neither to know what they do not know nor to feel what they do not feel. Their advantage in inquiry is epistemological, not metaphysical.

If there is any single poem responsible for the notion that Romantic poets view children as receptacles of metaphysical truths, perhaps it is Wordsworth's great *Ode*, which describes "Intimations of Immortality" that derive from "Recollections of Early Childhood." As Thomas McFarland has observed, there appears to be tension between this poem, in which the speaker calls the child the "best Philosopher," the "Mighty Prophet! Seer blest! / On whom those truths do rest, / Which we are toiling all our lives to find" (WPW 461), and Wordsworth's *Prelude*, which was initially conceived as a poem that would describe the *growth* of the poet's mind. As McFarland puts it, the "aspiration to trace the growth of the poet's mind is in direct conflict with Wordsworth's apotheosis of childhood, for he believed that children need no growth, that they are 'blest, and powerful,' that they already possess 'those truths' that 'we are toiling all our lives to find'" (McFarland 1982a 603; see also McFarland 1982b). In light of the preceding discussion, one observes that "Anecdote for Fathers" offers a much needed corrective to the mildly over-enthusiastic claims of the speaker of Wordsworth's *Ode*. But in what sense do children possess "truths"? Perhaps what they possess is not so much metaphysical truths as an epistemological openness which, in the case of children like Freud's Little Hans, allows "contradictory feelings" to "coexist peacefully" in their hearts without any awareness that they are contradictory (LH 93). Their "truths," therefore, are those that all humans are capable of possessing if they can successfully suppress the critical faculty that Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, suggested was central not merely to the work of the creative artist but also to the work of psychoanalysis (ID 134). How many fathers and mothers admit to themselves that they can feel jealous of the attention their children receive from their spouses, or that they can resent their children for all the new complexities and worries that parenthood brings? How many mourners can admit that the death of a beloved family member was preferable to the harried, dread-filled waiting game of witnessing a slow and painful human demise? Few adults can admit to themselves that they can think such selfish things, because their judgment tells them, A) I am a good person, B) only a bad person would think such things, and C) therefore, I do not think such things. By contrast, a child is perfectly willing to admit about him or herself what no adult would be willing to admit. The best philosopher, then, is the one who has the wisdom to know things that most adults are unwilling to know and eager to rationalize away. Though it makes sense that McFarland should observe a "direct conflict" between Wordsworth's claim that the child is the "best Philosopher" and his claim that the poet's mind requires "growth," this conflict is grounded in a category error: Children possess wisdom, not knowledge; they possess the proper epistemological attitude, not metaphysical truths. The growth of the poet's mind

begins, like creative work itself, only after the proper epistemological attitude is achieved: the suppression of a critical faculty (or the suspension of a natural attitude) which children have not yet developed.

The Romantic philosophy of wonder is much misunderstood, because (as these pages have suggested) modern philosophers and aestheticians have often conflated wonder with astonishment and mistaken wonder for a naïve, undiscriminating, anti-rational attitude toward the phenomenal world. Such slippages occasionally occur in DeLillo's novels as well. Astonishment, wonder and premodern philosophy are each, in some sense, unproductive. However, while astonishment consists in an involuntary over-fullness of mind and cessation of engagement that is truly unproductive, wonder and the love of wisdom consist in a voluntarily sustained engagement and suspension of judgment that would more accurately be labeled as intentionally *non-productive*.[224] When in *White Noise* Babette's father Vernon makes a surprise visit, Jack says of Babette that upon finding her father in the kitchen, "Nothing remained but her ability to gape…. I watched her face fill to the brim with numb wonder" (WN 246). Despite DeLillo's apparent preference for the word wonder, it would be more accurate to classify Babette's reaction as one of astonishment, since speaking of a "numb wonder" is like speaking of an 'inactive activity' as opposed to the "passivity in activity" of a philosophical wonder (EJ 108); one can imagine it but it would be more concise and appropriate to use a different word. While one should distinguish wonder from astonishment in terms of the voluntary activity of the first and the involuntary passivity of the second, one should distinguish wonder and sublimity in terms of their *orientations* and their commitment to the aesthetic object. Central to the opposing orientations of these two activities is the concept of transcendence. While sublimity actively seeks transcendence and uses the aesthetic object as a means toward that end, wonder is a hovering middle state of the mind that actively *resists* transcendence and maintains its engagement with and respect for the aesthetic object.[225] DeLillo does not consistently respect this resistance. After hearing his daughter Steffie whisper the words "Toyota Celica" in her sleep, Jack reflects:

> A long moment passed before I realized this was the name of an automobile. The truth only amazed me more. The utterance was beautiful and mysterious, gold-shot with looming wonder. It was like the name of an ancient power in the sky, tablet-carved in cuneiform. It made me feel that something hovered. But how could this be?... (WN 155).

Jack's description offers a fine model for the sustained questioning and hovering attention of an active wonder. Yet the paragraph concludes with the announcement, "Whatever its source, the utterance struck me with the impact of a moment of splendid transcendence" (155). Here the text either conflates wonder and sublimity or describes Jack's transition from an experience of wonder to one of sublimity. The possibility of a conflation becomes more plausible if one allows for the consideration of a moment in the same interview cited above, in which DeLillo describes the "extraordinary wonder of things" as a form of "transcendence" (O 63).

Yet DeLillo's treatment of wonder is also a consequence of living and writing in a post-apocalyptic age. The chemical sunsets, the conspiracy theories and the escapes from actuality into virtuality that appear in his novels can all be sources either of wonder or of sublimity, yet in the present age, as the result of a diminished lifeworld, they are more often sources of a self-directed sublimity than an other-directed wonder. Indeed, *White Noise* helps readers to

understand why this is. In modernity – and particularly in today's post-apocalyptic, mass-media culture – there is a pervasive form of escapism that premodern epistemology and the Romantic philosophy of wonder have sought to resist – an escape from the bored, condescending, desensitized attitude that seeks comfort in premature judgment and belief. Just as Hegel avers that Socrates could be said not to know anything because he never constructed a system, so does Arnold aver that the Romantics did not know enough because poets like Wordsworth and Blake sought to suspend judgment and admire the natural epistemological openness of the child who has not yet been inculcated by a culture of self-righteous belief. In *White Noise*, DeLillo dramatizes the world of a postmodern child who takes a mother's appearance on a TV screen or a radio announcer's prediction of rain as more real than a mother's embrace or rain on a windshield. These are exaggerations that conceal a poignant, nut-hard kernel of truth. With its 1985 publication, *White Noise* prophetically characterized the diminishing lifeworld of a child whose reality would become even more impoverished a decade afterwards with the opening of cyberspace. Yet before Simmel, Freud and DeLillo, Wordsworth and his Romantic contemporaries glimpsed the damaging impact that violent stimulants would have on the human capacity to think and feel. Rejecting Hegel's and Arnold's views of intellectual inquiry and human progress, they sought to renew a premodern philosophy of wonder.

Epistemology, Ethics, and Wordsworth's "Thoughtful Wonder":

A Conclusion

When I began my graduate work at Stony Brook, Wordsworth and Byron were circulating in my head. I'd written on them as an undergraduate at UVA; my research on them had introduced me to the scholarly work of Dr. Peter J. Manning; and a paper I'd written on Byron, submitted as a writing sample, had brought me into contact with Dr. Manning himself, who invited me to campus to sit in on the spring seminar he was teaching. After this fortuitous encounter with my future mentor in the field of Romanticism, I had another bit of luck. Though I had developed only a passing familiarity with phenomenology as an undergraduate, I felt drawn to enroll that first semester in a course in the philosophy department called "Toward a Merleau-Pontian Aesthetic," which Dr. Edward S. Casey was teaching. As I read for the first time Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and his essays on aesthetics such as "Cézanne's Doubt" and "Eye and Mind," I was also serving as Dr. Manning's teaching assistant for an undergraduate survey course, which allowed me to lead small-group discussions every Friday on writers such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, Byron and Keats, Lamb and Hazlitt, Austen and Edgeworth. The interplay between Romanticism and phenomenology was extremely thought provoking. During my time as an undergraduate at UVA, I had been enriched by the opportunity to participate in courses and engage in an independent study with the late Dr. Richard Rorty, who inspired me to blend literature and philosophy in my writings as his courses had done as Sterling Professor of Humanities. The paper I wrote for Dr. Casey – the first one I produced as a Ph.D. student at Stony Brook – examined the phenomenological aspects of Wordsworth's poetry and prose, and it touched upon the importance of philosophical wonder in poetic and phenomenological practice. Unknowingly, I had stumbled upon a subject that would preoccupy me for years to come.

In the introduction and part I of this study, I surveyed several instances of wonder that have appeared in Romantic writings, observing that Wordsworth's poetry and prose provide a peculiarly rich and salient example of what I have been calling the Romantic renewal of philosophical wonder: the steadfast effort of numerous Romantic-period writers to remain intellectually engaged while resisting premature judgments, in this way privileging the premodern love of wisdom over the Enlightenment love of system. Along the way I sought to offer a new take on old questions about whether Wordsworth's writings are in some sense philosophical. Like many commentators, my conclusion was, "Yes, Wordsworth is a philosopher of sorts," but my aim in this study has been to describe the epistemological attitude and practices that are evident in Wordsworth's poetry and prose instead of allowing my analysis to be guided by speculations about which philosophers had influenced him either through his own readings or through accounts of different philosophies that he might have gleaned from his friendship with Coleridge.

My writings have been spurred by a conviction that there is something strange about Arnold's claim that the Romantics "did not know enough" (FC 262), and about F. R. Leavis's claim that Wordsworth "hadn't enough material" to compose a philosophical poem, having "not a philosophy" but "a wisdom to communicate" (Leavis 163); something strange about W. B. Gallie's claim that Wordsworth successfully identified "the inadequacies of certain of our categories," but that he failed to fulfill his goals because he "had not the ingenuity to replace these categories by a new system" (Gallie 664). Above all, there is something strange about the

fact that Coleridge spoke of Wordsworth's *Prelude* as a "philosophico-biographical Poem" in one letter (CL II.1104), only to demand in a later letter that Wordsworth's *Recluse* exhibit the "matter and arrangement of *Philosophy*" and "the Totality of a System" (CL IV.574). It seemed to me that Wordsworth was doing something very different from what these commentators expected, and not merely by accident; he was creating poetry that was deeply philosophical in way that they didn't, or didn't consistently, understand or appreciate.

Yet what was this 'way' that Wordsworth had found? To me it seemed like a higher way (method or *meta-hodos*) that for him also served as a way *out* (exodus or *ex-hodos*); it seemed like a way of pursuing wisdom and exploring human consciousness *without* pursuing system and yearning to make objective discoveries.

When my reading time became divided between the writings of Romantics, phenomenologists, and psychoanalysts, I began to glimpse certain parallels between these approaches that seemed too pervasive to be merely coincidental. Each group of writers describes a natural attitude or critical faculty which, like "mind-forg'd manacles" (E 27) or the "yoke" of "custom" (V.544-45; PP 198-200), places a "film of familiarity" over the whole phenomenal world (BL II.7; DP 533), restricting one's awareness of that world and of the senses and mental activities that disclose it, so that it is almost as if "man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" (E 39). Moreover, each group of writers forwards a positive version of the skeptical epochê (or suspension of judgment), whether in the form of Wordsworth's "wise passiveness" (WPW 377), Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief" or "negative faith" (BL II.6, 134, 214), Keats' "*Negative Capability*" (KSL 41), Freud's "suppress[ion] of the critical faculty" (ID 134), or Husserl's phenomenological reduction, which begins with a suspension of the natural attitude and which he explicitly associates with the ancient skeptical epochê (I 61). Finally, several of these writers affirmed that the two preceding characteristics – the defamiliarizing quality of their descriptions and the suspension of judgment that enables these descriptions – gain their positive flavor and avoid falling into a merely negative skepticism because they are sustained and fuelled by philosophical wonder – the epistemological attitude that premodern thinkers said was fundamental to philosophical inquiry and that Enlightenment thinkers demeaned out of a preference for knowledge production and totalizing system.

In my research, I was initially struck by Coleridge's and Shelley's explicit avowals that the defamiliarizing efforts of poets aimed to expose people to the wonders of the world. According to Coleridge's account in the *Biographia*, Wordsworth's poetry was designed to provoke this unveiling of wonders in his readers by "awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us" (BL II.7). In a similar vein, and most likely under Coleridge's influence, Shelley observes that poetry "strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty which is the spirit of its forms," further asserting that poetry "purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being" (DP 533). As Hegel says, "the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood" (§31; PS 18), and it was exciting to see these Romantic writers embracing a task that was as philosophical as it was poetic.

Yet sensing, as I did, that my favorite poets were not merely seeking to reveal wonders but to cultivate an attitude of philosophical wonder, I thought there was more to it than this.

Finding in the steps of Husserl's phenomenological reduction the most detailed guide to the cultivation of philosophical wonder ever recorded, I sought to demonstrate that the philosophico-poetical impulses of the Romantics were guided by a quasi-method which, while certainly less detailed than that of Husserl, was also more self-conscious and explicit than the "spontaneous phenomenology" that Hartman observed in Wordsworth's works (Hartman 1987 xxvi-xxvii).

I felt confirmed in my suspicions when I heard Wordsworth proclaim in his Essay Supplementary that as a poet he aspires to "treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*," and that he believes this approach to poetry, "if genuine, is as permanent as pure science" (his italics; PW III.63). Wordsworth's remarks seemed to resonate with Husserl's aspiration to produce "piece[s] of pure description" that are "*prior to any 'theory'*" and that would, as manifestations of a "universal science of subjectivity," have the potential to provide new foundations "for all objective sciences" (his italics; I 56; Husserl 1970 147).

I felt further confirmed in my suspicions when I came across *MS. Y* of *The Prelude* and heard Wordsworth's speaker describe the "everyday appearances, which now [as the child matures] / The spirit of thoughtful wonder first pervades" – appearances which, as the child transforms into an adult, "Become familiar, agitate us less" (lines 35-36, 18; NCP 501). In this passage that Wordsworth had excised from *The Prelude*, the speaker sang not of the world's wonders but of "The spirit of thoughtful wonder" – an attitude supplied by the thinking subject – which disclosed these appearances, attended to them, and endowed them with significance.

Yet why had the passage been excised? Surely my aim of demonstrating that Wordsworth's *Prelude* represented the culmination of his philosophy of wonder – the dissertation project that I had already fully mapped out by the time I first encountered *MS. Y* – might have been more convincing if Wordsworth had included the passage in the 1805 or 1850 versions of the poem.

Then I finished reading the passage, as excerpted in the Norton Critical *Prelude* (NCP 500-05), and it occurred to me that my phenomenological interpretation of Wordsworth provided a way to understand why the passage might have been excised in the first place. Just as the Essay Supplementary (in a passage examined in chapter four) outlines and describes prejudices that undermine the ability of readers to appreciate poetry, so does *MS. Y* outline and describe prejudices that undermine the thinking subject's ability to appreciate the phenomenal world. While the ideal reader of poetry has the "leisure" to treat it "*as a study*" (his italics; PW III.62), the ideal observer of the phenomenal world

> … sees in the heavens
>
> A blue vault merely and a glittering cloud,
>
> One old familiar likeness over all,
>
> A superficial pageant, known too well
>
> To be regarded – he looks nearer, calls
>
> The stars out of their shy retreats and parts

> The milky stream into its separate forms,
>
> Loses and finds again, when baffled most
>
> Not least delighted (lines 140-48; NCP 503).

Wordsworth's speaker is aware that the problem with an "old familiar likeness" is that it is (in Hegel's words) "not cognitively understood" (§31; PS 18), and that it will remain so as long as I continue to think of this "superficial pageant" as "known too well / To be regarded." To adequately witness the strangeness and novelty of the phenomenal world, I must look nearer, call out minute particulars from what is otherwise one familiar appearance; I must distill from this appearance the "separate forms" that constitute it, lose them and find them again, allow myself to be baffled and delighted. Yet in *MS. Y*, the speaker's description of the ideal observer of the phenomenal world leads to a sobering moment of recognition that the author seems, in excising the passage, to have intentionally suppressed. For when turning this attentive gaze "upon mankind," this observer encounters "sordid men, / And transient occupations, and desires / Ignoble and depraved," and ultimately finds him or herself "ascending in apparent slight / Of man," preferring the phenomenal world to the world of human communion (lines 191, 195-97, 212-13; NCP 504-05). Though I find it surprising that the many luminous moments in this passage did not find their way into the writings Wordsworth published during his lifetime, I suspect that the whole of it was excised when the poet was forced to acknowledge that his train of thought might open him up to complaints of solipsism – complaints with which Husserl would later be confronted.[226]

What other reasons might he have had for omitting the passage? In chapter six, I speculated that Wordsworth might have omitted his reference to "The time of unrememberable being" (CP 115) – his most explicit reference to the period of childhood amnesia in the *Prelude* manuscripts – from Book I of *The Prelude* on the theory (later articulated by Hemingway) that "you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood" (Hemingway 63-64). In excising the revealing admission that the ideal observer of the phenomenal world might ultimately find him or herself "ascending in apparent slight / Of man," Wordsworth again decides to omit a direct statement that would have given readers a clearer sense of his stance as a poet, a philosopher, and a human being. Maybe the mysterious power of *The Prelude* – this largely plotless, largely characterless narrative of human consciousness – resides partly in its tacit insistence that the life of the mind and of the senses is quite sufficient without the complexity and messiness of human interaction. Even if (as *MS. Y* indicates) I am "sequestered" like the "monk or priest" of former ages or like the "Indian when in solitude / And individual glory he looks [out] / From some high eminence upon a tract / Boundless of unappropriated earth" (lines 200-01, 205-08; NCP 504-05), I can lead a rich and fulfilling existence as long as I have cultivated a wondering attention to the worlds of internal and external phenomena.

However, it also seems distinctly possible that Wordsworth omitted the passage not (or not merely) because its felt presence lent the poem additional power, but because accusations of misanthropy, egotism and solipsism would have disturbed him even as his solitude soothed and stimulated him. In an earlier incarnation, this project was a great deal larger, until I decided that it really deserved to be two separate projects: the present project, which focuses on the role of philosophical wonder in Wordsworth's poetry and prose; and a companion project, which instead

focuses upon wonder's role as an other-directed aesthetic attitude that (as gestured toward in chapter eight) serves as an ethical counterpoint to a self-directed sublimity. While the present project is informed primarily by psychoanalysts and phenomenologists such as Freud, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Straus who attend to consciousness and sense experience, the companion project is informed by phenomenologists such as Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Ricoeur who attend to ethics and (usually indirectly) to its relationship with aesthetics. While Wordsworth does figure in this companion project, and while he was clearly driven in his writings by a yearning to encounter and respect other human beings and to cultivate an ethical attitude, the companion project's primary focus is William Blake – a development that initially surprised me given that Blake in his prophetic works appeared to have sought escape and refuge from the world of earth and human life. I mention this companion project here not to enter into a discussion of Blake but to suggest that as otherworldly as Blake's later works such as *The Four Zoas*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem* often appear, they are, paradoxically, no more otherworldly than the sensuous, super-saturated atmospheres that encompass readers who enter Wordsworth's *Prelude*. While Blake's visionary fantasies portray characters with recognizably human personality traits in a celestial setting, Wordsworth's *Prelude* takes place in some of the most well-traveled cityscapes and landscapes of northern Europe, yet rarely portrays a human interaction. It seems plausible, therefore, to assume that Wordsworth might have felt compelled to omit traces of misanthropy, egocentrism and solipsism from his long autobiographical poem, whether out of a yearning to subdue his egocentric tendencies or out of fear that others would condemn him for them.

Of course, such omissions could not completely elide tendencies that were already so pronounced in Wordsworth's writings. In chapter two, I examined a passage in which Husserl subscribes to the apparently "insane" notion that "the world exists only through an act of mine" (PA 321), and Wordsworth's contemporaries suspected that he entertained similar notions. In an 1816 essay called "On Modern Lawyers and Poets" that served as a veiled (or not so veiled) gibe at Wordsworth, William Hazlitt complains that the author of *Lyrical Ballads* exhibits an "egotism" that is actually a kind of "madness," since the poet "sees nothing but himself and the universe" and "considers the movements of passion in *Lear*, *Othello*, or *Macbeth*, as impertinent, compared with the Moods of his own Mind," the title of a section in Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1807 (Hazlitt V.162-4). Hazlitt's polemics would later inspire Keats to distinguish between "the camelion Poet" who, like Shakespeare, "has no Identity," and "the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone" (KSL 147-48, 398). More recently, critics have suggested that such egocentric tendencies represent a denial of socio-historical realities. Just as a Marxist critic such as Terry Eagleton will accuse Husserl of treating the human subject as "the source and origin of all meaning" and as therefore "prior to his history and social conditions" (Eagleton 58), so will a New Historicist critic like Marjorie Levinson accuse the speaker of *Tintern Abbey* of a selective "blindness which assumes the autonomy of the psyche, its happy detachment from the social fact of being," and which allows the "mind" to function "as a barricade to resist the violence of historical change and contradiction" (Levinson 48, 53). This is neither the time nor the place for me to take up these claims. I raise them here not to affirm or deny them but to show that the issues they raise gesture toward an omission of my own, which has dwelled at the back of this study throughout its composition.

In the spirit of resistance, I would like to conclude by proposing something that might seem unorthodox: There is something inherently ethical about the thinking subject's efforts to

cultivate an attitude of philosophical wonder. Even if these efforts are not always motivated by a respect for the face of the Other, or by a commitment to grappling with socio-historical realities, the premodern love of wisdom, which takes wonder not only as its starting point but as its abiding first principle and motive force, and wonder itself, which attends respectfully to whatever appears before it, sustaining consideration and suspending judgment – this wondering love of wisdom already represents a movement toward the ethical. When I encounter Wordsworth's ideal inquirer who in speculation is "like a child," who "Loses and finds again, when baffled most / Not least delighted" (lines 162, 147-48; NCP 503-04); or his "monk or priest" who lives a "sequestered," monastic life like the abbots and novices of Hermann Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* (lines 200-01; NCP 504); or his "Indian" who "looks [out] / From some high eminence upon a tract / Boundless of unappropriated earth" (lines 205-08; NCP 505), I glimpse in each of these solitary, anchorite characters the kind of respectful attention and natural piety that would easily carry over into the worlds of human encounter and social justice. In excising the reference to his ideal inquirer's ascension "in apparent slight / Of man" (lines 212-13; NCP 505), Wordsworth entertained a valid concern – one with which Levinas himself would later grapple: Should any appearance or occurrence – whether it be a fantasy or a philosophical problem, an ancient tree or an ailing animal, a solemn duty or a political demonstration – be permitted to compete with the call of a human face? Levinas compellingly argues not only that it should not compete but that it *cannot* compete. Yet in the end, I believe, life should be understood not as a competing set of imperatives but as a mellifluous array of encounters. Against this broader understanding of ethics, I would contend that wonder is itself ethical.

In this connection, Paul Ricoeur's distinction between the "ethical aim" and the "moral norm" provides a helpful clarification (Ricoeur 1992 169-239). Though ethics and morality are commonly understood as synonyms, Ricoeur reminds us that 'the right thing to do' isn't always so clear. Consequently, he proposes that the ethical "*aim* of an accomplished life" should be given primacy over "the articulation of this aim in *norms*," since as helpful as norms can be, they sometimes also lead to "impasses in practice" (Ricoeur 1992 170). In legal terms, one might say that moral people look to defer to precedents, and ethical people attend to each problem in its own complexity. While moral judgment is prescripted, ethical attention requires imagination, deliberation – even improvisation. Above all, I would argue, ethical attention requires that one cultivate the kind of respectful and thoughtful epistemological attitude that is characteristic of philosophical wonder. After all, *responding* to the call of a human face is well and good; but *how* should one respond? People rarely wish for us to throw ourselves at their feet; they wish for us to *notice* them – to notice what they say, and more often, what they cannot say.

Conveniently, Ricoeur's distinction between the ethical aim and the moral norm provides a suitable framework in which to rehearse and put to rest the overarching concepts of this study. For just as rigid and uncompromising beliefs can serve as obstacles to insight, so can prescripted moral norms, paradoxically, serve as obstacles to ethical behavior, as in cases when *ideas* about right and wrong get in the way of doing someone an actual kindness. Ricoeur discovers practical benefits in distinguishing between two synonymous words, ethics and morality, and this study has sought to demonstrate that there are also practical benefits to distinguishing between two other words that are often thought synonymous, wisdom and knowledge. While a commitment to wisdom and the ethical aim requires the thinking subject to contemplate, discern and deliberate, a commitment to knowledge and moral norms can sometimes be used to sanction

premature judgments and self-righteous complacency. Dogmatists and moralizers love system because it provides the comforts of certainty, closure and purpose, even when these comforts ultimately prove illusory. Wonderers and pursuers of the ethical aim shun such comforts, surmising that the love of wisdom and of the good is a work in progress – a way of life that concludes only with life itself.

William Wordsworth's way of life was not only documented in *The Prelude*; it was *lived* in *The Prelude*. From the cold, Goslar winter of 1798, when he composed its first lines; through the completion of the two-part *Prelude* of 1799, the five-book *Prelude* of 1804, the thirteen-book *Prelude* of 1805; through the decades that would follow, during which he would tinker with the poem now and then, shaping and reshaping it to reflect the new moods and thoughts that possessed him, the new feelings and beliefs; and even into his final years, after more than five decades, *The Prelude* remained his way of life. As a philosopher of consciousness, Wordsworth could not, of course, ever *really* finish a poem that recorded the activities of remembering, imagining and confabulation that perpetually occupied his mind. His mind was still recording. As a philosopher of wonder, he had to resist such a premature conclusion, just as he had resisted Coleridge's yearning for a systematic poem and Wedgwood's for a systematic nursery of genius; just as he had resisted the Enlightenment's yearning to woo, conquer and mirror nature; just as he had resisted his own yearning to erect a poem called *The Recluse* on the model of a gothic church. Though visiting cathedrals had filled him with a sense of wonder, creating a cathedral did not. He had to resist. He had to wonder.

[1] Quoted in L 62; see also Aquinas 1961 24 (Lesson 3, Section 55).
[2] The discussion of wonder and poetry in the first chapters of Book Alpha of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* should not be mistaken with Aristotle's declaration in the *Poetics* – later cited by Wordsworth (PW I.139) – that, "poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts" (Aristotle 1965 43-44).
[3] For Stein's self-congratulatory reflections on the effect of her treatment of the rose and its importance in the history of poetry, see Stein 1966 150-51.
[4] Though first published in 1840, as part of the posthumous two-volume edition of Shelley's *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* that Mary Shelley edited, Shelley's *Defense* was composed in 1821 (DP 509).
[5] Coleridge's description of Wordsworth's poetic aims seems to accord with Wordsworth's own claim in the 1800 Preface that his poems differ from "the popular Poetry of the day" in that in his poems "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling." Both Coleridge and Wordsworth suggest that it is the attentions and feelings of the human subject that determines the value of the object. In this sense, no object is trivial, because objects appear and exist in relationships that endow them with meaning (PW I.128).
[6] On the preoccupation with system among Enlightenment thinkers, see Cassirer vii and 8.
[7] For an extended treatment of Hegel's conception of system as a perpetual organic process, of the positive skepticism that he implicitly appears to advocate (even as he repudiates negative skepticism), and of Hegel's relationship to twentieth-century phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, see appendix one.
[8] Though I am not certain that Poe read Shelley's *Defense* before writing "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the timing of its publication, the content of its opening paragraphs and his devotion to Shelley together make it seem plausible that he might have had Shelley in mind.
[9] Holmes demeans Dupin in *A Study in Scarlet*, calling the French detective "a very inferior fellow" (Doyle 2008 21). However, Doyle himself suggested that Poe had not only invented the modern detective genre but that "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" had accomplished about as much as any detective story could accomplish (Doyle 1908 117-19). By contrast, Terry J. Martin has argued that the Dupin of "Rue Morgue" as distinguished from the Dupins that appear in "The Mystery of Marie Roget" and "The Purloined Letter" does not exemplify the ideal detective that the story's prefatory remarks describe. According to Martin, the story proposes a "redefinition of analysis as an act of imagination," and Dupin's resolution of the crime does not satisfy these redefined criteria (Martin 36). However, Martin too quickly assumes that the story has *replaced* analysis with imagination and consequently ignores the story's explicit (and more interesting) contention that analysis and imagination can function in a mutually implicating and constructive symbiosis.
[10] Coleridge's assertion that, "The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory," seems worded as a reaction to Wordsworth's claim in the Preface of 1815 that fancy is, "under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty" (PW III.37). Chapters four through seven of this study will address Wordsworth's attention to mental faculties in greater detail.
[11] On the resemblance between philosophical wonder and phenomenological method, see PPH and POP xv. Fink's footnotes remind us that at *Theaetetus* 155d and *Metaphysics* 982b11,

respectively, Socrates and Aristotle identify wonder as the natural origin and attitude of philosophical practice (PPH 23-25 and 54-55).

[12] According to Cicero, though Socrates's immediate followers did not preserve the Socratic method of questioning, it was Arcesilaus, the founder of skepticism, who "revived it and required that those who wished to hear him not ask for [his opinion], but should themselves say what they thought; and when they had done so, he maintained the contrary position." Cicero, *On Goals* (2.2), quoted in HP 274.

[13] The British poet John Dryden is aware of this more basic meaning of skepticism, and he claims that the dialogue form of his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* participates in a tradition of "problematical" or "skeptical" inquiry that runs through Plato, Aristotle and Cicero. "Because 'skeptical' in Greek had meant something like 'inquisition' or 'inquiry,'" Earl Miner notes, "and because Dryden associated the dialogue form naturally enough with Plato, it is clear that he was not professing to a full philosophical skepticism or agnosticism" (Miner 27-31).

[14] See *Adversus Mathematicos* (7.150-58) for Sextus Empiricus's account of Arcesilaus's response to the Stoics, which marked the origin of skepticism. Quoted in HP 274-76.

[15] The bracketed text is inserted by the HP editor. See Sextus Empiricus's *Adversus Mathematicos* (7.156-57), quoted in HP 275.

[16] For accounts of the Romantic view of wonder as anti-rational, see Tanner 1967 1-15; Quinn 1969 626 and 647; and Scott 226. For Quinn's slight mitigation of this claim, see Quinn 2002 270-72.

[17] On Aristotle's "restricted use of 'wisdom,'" see Irwin's notes (Aristotle 1999 244).

[18] Anselm concludes the first chapter of his *Proslogium* with these words: "For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, – that unless I believed, I should not understand" (Anselm 53).

[19] This is a consistent theme in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica.* See, for instance, the First Part of the Second Part, Question 3, Article 5.

[20] As Edward S. Casey has observed, to be ambivalent about wonder (and about related aesthetic states such as admiration, surprise and astonishment) is to be "emblematically modern in spirit" (Casey 2007 214).

[21] On the richer, pre-19th century meaning of *admirare* that connotes wonder, see chapter one of Quinn's *Iris Exiled.* Of wonder as the *principium* of philosophy, Pieper explains, "wonder is not merely the beginning in the sense of *initium*, the first stage or phase of philosophy. Rather, wonder is the beginning in the sense of the 'principle' (*principium*), the abiding, ever-intrinsic origin of philosophizing" (L 106). As Pieper elsewhere observes, there is a striking parallel between the Greek *arché* and the Latin *principium*, two words which each combine "two elements of meaning: that of 'origin' and that of 'rule.'" Thus, it is curiously appropriate to render the Greek notion of *thauma* (wonder) as *arché* with the Latin notion of *admirare* as *principium* (Pieper 1960 28-29).

[22] This focus is only natural given the suggestive way that this passage brings Keats's concept of negative capability into connection with two of his other famous formulations: his discussion of Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime" (KSL 147), which he distinguishes from the "capability of submission" (KSL 35) that would allow Shakespeare to become a "camelion poet" with "no self" and "no character," continually "filling some other Body" (KSL 148); and his discussion of the role of beauty in inquiry – in particular, his contention that, "What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth" (KSL 36), which he would later echo in the final lines of his "Ode on a

Grecian Urn" (1820). All three of these famous formulations appear to have emerged in more or less inchoate form in Keats's letters to his new friend Benjamin Bailey, a divinity student at Oxford whom he had met through fellow poet John Hamilton Reynolds during the spring of that year. In Keats's letter to Bailey on November 22, 1817, Keats distinguishes between "Men of Genius" like Shakespeare, who exhibit the "capability of submission," and "Men of Power" (e.g., Wordsworth), who can be nothing other than what they are, the success of their works rising and falling with the rhetorical strength of their distinct persona. In this same letter, he complains of "consequitive reasoning" and makes the claim that, "What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth" (KSL 35-36). On Keats's acquaintance with Bailey and on Bailey's "essential, formative" influence on Keats's intellectual development, see Bate 196-220, especially 196.

[23] On the importance of the word "irritable" in Keats's formulation, see Bate 249.

[24] At this point, one might wonder how to view the earlier account of Hegel as in any way compatible with the resistance to synthesis evident in post-Hegelian thinkers. The totalizing pretensions of Hegel's system made him a natural nemesis for thinkers like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, who in their reactions against him also articulated the foundational statements of a nascent existentialism. However, I tend to agree with Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that, "as it turns out, Hegel's successors have placed more emphasis on what they reject of his heritage than on what they owe to him." As Merleau-Ponty says, "it was he [Hegel] who started the attempt to explore the irrational and integrate it into an expanded reason" (Merleau-Ponty 1964b 63). In practice the Hegelian method already marks a return to the premodern emphasis on wonder as the fundamental philosophical attitude, and in this sense he is indirectly responsible for the renewal of wonder in twentieth-century movements such as psychoanalysis, phenomenology and deconstruction.

[25] In viewing Romantic writers as mutual contributors to a renewal of premodern wonder, this study aims to illuminate a common line of concern that connects texts as apparently disparate as Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Byron's *Don Juan*. In recounting the underlying critical assumptions that shaped the twentieth-century understanding of the Romantic period and gave priority to Wordsworth and Coleridge over Byron, Jerome McGann observes, "The subject of Byron's late masterpiece *Don Juan* was set aside altogether so far as the question of Byron's romanticism was concerned. For while here one could see, very clearly, a panoramic (dis)play of 'romantic irony,' Byron's work pursued its ironies in an apparently unsystematic and nontheoretical way" (McGann 1992). McGann's careful qualification of Byron's efforts as *apparently* unsystematic and nontheoretical is significant in this connection, because Byron's epistemological stance is at once systematic (if system is understood as a method or practice of philosophical inquiry) and anti-systematic (if system is understood as a static construct and a totalizing ideal). From this point of view, Byron and Wordsworth are both poets who are deeply sensitive to philosophical wonder.

[26] To appreciate this notion of the ethical, it is useful to remember Paul Ricoeur's distinction between the "moral norm" and the "ethical aim" (Ricoeur 1992 169-239). In legal terms, one might say that moral people defer to precedents, and ethical people create them. While moral judgment is prescripted, ethical judgment requires imagination, discernment – even improvisation.

[27] In the order of their appearance, here are a few of the scholarly studies that have addressed the role of the fragment (and in some cases its opposition to the system) in Romantic writings:

McFarland 1981; Levinson 1986; Kubiak 1994; Rajan 2000; Chaouli 2000; Strathman 2006; Thomas 2008; and Regier 2010.

[28] On the Enlightenment's "love of system" (an apparent play on the etymology of philosophy as the 'love of wisdom'), see Cassirer vii and 8.

[29] For a full-length study on wonder among the American Transcendentalists and their successors, see Tanner 1967. For an early treatment of the role of wonder among the British Romantics that does not examine the philosophical basis of wonder, see Watts-Dunton. For an essay that employs wonder and Jamesian pragmatism as a lens to read Wordsworth that emphasizes the aesthetic and anti-rational form of wonder, see Scott 2005.

[30] For an early example of this traditional view, see Minto.

[31] Though Kenneth R. Johnston identifies other possible reasons why *The Recluse* was not completed, he also observes that some commentators have attributed the failure, at least in part, to "Coleridge's failure to supply the philosophy on which it [the poem] was to be based," which "was indeed the form of contractual expectation shared by both men" (WR xiv). The existence of such an informal contract becomes especially prominent in 1804 letters that Wordsworth wrote to Coleridge. In a letter written in March of that year, Wordsworth says, "I am very anxious to have your notes for the Recluse" (EY 452), but when Coleridge becomes ill, Wordsworth's petitions become especially desperate, and he confesses that at the time of hearing about Coleridge's "late attack," he "would gladly have given 3 fourths of my possessions for your letter on The Recluse at that time. I cannot say what a load it would be to me, should I survive you and you die without this memorial left behind" (EY 464).

[32] See Christensen 1977 and Christensen 1986.

[33] See, for instance, Maltby.

[34] Husserl qualifies the pretensions of his phenomenology toward science, saying that, as a descriptive and eidetic science, phenomenology provides a grounding for the other experiential or empiricistic sciences that are concerned with matters of fact (I 7-8). While empiricistic science says that "all science must proceed from *experience*, must *ground* its mediate cognition on immediate experience," Husserl says that the insights of his eidetic science – granted a "genuine freedom from prejudices" latent in the natural attitude of experience – "derive their validity from *originally presentive intuitions*." While the first seeks the "legitimation of all cognition by *experience*," the second aims to "return to the 'things themselves'" (I 35-6; his italics). Here Husserl is formulating the position that distinguishes his transcendental phenomenology from the later efforts of so-called existential phenomenologists. Though one might object to Husserl's transcendental move, one can nonetheless concede that he makes allowances for the differences between his descriptive pursuits and the more experimental pursuits of the sciences.

[35] According to Wittgenstein, Freud ignores the difference between speculation and explanation by engaging in a kind of equivocation. Freud claims that dreams are wish fulfillments, and Wittgenstein says this claim is grounded in speculation, not evidence. What Freud offers is "something prior even to the formation of an hypothesis" (Wittgenstein 1972 44), yet when one makes this objection, Freud retorts: "'Are you asking me to believe there is anything which happens without a cause?'" (Wittgenstein 1972 49; Wittgenstein's paraphrase). Leaning against this claim, Freud presents his persuasive speculations as causal explanations.

[36] CN II.2557.

[37] In a recent scholarly work that comes closer to my epistemological focus, Tim Milnes has observed a tension or "ambivalence" in the writings of Coleridge and his contemporaries "between a thoroughly pragmatic attitude towards truth, interpretation and self-description, and a propensity to hypostasise key concepts as transcendent ideals" – a division that Milnes explains in terms of a conflict between "two competing strains of British empiricism: representationalism, and a linguistic 'turn' in late eighteenth-century thought" (Milnes 2010 3). While my categories of wonder and system bring different things to light than Milnes's categories of pragmatic truth and transcendent truth, and while my general approach in this study is moored less in British empiricism and American pragmatism and more in ancient skepticism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and Wittgenstein, I see Milnes's approach as complementary to my own.

[38] While one can understand why McFarland would suggest that Coleridge's sensitivity to divergent viewpoints is a sign of intellectual "integrity," it is ironic that he should choose this word that is rooted in the concept of wholeness. As Coleridge himself suggests, his dividedness can also be understood as the force that *compromised* his health and wholeness.

[39] On the "knowingness" of contemporary thinkers such Frederic Jameson and the value of the human capacity to shudder with awe, see Rorty 1998.

[40] For one prominent example of this attitude, see chapter three of Wellek.

[41] Coleridge might take some consolation in his conviction, articulated later in the same work, that the Spirit of the Divine Nature expresses itself in a similar manner, "*Overflowing* by its communicativeness, budding and blossoming forth in all earnestness of persuasion, and in all words of sound doctrine" (SM 91).

[42] In his 1814 preface to *The Excursion*, Wordsworth refers to his autobiographical epic as a "preparatory poem" that "conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently mature for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself." He adds that "the two Works" – his autobiographical poem and *The Recluse* – "have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church" (PW III.5).

[43] I will supplement the examination of my two primary texts with occasional references to Coleridge's letters, his notebooks, his second *Lay Sermon* (1817), his *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and his posthumously published *Table Talk*, which is especially useful in determining whether Coleridge's views had changed by the end of his life. The period of 1816 and 1817 is of special interest to this study because it is especially marked by the conflict between wonder and system that will inform my reading of Wordsworth in succeeding chapters.

[44] See Pluhar's notes (CPR 5n6, 31n122).

[45] For further exploration of Kant's curious mixing of system metaphors, see Rajan 2000, especially 140.

[46] It is worth noting here that in their less prudent moments both Kant and Hegel were occasionally prone to get carried away by the successes of their philosophical speculations and to forget the self-assigned goals and limits of their inquiries. For instance, despite Kant's frequent avowals that his ideals of absolute totality and of a perfect systematic unity are merely goals that help one to direct and regulate inquiry, he nonetheless declares in an unguarded moment,

> Hence not only is each system by itself structured in accordance with an idea, but, in addition, all systems are in turn united purposively among one another – as members of a whole – in a system of human cognition, and thus permit an architectonic of all human

> knowledge. Such an architectonic – at the present time, when so much material has already been collected or can be obtained from the ruins of collapsed old edifices – would not only be possible, but indeed not even difficult (CPR 757).

This declaration emerges suddenly in the paragraphs that follow Kant's descriptions of the architectural and organic bodily metaphors for system cited above. Not unlike the patent officer who reportedly suggested at the advent of the twentieth century that it was probably about time to close the patent office as nothing more was likely to be invented – this before the inventions of air and space travel, television, the internet – Kant suggests that the recent influx of "material" that has been collected by researchers and that could be gathered from the rubble of demolished systems would bring his contemporaries close to assembling "an architectonic of all human knowledge." Similarly, though the dynamic and dialectical systematic process that Hegel outlines in the Preface to his *Phenomenology* provides a much more plausible organic metaphor than Kant's reified systematic totality that inexplicably grows internally like an animal body, the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* (not to mention the more totalizing Hegel of the *Encyclopedia*) still occasionally confesses a hope that the search for human knowledge might one day be complete: "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title '*love* of knowing' and be *actual* knowing – that is what I have set myself to do" (his italics; §4; PS 3). In the wake of the advances of modern science and its handmaiden, modern philosophy, even the most earnest, prudent and committed of thinkers found the overwhelming craving for totalization difficult to suppress.

[47] Wheeler compellingly argues that due to the widespread acceptance of Kantianism the Coleridgean imagination has been misinterpreted by all but a handful of scholars since the publication of the *Biographia* in 1817. She cites Dewey's essay as a formative influence on her reading of Coleridge, and she forwards select pieces of evidence to suggest that Coleridge rejects the Kantian thing-in-itself (Wheeler 39n3). Yet she fails to account for the extreme surplus of primary and secondary evidence that substantiates Coleridge's reliance upon a Christianized Platonism and a Platonized Kantianism. Though Wheeler attempts to present Coleridge as a post-Hegelian thinker, this other evidence clearly demonstrates that Coleridge subscribed to a foundationalist theory of two worlds, and his occasional skepticism regarding the nuances of Kant's conception of the noumenal does not mitigate these essentialist beliefs. More likely, Coleridge held both sets of beliefs, switching back and forth between them depending on his aims and inclinations, just as he appears to have switched back and forth between a philosophy of wonder and a philosophy of system.

[48] The notion of the system as a genre might sound strange to some because, as Clifford Siskin observes, "we have forgotten that system, like the novel, *is* a genre and not just an idea – it's a form of writing that was crucially important to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Siskin 2001 202). Citing Johnson's *Dictionary*, Siskin defines the system as a genre that engages in "the 'reduc[tion]' of 'many things' into a 'regular' and 'uni[ted]' 'combination' and 'order'" (Siskin 2001 204). That the system might be called a genre, according to Kant's formulation, is evident when one observes that he distinguishes the "content" that is proper to a given science from its proper "articulation," which is that of a "systematic unity" (CPR 757). This is quite possibly the distinction Coleridge has in mind when he speaks of the proper "matter [or content] and arrangement [or articulation] of *Philosophy*" (CL IV.574).

[49] Thomas McFarland and Jerome C. Christensen offer classic (and contrasting) critical accounts of the ways that Coleridge's compositional practices recontextualize and even (according to

Christensen) resist the systematic enterprise. While McFarland describes the "reticulative power" and "mosaic organization" of Coleridge's writings that (in Coleridge's words) assembles "insulated fragments of truth" into a larger whole that participates in a philosophical tradition and can thus never be wholly original or wholly complete (McFarland 1969 27 and 49), Christensen suggests that Coleridge's method resembles that of the "marginal commentator" who responds to a source text in order to relieve himself of "the responsibility for systematic discourse" altogether (Christensen 1977 934). This chapter seeks to supplement the work of such commentators by examining the underlying and unresolved conflict between wonder and system that lies at the core of Coleridge's writings – a conflict that provides a key to understanding the conflicting epistemological attitudes that at once propelled (system) and resisted (wonder) the completion of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's projected magnum opera.

[50] Aquinas discontinued work on the *Summa* near the end of his life, after confessing that he had experienced a religious ecstasy and that his mystical visions had made his systematic aims seem paltry and futile by comparison. "I am unable to do it," he said. "Everything that I have written seems like chaff to me, in comparison with the things that I have been and that have been revealed to me" (Aspell 156). Of Aquinas's visions, see Quinn 2002 139-40.

[51] For a prominent example of the Enlightenment's love of system, see Adam Smith's discussions in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) of the "love of system" and of the "man of system" (Smith 187, 241). Compelled by this love of system (i.e., this love of "the beauty of order, of art and contrivance"), the man of system "take[s] pleasure in beholding the perfection of so beautiful and grand a system" as "the great system of government"; is "uneasy" in the face of "any obstruction that can in the least disturb or encumber the regularity of its motions"; and "is often so enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan of government, that he cannot suffer the smallest deviation from any part of it" (Smith 187-88, 241). For a broader historical view of this Enlightenment love of system, see also Ernst Cassirer's discussion of d'Alembert's distinction in the Preliminary Discourse to *La grande Encyclopédie* (1751) between an *esprit systématique* (or a systematic spirit), which d'Alembert considered the dominant tendency of his own day, and an *esprit de système* (a spirit and even, according to Cassirer, a "love of system for its own sake"), which had been prominent at the advent of the Enlightenment (Cassirer vii, 8). While d'Alembert likens the *esprit de système* to the rationalist's "spirit of hypothesis and conjecture," he likens the *esprit systématique* to the empiricist's "art of reducing to the greatest extent possible a large number of phenomena to a single one which may be seen as a principle" (Hayes 42-43). The love of system for its own sake (*qua esprit systématique*) is prone toward grand and sweeping generalizations that reduce the many to the one.

[52] In his *Academica* (1.44-46), Cicero observes that commitment to wonder and its insistence on keeping everything "open to question" was characteristic not just of the ancient skeptics but also of the "old philosophers" who preceded them. Arcesilaus, the founder of Academic skepticism, did not, according to Cicero, advocate the suspension of judgment "because of stubbornness or zeal for victory [in debate], but because of the obscurity of the very matters that led Socrates to a confession of ignorance, and before Socrates, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and almosts all the old philosophers" (HP 281). As Plutarch suggests in *Against Colotes* (1122a-f), the dominant tendency among the Academics (and by extension, Cicero suggests, among the earlier Greek philosophers of antiquity) was not a dogmatic denial of the possibility of all knowledge but a sustained commitment to inquiry that resisted the "premature assent" of mere

"opinion," which they construed as an unnecessary "yielding" and a sign of "weakness" (HP 272).

[53] For *archê* as 'foundation,' see Plato 1987 37; for *archê* as 'origin,' see Plato 1957 43.

[54] For one philosopher's claim that Nietzsche's contradictions are the fruitful ground where his richest thought abides, see Jaspers.

[55] It is worth noting here that Nietzsche is not anti-Christian. His own interpretation (and some might say, purification) of Christianity in *The Antichrist* suggests that "in truth, there was only *one* Christian, and he died on the cross" (Nietzsche 1982 612), and that while Jesus of Nazareth advocated good works and the creation of the Kingdom of God in this world, Paul the Evangelist distorted Jesus's teachings, choosing instead to emphasize faith in a resurrection and in the possibility of a paradisal afterworld. Nietzsche says, "The 'kingdom of heaven' is a state of the heart – not something that is to come 'above the earth' or 'after death'[…] it is everywhere, it is nowhere" (Nietzsche 1982 608). Intriguingly, Nietzsche's account of Jesus's teachings received ancient *and* posthumous confirmation in the hidden gospels discovered at Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt in 1945. In *The Gospel of Thomas*, which claims to record the actual words of Jesus, the gospel writer proclaims, "Jesus said, 'If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the kingdom is in heaven,' the birds of heaven will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside you and it is outside you" (Meyer 23).

[56] "Know thyself" is one of the two commands inscribed in Apollo's temple at Delphi (the other is "Nothing in excess"), and Socrates states his commitment to it in a number of places, including Plato's *Phaedrus* (230a). As Allegra de Laurentiis observes, Hegel affirms this credo as "the intrinsic *telos*, motive force, and regulative principle of human thinking in general and of philosophy in particular" (de Laurentiis 258).

[57] On the richer, pre-19th century meaning of *admirare* that connotes wonder and on Shakespeare's use of this premodern notion of admiration in *Hamlet*, see chapter one of Quinn 2002, especially 3-6.

[58] As Pieper elsewhere observes, it is curiously appropriate to render the classical Greek notion of *thauma* (wonder) as *arché* with the classical Latin notion of *admirare* (wonder) as *principium* (Pieper 1960 28-29).

[59] On wonder as a pleasurable species of fear, see Quinn 18.

[60] Coleridge's formulation of "an affectionate seeking after the truth" is particularly limiting according to Kant's definition of "truth," which is "the agreement of our concepts with the object" (CPR 617). Kant's truth is an object of the understanding, but it is more likely, given Coleridge's disrespect for the understanding (as this chapter will address below), that Coleridge thinks of "the truth" as an object of the reason.

[61] KSL 70.

[62] For instance, see Cicero on Arcesilaus's revival of Socratic method in Cicero, *On Goals* (2.2; HP 274).

[63] For an account of how twentieth-century Continental philosophers such as Freud, Husserl and Derrida renewed this positive application of the epochê as well as the Scholastic emphasis on intentionality, see chapter four.

[64] Jürgen Peper names Wordsworth's wise passiveness, Coleridge's negative faith, and Keats's negative capability as instances of a "heuristic *epoché*" that participates in a transatlantic aesthetic tradition ranging from Rousseau to Mailer (Peper 299-302).

[65] Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was published in July of 1817, several months before Keats's discussion of negative capability (BL xxxviii).
[66] It is worth noting here that the phrase "*negative* faith" might, in turn, derive from Kant, though Coleridge's usage of the term is quite distinct from Kant's. Kant's "*negative* faith" (the italics of Kant and Coleridge are identical) is a faith that is grounded in fear – the kind of fear which (though Kant does not note this) leads to Pascal's expedient wager. As Kant puts it, there is a kind of person who is unsure about the existence of God and of an afterlife and who will yet behave in a manner that is morally responsible because "he cannot plead any *certainty* that *no* such being and *no* future life are to be found." Such a negative faith, according to Kant, can serve as "a powerful restraint on the eruption of evil attitudes" (CPR 754), steering morally bankrupt individuals away from acts of cruelty by appealing to their self-preservation instincts. What brings Kant's Pascalian subjects in contact with Coleridge's readers of poetry is their agnosticism; they suspend judgment when they are not granted adequate evidence to be certain.
[67] It is often forgotten that the words 'fact' (from the Latin *facere*) and 'fiction' (from the Latin *fingere*) both, in some sense, mean 'made.' For a playful meditation on this connection, see chapter nine of Livingston 2006.
[68] A wonderful contemporary example of this is writer / director Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), which dramatically transfigures the conclusion of World War II by allowing a peculiarly powerful (unconscious, archetypal) fantasy to take over at the film's conclusion. It is precisely Tarantino's decision to deviate from the facts of the understanding and to give priority to the fictions of the imagination that gives the film's apotheosis its shocking power.
[69] The phenomenological concept of bracketing is especially pertinent in the analysis of the experience of the theatergoer, for in this experience there are multiple brackets at work simultaneously. When I go to the theater, I must, first of all, tell myself that the occurrences on stage are not real – I must bracket it, so that when Romeo goes to drink the poison, I do not yell, "Don't do it! She's not really dead!" Such an act would ruin the experience of the play for the rest of the audience; moreover, it would suggest that I have failed to recognize that what is happening to the characters on stage is not happening to the actors who play those characters. Coleridge's claim that a play should not contradict historical facts invites us to consider a bracket within a bracket: Admittedly, the play is not itself real, and I agree not to yell anything at Romeo, but if a production of *Romeo and Juliet* were to suggest, for some reason, that at the time of the play's action Verona was under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, that Romeo's family was filled with Nazis, and that Juliet's was filled with Jews, then this production would be asking me to impose a twentieth century political conflict on the shoulders of a pair thirteenth century Italian teenagers who are in love. According to Coleridge, even if I can successfully bracket the play in one sense, agreeing not to yell that Romeo shouldn't drink the poison, this does not mean that I can or should successfully bracket the play in a second more specific sense, in cases where its action flies in the face of facts of known and absolute truth.
[70] Walter Jackson Bate suggests that Keats's view of Coleridge might derive from the *Lay Sermons*, which Bailey had been reading during Keats's visit with him in Oxford (Bate 238), and which Keats himself mentions in a letter to Bailey a few weeks before the letter on negative capability (KSL 31).
[71] In chapter twelve, he continues his critique of Locke's mechanical philosophy when he complains that it is common for "proselytes of that compendious philosophy, which talking of mind but thinking of brick and mortar, or other images equally abstracted from body, contributes

a theory of spirit by nicknaming matter, and in a few hours can qualify its dullest disciples to explain the omne scibile ['everything knowable'] by reducing all things to impressions, ideas, and sensations" (BL I.235). Coleridge's objections to Locke's philosophy continue in his annotations to John Petvin's *Letters Concerning Mind,* as published in Brinkley.

[72] The next section will further examine the symbols of the caterpillar and the magnifying glass.

[73] His italics; CPR 753.

[74] Kant illustrates what he means by "transcendental" when he distinguishes his theory of the sublime from that of Burke. While Kant characterizes the Burkean sublime as "physiological" (or "merely empirical"), he characterizes his own theory of the sublime as "transcendental." Kant attempts to ground his transcendental theory in a priori principles that will apply not merely to the empirical writer but to everyone. While Edmund Burke offers an empirical description of a body's physiological experience of the sublime, Kant offers a transcendental description of what happens in the mind – and more specifically, between the mind's different faculties – in the sublime moment (CJ 137-38).

[75] Pluhar offers the traditional definition of this logical fallacy as the "(fallacy of putting) prior what is posterior; an example would be begging the question" (CPR 654n273). Engell and Bate note that the Greek phrase, literally "Latter-Former," involves "reversing the normal order" in which rational inquiry proceeds (BL II.131n1). To "believe in order to understand," as Anselm proposes (53), is to *assume* the truth of one's longed for conclusion before its truth has been verified, thereby corrupting the inquiry by predetermining its results.

[76] Coleridge's description of the hovering imagination yields some interesting parallels with Kant's discussion of "creatures of the imagination" whose "characteristics amount less to a determinate image than to a design that hovers, as it were, at the mean of various experiences…" (CPR 562).

[77] Similarly, Pine-Coffin's translation of Augustine's *Confessions* describes the skepticism and suspension of judgment that the Academic skeptics perform as a "hovering between doctrine and another" (V.14; Augustine 108).

[78] Descartes's demeaning treatment of wonder in *The Passions of the Soul* (1649) occurs in large part due to his suggestion that wonder is a sibling of a passive astonishment, incapable of garnering the active and creative power of which premodern and twentieth-century Continental philosophers think it capable. Though Descartes concedes that "some inclination to wonder" can make people "disposed to acquire scientific knowledge," his belief that wonder is always on the verge of falling into an infertile, immobile astonishment that "may entirely prevent or pervert the use of reason" leads him to dismiss wonder as a childish passion (Part Two, sections 69-78; I.353-56).

[79] Fink's footnotes remind us that at *Theaetetus* 155d and *Metaphysics* 982b11, respectively, Socrates and Aristotle identify wonder as the natural origin and attitude of philosophical practice (PPH 23-25 and 54-55).

[80] For a detailed description of Husserl's phenomenological reduction, see chapter seven, which considers the ways that Wordsworth's intellectual explorations in *The Prelude* resemble Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological method.

[81] Elsewhere in the *Biographia,* Coleridge declares that in the act of poetic creation, the imagination is "first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, controul…" (BL II.16). By contrast, in a letter to Körner dated 1 December 1788, Schiller suggests, "where there is a creative mind, Reason – so it

seems to me – relaxes its watch upon the gates, and the ideas rush in pell-mell, and only then does it look them through and examine them in a mass." However, if one accepts Kant's categorization of the reason as the faculty of the will, then it would appear that neither Coleridge nor Schiller is quite right. Certainly, the understanding has its role in poetic creation – especially in the critical act of revision – but for the understanding to play any kind of active role in the initial bursts of creation would most likely interrupt the free play of the imagination. Nor, as Schiller suggests, does the reason merely "relax its watch upon the gates." Rather, as the faculty of the will, it must actively participate in the process of creation by allowing the poet to suspend judgment and resist the fixating tendencies of the understanding and the judgment. For the above translation of Schiller's letter, see ID 135.

[82] That Coleridge sides with Plato in assuming that ideas are not merely regulative but also constitutive and that Coleridge's view of Kant is a Platonized Kantianism has by now become a critical commonplace. As Coleridge himself says, "It seems clear that the Critical Philosophy, as contained in the works of Immanuel Kantius, is a Junction of the Stoic *Moral* with the Platonic *Dialectic*" (CN I.457). For a full-length study of Coleridge's Platonized Kantianism, see Vigus. Other mentions of it appear in relation to system and to Coleridge's influence on Emerson in Harris and Gelpi.

[83] As Phillip R. Sloan puts it, "One novel feature of this assimilation of Kant by many British intellectuals is the reinterpretation of Kant's transcendental Ideas and the regulative maxims of reason in a realist, rather than a regulative, fashion. It was a 'Platonized' Kant that resulted. Coleridge even pressed the point that an epistemological realism was Kant's true teaching as they had encountered this in Germany, with the skeptical, restrictive epistemology promulgated in his name only serving as a cover for his true doctrines" (Sloan 154).

[84] Hermann Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund* (New York: Bantam, 1971), 15.

[85] Jacques Derrida, "'This Strange Institution Called Literature': An Interview with Jacques Derrida" in *Acts of Literature*. Ed. by Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 44-45.

[86] "Quite generally," Hegel says, "the familiar [das Bekannte], just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood" (§31; PS 18). The problem, according to Heidegger, is often the familiarizing and desensitizing influence of tradition. "If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent," Heidegger says, "then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved" (§6; Heidegger 1962 44). Thus, Coleridge's "admitted truths" of "universal admission" must be continually analyzed and defamiliarized if they are to remain vital.

[87] On philosophy as a way of life (or as *bios* as well as *logos*), see Jaeger 130-31n10; Wallis 8; and Hadot 1995.

[88] For a recent survey of the continuing debate about the relationship between Wittgenstein's thought and phenomenology and about the possibility that Wittgenstein engages in a kind of "grammatical phenomenology," see Gálvez 14. A few of the classic articles that address the relationship between Wittgenstein's thought and phenomenology are: Spiegelberg 1968; Ihde 1975; Gier 1981; and Gier 1990. For a more recent discussion of the concept of intentionality in Wittgenstein and Husserl, see Benoist.

[89] Husserl contends that as a descriptive and eidetic science phenomenology provides a grounding for the other experiential or empiricistic sciences that are concerned with matters of fact (I 7-8).

[90] The later Wittgenstein is known for his tendency to analyze language and other phenomena by presenting examples (or as his comments will suggest below, "similes.") On the "*exemplary-suppositional*" status of phenomenological method, see LD 181; his italics.

[91] *Culture and Value* is a work of the later Wittgenstein. With the exception of the first aphorism, which is from 1914, the rest of the aphorisms come from the years 1929 through 1951, and these are precisely the years Wittgenstein himself associates with his later phase. In the preface to his *Philosophical Investigations*, composed in 1945, Wittgenstein says, "The thoughts which I publish in what follows are the precipitate of philosophical investigations which have occupied me for the last sixteen years" (PI ix).

[92] Indeed, the occasionally excessive "matter-of-factness" that Coleridge observed in certain passages of Wordsworth's poetry drove Coleridge to criticize Wordsworth in chapter twenty-two of the *Biographia* (BL 126-35). Yet Wordsworth's close attention to the concrete objects and minute details of the world around him are also a major part of what endows his poetry with such intensity and power.

[93] CL IV.574.

[94] Though *The Excursion* was the first published installment, it "belongs," as Wordsworth states in the 1814 Preface, "to the second part of a long and laborious Work [*The Recluse*], which is to consist of three parts" (PW III.5).

[95] Of course, one could identify poets who might take exception to certain features of Coleridge's description. For example, in his Modernist departure from Romantic passion, T. S. Eliot asserted that, "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." Yet the history of poetry has been dominated by accounts of deep feeling and divine or earthly inspiration, which would suggest that Eliot's effort to "escape from emotion" might in fact paradoxically represent (as Peter J. Manning once shared with me in conversation) "a passionate need to use poetry to escape from the pressures of personal feeling" (Eliot 1960 58).

[96] From a different point of view, one might argue that Coleridge did *not* abandon his conception of the system as a genre later in life, and that he believed himself to be putting the finishing touches on his own system. The Herculean editorial efforts that have given us the *Opus Maximum* certainly demonstrate that Coleridge had, indeed, produced a great deal of material, even though he had not yet managed to assemble it into a proper systematic unity. Yet this alternative reading of Coleridge's references to "my system" in the *Table Talk* does not alter the arc of my larger argument, which is concerned primarily with how Coleridge's conception of system by and before his letter to Wordsworth in 1815 shaped Wordsworth's own conception of philosophical poetry. The question of Coleridge's views of system later in life is of merely ancillary interest.

[97] William Minto wrote his 1889 essay, "Wordsworth's Great Failure," in partial response to a posthumous publication of a poem called *The Recluse*, reported to be a mere fragment of the intended poem. Stephen's essay, published more than three decades earlier, could not have accounted for this subsequent critical consensus.

[98] In correspondence with Duncan Wu, W. J. B. Owen has said, "It is hard to think that W[ordsworth] didn't read Hartley," yet as Wu observes, Wordsworth's first reference to Hartley's *Observations on Man* appears in 1808 and demonstrates nothing more than a passing acquaintance which *might* have been more than passing, even as the associationist view would have been familiar to Wordsworth and his contemporaries (Wu 1995 103).

[99] See Beatty; Stallknecht 196-; Stallknecht 1962; Rader; Grob; and K. Thomas.
[100] It should be noted that Leavis repeatedly depends upon Beatty's Hartleian reading of Wordsworth – implying that it was the prevailing philosophical reading of Wordsworth's poetry at the time – only to undermine its importance (158, 161, 164).
[101] CL IV.687. In a letter to James Gillman, dated 10 November 1816, Coleridge says, "Philosophy is the Science of Ideas –: Science the Knowlege of Powers" (CL IV.690).
[102] CV 24e.
[103] The origin of Wordsworth's attribution to Aristotle – one that is, in this case, not entirely accurate – is most likely Coleridge, who in the *Biographia Literaria* adapts Aristotle's Greek in a way that is extremely similar to Wordsworth's claim (BL II.126). What Aristotle actually says in the ninth chapter of his *Poetics* is, "poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts" (Aristotle 1965 43-44). See the editorial notes in Wordsworth's *Prose Works* (PW I.179).
[104] For an extended account to the relationship between autobiography, system and philosophy, see chapter three.
[105] See chapter eight of Rorty 1979.
[106] "The word *knowledge*," according to Rorty, "would not seem worth fighting over were it not for the Kantian tradition that to be a philosopher is to have a 'theory of knowledge' [or epistemology], and the Platonic tradition that action not based on knowledge of the truth of propositions is 'irrational'" (Rorty 1979 356). Moreover, Rorty suggests that Kant "professionalized" the discipline of philosophy, "if only by making it impossible to be taken seriously as a 'philosopher' without having mastered the first *Critique*" (Rorty 1979 149). Rorty's masterfully lucid distillation of the Western philosophical tradition leads him to his neo-pragmatist conclusion that we should now attempt to practice "philosophy without epistemology" – a practice made difficult only because, "Our present notions of what it is to be a philosopher are so tied up with the Kantian attempt to render knowledge-claims commensurable…" (Rorty 1979 357). While this study is partially inspired by Rorty's views, it will propose that Rorty's definition of epistemology is unnecessarily narrow and that his distinction between epistemology and hermeneutics is a polemical overstatement. Plato's aporetical dialogues and Wittgenstein's aphorisms illustrate premodern and contemporary expressions of an epistemological attitude that resists system and resides in philosophical wonder, indicating that the concept of epistemology existed long before the so-called Epistemological Turn that Descartes initiated. Though my reading of Romantic and Continental philosophies of wonder shares several affinities with Rorty's critique of correspondence theories of truth, I would suggest that a renewal of philosophical wonder calls not for a discarding of epistemology but for a renewal of its full richness and vitality.
[107] While Wittgenstein claims that his inventiveness resides in the creation of new similes that will refresh our thinking (CV 19e), Rorty's overarching aim in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is to undermine and explode the assumption that the task of the philosopher is to mirror nature, 'discovering' the truths that correspond to it. According to both views, truth is made, not found.
[108] For evidence of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's agreement, see EY 452 and EY 464.
[109] For his own part, Francis Jeffrey, a contemporary and critic of Wordsworth, called these poems, "wanton and capricious experiments on public taste and indulgence" (Jeffrey 458).

[110] Bacon's *Great Instauration* announces his wish to forge a "new kind" of natural history that would be "compiled on a new system" (Bacon 1994 24), but his conscious choice of the aphoristic style of premodern thinkers in the *Novum Organum* suggests that he is most likely using the word "system" in the sense of a consistent method and not of a structural totality. Moreover, his choice of the aphorism, perhaps inadvertently, also renews the ancient epistemological attitude of wonder and undermines the modern one that led his contemporaries to organize their works in such a way as to create the illusion of comprehensiveness and completion. According to Bacon,

> … the first and earliest seekers after truth, with greater frankness and better success, were in the habit of casting the knowledge which they gathered from their study of things and which they intended to keep for use, into *aphorisms*, short and scattered sentences, not linked to each other by a rhetorical method of presentation; nor did they pretend or profess to embrace the entire art. But the way things are done now, it is hardly surprising that men look no further into matters that are handed down to them, as if they were perfect and long since complete in every respect (Bacon 1994 96).

Though Bacon had in 1605 explicitly demeaned wonder by calling it "broken knowledge" (Bacon 2001 9), in 1620 he appears to counteract this claim by implicitly demonstrating the importance of philosophical wonder.

[111] According to Abrams, who cites each of the previous references to Bacon in his analysis of Wordsworth's "Prospectus," Bacon's metaphorical marriage between the mind and the universe is part of "the public domain of Western culture" (Abrams 61). Yet this particular likeness between Bacon's and Wordsworth's writings (and others soon to be addressed) is significant enough that it seems appropriate to substantiate this possible influence with some evidence. Wordsworth is known to have recommended Bacon's *Essays* and *Advancement of Learning* to Dorothy Wordsworth's friend Mrs. Thomas Clarkson in 1805 (Wordsworth 1967 662), and to have been looking for an edition of "'Lord Bacon's Works'" in July of 1808 (Wordsworth 1969 257). Furthermore, Bacon's famous equation of knowledge and power appears in *The Great Instauration* (Bacon 1994 29), and as we shall see it finds an explicit echo in Wordsworth's drafts to *The Convention of Cintra* (PW I.324-35n). Moreover, Wordsworth cites Bacon in his Essay, Supplementary to the Preface of 1815 (PW III.68) – a text I will be discussing below as a possible launching point for Wordsworth's departure from Bacon – so it is interesting to see that Wordsworth had Bacon in mind during its writing. Though Wordsworth's acquaintance with Basil Montagu's edition of Bacon arrives too late for any significant influence on Wordsworth's early poetry, Duncan Wu, citing several of these connections, confirms that Wordsworth is thought to have consulted Coleridge's four-volume set of Bacon's *Works*, edited by David Mallet (1740) (Wu 1993 8; Wu 1995 8-10).

[112] Wordsworth acknowledges the need to challenge received ideas, noting that Bacon's innovations were "justified by the wrong practice which had till that time generally prevailed." In a different version of this passage, he also praises Bacon by adding that, "the mind of this Philosopher was comprehensive and sublime and must have had intimate communion of the truth of which the experimentalists who deem themselves his disciples are for the most part ignorant" (PW I.324n). Just as Nietzsche and Holden Caulfield argue that Jesus's wrongheaded followers were responsible for the problems of Christianity, so does Wordsworth acknowledges that Bacon's true message has been tarnished by the "ignorant" errors of his ardent "disciples."

[113] CV 16e.

[114] Jeffrey refers to *The Excursion* as "a tissue of moral and devotional ravings, in which innumerable changes are rung upon a few very simple and familiar ideas" (Jeffrey 459), and he adds that its fourth book, "with the exception of some brilliant and forcible expressions here and there, consists of an exposition of truisms, more cloudy, wordy, and inconceivably prolix, than anything we ever met with" (Jeffrey 461). He concludes that the poet of *The Excursion* is plagued by "an unlucky predilection for truisms" (469). For Park's reiteration of Jeffrey's verdict, see Park 368.

[115] For an account of system as a dynamic process rather than as an architectonic totality, see the introduction to this study as well as appendix one, which focuses on the similarities between Hegel's positive skepticism and its likeness to the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

[116] Of course, I might in this connection mention any number of creative autobiographies produced by Romantic writers – among them Byron's *Don Juan*, DeQuincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, and Lamb's *Essays of Elia* – yet I here focus on Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Coleridge's *Biographia* because they speak to a peculiar yearning to prepare the way for – or intermingle – system with autobiography. By contrast, one might argue that – in concluding *Don Juan* with the aporetical announcement, "I leave the thing a problem, like all things" (XVII.13; DJ 558) – Byron is affirming the inevitability of aporia and the incompatibility of a descriptive and narrative poem with the generalizing reach toward explanation.

[117] At its periphery, this chapter aims to complicate each of these supposed binary oppositions and to suggest that they are far less distant from each other than is commonly supposed. Ultimately, for instance, I would want to agree with Ludwig Wittgenstein and Richard Rorty that many of the insights people describe as discoveries, laws, or absolute truths are in fact hypotheses that have been not discovered but *created*, proven valid only until they can be refined or proven invalid in a broader context. Yet, paradoxically, in order to highlight and discuss the similarities between these supposed binaries, one must first reaffirm their opposition. Indeed, as binary oppositions, they are useful categories for thought, so long as they are taken as merely that – useful categories or concepts that are not absolute. Among those pairings that might require further justification are the autobiography/system and description/explanation distinctions, the first of which this chapter will further illuminate and the second of which I can offer brief justification for here. The tension between description and explanation finds corroboration in the approach that Wittgenstein adopts in his *Philosophical Investigations*, where he says, "We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems" (PI 40e). In his preference for description and in his suggestion that description should gain its "light" or "purpose" from an engagement with the philosophical problems themselves, Wittgenstein aligns himself with the conception of philosophy as a practice, as a perpetual process and way of life. If 'description' is taken literally as a 'writing down' of what one observes (*de-scribere*), 'explanation' is rather a 'flattening out' of those observations (*ex-planus*). One German translation for the word 'explanation' is *darlegen*, and its 'laying out' has a similar flattening connotation. These associations lead Wittgenstein to assert that Renan was incorrect when he suggested "that scientific explanation could intensify wonderment" (CV 5e). While pure description occurs in a state of *suspended* judgment, explanation requires judgment and typically becomes sedimented as 'common sense' – a flattening or oversimplification that counteracts the creative impulse and forecloses the openness of a philosophical wonder.

[118] The amorphous genre (or activity) of autobiography (literally, 'self-life-writing' or 'the writing down of one's life') is often divided into more specific sub-genres, several of which apply to these three autobiographical texts, and none of which accounts for the peculiar qualities this chapter will identify. For instance, one might call these texts philosophical autobiographies, because in addition to narrating the speaker's life, each of them also explores philosophical problems that are central to the autobiographical impulse such as the nature of time and of memory. Along similar lines, one might also call these texts meta-autobiographical, because they self-reflexively pose questions that complicate the autobiographical enterprise (e.g., what is a self; can it revisit its past; does it remember, imagine or confabulate that past?). In addition, one might (following M. H. Abrams) observe that each of these texts participates in a tradition of creative autobiography as a "more-or-less fictional work of art about the development of the artist himself" as well as in a tradition of spiritual autobiography as an account of the internal struggles of a religious (or secularized religious) crisis (Abrams 80, 84) – a tradition that Augustine himself helped to found when he observed that religious struggles resemble a movement "from sickness to health" that is "much like that which doctors call the crisis" (VI.1; C 112). However, none of these more specific labels sufficiently accounts for the fact that, on its surface and in its own way, each of these texts characterizes the autobiography as a necessary burden that the speaker must endure so that he can then announce abstract truths of universal value in a systematic form. On the notion of a secularized religious crisis among modernist writers, see Stephen Dedalus's conception of himself as "a priest of eternal imagination" (Joyce 221) as well as the Proust narrator's acknowledgement that "when a belief vanishes, there survives it – more and more vigorously so as to cloak the absence of the power, now lost to us, of impairing reality to new things – a fetishistic attachment to the old things which it did once animate, as if it was in them and not in ourselves that the divine spark resided, and as if our present incredulity has a contingent cause – the death of the gods" (RTP I.460).

[119] Though fully drafted in thirteen-books by the end of 1805, Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem on the growth of his mind was posthumously published and called *The Prelude* in 1850. This chapter will consider the significance of these posthumous occurrences below.

[120] In appropriating the concept of supplementarity for this discussion of autobiography and system, I am of course indebted to Jacques Derrida. In accordance with his provocative reading of Rousseau in *Of Grammatology* (1967), each of these autobiographies, like the concept of supplementarity itself, "harbors within itself two significations whose cohabitation is as strange as it is necessary": On one hand, each autobiography presents itself as a supplement that "adds itself" to the system, acting as "a surplus" that declares itself to be ancillary to and parasitic upon the primary text – the system for which it prepares the way as a mere cleansing of the soul or mind or palate; yet on the other hand, this autobiography "adds" to the system "only to replace" it, "intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*" it, supplanting the system as "one fills a void" (Derrida 1976 144-45).

[121] Scholars have interpreted the role of aporia and wonder in Platonic dialogue with differing emphases. While some, such as Rodolphe Gasché, highlight the energizing role that wonder can play in discovering the solutions to problems, others, such as William Desmond, affirm wonder's role as a positive skeptical attitude that can also illuminate the limits of determinacy. According to Gasché, "Socrates' dialectical art of questioning consists precisely in trying to throw his interlocutor into an aporetic impasse so as to cause aporetic wonder and a motivation to seek its

solution in philosophy" (Gasché 333). By contrast, Desmond asserts that, "The [Platonic] dialogue drives logos to a new height of articulation, but also to a deeper acknowledgment of being at a loss. Logos in *aporia*, logos at an impasse: these are constitutive for the Platonic sense of philosophical thinking. It is as if the wonder that is said to be the originating pathos of the philosopher *reappears* after he has done his best job in giving a determinate logos. The indeterminate perplexity reappears, wonder resurrects itself, in a different sense of being at a loss, now at the limit of logos itself" (Desmond 34).

[122] This notion of the "positive" finds expression in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," where the narrator speaks of "the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherently positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe in one unceasing radiation of gloom" (Poe 2002 175). Phenomenologists have often identified "positive" phenomena that have not previously been acknowledged as such. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty says, "We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon" (POP 14), challenging the Cartesian assumption that indeterminacy characterizes only those innately clear and distinct phenomena that are soon to be clarified. Likewise, Levinas says that "separation" is a phenomenon "accomplished as a positive event," not as an event in which the separated state is merely made "equivalent to its contrary as soon as it is produced" (TI 173, 175). A probable influence upon these claims is Husserl's concept of "morphological essences" – essences that are inherently "vague" yet not "defective," and that, in their spheres, "are the only legitimate concepts" (I 166).

[123] As Derrida notes in *Aporias* (1993), the phrase, "the experience of the aporia," involves a paradoxical pairing of two words which, oxymoronically, speak of the passage of a non-passage, and which should, therefore, be understood as "coupled in an aporetic fashion" (Derrida 1993 19).

[124] In *Aporias*, Derrida distinguishes these three types or figures of aporia, describing the first as "the nonpassage, the impasse or aporia, [which] stems from the fact that there is no limit" – "no longer a border to cross, no opposition between two sides: the limit is too porous, permeable, and indeterminate"; the second as a "nonpassage" characterized by "impermeability," by "the opaque existence of an uncrossable border"; and the third type of aporia as,

> a nonpassage because its elementary milieu does not allow for something that could be called passage, step, walk, gait, displacement, or replacement, a kinesis in general. There is no more path (*odos*, *methodos*, *Weg*, or *Holzweg*). The impasse itself would be impossible. The coming or the future advent of the event would have no relation to the passage of what happens or comes to pass. In this case, there would be an aporia because there is not even any space for an aporia determined as experience of the step or of the edge, crossing or not of some line, relation to some spatial figure of the limit. No more movement or trajectory, no more *trans*- (transport, transposition, transgression, translation, and even transcendence) (Derrida 1993 20-21).

While the first two kinds of aporia, the endless path and the dead end, find their corollaries in terrestrial navigation in the effort to find the 'ends of the earth' on our oblong spheroid of a planet and in phenomena such as canyons and oceans, the third kind of aporia, the end of space, can, like the concept of an expanding universe, have only the vaguest and most amorphous connection to terrestrial (or for that matter, celestial) navigation. However, such an amorphous experience can occur (as the section on Proust will suggest) in the mind.

[125] See chapter three of part two in volume two of Misch.

[126] One of the reasons scholars like Abrams label the *Confessions* as a creative – or "more-or-less fictional" (Abrams 80) – autobiography is that Augustine's religious crisis in a garden has striking allegorical parallels to Biblical temptation and conversion narratives, which have led scholars to suspect that historical accuracy was not Augustine's primary concern. Indeed, it is here worth remembering that the words 'fact' (from the Latin *facere*) and 'fiction' (from the Latin *fingere*) both, in some sense, mean 'made' (Livingston 2006 43). To underscore the likelihood that the three works under discussion are *creative* autobiographies, I have taken pains to distinguish their historical authors from the voices that speak within them.

[127] For instance, while scholars such Landsberg and Le Blond have argued that the work is divided into three stages that represent Augustine's past, present and future, other scholars such as John C. Cooper have argued that it is divided into two stages that represent his *confessio peccati* (confessions of sins) and his *confessio fidei* (confessions of faith) (Cooper 42). Augustine explicitly marks the transition between Book IX and Book X as a transition between his past ("what I once was") and his present ("what I am now") (XI.3-4; C 209-10). O'Meara cites Landsberg and Le Blond as proponents of this temporal division (O'Meara 14).

[128] In his *Confessions*, Augustine's speaker suggests that he has been forced to narrate his autobiography in haste (III.12, IX.8; C 69, 192), and at the end of the autobiographical portion of the text he expresses a longing to proceed to the telling "greater things" (IX.4; C 185). Citing such passages, Courcelle indicates that Augustine's primary intention might have been to explicate not merely the beginning of *Genesis* but all of it and perhaps all or much of the Bible. Though, according to Courcelle's theory, Augustine's plans were ultimately aborted, Courcelle speculates that one of the first examples of autobiography in Western history might have been intended as a mere preamble to the more serious work of philosophical inquiry and doctrinal or scriptural explication to follow (Courcelle; Pine-Coffin 11-18; O'Meara 13-17).

[129] According to its classical definition, an apology is a defense, explanation or justification, as distinct from its modern connotation as an expression of regret. Of the three autobiographies in question, perhaps only Augustine's *Confessions* can accurately be labeled as an apology in the modern sense of the word. Augustine's speaker feels obliged to confess even "the sins I committed as a baby," on the assumption that "no man is free from sin, not even a child who has lived only one day on earth" (I.7; C 27). By contrast, readers never quite believe that Wordsworth's speaker is truly repenting when he describes his clandestine stealing of the "elfin pinnace" and the oar-beating joy ride that "lustily" follows in Book I of *The Prelude* (I.401; PP 58), nor that Marcel is truly repenting his decision to consign his deceased Aunt Léonie's furniture to the brothel he frequents so that the women there can take advantage of the bequeathed pieces by "putting them to their own uses" (RTP I.622). Though these episodes, tinged with the pleasures and anxieties of transgression, do create an atmosphere of vague remorse, they are also presented as necessary stages in the artistic apprenticeships of the two speakers – apprenticeships that both speakers take very seriously, even if Wordsworth's earnest conception of himself as "A favoured being" whom nature has "singled out, as it might seem, / For holy services" (I.364, 62-63; PP 56, 38), lacks the amused self-awareness and subtle irony that infuses all of Marcel's professed artistic aspirations. As Julia Kristeva has suggested (and her insight applies to the indiscretion of Wordsworth's speaker as well as to that of Marcel), "Aunt Léonie assumes the role of the mother on whom the narrator must revenge himself in order to be separated from her so that sexual pleasure and writing may occur" (Kristeva 1996b 19-20). While Marcel must betray his deceased aunt to create the reserves of energy and

experience that would enable him to write, the former self of Wordsworth's speaker must instead trouble the borders of a different mother figure, "old grandame earth," by engaging in a naughty "act of stealth / And troubled pleasure" that elicits her disapprobation (V.346, I.388-89; PP 188, 56). Stealing secretly the "elfin pinnace" and "lustily" beating its oars with "trembling hands," the speaker distinctly recalls the moment when he looked up at the rock wall looming above him and noticed how, "from behind that craggy steep (till then / The bound of the horizon) a huge cliff / As if with voluntary power instinct, / Upreared its head," and how it appeared that this cliff "like a living thing / Strode after me" (I.405-08, 411-12; PP 58). The descriptions of the boy's transgression and of the cliff's seemingly voluntary chastisement both contain phallic imagery, and the addition of the word "lustily" in 1805, which did not appear in the 1799 version of the same episode, suggests that Wordsworth himself was aware of the scenes sexual undertones and, by extension, of the "Severer interventions" that "she," nature, sometimes finds "delight" in employing to curb the sexual transgressions of those "favoured" with her attention (I.370-71, 364; PP 56).

[130] The rhetorical questions in Books IV though IX are either rhetorical questions to which the speaker believes he already has an answer (IV.12; C 83; V.2; C 91-92; VI.1; C 111; VIII.9; C 172; and IX.1; C 181) or questions presented within distancing quotation marks that burdened his younger self and no longer burden him (VII.3; C 136-37; VII.5; C 138-39; and VIII.11; C 175-76).

[131] Courcelle's is one of many hypotheses that attempt to explain the structure of the *Confessions*. While some scholars have argued that the work harbors a latent unity, Courcelle cites the work's obvious disunity as evidence that Augustine had other plans for it. Over the years, Courcelle's hypothesis has incited a number of negative reactions from scholars (Pine-Coffin 16; O'Meara 16). However, whether Courcelle's theory is correct or incorrect, it has interesting implications for our understanding of the relationship between autobiography and system.

[132] Wordsworth's long "preparatory" autobiographical poem offered James Joyce and countless others a poetic model for what came to be called the artist novel (or *künstlerroman*) – the semi-autobiographical novel with which many novelists begin their careers. Among the numerous studies of this rich tradition of fictionalized autobiographies is Maurice Beebe's *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts*.

[133] For example, in 1821, Dorothy reports to Catherine Clarkson that Wordsworth "has not looked at The Recluse or the poem on his own life; and this disturbs us." While Wordsworth and his supporters still look at *The Recluse* as the overarching goal of all his work, Dorothy also seems to indicate that "the poem on his own life" has taken on greater importance than a typical "appendix" would (LY I.28).

[134] Unless otherwise noted, all parenthetical references to Wordsworth's *Prelude* refer to the book and line numbers of the 1805 version.

[135] These details about Wordsworth's time in Goslar have been culled from several sources (Parrish; Matlak; Gill 1990; Steen).

[136] Wordsworth is alluding to a moment in Milton that is far from ambivalent: In Book X of *Paradise Lost*, it is Satan's children, Sin and Death, who build a "broad way" over the "Chaos wild" (X.473, 477). Yet the substance of Wordsworth's lengthy discussion of technology and the modern man, while clearly critical, is far less condemning than Milton's perspective on Sin and Death.

[137] Kenneth Patchen's visionary work, *The Journal of Albion Moonlight*, would a few years later provide a succinct encapsulation of this distinction between "literary preoccupations" and creative inspirations. According to Patchen's speaker, "literature" is "what you write down when you think you should be saying something." By contrast, "Writing begins when you'd rather be doing anything else: and you've just done it" (Patchen 18).
[138] RTP III.1089.
[139] This supplementary relationship between author and work has an interesting twist from a psychoanalytic perspective. I have noted that there appears to be a pervasive assumption that an autobiography must always be conceived as a supplement if it is in proximity to a system or treatise. Yet as an autonomous creation of the mind, the system is, in turn, a supplement to the self. On the psychoanalytic model, such a creation or supplement to the self is often interpreted as a mother replacement – as a kind of "erotic object that I can eventually master," and perhaps "abandon, and replace with other objects" (Kristeva 1996 67). Coleridge wants Wordsworth to "deliver upon authority a system of philosophy" (TT I.307), and this is the kind of "phallic and manly pose" by which the system-builder "imitates a father or an authoritarian male figure," wishing to "master" the system since as an Oedipal male child it was forbidden to master the mother as he desired (Kristeva 1996 67). The concept of an autobiographical philosophy suggests that in striving to produce and master this system, the autobiographical philosopher ultimately encounters an aporia, exchanging determinate universal ambitions for prolonged attention to an indeterminate personal narrative. Strikingly, in the case of each of the three examples of autobiographical philosophy I am discussing, one might argue that the mother of the speaker is the single most important figure or absent figure in the narrative. Instead of mastering the mother by constructing a system, the autobiographical philosopher embraces the mother by composing an homage to her. While the system is characterized by stereotypically masculine qualities (dominance, abstraction, judgment), the autobiography or system replacement is characterized by stereotypically feminine qualities (receptivity, emotion, respectful attention to detail). In trying to eschew his dependence upon the feminine supplement to himself (his mother) and to remake himself by replacing her with a masculine supplement to himself (a system), he recoils from system and embraces the mother – and his 'feminine side' – once again.
[140] Taking as his launching point Wordsworth's suggestion that the extant portion of *The Excursion* "belongs to" the second part of *The Recluse* (PW III.5), Stevenson compellingly suggests that the concluding lines of *The Excursion* prove that the poem is incomplete (Stevenson 171).
[141] For Hazlitt's three-part review of *The Excursion* in *The Examiner*, see H XIX.9-25. For Hazlitt's account of Wordsworth's response to this review, see H IX.6 and Bromwich 159-60.
[142] As Tom Duggett observes, given the nationalistic undertones of the gothic in Wordsworth's time, Wordsworth may have aimed at "catching the *zeitgeist*" when he adopted the gothic church as his organizing metaphor (Duggett 211). Citing Fil Hearn, Duggett reminds us that in Regency England "the Gothic became an essentially English, or at least, an essentially un-French style" (Duggett 213). With Napoleon as the "most powerful benefactor" of neo-classical style, Hearn asserts that Regency England, "emerging [after the fall of Napoleon] as the dominant power of Europe, celebrated its ascendant nationalism with recognition that its two greatest secular institutions, parliamentary government and university education, had both originated in the Middle Ages in Gothic settings" (Hearn 11).
[143] See Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*, Part Two, sections 69-78; I.353-56.

[144] DP 535. Though first published in 1840, as part of the posthumous two-volume edition of Shelley's *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* that Mary Shelley edited, Shelley's *Defense* was composed in 1821 (DP 509).
[145] FC 262.
[146] For references to copying, genius, inspiration, vision, conscience and spiritual perception, see Blake's annotations to Reynolds.
[147] So compelling is the modern prejudice against the autodidact that a group called the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition has composed a "declaration of reasonable doubt" as to the authorial authenticity of Shakespeare's works, acquiring the signatures of more than three hundred people, scholars and actors among them (Goodwin).
[148] The speaker of Peacock's "Four Ages of Poetry" addresses the audience with a slippery, perhaps ultimately indiscernible tone that makes it difficult to categorize the essay and its writer with any static label. Though a literal reading of the essay would cast Peacock as a sincere utilitarian, the writer might have also have worn a smirk and had his tongue planted in his cheek as he composed it. In which case, Peacock might have been quite amused by the sincere indignation his essay incited, had Shelley's *Defense* been published in 1821 when it was composed and not posthumously in 1840.
[149] As Leon Gottfried has observed, one of Arnold's "weaknesses" was the fact that "his overriding propagandist intentions sometimes prevented a disinterested analysis and evaluation of the literary object before him" (Gottfried 1). So, one might further argue, did his desire to preserve exclusive ground for the critic prevent him from leaving room for the possibility of genuine artistic creation.
[150] For Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of leisure and the non-productive nature of philosophical contemplation, see for instance Alpha 2 of *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 2004 7-10). For a book-length account of philosophy's role as a non-productive and non-sectarian activity that flourishes in leisurely contemplation, see Josef Pieper's *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*.
[151] "*Theaetetus* is often hailed as 'Plato's most sustained study of epistemology,'" but as Robin Waterfield observes, "it is closer to the truth to say that *Theaetetus* establishes the study of knowledge as a branch of philosophy in its own right" (Plato 1987 9). If Theaetetus establishes the field of epistemology, then Theaetetus's error might be called the first major epistemological error.
[152] Arnold originally composed the poem in 1849, publishing it in 1852 under this title. However, the subtitle changed to "Continued" when Arnold decided to place it after "To Marguerite: In Isolation" (1857) (Arnold 1979 129).
[153] The passage continues: "If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (Donne 87).
[154] On Hutton and Lyell, see Erickson 4-5; on Lyell and continental drift, see Oreskes 2001 10-12; on Lyell and catastrophism, see Van Andel 397-99.
[155] In his *Table Talk* writings of the 1830s, Coleridge was already voicing objections to Lyell's theory of uniformitarianism: "Lyell's system of geology is half the truth – but not more. Much of what he affirms is true, most of what he denies is false – which is the general characteristic of all systems not embracing the whole truth" (Coleridge 1990 I.395).
[156] For Wegener's characterization of Taylor's version of the theory, see Wegener 3-4.

[157] For a brief account of catastrophic, pre-Wegenerian theories of continental drift, see Spilhaus.
[158] W 42-43.
[159] For instance, McFarland names these as "the five ultimate poetic statements by the greatest poet of the nineteenth century" (McFarland 1982 59).
[160] The success of Arnold's volume becomes more apparent when one contrasts its sale to the popularity of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* which, according to W.J.B. Owen, "must be considered remarkable." As Owens observes, "The edition of 1798, of 500 copies, was technically out of print by 1800. The edition of 1800 (750 copies of vol. i, 1000 copies of vol. ii) had 'sold to within 130 copies' by 26 June 1801, about six months after publication" (PW III.55). Thus, while 2,120 copies of *Lyrical Ballads* sold in nearly four years, 4,000 copies of Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth* sold in the first five months. To some extent, one might explain the disparity by the growth of the reading public in general and of Wordsworth's audience through the decades in particular, yet clearly Arnold's volume was an even more remarkable success than *Lyrical Ballads*.
[161] One such book is James Scoggins' *Imagination and Fancy: Complementary Modes in the Poetry of Wordsworth*, which offers close readings of the poems within two of Wordsworth's organizational categories.
[162] Crabb Robinson's journals of 1812 indicate that he was among the first people to hear Wordsworth's plan to organize his poems according to mental activities. While an acquaintance named Miller noted that he esteemed the "pure morality" of Wordsworth's poems, "Wordsworth," Crabb Robinson writes, "said he himself looked to the powers of the mind his poems call forth, and the energies they presuppose and excite, as the standard by which they are to be estimated. Wordsworth purposes as soon as the two last volumes are out of print to reprint the four volumes, arranging the poems with some reference either to fancy, imagination, reflection, or mere feeling contained in them. *The Kitten and the Falling Leaves* he spoke of [as] merely fanciful, *The Highland Girl* as of the highest kind being imaginative, *The Happy Warrior* as appertaining to reflection" (HCR I.89).
[163] In his helpful, 1936 essay, "'Intention' and 'Intentionality' in the Scholastics, Brentano and Husserl," Herbert Spiegelberg offers an outline of the different Scholastic thinkers – among them Thomas of Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham – who employed the concept of intentionality in ways that might have informed Brentano's modern appropriation of it (Spiegelberg 1981 3-26).
[164] In my introduction and in chapter two, I discuss the broadened concept of epistemology that I am privileging – one that frames epistemology as the study not only of the attainment of knowledge (and thus not only as a correspondence theory of truth) but also of the duties, limits and goals of the pursuit of knowledge. While Richard Rorty suggests that epistemology (narrowly defined as "foundational epistemology") is largely a byproduct of Kant's professionalization of philosophy and is consequently something philosophy would be better off without, I would argue that the hermeneutical emphases Rorty rightly seeks to revive should be situated not *in opposition to* epistemology but as *a part of* an epistemology that is richly complex enough to house the extremes of an instrumental reason and a wondering reason (Rorty 1979 315, 356-57).
[165] In an effort to explain Brentano's intermingling of two senses of the word intentionality in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* – the ontological concept of "intentional inexistence" and the epistemological concept of directedness – Spiegelberg writes,

> Objects toward which I direct myself do not by any means have to exist immanently. Even if both things always went together, they would still have to be distinguished conceptually. It seems that Brentano was not sufficiently aware of this difference when he combined the two phenomena under the heading of 'intentional inexistence' (Spiegelberg 1981 15).

Spiegelberg is correct in observing that Brentano combines the two concepts without any explicit acknowledgment that he has done so, yet then uses this as grounds to argue that, "Husserl was the first to separate the concept of intentionality from the notion of immanent inexistence and interpreted it, or, speaking more precisely, re-interpreted it, as relatedness to, direction toward, the object" (Spiegelberg 1981 16). In giving Husserl preference over Brentano as modern innovator, Spiegelberg appears to go too far. If Husserl has given up the concept of immanent inexistence as such, he has nonetheless profited from the early Brentano's suggestion that it is helpful to avoid thinking of objects as real things – and this suspension of the supposed reality of object phenomena was to become a central tenet of the phenomenological reduction. Moreover, Brentano most certainly emphasizes the notion of the intentional as a kind of directedness. In quoting Brentano, Spiegelberg even omits the crucial phrase, "direction toward an object," as if to further highlight Husserl's contribution (Spiegelberg 1981 14). Brentano's precedent does not take away from Husserl's crucial additions – in particular, his refinement of the concept of intentionality as a cogito in "the *pregnant* sense" (I 72; also 68), which includes cogitatio (disclosing mental processes) and cogitatum (disclosed phenomenal objects) (I 69), as well as his introduction of the skeptical epochê and of his own unique supplement to it, the phenomenological reduction – yet Brentano's prescient paragraph should nonetheless receive its due.

[166] On the "radical reformulation" of the concept of intentionality in Brentano's later writings, see Hedwig 326. On Brentano's later abandonment of the concept of "intentional inexistence," see Runggaldier.

[167] Ruoff's insightful association of Wordsworth and phenomenology culminates with the following comments: "Wordsworth's development of a poetic system based upon appearances during an age when essentialism was clearly the order of the day is remarkable. It would seem to have been possible only because of his relative freedom from the presiding anxieties of many of his contemporaries. For example, his poetry reflects throughout a subtle knowledge of the vagaries of individual perception, yet he is notoriously unconcerned about finally distinguishing what is in here from what is out there. The subject-object controversy seems to lose any substantial importance for him because the two coalesce within the perceptual act itself" (Ruoff 78-79).

[168] Owen's acceptance of the "Poems Founded on the Affections" section of 1815 might be influenced by Wordsworth's own subject-centered categorization of 1809, which Owen admits to preferring (Owen 151-57). In the proposed arrangement of 1809, outlined in a letter to Coleridge, Wordsworth suggests that, "The 2nd class," succeeding the childhood section, "would relate to the fraternal affections, to friendship and to love and to all those emotions, which follow after childhood, in youth and early manhood" (MY I.334-35). It would appear that this early association of the affections with childhood allowed Owen to accept the category as valid. Yet here, already, in the 1809 arrangement can we observe the first inklings of the arrangement according to mental phenomena that Wordsworth would articulate to Crabb Robinson in 1812

and implement in 1815 (HCR I.89). Indeed, this emphasis on mental life is already present in the 1807 category, "Moods of My Own Mind."

[169] For an examination of the complex relationship between Coleridge and Keats, of their related formulations of negative faith and negative capability, and of the relationship of these to the philosophy of wonder, see chapter one.

[170] The larger context of this final announcement in Freud's *Autobiographical Study*, where he concedes that his suspension of judgment has sometimes led him into trouble, will receive further treatment in chapter six.

[171] The objective of this paragraph and the previous is to briefly highlight some commonalities between the epistemological attitudes of psychoanalysis and phenomenology. Clearly, these two methods are not identical. Yet the effort to distinguish them has, among phenomenologists in particular, sometimes led us to make too much of differences and too little of similarities. To cite just one example, Paul Ricoeur has written, "Whereas phenomenology begins with an act of 'suspension,' with an epochê at the free disposition of the subject, psychoanalysis begins with a suspension of the control of consciousness, whereby the subject is made a slave equal to his true bondage, to use Spinoza's terms. By starting from the very level of this bondage, that is, by unreservedly delivering oneself over to the domineering flux of underlying motivations, the true situation of consciousness is discovered. The fiction of absence of motivation, on which consciousness based its illusion of self-determination, is recognized as fiction; the fullness of motivation is revealed in place of the emptiness and arbitrariness of consciousness" (Ricoeur 1970 391). To Ricoeur's finely wrought distinction and description of psychoanalytic method, one might nonetheless add that it is not merely "a suspension of the control of consciousness" that psychoanalysis requires, but more specifically a suspension of judgment or of the critical faculty. This suspension is surely not identical to that of phenomenology – as Ricoeur points out, for instance, psychoanalysis can provide neither the empirical verification nor the logic of proof that would enable it to call itself a science (Ricoeur 1970 345-46) – but it nonetheless promotes a bracketing of prejudices and a voluntary sustaining of attention that resembles the positive skepticism of a philosophical wonder. The analysand does not merely let go and give up control; rather, he or she engages in a sophisticated intellectual maneuver which Freud likens to that of the "thinking artist" (ID 135). Describing phenomenological method, Ricoeur says, "the epochê or suspension of value judgments becomes the basic step toward self-knowledge; it is the step that enables the reality principle to gain control of the process of becoming conscious" (Ricoeur 1970 280). Surely this "step" is one that Freud and Husserl took together, perhaps due to the influence of Franz Brentano, and this particular giant step for mankind toward a 'science of subjectivity,' if less celestial than Neil Armstrong's, nonetheless represents one of the most striking independently arrived at philosophical advances in Western intellectual history, rivaled perhaps only by the fight between the English and the Germans over who invented the calculus.

[172] Though I am certainly not the first commentator to point out similarities between the methods of these two students of Brentano, it is my hope that the interdisciplinary nature of this project will help to illuminate new points of contact and interpenetration between psychoanalysis and phenomenology. One notable book-length study on the subject is Richard Askay's and Jensen Farquhar's *Apprehending the Inaccessible: Freudian Psychoanalysis and Existential Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. P., 2006). An earlier commentator, Peter Koestenbaum, had this to say on the subject:

> Not only did both Freud and Husserl live at approximately the same time (Freud lived from 1856 to 1939, Husserl from 1859 to 1938), study under Franz Brentano, and write important works at the turn of the century (Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900, and Husserl's *Logical Investigations* appeared in 1900 and 1901), but above all there are important affinities between Husserl's phenomenological epoche and Freud's basic rule (free-association). The process of psychotherapy is a systematic and repeated application of the kind of honesty and distancing that is characteristic of the epoche. It can be argued that psychotherapy is the epoche applied to one's personal life (Koestenbaum lxxiv).

[173] On Freud's inconsistent attentions to the differences between remembering and imagining, see chapter six.

[174] In suspending the natural attitude, Husserl brackets "preconceived opinions of every sort" (I 56) – not only all "pregiven philosophical standpoints" and "doctrines" but also "the concept of philosophy" (I 33), in this way ensuring that phenomenology can "claim to be 'first' philosophy" (I 148); not only the laws of science but also all "formal logic," apart from "logical *axioms*" such as the law of contradiction, so that it can claim itself to be "a *purely descriptive* discipline" (his italics; I 136); not only "the natural data which continue to be objects of consciousness," not only "the entire natural world," but even "*ourselves*" in "our empirical *factual being*" (his italics; I 148-49; also I 54).

[175] Despite the psychological nature of his discussion, Wordsworth speaks in his prose fragment on "The Sublime and the Beautiful" of "the law of sublimity and that of beauty" in a manner that seems to prematurely take as explanation what is clearly a description of an aesthetic experience (PW II.350).

[176] W 49-50.

[177] In the Cornell edition of *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807*, Jared Curtis speculates about the composition process of the *Ode,* listing the probable composition dates of some or all of stanzas 1 through 4 as March 27, 1802; some or all of stanzas 5 through 8 as June 17, 1802; and the remainder of the poem by March 6, 1804 (Wordsworth 1983 271n).

[178] This leads Thomas to conclude that "wonder is a cause of pleasure, in so far as it includes a hope of getting the knowledge which one desires to have" (Aquinas 2007 732).

[179] Beth Lau is one scholar who has explored the resonances between Wordsworth's poetry and current memory research in cognitive science, noting, for example, Wordsworth's insights into the role that one's personal identity plays in the selectivity of memory encoding as well as the role that one's moods and present beliefs play in memory retrieval and distortion (Lau 2002).

[180] For an examination of Wordsworth's privileging of the "unreasoning progress of the world" over the mechanical progress of the dwarf man (V.384; PP 190), see chapter three.

[181] For an account of the psychoanalytic import of Leibniz's response to Locke, see Tallis.

[182] Whyte, Ellenberger and Tallis are three of the authors who have attempted to dispel this myth.

[183] Freud, the self-proclaimed founder of the method by which the unconscious can be studied, often seems to feel (in Keats's words) like a "stout Cortez when with eagle eyes / He star'd at the Pacific." In this he has much in common with Edmund Husserl, founder of phenomenology. "For I am actually not at all a man of science, not an observer, not an experimenter, not a thinker," Freud wrote to Fliess on February 1, 1900. "I am by temperament nothing but a conquistador – an adventurer" (Freud 1985 398). In the wake of one of his conquests, Freud cites the discovery of the unconscious as the third great blow to human narcissism, after

Copernicus's claim that the earth is not the center of the universe and Darwin's claim that humans descend from other species (DPP 136-44).

[184] Freud said this to a Professor Becker in 1928 (Berman 304n40; Trilling 33).

[185] In the opening pages of Henry James's novel, *The Ambassadors* (1903), we read, "He was burdened, poor Strether – it had better be confessed at the outset – with the oddity of a double consciousness. There was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference" (H. James 18). However, big brother William would most likely have criticized Henry for indicating that there was anything special (or "odd") about Strether's double consciousness. It is a quality that most people exhibit, though the second self is perhaps, for some people, a more constant companion.

[186] Though the case study of 'Little Hans' provided Freud with an opportunity to analyze a child, it is important to note that he did not do so directly. The father of Little Hans served as an intermediary because Freud had reservations about the ethicality of an adult who was a stranger working so intimately with a child. With her method of play therapy, Melanie Klein found a way of resolving this difficulty. As Juliet Mitchell observes, "Where, in the case of 'Little Hans', his famous analysis of a childhood phobia, Freud talked to the father, Klein talks directly and listens to Fritz," who was the subject of her case study (Mitchell 18).

[187] However, as Freud observes and as chapter six will take up explicitly, it is often difficult to be certain that such 'remembered' experiences are not, in fact, imagined (S 310).

[188] See chapter four for an more detailed account of the relationship between Freud's suppression of the critical faculty and Husserl's suspension of the natural attitude.

[189] Casey's companion studies, *Imagining* and *Remembering*, serve as the definitive treatments of the phenomenological efforts to describe these crucial mental activities.

[190] To view the claims of this paragraph in an extended argument, see chapter five. On the comparatively late development of episodic memory as a possible cause of childhood amnesia, see Perner and Ruffman; quoted in Tulving 32.

[191] On "the problem" of childhood amnesia, see Freud's "Screen Memories" (hereafter "S"), 303-04.

[192] For a discussion of one of Freud's most pronounced claims for the real seduction and for his later revision of such claims, see the below examinations of Freud's *Wolfman* (hereafter "W") and his *Autobiographical Study* (hereafter "AS").

[193] On the image-dependence of imagining and remembering on perception and on the autonomy of all three activities, see Casey's book-length studies of *Imagining* and *Remembering* as well as the essays collected in *Spirit and Soul: Essays in Philosophical Psychology*, particularly "Imagination, Fantasy, Hallucination, and Memory" and "Imagining and Remembering."

[194] To a Professor Becker in 1928, Freud said, "The poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious. What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied" (Berman 304n40; also Trilling 33).

[195] Confabulation can also result from mental defects that are not memory-based, such as hallucination and incomplete or false perception. In cases when confabulation is more broadly defined as the production of false statements without awareness that the statements are false, then the term can also apply to patients who experience blindness, paralysis, or aphasia (i.e., the loss of language capacity) but do not recognize, believe or accept that they are having these experiences (Schnider 51).

[196] Research suggests that healthy subjects typically produce false memories when these memories are in some way "manipulated or planted" by an external source, as can occur when these subjects are provided with "the gist of some target information," when they are encouraged to "imagine events," or when the process of "post-event processing" is in some way manipulated by "comments on the quality of the answers given by the subjects" (Schnider 201). For example, subjects who watch a video of a car accident are more likely to say that they've seen a broken headlight in the video if they are asked about "the" broken headlight than if they are asked about "a" broken headlight (French 39). Furthermore, they are more likely to say the cars in the accident were going fast if a verb like "smashed" is used, and they are more likely to say the cars were going slow if a verb like "contacted" is used (French 40). Moreover, the misinformation is more likely to take hold if the subject deems the messenger reliable (French 42). In other words, research suggests that the work of psychoanalysis can create a fertile ground for the production of false memories in cases when a trusted analyst suggests potential (i.e., gap-filling) explanations for the analysand's feelings about the past, when the analysand becomes inattentive to the occasional intermingling of the activities of remembering and imagining, or when the analyst implies that the analysand's narration of past events is in some way lacking. Research also suggests that the false memories produced can be held by the analysand with "moderate" and even "strong" conviction and that even advanced brain scanning technology cannot reliably distinguish false memories from true ones (Schnider 201, 194).

[197] The parenthetical references to Wordsworth's *Prelude* in this chapter come either from the Cornell edition of the 1798-99 *Prelude* (hereafter "CP"), which contains the Goslar notebook (or "JJ" manuscript), or from the thirteen-book, 1805 version of the poem, which appears in the Penguin edition of *The Prelude* (hereafter "PP.")

[198] With the concept of atmospheric imaginings, I mean to suggest that it is possible for a subject to relate wholly fabricated stories as if they were recollections, if these stories were infused with concrete details and a general atmosphere that is familiar. Research has shown that subjects will, if prompted, produce a wholly fabricated story (e.g., of being lost in a shopping mall as a child) if the story is set in a familiar environment that the subject knows well (e.g., a probable location and other contextualizing details prompted by a family member or a false photograph). As French, Garry and Loftus indicate, "People may search their memories for related details; they may imagine what might have happened and who was likely to have been there at the time. As a result they may create a whole new memory," which is based on the prompted details or on the photo (French 47-48). "Taken together," they conclude,

> these studies show that trying to remember something that didn't happen can lead people to believe that it did happen and can lead some of them to go further and remember specific details about it. When people struggle to remember something from their pasts, they may imagine details, they may confuse these imagined details along with details from other memories, and as a result they create a whole false memory. In other words, one pathway to confabulation is through trying to remember (French 49).

[199] Ernest Hemingway, unpublished omissions from *A Moveable Feast*, included in Item 122 of the Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

[200] The first volume of Moncrieff's translation of Proust appeared in 1922. Hemingway's memoirs document his life in Paris during the years 1921 through 1926, making it seem plausible that he might have read Moncrieff's translation during this time. A more literal English rendering of the title of Proust's seven-novel masterpiece is *In Search of Lost Time*.

[201] From the usage of these words in contemporary parlance, one would never know that the words 'fact' (from the Latin *facere*) and 'fiction' (from the Latin *fingere*) both, in some sense, mean 'made.' For a playful meditation on this connection, see chapter nine of Livingston 2006.
[202] Wordsworth's speaker refers to the first fifty-four lines of the poem as the "glad preamble" (VII.4, PP 250), and as Don H. Bialostosky observes, commentators have adopted Wordsworth's label (Bialostosky 140).
[203] As Parrish observes, "The last poem Wordsworth wrote before leaving England was *Tintern Abbey*, completed in mid-July, and the affinities between *Tintern Abbey* and the autobiographical verse he began to write in Germany three months later help to point up *The Prelude*'s earliest design" (Parrish 7).
[204] Parrish's reconstruction of the JJ manuscript reveals that Wordsworth began composing on the last page of the notebook (Zv; CP 117), working from there toward the front of the notebook (Parrish 3), making this notebook page the earliest extant manuscript of *The Prelude*.
[205] Beth Lau cites both of these passages as instances of Wordsworth's awareness of "the subjective quality of memory, in particular the way in which subsequent experience and reflection alter one's impression of the past" (Lau 679).
[206] Hellman 112.
[207] Though the idea of a "science of subjectivity" is, as Jonathan Lear observes in relation to Freud's efforts, "so strange as to seem almost a contradiction in terms" (Lear 6), this is precisely the ideal that Brentano, Freud and Husserl appear to have set for themselves. Just as Brentano speaks of his "descriptive psychology" as a "science of mental phenomena" (PES 29n; PES 8) – "a science which draws its concepts from inner experience" (PES 29n) – so does Husserl speak of phenomenology as "the science of consciousness" (HIL 13). In his later work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1954), he speaks more explicitly of "the postulate of that novel universal science of subjectivity," which has the potential to become the foundation "for all objective sciences" (Husserl 1970 147). Moreover, they both view their efforts as (in Husserl's words) a kind of "descriptive analysis" (I 136), which can serve as a new and necessary foundation for the sciences. Brentano indicates that mathematics "is dependent upon descriptive psychology insofar as a clarification of its *basic concepts* and *ultimate axioms* is impossible without analysis of consciousness" (PES 29n). According to Husserl, "Science does not consist in direct grasping and seeing, but in indirect deducing and substantiating." Thus, science can find a new grounding in phenomenology, which examines the "distinctive content upon which the tenability and Evidenz of the substantiation hinge" (Husserl 2008 5).
[208] The use of a capital 'O' in 'Object' is a product of the translators' efforts to distinguish the German translation of *Objekt* ('Object') from that of *Gegenstand* ('object'). In Husserl's slogan, "To the things themselves," the word 'things' is the translation of yet another German word, *Sachen*. Understandably, then, these related words can be a source of confusion. One might even wonder if this distinction between 'phenomena' (or 'object phenomena') on one hand and 'Objects' (or 'natural objects') on the other is not some kind of equivocation. It is, therefore, useful that we remember Edward S. Casey's reminder that Husserl's over-quoted slogan is, in some sense, an "ambitious and incautious methodological watchword," both because, as Casey states, the phenomenologist's "positing requires more imaginative than strictly perceptual activity" (LD 181-82), and also because the terms 'thing,' 'object,' and 'Object' can overshadow and confuse the fundamental basis of phenomenology as an attention to, yes, phenomena.

Husserl's peculiar form of transcendental phenomenology can easily be mistaken for idealism, yet my account is concerned with Husserl's notion of phenomenology as a descriptive method.

[209] I would argue that there are, in fact, two significant reductions in "Eye and Mind": the first and third sections. Generally, the essays five sections run as follows: 1) a bracketing of our general scientific attitude; 2) a post-reduction attention to painting; 3) a bracketing of a particular scientific attitude toward seeing, which is encapsulated in Descartes' *Dioptrics*; 4) a closer, post-reduction attention to painting; 5) a conclusion.

[210] On Wordsworth's attention to the intermingling of and the blurring between the activities of remembering and imagining, which is often called confabulation, see chapter six.

[211] WPW 62. In his *Poems of 1815*, Wordsworth categorized the poem as one of his "Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood."

[212] According to Tom LeClair, Ernest Becker's book, *The Denial of Death*, "is one of the few 'influences' [DeLillo] will confirm" (393 and 411n6); also quoted in Bonca 463.

[213] For another scene in *White Noise* that is grounded in 20th century theory, see DeLillo's homage to the concept of "the aura" (WN 12-13), which Walter Benjamin articulated in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

[214] Appropriately, the Wachowski brothers make sure that Neo's copy of Baudrillard's book is hollow. Perhaps because he has not yet escaped from the Matrix, it too is a simulacrum – a shadow without substance.

[215] For the "dwarf man" and the "mighty workmen of our later age," see PP V.290-388, especially lines 294-95, 320 and 346-49.

[216] See *Adversus Mathematicos* (7.150-58) for Sextus Empiricus's account of Arcesilaus's response to the Stoics, which marked the origin of skepticism (HP 274-76).

[217] See *On Goals* (2.2) for Cicero's claim that the Socratic method of questioning "was not preserved by his [immediate] successors" and that it was Arcesilaus who "revived it and required that those who wished to hear him not ask for [his opinion], but should themselves say what they thought; and when they had done so, he maintained the contrary position" (HP 274).

[218] See Sextus Empiricus's *Adversus Mathematicos* (7.156-57; HP 275; the bracketed text is inserted by the editor).

[219] John Dryden is aware of this more basic meaning of skepticism, and he claims that the dialogue form of his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* participates in a tradition of "problematical" or "skeptical" inquiry that runs through Plato, Aristotle and Cicero. "Because 'skeptical' in Greek had meant something like 'inquisition' or 'inquiry,'" Earl Miner notes, "and because Dryden associated the dialogue form naturally enough with Plato, it is clear that he was not professing to a full philosophical skepticism or agnosticism" (Miner 27-31).

[220] A few of Blake's lyrics were published in Benjamin Heath Malkin's volume, *A Father's Memoirs of His Child* (1806), and William and Mary Wordsworth seem to have read and copied into their commonplace book four of Blake's poems: "Holy Thursday" from *Songs of Innocence*, as well as "Laughing Song," "The Tyger," and "I Love the Jocund Dance." Scholars speculate that Wordsworth read these poems sometime in 1807 (Wu 1995 24-25, 139).

[221] On Bacon (E 638, 648, 656); on Newton (E 660); on Locke (E 659, 660, 670).

[222] Though there is little extant evidence that Wordsworth influenced Whitman, commentators such as Robert Weisbuch have identified passages that Whitman might have written in implicit homage to Wordsworth. For instance, Weisbuch has suggested that when the speaker of "Song of Myself" says, "Now the performer launches his nerve . . . . he has passed his prelude on the

reeds within," he may be conceding that Whitman's autobiographical poem of 1855 was composed only after its author had read and pondered Wordsworth's *Prelude*, published posthumously in 1850 (Weisbuch 178; Whitman 77). Other commentators such as Karen Karbiener have proposed that Whitman's lack of reference to Wordsworth might be read as a rhetorical silence on the subject of Wordsworth's influence. However, as Karbiener demonstrates, we can at least be certain that Whitman read "We Are Seven," one of Wordsworth's most influential poems of the wisdom of the child (Karbiener). .

[223] O 64.

[224] As Aquinas put it, it is "necessary for the perfection of the human community, that there be persons who devote themselves to the [use-less] life of contemplation" (quoted in L 26).

[225] As chapter one has suggested, this description of wonder is influenced by Coleridge's description of imagination as a hovering middle state of the mind.

[226] Husserl defended phenomenology against the complaint of solipsism in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1910-11), near the beginning of his career (§18; Husserl 2006 47), and in *Cartesian Meditations* (1950), near the end of his career (§42; Husserl 1977 89-90).

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