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The Music of Romantic Poetry and the Mediation of Romanticism

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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In the poetry of British Romanticism, “music” has a significance that stretches across versification, figurative conceits, rapidly evolving generic modes, song lyrics, the cultural practice of music, impassioned recitation, the conspicuous silence of print, and the sale of printed books—in other words, an interrelated spectrum of issues that reaches through formalism to historicism and beyond. Music’s relevance to various romantic cultures, as well as its many tropes and topoi, mirrors a conceptual versatility that poets found abundantly instrumental when sitting down (or walking along) to contemplate the relation of self and craft, craft and culture, and, above all, sound and print. Through the remediating apparatus of print, the romantic poets (chiefly Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake and Keats) imagined deeply nuanced systems of relation through the sign and cultural practice music, and often through conceptual oppositions that silent, printed fictions facilitate: between musical song and the “music” that emanates from the poet’s voice; between the sociability of cultural music and the isolated pursuit of self-presence via natural music; between the mere hearing of exterior sounds (i.e. phenomena) and the choice to interpret or not interpret those sounds as music (by the imagination of the culturally savvy yet nature-seeking subject); and between the fading genre of musical “lyrics” and the lyricism that was theirs to define. Considering "music" from these multiple vantages forces us to read well-worn poems differently, deepening and complicating an array of familiar critical narratives—such as the importance of musical lyricism in Wordsworth's attempt to station himself in a line of prophetic poets after Milton, or the role cultural music plays in Keats's turning away from the chummy sociability of the Cockneys to effect his own becoming as poet. Ultimately, I argue that by understanding how and why poets wrote “music” into the printed medium of romantic poetry, we further grasp romanticism’s deep investment in the relation between actual music and the oral and aural fictions of poems themselves—the “unheard melodies”—which, in turn, enlarges the way we can understand the relation of romantic poetry to various contemporary cultures.

Dedication Page

For Jacqueline.

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Acknowledgments

The growth of this dissertation happened as growth often does—sometimes gradually, sometimes in spurts, sometimes painfully, and sometimes, more rarely, with surprising grace. Any moments of grace are assuredly attributable to the generosity and wisdom of others. So here let me briefly acknowledge such debts, and fond remembrances as well. First, to my committee. Without many years of guidance from my advisor, Rowan Phillips, I doubt I could have succeeded in this project, nor attempted it with a sense of wonder. I have Peter Manning to thank for transporting me to Romanticism, and for bringing Romanticism to life. From my first day of graduate study at Stony Brook to my dissertation defense, Benedict Robinson has helped me sharpen my arguments alongside my critical eye. I also thank Celia Marshik for having always been a mentoring presence and a source of encouragement. I must also reserve a hearty portion of my gratitude for Janet Meckle, Dorothy Mason, Margaret Hanley and Liz Rhen—for their many years of advice, rescue, and unfathomable patience. Outside of the Stony Brook community, many voices and minds impacted this work. I send my boundless gratitude to Maureen N. McLane for being a part of my dissertation committee and for shaping the way I think about British Romanticism—both through her work and in her responses to my own. I'm also grateful to Heather Dubrow for sharing her insights into lyric and song, and for listening to mine. I have close friends who chose to go to graduate school, and graduate school colleagues who became close friends—to both groups, now one, I look forward to sharing future endeavors and conversations. There are past guides whose teachings live in this project—SunHee Kim Gertz and John Conron especially. And apart from individuals, I must thank the Graduate School at Stony Brook, The English Department, the generosity of the Mellon Foundation, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Lastly, my warm thanks to my parents, my sister, and my family near and far for never doubting that this long endeavor would pay off. And above all, I thank my wife, Jacqueline, for having lived through this process with me, and for proving the poets so very right and so very wrong in all the best of ways.

Introduction

Romantic verse goes by many musical names—melody, song, lyric, ballad, harmonious numbers, melodious murmurs, tuneful speech and much more. These names crop up repeatedly, even incessantly, in poems as well as prose. The poetic voice that accomplishes these oral deeds, though printed, is often said to inspire best when it is heard, much as Keats heard Chapman "speak out loud and bold." Actual oral rehearsals and recitations increased the effect. When Charles Lamb heard Coleridge speak "Kubla Khan" out loud, Lamb's enthrallment induced him to write to Wordsworth and report that Coleridge brings "heaven & Elysian bowers" into his parlor when he "sings or says it." [1] Hazlitt, with less affection, remembered hearing a "*chaunt"* [2] in the recitation of Wordsworth, and Haydon was purportedly touched when Keats would recite in his characteristic "half-chant."[3] In face-to-face exchanges, poetry made good on its musical invocations and evocations by living a notably aural, even melodious life in the mouths of romantics.[4] For them, it would almost seem that voice of poetry, or the melody of speech, or the songs of lyric, were interchangeable.

For years, major critical studies of the "music" and "poetry" were comparatist works that traced correspondences between canonical poems and classical music[5]—the

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[1] Letter to Wordsworth, April 16th, 1816. See, The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb. Ed Edwin J. Marrs, 3 vols. Ithaca: 1978, III. 215.

in The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt, Ed. Duncan Wu. 12 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998: IX, p.105

[2] The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt, Ed. Duncan Wu. 12 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998: IX, p.105

[3] Butler, Marilyn. Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 136.

[4] I follow David Perkins's observation that "Romantic recitation was far more musical than we now conceive." "How the Romantics Recited Poetry," SEL 31 (1991): 655-71

[5] Some of the best-known examples are John Hollander's The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music from 1500-1700. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. Hollander traces the gradual trivializing of once-essential connections between the conception of the world, society and cosmos by poetry and music; Winn, James Anderson. Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981. Moving from the ancient world to the twentieth-century, Winn finds that aesthetic changes to one art have "eloquent" correspondences in the other. Barricelli, Jean-Pierre. Melopoiesis: Approaches to the Study of Literature and Music. New York: NYU Press, 1988. Barricelli advocates for, and demonstrates that an approach to the concomitant study of literature and music, despite challenges, can and should further our knowledge of both; For the eighteenth-century, see Neubauer, John. The Emancipation of Music from Language. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. Neaubauer plumbs the aesthetic shifts that allowed and emerged from music's ability to become a high art in itself, on par with and not subordinated to, or requiring the assistance of, literature. For the nineteenth-century, see Kramer Lawrence. Music and

curious, seemingly interchangeable musical taxonomies of romantic poetry—song, voice, speech, melody, etc.—remained elided in them. But if "music" can refer at once to the sound of birds and the symphonies of Mozart, it may be due for some clarification, and less for the sake of Mozart and more for the sake of the music of warblers and nightingales. So the question I ask is, how did poets discover and nuance the relations of poetry and music, and what was at stake in defining and specifying that relation? Lamb's quote from above helps us hone in on an answer. While he joyed to hear "heaven & Elysian bowers" entering his parlour when Coleridge said or sang "Kubla Khan," he also expresses fears that "[the poem] is an owl that wont bear day-light. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense."[6] All this marvelously hybridized singing or saying must be set down in a silent, typographical medium in which the sounds that impel Lamb's flowery, nearly impressionistic response (like a response to music) come under threat. While the "music" of romantic poetry can be read in many ways, my central thesis is that Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake and Keats discover and exploit protean crosscurrents among poetic genre, the cultural practice of music, and the complicated exchanges between musical qualities of orality and the remediating apparatus of print. In essence, and in so doing, they *themselves* define the nuances of what "music" is—between "song" and "voice," between the sociability of cultural music and the isolation of natural music, between the sounds of printed poetry and the sounds described in print, and between the fading genre of musical lyric and the lyric that was theirs to define. And often, print is the whetstone that sharpens these deeply oral and aural preoccupations.

Much has indeed been written on music and romantic poetry, though book-length studies of the romantics are comparatively few. Monographs on music and romantic poetry tend to focus on a single figure, as studies of Keats, Shelley and Blake have done.[7] The critical need to write a coherent, cross-referencing book can be difficult when "music" is the object of literary study—especially given the fact that finding productive exchanges between poiesis and music, or even using poetry to produce musical effects, is perhaps as individual a process as listening and responding to music.[8] It would be, in

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Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Kramer's volume introduces for the first time post-structuralist theories in the study of music and poetry and advances our sense of music and poetry have both complementary and supplementary functions in cultural practice.

[6] Letter to Wordsworth, III, p. 215.

[7] For Blake: Fairchild, B.F. Such holy Song: Music as Idea, Form, and Image in the Poetry of William Blake. Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1980. For Keats: Minahan, John A. Word Like a Bell: John Keats, Music and the Romantic Poet. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1992. For Shelley: Vatalaro, Paul A. Shelley's Music: Fantasy, Authority and Object Voice. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009; and Quillin, Jessica K. Shelley and the Musico-Poetics of Romanticism. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012.

[8] There are exceptions. For instance, Erland Anderson's study of metaphors in music does indeed bring together in a single volume the notably divergent approaches he finds in each poet. Anderson, Erland. Harmonious Madness: A Study of Musical Metaphors in the Poetry of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1974.

many ways, a simpler endeavor to choose one poet—e.g. "Coleridge and the Music of Prolixity."[9] But the difficulty of incorporating what are, at times, these poets' radically different approaches to the meeting place of poiesis and what they understood as music—or music worth writing about—also motivates the present study. As we will see, Keats uses music as a way to negotiate the meeting place of poetry and sociable exchange. Wordsworth, quite differently, finds that music is crucial to imagining a lyric mode that can be remediated into a genre of mythic self-creation. Such divergent approaches, juxtaposed, compel us to recognize Wordsworth's lyricism as a kind of poetical musical culture in itself in which imagined communities and self-relation are themselves set in relation; in Keats, the ode becomes the lyrical staging point in which his decisive becoming as a poet and greater dislocation from Huntian praxis becomes, especially in his musical speculations, most evident. The point, I believe, is not simply to analyze these different poetical projects and search for points of connection, but rather to think in Coleridgean ways about Keats, or in Blakean ways about Wordsworth, all the while keeping in mind that each of these poets, even if on a varying level, all share and make up large portions of what we recognize as the medial condition of romanticism—a unifying feature and condition in which poetry's music and print were often fated to meet.

Perhaps due to the uncertainties inherent in analyzing the "music" in language or poetic language, musical metaphors are often fruitful, stable objects of studies of poetry and music. While images of lyres and musical instruments had long permeated the verses of English poetry, the romantics renew and revitalize and perhaps discover figures that accrete into emblems of voice, aurality or song that suit their variegated aims—for instance, the Aeolian lyre or wind harp as detailed in Abrams's well-known idea of "the correspondent breeze," or John Hollander's discerning study of the shell/cave as a figure for hearing and sound.[10] More contemporary work, however, has worn down boundaries between categories like "metaphor" and broader cultural aesthetics. James Donelan's Poetry and the Romantic Musical Aesthetic crosses the border of German and British Romanticism in an effort to prove that "at the core of early Romanticism lies a structure—the dialectic of Idealist self-consciousness—and a metaphor—the self-sustaining aesthetic of absolute music—that mirror and support each other, often in ways difficult to prove" (xi).[11] Music, in the sense that Donelan poses it, encompasses a way of relating to the world, and in moments where non-verbal, audible communions between the self and the world are heard (or not heard when anticipated), a powerful recognition of self-consciousness occurs, a process he associates with "absolute music" (music without programmatic meaning). In this way, "music" need not be music at all.

As Donelan demonstrates, the very definition of what music "is" can be an up for grabs question for a critic. The opposite strategy is to be as concrete as possible and gauge the relationship of poetry with cultural practices and cultural forms of music—actual music. And England had much of it. The country may have been saddled with the reputation of *a land without music*, but Handel, Haydn, Mozart and many more European

[9] To be clear, this is a title of my own invention, not a reference.
[10] Hollander, John. Images of Voice: Music and Sound in Romantic Poetry. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1970.
[11] The full citiation is: Donelan, James A. Poetry and the Romantic Musical Aesthetic. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

masters visited, toured and took advantage of the vibrant musical cosmopolitanism in London. Even in the "Dark Ages" of the eighteenth century, "concert life… as a whole had a variety and vitality to which it would be hard to find a parallel," and this variety and vitality increased as the nineteenth century approached.[12] Music crossed borders fluidly and rapidly in the form of traveling musicians, printed songbooks, and, of course, as fictional performance featured in the pages of novels and poems. Yet, music was both beloved and the site of controversy, and therein lies a romantic problem. The enlightenment tradition (through and against which the romantics would form their opinions) refocused ancient anxieties[13] about music through contemporary concerns about virtue and morality. The moral angling of Shaftesbury, Smith, Pope, and later of Dennis, Addison, Steele and Johnson, was a mainstay of a body of writing wherein morals and educated taste—the shared *aesthetic* of the educated—was printed for an expanding, and dangerously common, readership. So too did this hold for music, and especially so. Discussing this, David Schroeder notes that "in the work of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and others, it became natural to place music among those things that could make society better, through improvement of taste, through acquiring refinement and through the ways that these could promulgate morality."[14] Unstitched unities were often blamed for artistic degradation, and what was problematic for the musician was likewise a problem for the poet. As music and poetry parted ways and became complex, irreconcilable forms of fine art, both the musician and the poet were seduced to vulgarity. According to John Brown, the musician "prided himself (like the Poet) in a pompous Display of Art, to the neglect of *Expression* and true *Pathos*" and was thereby "divorced from *Poetry, Legislation, and Morals."*[15]

By the late Eighteenth Century, "pompous displays" were a locus of cultural polemics about music. Gillen D'Arcy Wood has examined these more vicious attributes through the his coinage "virtuosophobia," a summary term for another strain of romantic ideology that defines "expression, sincerity, and the sublime" against the "virtuosic 'world' of fashion, performance, and material luxury, all deeply associated with metropolitan musical culture."[16] Virtuosity, and the fear of it, comes in many flavors—

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[12] Sadie, Stanley. "Concert Life in Eighteenth Century England." PRMA 85 (1958-1959): 17-30, p. 17.

[13] Plato vilified dirge-like compositions which, he fears, will causes idleness, indulgent melancholy and problematic femininity when he informs Glaucon that they "must do away with" with the Mixolydian and "intense Lydian" harmonai, "for they are useless even to women who are to make the best of themselves, let alone men;" thus Plato links music's power to affect the passions with more wide-ranging concerns over civic well-being. See, *The Republic*, Book III in Source Readings in Music History (revised edition). Ed Leo Treitler. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998, p. 10.

[14] See his "Listening, Thinking, Writing" in The Cambridge History of Eighteenth Century Music pp. 183-200. Ed Simon P. Keefe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 186.

[15] Brown, John A. A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progression, Separations, and Corruptions of Poetry and Music. London, 1763, p. 198.

[16] Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. Virtue and Virtuosity: Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 7.

literary, musical, and social, among others—but it, too, allows its executors and critics the opportunity to define their affiliations with different cultural identities and the literary and musical practices that are shaped through them.

The romantic practice of turning to nature, which is often if not always a simultaneous turn from social and metropolitan spaces, often gets rehearsed as a search for natural music that will displace or refocus the entertainments practiced and consumed by mass culture—symptoms of wider social ills enabled, in part, by what Coleridge calls the "gaudy throng." Wordsworth subtly orients conjunctions between the hard experience of human social existence and natural rejuvenation, but, in poems like *Tintern Abbey*, he tips his musical hand somewhat by hearing a notably vague and virtual "still, sad music of humanity" (l. 91) [17] that chastens the joy once felt immanently in nature, while in other circumstances hearing natural music directly.

> I heard a thousand blended notes,
> While in a grove I sate reclined,
> In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
>
> To her fair works did Nature link
> The human soul that round me ran;
> And much it grieved my heart to think
> What man has made of man. ("Lines Written in Early Spring" ll. 1-8)[18]

Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" and hosts of other poems rehearse the procedure of linking natural music with some disturbance left behind in the human world. But they also configure a return to that world—the sudden shock of dream state when music has vanished, a desire to be made the lyre of the wind and through its power and disseminate "leaves." Correspondent breezes may rejeuvenate, but there is a bardic authority in returning with nature's music, like Blake's gray-haired figure holding an immense harp in "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," the poem that concludes the "Songs of Innocence and Experience" and bids the "youth of delight" to "come hither and see the opening morn/ Image of truth new born"—the simultaneously natural and political image of awakening.

Actual music and the cultural context that surrounds it, however, often receives a more dubious treatment. When Coleridge admonishes theater goers from the vantage point of the forest, or nature—

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[17] Quotations from Wordsworth's poems are taken from, Wordsworth, William. William Wordsworth, The Poems. Ed John O. Hayden. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. Cited by line.

[18] There are exceptions to Wordsworth's preference for heard natural music and virtual human music—like the wildered and bewildered verses of "The Solitary Reaper," but as we will see in the first chapter, Wordsworth's hearing of human music, bereft of a recognizable verbal text, not only inspires an absolute crisis but likewise results in some of his most complex textual mediations.

> …youths and maidens most poetical
> Who lose the deep'ning twilights of the spring
> In ball-rooms and hot theatres, (ll. 35-37)[19]

—he simultaneously turns to the nightingale in the hopes that its "song" should "Be loved like Nature!" (ll. 32, 34). Keats, the poet in this project who lived most intensely, if briefly, in an active musical culture, was able to use the phrase of "sick of Mozart" as an ideologically loaded remonstrance of Leigh Hunt and Hunt's ham-fisted views of artistic beauty. Yet Keats had previously written that his heart "[w]as warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart," and after his disavowal of Hunt through Mozart would write down one of the most famous lines in the entire cannon, musical or no:

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter…" (ll. 11-12)

As we will see in the fourth chapter, Keats's relations with the Hunt Circle and his development as a poet are richly involved with the way in which he uses music to establish, and then distance himself from, poetical sociability. The turn from musical culture to the hidden Nightingale or the silent Urn follows from and develops that familiar biographical and critical narrative of self-determined becoming.

Unheard music, however, could be said to describe much of the music of romantic poetry. Terence Hoagwood has suggested that the music the romantics heard (in nature, on instruments, through poetry) was a preeminent figure of absence in the period, something he calls a "profitable fictitiousness…wrought by the enterprising but 'deceiving elf of an imagination' for sale" (16).[20] Burns, Moore, Hemans, Clare and even Byron (in the *Hebrew Melodies*) were adept at reaping the financial boon of packaging poetry as song (pseudo-song) and shrewdly marketing it as printed orality.[21] Hoagwood points out that Keats taps the ore of pseudo-songs but finds little profit in it. Similarly, Shelly uses musical absences, but in the guise of artist, not entrepreneur.[22] Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge hardly enter the picture.

In essence, the remove from the musical marketplace is also what allows the poets studied here to explore song, music and orality so poignantly and idiosyncratically. While I agree with Hoagwood that music can figure absence, I also believe this is a reductive view. The sound of poetry itself—either its subvocalization or recitation—engenders a corresponding presence of sound in very much the same way that printed music, when

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[19] From, Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Poetical Works. Ed. J. C. C. Mays. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bollingen Series LXXV 16, 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

[20] Hoagwood, Terence Allan. From Song to Print: Romantic Pseudo Songs. New York: Palgrave, 2010.

[21] Hoagwood examines the connection between the printed restoration of oral and musical forms and the print capitalism's incentives. Always, the absence of the thing that pseudo-songs purport to sell—music—is what seemingly stimulates demand. pp. 9-22.

[22] For Keats, see pp. 11-16 in Hoagwood; for Shelly, see pp. 5-8.

played, engenders musical sounds. When songs were written as pairings of texts and tunes, they inflicted the strictures of the marketplace for song and likewise the need to produce, produce, produce—a "slavish labour" that figures like Sir Walter Scott correlated with generic unworthiness and poetical dalliance.

> There is sufficient evidence both in the edition of Dr. Currie, and in this supplemental volume, that even the genius of Burns could not support him in the monotonous task of writing love verses on heaving bosoms and sparkling eyes, and twisting them into such rhythmical forms, as might suit the capricious evolutions of Scotch reels, ports, and strathspeys—a slavish labour, which no talents could support, led to negligence, and above all, diverted the poet from his grand plan of dramatic composition.[23]

Writing for the public taste prefigures the scope and theme of poetic composition, belaboring it with what the market for songs mandates (e.g. sentimentalism, lack of dramatic seriousness, meters accommodated to musical rhythm,) wherein lyric texts, music, and illustrations were packaged together.

Commercial aims drove a wedge between art and merchandise—the effort of aesthetic creation was hardly something to be found in nature. George Thomson, for instance, micromanaged the packaging of songs on such a deeply material level that he went well beyond selecting type and illustrations and actually insisted on paper of a certain quality and thickness.[24] And yet, for the texts and tunes to be published as Scottish airs and folksongs, he found that an "enthusiasm for Caledonian Music and Song," much like the right shade of paper, was necessary—Caledonian ancestry was not (Slagle 142).[25] What mattered was mutual configuration: "Accompaniments…calculated to support the Voice…harmony [that] is plainly expressed in musical notes," and, as

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[23] *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1.i*,* 1809, p. 32

[24] See: Slagle, Judith Bailey. "Ballads and Folksongs of Scotland, Ireland and Wales: The Collaboration of Joanna Baillie and George Thomson." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 55 (2006): 137-157, pp. 138-139. "These ornate folio editions contain verses, scores, drawings, decorated title pages and musical accompaniments. In addition to the artists and engravers he employed for the illustrations, explains McCue, Thomson "was just as fastidious about the thickness, colour and general quality of his paper as he was about the standards of printing or engraving" (138). See also Kirsteen McCue's "'The most intricate bibliographical enigma': understanding George Thomson (1757-1851) and his collections of national airs" in Music Librarianship in the United Kingdom: Fifty Years of the United Kingdom Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres. Ed. Richard Turbet. Hant, England: Ashgate, 2003, p. 101.

[25] As Slagel's article explains (especially pp. 138-143), Thomson supplied glossaries of Scots dialect for audiences, called upon Byron to provide some lyrics and recruited the likes of Beethoven, Haydon and Pleyel (among others) to provide arrangements that would suit educated standards yet be playable for amateurs.

Joana Baillie would discover with difficulty, a seamless integration of rhythm and meter. The "the vilest of all measures" she decided, was triplet meter, or the "dump-i-ty dump-i-ty dump, " for which she had "to count [her] fingers again & again to put the same numbers of sylables [*sic*] in each line, [her] ear being of no manner of use..."[26] Slavish labor indeed.[27]

Of course, in setting a text to actual music, the text and tune can be configured in a nearly infinite number of ways. In poems not written with a tune in mind, it's hard to say where and how music may have entered the mind of the poet in the process of composition. Keats, for instance, made a pilgrimage to Burns's grave when on a Scottish tour and likewise, when enduring the Hunt circle, found himself in the company of Vincent Novello, a professional musician and publisher noted for popularizing European liturgical music and Mozart in England. Keats lived in a world where the cultural crossings of "song" and "ballad" and "music" might equally suggest musical figures like the "Scottish Snap" or the endless melismatic passages we hear in the *Kyrie* section of Mozart's Great Mass—both of which, given his love of music, may have impacted his imagination, and both of which are difficult to hear or detect in the canon of most British Romantic poetry, Keats included. Or, we may hear it too readily:

> Oh what can ail thee, knight at arms,
> Alone and palely loitering?
> The sedge has withered from the lake,
> And no birds sing. ("La belle dame sans merci" ll. 1-4)[28]

Is there a musical rhythm here? We could scan the line as, Oh WHAT can AIL thee, KNIGHT at ARMS. But what if we hear it through more syncopated rhythms—of a rhythm more like a ballad? "Oh" sounds like an upbeat—a pick-up note. "What" receives a great deal of emphasis as a downbeat; "can ail thee" proceeds in a rocking quarter/eighth rhythm and then "knight" lands on the next major downbeat, but is followed quickly by "at-arms." Minus our pick-up note, this rhythm would be easy to reproduce in the next line—a repeated phrasing germane to the ballad where repetition is a common feature of both text and tune. Is that a poetical choice? A musical instinct? Lastly, the truncated line at the end would likely require longer notes—a musical elongation that produces something akin to the visual effect of the shortened line—or perhaps something melismatic. The dripping melancholy of Keats's poem sounds suddenly playful and doleful at once, perhaps altering, perhaps deepening the feelings expressed through the images. And perhaps that is the point. The imagined, expressive music of the verse has a music that is liberated from the confinement of actual musical

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[26] Slagle, 140; Baillie quoted in Slagle, 147.

[27] Baillie's complaint was shared by a host of songwriters and librettists who were poets by trade. Dryden once remarked that "the Numbers of Poetry and Vocal Musick, are sometimes so contrary, that in many places I have been obliged to cramp my Verses, and make them rugged to the Reader, that they may be harmonious to the Hearer." Quoted in Winn, p. 242.

[28] My source for Keats's poetry is Keats's Poetry and Prose. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009.

setting. Then again, Keats's sense of the "music" of composition also derives from the "notes" of language itself. As Bailey explains,

> One of [Keats's] favorite topics of discourse was the principle of melody in Verse, upon which he had his own notions, particularly in the open & close vowels….Keats's theory was, that the vowels should be so managed as not to clash one with another so as to mar the melody, —& yet that they should be interchangeable like different notes of music to prevent monotony.[29]

In Bailey's account, music is both real and figurative—a sound of verse and, as art form, a simile to which the sounds of verse warrant merit-worthy comparisons. While Saintsbury credits Keats with the "deliberate and constant use of assonance" (an observation with which Bate agrees),[30] Bailey himself suspected Wordsworth had made similar inroads, and Coleridge's metrical systems were equally sonorous with respect to assonance and consonance alike.[31] Once again, we return to the fact that music, in romantic poetry, was enormously variegated depending on how we find ourselves willing to define "music."

We can hardly discuss Keats's ballad, and musical language in general, without immediately thinking of "lyric," perhaps the most important genre of poetry where a discussion of music and romanticism is concerned. Like the "music" of romantic poetry, lyric is a conceptually diffuse term—especially in the hands of twentieth- and twenty-first century critics. In fact, the genre's conceptual diffuseness is part and parcel of its contested status among critics, which represents an ongoing theoretical conversation into which this dissertation also hopes to make interventions.

Lyric's universally recognizable features are those that most critics unanimously concede are belated, reactionary and bygone, which are more or less summarized here:

> In the most common use of the term, a **lyric** is any fairly short poem consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling. Many lyric speakers represented (*sic*) as musing in solitude. In *dramatic lyrics*, however, the lyric speaker is represented as addressing another person in a specific situation; instances are John Donne's "Canonization" and William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey."

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[29] Quoted in Bate, p. 414. See: Bate, Walter Jackson. John Keats. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.

[30] Bate, p. 414.

[31] See Brennan O'Donnell assiduous analyses of Coleridge's prosody in "The 'Invention' of a Meter: 'Christabel' Meter as Fact and Fiction" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100. 4 (2001): 511-536.

This is M.H. Abrams from his own glossary.[32] His definition echoes his longer, well-known definition from "The Greater Romantic Lyric," which in turn reiterates prevailing formalist and structuralist views. Northrop Frye, for instance, defines lyric in essentially the same way, recalling "Mill's aphorism" that lyric is "preeminently the utterance that is overheard" (Frye 249).[33] Ever since, the habitual practice of invoking romantic conceptualizations of lyric poetry, the heavy reliance on a select number of canonized poems (e.g. Abrams's "Canonization" and "Tintern Abbey"), and the poisonous affiliation and complicity of lyric with New Criticism have provoked a continuous critical desire to reassess lyric's relationship to changing theoretical and pedagogical modes over the past forty years. The idea of lyric as the overheard utterance of an individual (or less, as a voiced subjectivity) has become the only thing that contemporary critics are most inclined to agree upon, provided they are agreeing to repudiate it.

The assumption that *lyric* is indeed a class of poetry or a readable, self-evident genre has faced a range of challenges; the most notable example is the January 2008 edition of the *PMLA*, entitled, *The New Lyric Studies*. The terms of the collection were largely shaped by Virginia Jackson's 2005 publication of Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading. As Rei Terada summarizes in "After the Critique of Lyric:"

> "[Dickinson's Misery] is the only book I know of that places the problem of lyric firmly within the perception that a lyric is there to be read. What most needs explanation in lyric occurs before and after the poem, in the motives for the materialization of lyric or lyricism."[34]

Jackson's arguments maintain that *lyric* is a set of practices and assumptions that have turned *lyric* into a homogenous and homogenizing frame for different types of poetry—a position built on decades of earlier challenges to lyric, most of which had explicitly named "the romantic / post-romantic lyric" as their object of critique and disdain. Marjorie Perloff observes (and half-laments), "romantic lyric" is…

> …a derogatory term; it connotes inwardness, subjectivity, monovocality, and transparency—all of these politically suspect in the age of multiculturalism. But …these claims… [conflate] two things: the attenuated, neo-romantic lyric of the later twentieth century…and the actual English lyric of the Romantic period. The term romantic, in other words, needs to be historicized more fully…[35]

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[32] A Glossary of Literary Terms: Sixth Edition. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1993, p. 108.

[33] Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957.

[34] Terada, Rei. "After the Critique of Lyric." *PMLA* 123.1 (2008): 195-200, p. 198.

[35] Perloff, Marjorie. "A response." in New Definitions in Lyric: Theory, Technology and Culture. Ed Mark Jefferys. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998: pp. 243-53, p. 247.

But what was the romantic model that the romantics inherited, wrote, theorized and read? Jackson writes toward the beginning of Dickinson's Misery "while it is beyond the scope of this book to trace the lyricization of poetry that began in the eighteenth century, the exemplary story of the composition, recovery, and publication of Dickinson's writing begins one chapter, at least, in what is so far a largely unwritten history."[36] She nonetheless points to some texts that provide support for the "chapter" she studies. Jackson refers to Douglas Patey's "Aesthetics and the Rise of Lyric in the Eighteenth Century," as one of the best expansions of Abrams's schematic chapter on lyric in the Eighteenth Century, one that is "invaluable for its history of the lyric's ascendancy to 'truest or most essential form' " (n.242). When we turn to Patey in an effort to unearth this "truest or most essential form," however, the quote she imputes to him is nowhere to be found—not in his article, nor in Abrams. Wherever this phrase comes from, it is either mistaken or implanted or assumed. The closest approximation is this: "I shall return to Warton's arguments, and in particular to his most influential of all eighteenth-century identifications of lyric as the truest poetry" (588).[37] Patey is making a reference to Joseph Warton's domestication of Charles Batteux's phrase *Poesie pure*. But this too is curious on an entirely different level. Warton is a problematic figure where Eighteenth Century lyric theory is concerned. In many ways, he is an aesthetic outlier. He introduces the Anglicized phrase "pure poetry" in an introduction to Pope, who he (Warton) is trying to recuperate as a lyric poet. Already, the romantic lyric that was so frequently written *against* Pope's influence is slipping out of focus. Warton presents a number of instances that bridge the "truly poetical" with descriptions that "[contain] such strong painting" (316);[38] or "true poetry" that contains a necessary "tincture of enthusiasm…painted with much sensibility, and in very animating colours" (320). His highest praises are reserved for Pope's epistolary poem "Abelard and Eloise,"[39] a poem that medially defines itself as an unfolding piece of writing that seeks to verbally rationalize irrational affect and vocalization:

> O write it not, my hand — the name appears
> Already written — wash it out, my tears!
> In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,
> Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys. (ll. 13-16)

In other words, the rational, graphic, textual, and ekphrastic biases that run through Warton's essay contextualize "pure poesy" lie far apart from the *poesie lyrique* that Batteux initially wrote about and which Warton, as Patey notes, appropriates. Apologizing for reducing lyric to a principle of imitation, Batteaux ventriloquizes some of its Eighteenth Century norms: "What! …Is not Poesy a song; inspired by joy,

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[36] Dickinson's Misery, p. 6.
[37] Patey, Douglas Lane. "'Aesthetics' and the Rise of Lyric in the Eighteenth Century." Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 33.3 (1993): 587-608.
[38] Warton, Joesph. Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope. London, 1756.
[39] Pope, Alexander. The Poems of Alexander Pope. Ed John Butt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. Cited by line.

admiration, gratitude? Is it not a cry of the heart, an impulse where Nature is all, and Art, nothing? I do not see any picture or painting. Everything is fire, feeling, drunkenness. [40] Battaeux tries to plot a middle course through his essay, arguing that true poetry is unlike epic and dramatic poetry because these other genres imitate actions (Batteux is specific about the fact that they actively represent life or engender narrative); while lyric, he argues, derives from passions, and in this regard Batteux identifies the substance of lyric imitation with precisely the same thing from which, he later claims, musical imitation springs. Thus the vocal, musical, impulsive, non-pictorial ideas he imagines in the statement above are precisely the qualifiers he uses to define lyric, and, by extension, pure poetry.

Thus Jackson skews Patey where he reads Warton from a great critical distance. Warton in turn skews Batteux, and from this fractured genealogy the problematic history that Jackson sets out to correct in the first place remains problematic. Where the emergence of romanticism is concerned, the "rise of lyric" (note: this is Patey's phrase; though it is invoked and evoked widely) is arguably more of a developmental trope than a historical fact. Patey's investment in the "rise" of lyric—which is what Abrams intimates and which attracts Jackson—foresees a historical endpoint in which art for art's sake (or pure poetry for its own, non-philosophical sake) is the winner of a vast cultural war. He maps out lyric's fate among the ideological divide that emerged through *Le Querelle des Ancients and Modernes*, observing that "the new [i.e. Eighteenth Century] "aesthetic" conception of art transformed definitions of "literature," and especially poetry, so that lyric became, as Coleridge was to say, "that which in its very essence is poetical." His overall argument wobbles by finding a historical endpoint in Coleridge, however. Coleridge points us in a very different direction. Much like Batteux, he frames his view of lyric in accord with what he takes to be his readers' pre-conceived notions of what a lyric is—a song. Thus the complete quote:

> …interfusion of the Lyrical, of that which in its very essence is poetical, not only with the Dramatic, as in the Plays of Metastasio where at the end of the Scene comes the Aria, as the exit speech of the Character—Now Songs in Shakespear (sic) are introduced as *Songs*, and just as songs are in real Life...not only with the dramatic, but as a part of the dramatic—The whole *midsummer Night's Dream* is one continued Specimen of the Lyrical dramatized—[41]

By mentioning that songs are not the play itself but introduced within a play, he emphasizes their place in the action imitated ("as…in real life"), not as an alternate mode of enunciation. It is likewise crucial to note that in Metastasian drama, *aria* really does

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[40] Batteux, Charles. Les Beaux-Arts Reduit à un Même Principe. Paris, 1747, p. 236. Unable to procure a translation of the text, I have supplied my own.

[41] From, Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Lectures 1808-1819 On Literature. Ed. R. A. Foakes. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bollingen Series LXXV 2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, p.118.

mean *song* (i.e. a sung text), not simply a soliloquy. Coleridge's concern here is the problematic discontinuity of song and speech that arises when one mode of vocal performance yields to another. In keeping with his unrelenting insistence on principles of aesthetic unity—especially after his encounter with Kant—he maintains that if there is beauty in song, dramatic language can embody and assimilate it. The expressive beauty of song ought to be transfused through verse in a verbal or "poetical" unity. In this view, lyric is necessarily adjectival, not nominal. The "lyrical" is a versatile mode of poetical speech whose clearest referent is "song"—a fugitive idea of music that runs through the poetical composition, and one that Coleridge blurs terminologically and conceptually.

If the lyric of the eighteenth-century rose to an essential state in romanticism, or a state we recognize and challenge under the sign of "post-romantic lyric," then that same idea of lyric came about during the theoretical dissolution of "lyric" as "song." That dissolving boundary, however, is precisely what this project seeks to investigate.[42] And while we will explore the exchanges that took place through that porous, sometime absent line between poetry and music, it is important to determine where that line could otherwise be said to be. Despite the many corners of life and nature from which the poets in this study drew inspiration and prepared to write, never do we encounter from them what Burns writes so elatedly about collecting the music of his native land: "I was so lucky as to pick up an entire copy of Oswald's Scots Music, and I think I shall make glorious work out of it. I want much Anderson's Collection of strathspeys &c,. and then I think I will have all the music of the country."[43]

Burns, who as a songwriter was actively engaged in the production and sale of poems *in* musical culture, is an important foil to the poets studied here. For him, the meeting of text and tune had laws of decorum that inhered in the conjunction of Scottish speech and Scottish song, "a certain irregularity" that does not easily cross the borders of one nation's verses to the next, nor out of their Scottish song settings and into the medium of English recitation.

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[42] In a wonderful chapter entitled "The Retuning of the Sky," David Duff has also undertaken the deed of substantively and directly considering the taxonomic and theoretical dimensions of post-romantic lyric against romanticism's lyrical-musical significance. Prior to the "process of colonisation whereby the category of lyric expanded to include large parts of the genre-spectrum, and ultimately the notion of poetry itself," he notes that the romantic period was a time where lyric was active and operative in musical culture—where pocket miscellanies and other collections shuffled together sonnets and popular songs, high brow and low brow, and stand as artifacts of the "forgotten world of lyric that surrounds the lyric poetry of Romanticism: the world of popular urban song" (141). However, his piece seems to resist considering the necessarily porous boundary between the lyric genre and its logic of mediation, nor does he see lyric's "musicality" as a reason for its colonization of other genres (as I do, in chapter one). Duff, David. "The Retuning of the Sky: Romanticism and Lyric." The Lyric Poem: Formations and Transformations, pp.135-155. Ed. Marion Thain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[43] Letter to James Johnson. The Letters of Robert Burns, 2 vols. Ed. J de Lancey Ferguson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931, II. 75.

> There is a certain irregularity in the old Scotch Songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness & measure that the English Poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of "The Mill Mill O," to give it a plain prosaic reading it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the Song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch Songs which begins 'To Fanny fair could I impart &c.' it is most exact measure, and yet, let them be both sung before a real Critic…a thorough Judge of Nature,—how flat & spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and tamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first.[44]

Burns heard an essentialized connection between the songs that survive in older, (i.e. truer) Scottish language and the tunes with which they developed. New songs and old tunes fall flat; prosaic readings stumble. The language of old Scotch Songs alone, and the tune alone, were merely distinct parts awaiting a fateful reconfiguration. And once restored, they produced "heart-moving melody." We could consider that the pre-composition process of writing a lyrical ballad, which Wordsworth calls recollection in tranquility, is, for Burns, the active collection, contemplation and singing of tunes themselves; he must write *through* the sound and cadence of the tune.

> My way is: I consider the poetic Sentiment, correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then chuse my theme; begin one Stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now & then, look out for objects in Nataure around me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy & workings of my bosom; humming every now & then air with the verses I have framed: when I feel my Muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, & there commit my effusions to paper; swinging, at intervals, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on—[45]

The belatedness that Burns admires brings two important issues to bear. The first is that ballads, in the romantic era, endeavored to reproduce a sense of belatedness, or preliterate orality, much as fictional minstrels were a means of representing cultural authority and an always-vanishing link to an oral past—the trope of "lastness" (e.g. Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*) where the minstrel is "'very lately alive' or quite

[44] From Burns's *Commonplace Book*, pp. 37-38. Quoted in Crawford, p. 263.
[45] Letter to George Thomson (September 1793), II. 200-201.

recently dead, the last minstrel" is "a constitutive *topos*, of antiquarian documentation and essay" and, more broadly, "another name for poiesis itself."[46] Maureen McLane has studied this phenomenon in detail in a study that also links tropes of belatedness and minstrelsy the medial situation of romantic poetry. Celeste Langan and McLane elsewhere have raised crucial questions over our fundamental assumptions about the medium of romantic poetry. "To consider how poetry mediates itself …is to examine, in the broadest sense, the means through and historical conditions under which human imagination materializes itself."[47] Following this idea, the historical conditions and medial fixity that Burns seems to feel are being polished away and pushed into the past were likewise at work wiping the literary field and its genres clean amid the arrival of poetical experiments, hybrid genres, and medial situation rife for disruption. As orality and print entered the historical frame of romanticism, the former remained assiduously preserved and the latter was unstoppably on the rise. Thus a volume like the *Lyrical Ballads*, as Langan and McLane suggest, announced its transmedial project through its very title: "… rather than develop a new poetic form, or merely rework generic conventions, it poses a question, suggests a possibility: what would it be like, the poems ask, to "hear" oral-formulaic poetry (ballads) through the medium of written poetry (lyric)?"[48]

Wordsworth never lost his fixation on the act of hearing and reading, claiming in 1815 that his "essentially lyrical" poems cannot "have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject." [49] Unlike Burns for whom lyric meant song, and song meant the accommodation of text to tune and tune to text, Wordsworth condenses and assimilates the generic place of music in lyric within the partnership of poet and reader—the reader's "impassioned recitation" and fluency with the meter, which Wordsworth insists must not be understood as "inflexible." The partnership is fluid, energetic, connective—and yet takes place directly and necessarily in print, without which Wordsworth could never have modulated the role of lyrical music in the first place. The reader has the "voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem."[50] No tunes but that which the reader recites. Sorry Burns.

I will extend this analysis of Wordsworth's view of lyricism in chapter one, tracing his engagement with the genre from the *Lyrical Ballads* to the *Prelude* (alongside other poems and prose passages). His repositioning of the lyric genre is owing to the vacillating role of lyrical music in his historical moment; "music"—as accompaniment, or as singing—was simultaneously the clearest signpost of lyric genre and yet one of its

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[46] McLane, Maureen N. Balladeering, Minstrelsy and the Making of British Romantic Poetry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 141.
[47] Langan, Celeste and Maureen N McLane. "The Medium of Romantic Poetry." in The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry. Eds. James Chandler and Maureen N. McLane. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 242
[48] The Medium of Romantic Poetry, pp. 248-249.
[49] From The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Eds. W.J.B. Owen and Jane W. Smyser, 3 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, III. 27.
[50] The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, III, 29-30.

most belated, even unnecessary attributes. By formulating claims to having produced music and lyricism not only through ballads but also in blank verse poems like *Tintern Abbey*, he both positions himself as the renovator and remediator of an entire genre while progressively and cannily shading his use of lyric into "lyrical"—from a form to a quality. As he deepens connections between music and lyricism, he begins to deploy it among many genres, insisting, for instance, that "the Excursion has one merit if it has no other, a versification to which for *variety* of musical effect no Poem in the language furnishes a parallel."[51] Such belief is reflected in the way that his intrageneric extensions of lyricism, driven and yet made possible by the print medium through which he works, attains the status of trope through which he comes to symbolize his own voice in the *Prelude*—a musically lyrical voice that he constructs autobiographically and which he uses to mythologize, and forcefully historicize, himself as Nature's chosen voice. My hope is that this view of Wordsworthian lyricism will contribute a new way to read Wordsworth's vying for prophetic laurels—as a poet of vocal self-creation.

In the second chapter, I am interested more directly in the sound of poetry itself—sonority and prosody. While much poetry in many periods uses prosody and special arrangements of sound—readable and scannable—Coleridge produces his sounds through pronounced strategies of mediation. Coleridge's reputation both for prolixity and jaw dropping, even entrancing powers of recitation are often studied to illuminate the vitality of romantic oral performance, which in Coleridge's case is thrown into stark relief by the woes that attend him in print publication—critical abuse and charges of plagiarism, chiefly. But my interest lies in how Coleridge's poiesis could also be said to emerge in the gulf between these apparently disparate media—the voice that "sings or says" and print. He took shrewd advantage of the medium of print that somewhat anticipates "the double logic of remediation," or the production of hyper-mediation in the pursuit of immediacy. [52] We see this particularly where Coleridge turns away from the perceived vulgarities of musical culture and instead locates "song" and "music" in sylvan ecosystems or lyric forms. His poems suggest that there is another medium in nature, not to be copied but rather remediated in the immediate sounds of poetic verse—and close analysis of that verse reveals simultaneously how the printed passage produced, and at times necessarily produces, natural music. It is a procedure that also informs the way we read him mediating his own texts—the shifting context of publication, the palimpsestic layering of successive texts, the appending of textual adjuncts (like his well known prefaces or glosses).

As we reach Blake in chapter three, a hovering question has a chance to play out. In the medial situation of romanticism, were there stakes in determining fine-tuned differences between oral modes like "speech" and "song"? We often speak of conjunctions of opposites in the mediality of romanticism—orality and print, for instance, which is a conjunction that I, too, at times, invoke.[53] But orality could be said to contain

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[51] "W.W. to Catherine Clarkson" [L. 343], Jan. 1815 in The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Vol III. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

[52] Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. Remediation: Understanding New Media. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.

[53] Now that I have used the term "mediality," a nod to David E. Wellbery is owing. In the forward to Friedrich Kittler's Discourse Networks, Wellbery uses the term "mediality" to

its own sub-opposites: plain speech and wildered song; communal hymning or solo singing. And "song" contains further binaries—human voices and instrumental music among others. Blake's "contrary states" frame potential contexts for such nuanced divisions to take root and obtain different purposes and, indeed, varying stakes. By reading the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence* as a "mediation scene," rather than as one of the "scenes of writing" known in Blake scholarship, I suggest that the poem contains within it the medial logic by which the remaining songs can be read, or understood within the multimedia contexts of verse form, voice, song, visual art, and text. Patterns emerge, like fraught listening in *Experience* and the suspension of narrative in favor of song in *Innocence*, sometimes deepening and sometimes confounding the states of innocence and experience. Lastly, the music that vanishes in the "Introduction" and initiates Blake's project of further specifying the interplay of discrete oral categories can be read in the visual images of the illuminated text—a supplement whose immediacy continues to mediate the way oral categories can be read and productively differentiated. In the concluding section of dissertation, I will also revisit Blake's model of the mediation scene to read collections that lie outside of Romanticism, namely Robert Herrick's *Hesperides* and some blues poetry of Langston Hughes.

In Chapter four, I will move the analysis closer to the intersection of musical culture itself by examining Keats's move from Huntian aspirant, to sociable Cockney insider, to independent lyric writer. The general outline of this critical narrative should sound familiar—a conflation of developmental studies of Keats's poetic craft in conjunction with the ever-operative context of Cockney culture, politics and sociable norms that critics such as Jeffrey N. Cox have crucially promulgated.[54] What remains to be seen, I argue, is how Keats uses music to mediate his involvement with the Hunt circle and the double-edge topos of sociability, something both lived and literary, that he absorbed there—a poetical focus that both energizes and complicates our sense of that involvement. I argue that we can map a turning point in his view of Cockney culture as well as the place of sociability (and its romantic proxy, intimacy) via the scenes of music in his long narrative poem, *Endymion*. In *Endymion,* music frames various shatterings and resuscitations of social order and erotic relationships. As Keats's disengagement progresses, I trace how his musical speculations deepen their capacity to represent moments of absence, empty content and isolation. Ironically, lyric isolation in Keats may well have had less to do with the lyric genre's purported melodious musing in solitude, and more to do with a forceful divestment from the sociable norms and codes he progressively abandoned.

Inasmuch as Shelley, who will be treated in the conclusion, famously suggests that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," we could also say that poets are the mediators-in-chief of the ways in which the advancement of poetry and poetic craft can be cultivated by turning to an art form outside their chosen medium. Despite

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describe "the general condition within which, under certain circumstances, something like 'poetry' or 'literature' can take place" (xiii). See David E. Wellbery, foreword to Friedrich A. Kittler, Discourse Networks, 1800/1900, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

[54] See Cox, Jeffrey N. Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley Hunt and Their Circle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

their differences, despite their shifting alliances and animosities, new versions of familiar critical stories and a deeper grasp of the media of romantic is to be had for anyone willing to ask, what *was* the music of romantic poetry?

Chapter 1

The Music in the Voice and Voice in the Song: Wordsworth's Pursuit of British Romantic Lyric

To begin, I would like to keep a basic historical commonplace in mind: when Wordsworth came on the literary scene at the close of the eighteenth century, he was eager to carve out a new, experimental niche, particularly in a lyric arena. My focus, however, concerns the uncertainty of poetry's status in the ever-changeful world of British Romantic musical song. In light of contemporary criticism's renewed interest in the figure of the minstrel, balladry, popular song and the ways that they (the minstrel figures, the texts, and the songs) were commodified, collected and appropriated as writers and publishers desired varying forms of poetic and cultural authority (and financial success), Wordsworth's understanding and use of the romantic lyric—a genre understood both as printed poem and sung text—is ready to be reexamined as well. I argue that while Wordsworth fails to follow the lead of figures like Thomas Moore, Joanna Baillie and Robert Burns and profit from the lucrative market for musically set songs, airs and ballads, he nonetheless manipulates and capitalizes on romantic poetry's connection with musical song, and, as I will argue, uses this strategy to forcefully historicize himself as *The Poet*. In a sense, this procedure mirrors what we know of Wordsworth's aspiration to see himself as next in a line of prophetic poets such as Milton, but we can also read him against that familiar narrative in that, as I will explore, his claim for such poetical status emerges in the way he configures ideas of lyricism in a number of genres—an endeavor made possible thanks to the medial crosscurrents of poetry as printed text and poetry as musically accompanied song alive in his historical moment. By positioning himself as a lyric poet who writes lyric without writing song (as in a text accompanied by music and intended to be sung), while simultaneously figuring the medium of lyric song—the presence of a musically accompanied voice—as both a trope and fundamental constituent of poetic power and prowess in poems intended for print, we can read in both his poetry and his prose an overarching argument that poiesis unfolds as a negotiation of the two chief *a priori* components of poetry-making itself: the medium of his art and the genre of his art, a negotiation that Wordsworth mythologizes into autobiographical narrative in *The Prelude*. Music is instrumental in the blurring of these many boundaries—partly because it had an unquestioned existence as both a literal and figurative aesthetic form, partly because in the silence of print no sound or voice is prohibited from being heard as music, and partly because music, by nature, blurs boundaries central to romantic poiesis. As Adam Potkay notes, "[music] locates us as part of a complex environment: to listen to music or, more broadly, to attend to musicality, is to understand in a discursively indefinite manner that blurs the line between objective property and subjective response, as well as any line between subject and intersubjective (biological, cultural, aesthetic) norms" (15).[55]

[55]Potkay, Adam. Wordsworth's Ethics. Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2012.

Why Lyric?

New Critical lyric studies and subsequent reactions against it tend to begin with John Stuart Mill's "aphorism"—"eloquence is heard, poetry is *over*heard."[56] Mill's phrase is easy to read as an aesthetic pronouncement, but it is also a medial workaround. As Mill writes elsewhere in "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties," "[Poets] have found within them one, highly delicate and sensitive specimen of human nature, on which the laws of emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study… It may be said that poetry which is printed on hot-pressed paper, and sold at a bookseller's shop, is a soliloquy in full dress and on the stage" (346, 349). The emphasis on soliloquy is clear, but Mill also argues that poetry is most poetical when the page and its material presence (and perhaps the historical context of its making) disappears beneath the fiction of the soliloquizing poet. Such material erasure, or transparency of material, has long ruffled critics. In fact, Virginia Jackson—a signpost for challenges to lyric and its theories—claims that lyric is a "transparent genre" that must be made "visible."[57] So much for overhearing.

But there is an important, easily elided gulf between the lyricism of Wordsworth—which I will argue is a generic, adjectival quality of voice—and what has been understood as "lyric" ever since—a formal, typological and nominal genre. First, consider that Mill never actually invokes the term "lyric" in "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties"; that terms arrives in the following essay, "Poets Born and Poets Made," where Wordsworth's fate as a lyric poet is considerably diminished: "…the genius of Wordsworth is essentially unlyrical. Lyric poetry, as it was the earliest kind, is also…more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other: it is the poetry most natural to a really poetic temperament, and least capable of being successfully imitated by one not so endowed by nature" (359). Mill argues that Wordsworth is too calculated, too heavily mediated by his materials and his method (he actually says that nothing "overflows"). Ultimately, Wordsworth is too much a poet of typography and not the poet of the ebullience that Mill finds in Shelley. "In Wordsworth, the poetry is almost always the mere setting of a thought" (358). The word "setting" makes for a cunning protest. As a *poeta fit, non nascitur*, Wordsworth fits too much the model of eloquent writer, a man whose method and mediation appears before us—a man given over to text *setting* as it were, and not the bardic, enthusiastic (Mill uses the term *possessed*, but italicizes it), impassioned, sublime creator of vivid outpourings that Shelley seems in comparison.

What Mill has done is set up the epistemological, historical and aesthetic problems that this chapter will explore. In short, he has taken the criteria of the great lyric ode as devised in the previous century and nominated Shelley as their truest inheritor, and we can read in his two essays several junctures. We see the birth of a contentious axiom; we see the exultation of passionate immediacy and a willful dismissal of the significance of print and mediation; and we see, above all, a rewriting of lyric history that defines the

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[56] Mill, John Stuart. "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties." in Autobiography and Literary Essays, by John Stuart Mill. Eds. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981, p. 348.

[57] Jackson, Virginia. Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 26.

lyric poet and lyric poetry outside of a mainstay of what, in the romantic era, had been central to its conception: musical song. To better understand Wordsworth's lyricism, we need to reintroduce the messy lyrical criteria that Mill excises from history—the material of print (that he explicitly denounces) and the significance of music (which he refuses even to acknowledge, and therefore erases all the more damningly). We must understand that the music of lyric, the allure and the popularity of lyrical verse and its many types (i.e. Odes and Ballads) and the trouble with writing that song into print created challenges and opportunities that erupt inside and outside (in prose, in footnotes, in letters, in literary historical lore) Wordsworth's poems. That is where we will proceed.

Lyric, in the romantic era, meant song. Johnson overlooked lyric and song in his dictionary, but musical encyclopedias and treatise writers in his wake gave him cover. Charles Burney,[58] who never shies away from literary topics in his musical writing, defines the "truly lyric" as poems of which the subject matter is fit for musical melody, and, moreover, that poetry is improving towards this condition throughout Europe.

> It has… been asked "whoever reads the words of a song but the author?" And there are certainly many *favorite songs*, which nothing but good Music and good singing could ever bring into notice. However, there are poems, I will not call them *songs*, on subjects of wit and science, which must ever be enfeebled by Music; while others, truly lyric and confined to passion and sentiment, travel quicker to the heart, and penetrate deeper into the soul by the vehicle of melody, than by that of declamation. But the time is not yet come for these discussions: when there is no poetry truly lyric, there can be no graceful or symmetric melody; and, during the [seventeenth] century, there was certainly none which merited the title in Europe (III, 395-6).

Burney is more or less in step with Phillip Ayres,[59] who at the end of Burney's dreadful seventeenth century could write: "I have herein followed the modern Italian, Spanish, and French Poets, who always call Lyrics, all such Sonnets, and other small Poems, which are proper to be set to Music, without restraining themselves to any particular Length of Verse." Many languages, many forms and one overarching category: "proper to be set to music." If we jump forward roughly 120 years, the definition will not have changed significantly. "The Lyrical," Wordsworth writes, contains "the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable."[60] Wordsworth, of course, has more to say on the matter, but we will return to him shortly. For now, I will suggest that the hint of

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[58] Burney, Charles. A General History of Music, From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period. 4 Vols. London, 1789.

[59] Quoted in George Saintsbury's fascinating, timeworn collection, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906, p. 269.

[60] From The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane W. Smyser. 3 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, III, 27.

equivocation in Wordsworth's conspicuously italicized "*full*" and Ayres's term "proper," surfaces in intervening definitions as well. Thomas Busby, who was an influential author on musical topics in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain until miring himself in a plagiarism scandal, published a Dictionary of Music, Theoretical and Practical in 1801.[61] His entry on lyric is both in step with his predecessors (and successor, in Wordsworth's case) and would hold a great deal of sway through its many re-printings; lyric, he writes, is as "an epithet applicable to odes, hymns and songs, or whatever is intended for musical rehearsal [read: *to be performed and heard*]." In the entry for "song," however, he clarifies that "all lyric poetry, properly speaking, consists of songs, but we only treat of that which commonly bears the name."[62] The qualifying phrase "properly speaking" connotes the fault-line that runs through the heart of romantic lyricism.

How this fault-line pertains to Wordsworth's lyricism, particularly in the context of his use of a term like "song" (and, by turns, "music" and "voice") is of central interest here. The forces that mount against this fault are familiar to us: the proliferation of print culture and the oral forms that print was so eager to assimilate, remediate and gobble up for profit. This makes "song" (musical song) particularly problematic and enormously ripe for consideration as it inhabits the most elaborately fictive and figurative register of what we typically refer to as "orality" and all that can't be heard from a printed page. We should note that these concerns predate romanticism; eighteenth-century treatise writers were vexed by the way printed song was increasingly "heard." Treatise writers in particular often espoused the belief that the separation of music and poetry lead both the musician and the poet to produce "a pompous Display of Art, to the neglect of *Expression* and true *Pathos*…divorced from…. *Legislation, and Morals"* in the words of the influential John "Estimate" Brown.[63] When Hugh Blair credits "the art of writing" with the proliferation of prose, he sees good separations and bad separations as a consequence. Verse and poetry obtained a more intense relationship (i.e. subjects such as history or philosophy didn't have to be recited in verse), but writing likewise led to the separation of music and poetry.[64] Poetry and music amassed "regular forms" and, poetry in particular became a "regular art" (i.e. rule-based*)*; thus poets were tempted "to affect what they did not feel. Composing coolly in their closets, they endeavored to imitate passion, rather than to express it" (II. 322-323). But not every writer railed against the cool inscription of language. As early as 1766, Richard Hurd, in *The Idea of Universal Poetry*,[65] surmised that "in the process of time, what was at first the extemporaneous production of genius or passion, under the conduct of a *natural ear*, becomes the labour of the closet, and is conducted by artificial rules; yet still, with a secret reference to the *sense* of hearing, and to that acceptation which melodious sounds meet with in the recital

[61] Busby, Thomas. Dictionary of Music, Theoretical and Practical. London: 1801.
[62] Busby, Thomas. A Complete Dictionary of Music: To which is Prefixed, a Familiar Introduction to the First Principles of that Science. London: 1801. (Busby's dictionary does not supply page numbers.)
[63] Brown, John A. A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progression, Separations, and Corruptions of Poetry and Music. London, 1763, p. 198.
[64] Blair, Hugh. Lectures on Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1783.
[65] Hurd, Richard. A Dissertation on the Ideas of Universal Poetry. London, 1766.

of expressive words" (13-14, Hurd's italics). The *sense* of hearing, rather than the sense of the natural ear, takes over as the agent of genius or passion. Associations between the rules of art and the realities of print motivate active aurality—a kind of aurality that compensates always-vanishing orality.

Half a century later (in 1801), following the publication of the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth appended a note to *Tintern Abbey*, seemingly in the hopes of clarifying the fact that the poem, though not nominally an ode, could at least be read like one: "I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition."[66] The species, of course, is the *great lyric ode*, a poem whose "impassioned music" had been shaped by a range of ideas and figures built up over the previous 150 years (e.g. the *sublime*, an obsession with Pindaric and Horatian odes of antiquity as well as antiquity itself; the practice of setting odes to music in the interest of recreating ancient Greek lyric models, where the ode really was sung to the lyre but had been contemporaneously replaced by baroque and then classical orchestras); it also evoked the names of those poets who managed to enter into the ode's arch difficulties and impassioned obscurities with greatest success and influence: Milton, Dryden, Collins, Gray among others. It was a typological node of cultural capital. And, music notwithstanding, we remember that Mill awarded it to Shelley, not Wordsworth.

By adding his note, we can understand that Wordsworth is staking a claim for lyrical authorship via the language of late eighteenth-century typology—forming a connection with a genre that he avows, somewhat paradoxically, not to have "ventured" into. He thus stations himself in the wake of lyric norms while simultaneously positioning the lyric as something new or something that can be rediscovered—offering himself as its creator/re-creator. His impassioned music resonates with the verbal content of the poem too. The note's suggestion of a typological past being reformed in the verses of the present accompanies a poem that is itself a long meditation on the past reformed in the landscape of the present, both of which are tuned by a musical idea—"impassioned music" and the "still, sad music of humanity." Nonetheless, the "principle requisites" he mentions are only concerned with the ode's nonverbal excesses (e.g. "impassioned music," "transitions"). It establishes, on a literary level, a high-stakes connection between the inner ear of the competent reader, the law of genre and the cannily vague idea of "impassioned music." And yet, there is a strain of concern, if not anxiety, in Wordsworth's note insofar as its very appearance conveys his uncertainty that a long, blank verse meditation might not immediately strike the reader as necessarily lyrical, as the collection's title (i.e. "*Lyrical Ballads*) insists. Wordsworth had every right to be concerned; he was confronted not only with mixed reviews but with mixed comprehension as well. As one reviewer wrote in a somewhat vexed footnote of his own,

[66] Quotations from Wordsworth's poems are taken from, Wordsworth, William. William Wordsworth, The Poems. Ed. John O. Hayden. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. Cited by line. Hayden includes Wordsworth's note to *Tintern Abbey* in the edition's endnotes, p. 954.

"The title of the Poems is, in some degree, objectionable. For what ballads are not *lyrical?* Besides, there are many compositions in blank verse, not at all lyrical."[67]

While Wordsworth's note to *Tintern Abbey* addressed his readers along purely poetic lines, his reviewer brings another idea into view; ballads were songs and as songs were unquestionably lyrical. What appeared overtly lyrical to the reviewer was not the greater lyric, but the lesser lyric, which frames lyricality within the domain of compositions like the ballad, the air, the folksong, the song of love and wine and so forth—songs that, in print, are not really songs ("properly speaking"). Studying song-collections like those of Walter Scott and Thomas Moore, Terence Hoagwood advances a connection between the idea of the "pseudo-song" and the fissile relationship shared between its printed text and imaginary tunefulness. Following Jerome McGann's sense that a "perpetual 'dialectic of remediation'" highlights "an unending transposition of cultural records into forms that obliterate the object they are built to preserve," Hoagwood explains that "romantic-period pseudo-songs show how typography had already, in the nineteenth century, obliterated the cultural currency of song under the sign of its preservation and dissemination."[68] Nowhere is this obliteration more evident than in conspicuous praises to music's "power, its value, its emotional appeal and importance," as well as "the sale of typography via an appeal to that which it is not – i.e. music" (103). This model suggests that one way poetry effectively marketed and sold itself was through idealizing its primary absence, but Hoagwood also assumes a very literal and thus narrow definition of what "music" could mean. Music could be called a ubiquitously present absence when we view print as a commodity, but if we view print as an object comprising one aspect of the practice (or the phenomenology) of reading, music could be understood as an complementary material capable of full presence, or at the very least always ready to be replaced or introduced to verse—especially in the time just prior to the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* and the inception of *The Prelude*.

Short anthologies of poems, pamphlets, broadsides and other publications would often advertise themselves as lyrics to musical works (which we can understand in the more modern sense of the term *song lyrics*). One such anthology, published in the decade before the second edition of the lyrical ballads,[69] entitled "All the Favorite Oratorios, Set to Music by Mr. Handel" brings these issues to bear[70] (see Fig. 1).[71] The advertisement reads:

> *All the* ORATORIOS, *and other Pieces here collected, having hitherto appeared in detached Pamphlets only, and those too of such various Sizes as to be but ill calculated for*

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[67] *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review*. Vol 17. London: 1831, p. 131.
[68] Hoagwood, Terence. "The Textualizing of Sound: Romantic-Period Pseudo Songs. Wordsworth Circle, 2007, pp. 100-104. My quotation is from 101.
[69] No precise date is given on the title page, but the volume is thought to have been published ca. 1790.
[70] Its editorship isn't explicitly noted, but it seems to be an endeavor motivated by purely financial reasons and enacted between the printer and bookseller, an E. Holditch and J. Cooke respectively. And it was yours for three shillings.
[71] All figures can be found in the "Collection of Figures" at the end of the project.

> *binding together in a portable Manner, it is hoped this uniform Edition will prove highly acceptable to every Lover of* MUSIC; *as it will not only be much cheaper in the first Purchase, but also prevent the Necessity of purchasing the Same Piece repeatedly. Complete* INDEXES *are likewise annexed, whereby any particular* AIR *may be instantly referred to; which will render the Whole useful either in the Closet, or at a* CONCERT: *Thus the Reader of Taste will be accommodated, in a Single Volume, with all the most elegant Composition of this Kind in the English Language.*

What lies inside, however, is not only a list of oratorios and airs but a range of what were then and still remain canonical lyric poems that had been incidentally set to music—chiefly, Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* and Milton's *L'Allergro and Il Penseroso.* What doesn't appear is musical notation, save for indications of where various operatic discontinuities can be found: e.g. Act I: Recitative (accompanied): "Hence loathed melancholy…" (see Fig. 2). [72] The book projects two possibilities. Its contents can be read as poetry in "the closet" or as a program, supporting yet subordinated to the on-stage performance of Handelian orchestration and choral singing. The music in this case is not "absent" in the same sense as pseudo-songs. It is anticipated, remembered or heard in performance with the text conveniently accessible as an adjunct. In light of this, we could ask: is the music absent from the poetry, or is the reader absent from the concert hall? Moreover, while the publication literally advertises itself as a binding-up of disparate publications, it also binds up and reconfigures the idea of authorship (are we purchasing Handel or Milton?), genericity (are we reading an oratorio, an air, a libretto?) and the experience of reading—are we reading a text at home? Listening to the text in public? Declaiming the text? Are we recalling a performance we once heard as we read? And these questions themselves inhere in the ambiguous space between two separate, yet here inseparable art forms—literature and music—and two media: live performance and silent reading.

The publication illustrates just *how* and *where* and for *what* purpose the lyric poem was read not only shifted the ontology of the text, but also that there was an extensive and active cultural framework that keyed into such shifts and was readily able to conjure them imaginatively. People really bought these books and continued to attend the performance of musically set canonical poems throughout the romantic period, and therefore the authorship and the genre of the text, to say nothing of its meaning, were contingent on the context of readers' encounters—their active role and ability to decide how to read. Despite Wordsworth's claim that "low and rustic life" had furnished his ballads with both "real language" and narrative situations, he also knew that his readership was likely to be composed of the kind of person that would have lived in this decidedly more multimedia world. And when we consider the breadth of that world, it's important to understand that the music of lyric and its ties to the way early romantic readers heard their texts was hardly confined to the purview of poets.

[72] All figures are included in the "Collection of Figures" at the end of the project.

Elocutionists, for instance, were infatuated with music for its rigid, formal structures and capacity to make sound uniform in both pitch and rhythm.[73] As James Chapman writes in *The Original Rhythmical Grammar of the English Language*,[74] if speakers have "marked peculiarities…because there are no visible symbols to direct to the proper use of the accidents of language" (x), then they ought to look with envy on the "masters of music…throughout the whole kingdom, [who] teach exactly the same notes of the same piece, and differ only in their knowledge of the art, the varieties of voice, and the introduction of those graces which arise from the peculiarity of taste and feeling; still the music of the piece remains the same" (ix). Song has the luxury of musical notation; expressive idiosyncrasies are a matter of taste or interpretation, not a defect of speech. The typography of printed form, which permits problematic variations of speech and accent, fails to realize the elocutionists' dream of an objective, universal standard by which language could be performed.

While speech could never quite reach this homogenizing, musical ideal, elocutionists at least gesture toward that ideal through music and language's clearest point of contact: lyric. William Mitford in *An Inquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language*[75] points his students/readers to the best rehearsal texts by instructing them to seek out poems that had been successfully set to music. It is a kind of prosodic essentialism mixed with tautology, one that assumes successfully set verse, in being successfully set, must have come into existence in tune with the correct music of the English language. Arne's ability to adapt Ariel's song from *The Tempest* and Handel's ability to set *L'Allegro* says as much about the lyrical excellence of these "songs" as it does each composer's text-setting abilities. In this, the meeting of Handel and Milton sheds light on what counts as "verses truly lyrical," which, Mitford reiterates, are "adapted to ready and complete coalition with musical air" (123). "Lyric verse, as distinguished from Epic," after all, "seems to have had its origin, in all languages which profess the two kinds, from improvements in music" (111). Thus music recuperates

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[73] In a crucial essay entitled "How the Romantics Recited Poetry" David Perkins places a generous list of texts in which "an analogy of music and poetry is pursued" (n42, 670). He lumps together some treatise writers and elocutionists. The fact of the matter is that the "analogy" is pursued at enormous length by elocutionists, who arguably take on the task of defining the correspondence of Music and Poetry that so centrally occupied the treatise writers that came before them (about midway through his chronological list there is a marked transition from one category of writer to the other). I do not have space to rehearse their arguments, but even their titles are revealing. In addition to Chapman and Mitford, Perkins notes Walter Young's Rhythmical Measures (1786), John Walker's The Melody Speaking (1786) Nicholas Roe's The Principles of Rhythm Both in Speech and Music Especially as Exhibited by the Mechanism of English Verse (1823). Surprisingly absent from this list is Illustrations of the English Rhythmus (1812) by Wordsworth's friend and correspondent, John Thelwall. The citation for Perkins is Perkins, David. "How the Romantics Recited Poetry," SEL 31 (1991): 655-71.

[74] Chapman, James The Original Rhythmical Grammar of the English Language. London, 1821.

[75] Mitford, William. An Inquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language and the Mechanism of Verse. London, 1804 (second edition).

verse, and verse provides best practice models for the improvement and uniformity of speech (and, with speech saved, so too is the nation saved.) [76]

By 1815, the anxieties and the dreams of lyric-obsessed elocutionists were shared by Wordsworth, when the repeatability of language and the ear of the reader-as-listener/declaimer became an irksome thorn in his side. Convinced that the *Excursion's*

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[76] When elocutionists voiced concern over the untapped, underdeveloped knowledge of the origin of language's power alongside admonitions about the sorry state of British speech, they did so with tones of nationalist urgency. Secondary material about this is extensive. For some comparatively recent takes, see Thomas P. Miller, The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997; Ulman, H. Lewis. Things, Thoughts, Words and Actions: The Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century Rhetorical Theory.Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994; Spoel, Phillipa M. "Rereading the Elocutionists: The Rhetoric of Thomas Sheridan's A course of Lectures on Elocution and John Walker's Elements of Elocution."International Society for the History of Rhetoric 19.1 (Winter 2001), pp. 49-91; and Elfenbein, Andrew. Romanticism and the Rise of English. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. Adam Beach also suggests that English standardization had given cover to "imperial ambitions and tropes" (118) since the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and had likewise been a tool of "internal colonialism," but the need to hear print correctly and speak words well intensified in the advent of romanticism, and it was registered with stakes that shuttled between aesthetics and nationalism (Beach, Adam R. "The Creation of a Classical Language in the Eighteenth Century: Standardizing English, Cultural Imperialism, and the Future of the Literary Canon*." Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 43.2 (2001) 117-141.). James Chapman allows that Anglophones know and use "the essentials of speech," but "at present, although we are in the constant use of these, in all reading and speaking, yet of the nature of the most of them, and their influence, we know nothing" (ix). Sometimes this particular raison d'etre of the project outshined all other concerns. William Mitford, for example, feels but never fully defines the precise nature of his object of study—the "harmony" of language—but he nonetheless finds clear and expedient stakes in nationalist, if not imperial pride: "Fortunately, the English, as opportunity will be taken to show, is favorable; and, with whatever disadvantages, perhaps, among languages now spoken in Europe, altogether the most favorable for the purpose" (11). These concerns and Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads provide mutual, even complementary contexts:

> …[T]o treat the subject…it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy of depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself." (V.1, 121)

"variety of musical effect" had no equal in English letters, he wrote to Catherine Clarkson the following.

> "Unitarian hymns must by their passionate monotony have deprived your Friend's ear of all compass, which implies all discrimination. To you I will whisper, that the Excursion has one merit if it has no other, a versification to which for *variety* of musical effect no Poem in the language furnishes a parallel." [77]

Note how Wordsworth's defense turns on a conceit of music. The ear was attuned to the wrong music—monotonous hymns—or this is how Wordsworth sees fit to imagine the cause of his reader's failure. The unheard variety of musical effect[78] provokes a snide rejoinder: "tell Patty Smith…to study with her fingers till she has learned to confess it to herself." The problem in 1815 is that one of the *Excursion's* chief merits (as Wordsworth sees it) is indeed all too susceptible to the wrong kind of repetition and "rehearsal." The voice (of a Patty Smith) or the ear (tuned to monotony) engenders a voice that is not Wordsworth's intended voice or "effect."

The catachresis of hearing the "spirit of versification" and the remedial instruction to practice on one's fingers inheres directly in Wordsworth's view of "the Lyrical," which, unsurprisingly, he would articulate that same year. The *Preface to the Poems of 1815* connects genre to the problematics of print in the context of the reader's constitutive role as active, or creative reader. Wordsworth's stake in lyrical music involves a typological invocation more than typographical suppression. In fact, many poetic genres, according to him, can be defined in terms of their vocal-musical relationship. Music is part-heuristic, part-straw man—an art form against which he can establish the province and purview of different genres as species of poetic enunciation. Narrative, for instance, is uttered in speech despite conventions like the epic singer's claim to be singing or strumming a harp.[79] These are either bygone or "distressed" claims,[80] stimulated by generic conventions and, as Wordsworth points out, arise from the need for epic to be serious. Music is superfluous; epic can be read seriously without it, and no effect is lost. In drama, by contrast, music is admitted "only incidentally" and "rarely" (which is a preposterous understatement) except in Opera, which holds equal claims to the dramatic and the lyrical.[81]

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[77] "W.W. to Catherine Clarkson" [L. 343], Jan. 1815 in The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Vol III. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.
[78] There was unrest about this aspect of the Excursion's reception throughout the Wordsworth household. Dorothy, for instance, complained that James Montgomery said "nothing of the versification." Among others, see the entry for James Montgomery in, Woof, Robert. William Wordsworth, The Critical Heritage 1793-1820. New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 418.
[79] See The Prose of William Wordsworth, p. 27.
[80] This term, of course, comes from Susan Stewart's influential "Notes on Distressed Genres." *The Journal of American Folklore* 104. 411 (1991): pp. 5-31.
[81] *ibid*

In and of itself, however, the "lyrical" is opposed to the epic strains of narrative in two regards. Wordsworth points out that an accompaniment of music is "indispensible" in the lyrical, and we can infer that since there is no lyrical equivalent for the formulaic epic claim that music is supposed to be heard or that singing is taking place (unless this is established via form or through a title like, "Song…"), the law of genre that connects lyric and music is all the more insistent.[82] Yet the forcefulness of the term "indispensible" grates against the realities of lyric composition in the early nineteenth century as much as it does against Wordsworth's medium: print.

> "Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, — the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification, — as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem; — in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images."[83]

As much as music is literally present in the meter and generically suspended as missing accompaniment, the lyrical in Wordsworth's poetry is suspended between the active and passive, between the authority of the writer and the reader, between differing formulations of musical exigency. Moreover, he speaks only for his own texts (I require…"), thus even as he incorporates commonplace generic views, he reconfigures them as guidelines by which the reader can rightfully acquaint his- or herself with Wordsworth's own verses; this reintroduces the self-anointing procedure conveyed through the note to *Tintern Abbey* even as it positions the reader as the authority that will ambiguously recognize and restore the impassioned (i.e. musical) recitation. [84]

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[82] *ibid*

[83] The Prose of William Wordsworth, p. 29.

[84] And yet, Wordsworth isn't theorizing unilaterally. Almost at the precise moment that he publishes the Poems of 1815, the Reverend G. G. Scraggs contributed a brief essay, "On the Study of English Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine* (March, 1815), pp. 118-120. Noting six "general heads" by which poetry can be classified, he defines lyric as the term "under which are included odes, hymns, and whatever may be set to music. The most celebrated in our language are those by Dryden, Pope, Watts, Gray, Collins, Scott, Langhorne and Mrs. Robinson" (119). There is vagueness if not outright slippage between the idea of reading as a mental activity in which verbal and aural meanings are mentally formulated, and another one that is explicitly oral, where the sense of the poetry is something that ambivalently linked with the manner in which it is, or should be,

Enter a second catachresis—narrative and lyric. The role of musical effect so central to the lyrical was something Wordsworth imagined as a constitutive, unparalleled aspect of the *Excursion,* his long, narrative philosophical poem. In the passages from the 1815 preface quoted above, we might note the subtle shift from "some of these pieces are essentially lyrical" to "poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves." The humbleness associated with lyric verse is marginalized via that "however," a symptom of the larger move he is undertaking in the passage. We see Wordsworth closing down the gap between lyrical features (musical ones) and poems in general. It is a move that becomes more apparent when Wordsworth uses a conspicuously adjectival noun—the lyrical—to define a class of poems. The lyrical is a non-musical yet indispensably musical quality of verse that reaches out across the whole generic spectrum. It foreshadows what Clifford Siskin would say about generic interrelations in his historicist readings of *romantic lyric*:

> "As more forms incorporate more lyric features, the lyric rises within the generic hierarchy. In turn the relative importance of every other form alters according to the extent that it has incorporated parts of the newly dominant form. This is important to our understanding of past texts, because the functions of the newly interrelated forms change."[85]

Though Siskin remaps the "rise of lyric" along a hierarchical axis, he is less than forthcoming about what, in a historicist sense, constitutes "lyric features" that crystallize along this axis. The question at hand, therefore, is what, precisely, are the lyric features that instantiate themselves within another form. Or, to use an illustrative if anachronistic term, what aspect of "lyric" goes viral on the printed page? The answer lies in the dynamics of the reader's aural encounter with the voice of the printed text—the absence of musical accompaniment linked with the absence of the poet's own audible voice and the reader's function in keying into that voice via the printed text. The ideal reader would be someone with innately poetical faculties. He or she would be a person who inhabits the spectrum of passion, sensitivity and, as Wordsworth writes in the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, "the spirit of life" that the poet has in excess; above all, it would be a person who has "a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as though they were present."[86]

It is worth pointing out that the complicated conjunction of the "lyrical," the ear

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uttered. In poetry, the "sense is not so easy as in prose…it requires much previous learning…There must also be a strict attention paid to the grammatical stops and marks, much more than is necessary in reading prose…all kinds of poetry must be read with a degree of animation, or vigor, and some with a peculiar energy and pathos; but a canting tone should be most carefully avoided" (119).

[85] Siskin, Clifford. The Historicity of Romantic Discourse. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 24 (all quotes from this page).

[86] Wordsworth, William. Lyrical Ballads. Ed. Michael Mason. New York: Longman, 1992, p. 138.

of the reader and the visual domain of print begins to take shape as early as his note to "The Thorn," where Wordsworth argues that passions communicated by poetry can issue in undercurrents and not only explicit reference (i.e. images). Wordsworth explains that this kind of expression "might be done by calling in the assistance of lyrical and rapid metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped, that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly."[87] The tempo established by meter not only composes the subject of the poem, it configures a relationship between the phenomenological experience of the reader and the poem's emotional realism—things that can be unified despite their necessary difference. The inflection of this voice carries semantic weight as well. Further on, Wordsworth argues that in the poems he writes, like all impassioned poetry, there is no "tautology." Repeated words "ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling, and not measured by the space which they occupy upon the paper." Medium, temporality and tempo are linked through this belief. Passions must necessarily act upon words to engender emotional meanings unrepresentable outside of the special condition of poetic discourse that Wordsworth ties to the "lyrical," and so "every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our powers, or the deficiencies of language." The visual sign of repeated words exemplifies the extent to which all words become "not only…symbols of the passion, but… *things*, active and efficient, which are part of the passion." His thoughts in the note to "The Thorn" draw on vocal and verbal excesses that bring to bear the absent music of "lyrical" verses. Repeated words in song lyrics, after all, have a musical logic that coordinates their repetition in non-tautological ways. Despite repetition, the emotional meaning of a word will differ from the one that came before it by being assigned a place in a developing melody. Wordsworth, of course, stops short of drawing out this kind of explicit connection, but he nonetheless ends his note by quoting instances from the *Book of Judges* that both incorporate his argument in a history of inspired verse that reaches back through antiquity and suggestively roots his previous discussion in the idea of song. "Awake, awake, Deborah: awake awake, utter a song…"[88] In the context of the note to "The Thorn," the familiar invocatory trope of the Ode (Awake, awake) and the desire for song cried out by the speaker, dramatize and coordinate the complex of typological associations of music, the lyrical, voice and text.

Thinking of Wordsworth's claims that a blank verse poem like *Tintern Abbey* might contain traces of the "impassioned music" of the greater ode—an unequivocally lyric form—provocatively brings the heart of the matter into play. Blank verse permits tension between a disciplined syllabic structure and a variety of prosodic effects. From this point of view it offers fertile ground for changes of both form and function of song lyrics. The fusing of a pastoral poem and the lyric poem, or the place of musical variety in a mode intended to be serious (rather than, say, rhetorical forcefulness), categories that Wordsworth continues to claim are separate in 1815, suggests hybridization, but, in a nod

[87] All quotations from the Note to "The Thorn" are from p. 38 in Mason's edition unless otherwise noted.
[88] Note to "The Thorn" p. 39.

to Siskin, it likewise demonstrates how fluidly the central effect of one genre can operate within the framework of another.

These ideas take a sharply personal turn midway in the *1805 Prelude*,[89] where Wordsworth turns his gaze back to the poem's origins and finds and confesses that he began in a "dithyrambic fervor."

> Five years are vanished since I first poured out,
> Saluted by that animating breeze
> Which met me issuing from the city's walls,
> A glad preamble to this verse. I sang
> Aloud in dithyrambic fervour, deep
> But short-lived uproar, like a torrent sent
> Out of the bowels of a bursting cloud
> Down Scawfell or Blencathara's rugged sides,
> A waterspout from heaven. (*1805*; 1-9)

This moment in the *Prelude* resonates with Wordsworth's thinly veiled generic determinations specified in his note into the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Hardly a modern print form, the dithyramb[90] is the transhistorical, wild vocal form of the earliest odes in which, according to Plato, the dithyrambic singer was most entirely himself and yet was also, according to Aristotle, the progenitor of tragedy. Indeed, the form itself remained "the song of thanks and praise" in Wordsworth's mind ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality," l. 141), and references to odes and their ambiguously poetic and musical existence recur throughout the *Prelude*, as in the "prophetic shell" episode of the Arab dream: "And heard in that instant in an unknown tongue/ Which yet I understood, articulate sounds, A loud prophetic blast of harmony, / An ode in passion uttered" (V. 93-97). Or the "turns and counter-turns" (the Jonsonian translations of strophe and anti-strophe first rendered in the "Cary-Morison" ode) that use the language of poetic form to figure "the various trials of our complex being" (XI, 196) as we write our autobiography in verse. This is to say nothing of the many instances of "song." Looking backward from the *1805 Prelude*, we can map out how the lyric of Wordsworth's ballad is assimilated by the loco-descriptive blank verse poem, which in turn is assimilated into the epic proportions of the poem on the growth of the poet's mind. Wordsworth's claim for a decisively lyrical voice continually augments. His *rota Virgilii* is a *rota Carmini* ever seeking to produce itself and likewise survive the limitations of its printed medium.

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[89] My Quotations from *The Prelude* are taken from The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979. Cited by version (*1799, 1805, 1850*) and line number(s).

[90] Mary Jacobus has also traced the odic dithyramb to Wordsworth's apostrophic voice. Her essay is compelling, though she reaches conclusions different from mine. See her "Apostrophe and Lyric Voice in the Prelude," in Hošek, Chaviva, and Patricia Parker. Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism, Ithica NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 167-81.

If "the lyrical" and its variegated series of referents had the ability to travel anywhere (within different genres and verse forms, including blank verse) and everywhere (as a transmissible, printed form) then we must look through genre to medium in order to understand how this could be. Celeste Langan has rooted out connections between print and the narrative presentation/representation of singing in an essay that should be required reading on this topic.[91] Langan historicizes Scott's Minstrel as a nascent theoretical examination and allegorical exploration of how, by the turn of the nineteenth-century, blank verse "comes to define a literary vernacular that signals, evokes, or *mediates,* rather than records, the aural component of poetry" (63). She notes that Wordsworth's "experimental 'Poet'" truly seems to emerge at the end of the *Lyrical Ballads*, once the belatedness (or the lastness) of the kind of primitivized, archaic oral poetry we see in Coleridge's "Rime" works itself out through the scenes of low and rustic life (52); we can read the collection as culminating in *Tintern Abbey*—culminating—that is, in blank verse. Scott is the antiquarian, if not the historian, who traces blank verse's medial function among belated figures of oral culture while pinpointing it as a signpost for print; Wordsworth is, by contrast, the poet who sets out to mobilize it. (Scott won and outsold Wordsworth—considerably).

Amid this, Langan gives us a phenomenologically complex yet tightly focused theoretical formulation: "that the very blankness of verse—that is, the fully residual status of sound—is constitutive of the poetry of print culture" (53). The reader, in the context of silent reading, "is no longer subjected to the *immediate* sensory input of verbal melody," and he or she "gains access to the *mediated* (i.e., narratively evoked) musical scene of the poem" (53). As Peter Manning has noted, however, Langan articulates a "paradoxical formulation" through the phrase "fully residual status of sound" (74).[92] He cites David Perkins's important essay "How the Romantics Recited Poetry" to emphasize that our contemporary subvocalizations (the sounds that inhere in the narrow margin between the unheard and the barely heard) were a far more elaborate affair in the romantic era.

> A poem might be half chanted in a sustained rhythm, or it might be delivered with many and long pauses and a highly varying inflection. In either case the long vowels were brought out, and so were their interplay and echoing. Whether it was closer to chanting or to singing, Romantic recitation was far more musical than we now conceive. (Perkins 665; in Manning 77)[93]

As Manning suggests, "[i]t is not that the readers gain access to the *mediated,* narratively evoked scene of the poem so much as they gain access to the *immediate* music of the text

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[91] Langan, Celeste. "Understanding Media in 1805: Audiovisual Hallucination in the Lay of the Last Minstrel." *Studies in Romanticism* 40.1 (Spring, 2001): 49-70.

[92] Manning, Peter J. "'The Birthday of Typography': A Response to Celeste Langan. *Studies in Romanticism* 40.1 (Spring, 2001): 71-83.

[93] Again, see Perkins, David. "How the Romantics Recited Poetry," SEL 31 (1991): 655-71.

itself. Freed from the exigency of communication, sound patterns become ever more intricate and various" (77). The unheard music of the traditional lyric song, lyrical oratories or the ballad sung up and down the streets was something poets made audible and left to their readers to recreate.

So Whose Voice Is It?

As performed poetry expropriates print's privileged ability to turn voice into oral fictions of song, organ tones, lays, incantations, ditties and orphic deeds, the question of "whose voice is it?" suddenly becomes at once urgent and ambiguous. Wordsworth acknowledges that poets speak through personas, but, at heart, poets are composed of familiar Wordsworthian tenets (a "man speaking to men…a more comprehensive soul… a man pleased with his own passions and volitions" and of course "a disposition to be affected by absent things as though they were present").[94] The progress of his argument follows the contours of Langan's reading of the placement of the poem in *Lyrical Ballads*. As the Poet speaks in his least mediated voice when speaking for himself, we understand the progress from folk voices to autobiographical loco-descriptive poetry as a progress from natural truth to the unmediated truth of the natural poet's voice. But what of the mediation of the voice by its printed medium? Wordsworth treats this idea in the *Preface* to *Lyrical Ballads* by suspiciously under-theorizing print's intractable intermediacy in the production of voice, as the following paradox illustrates: "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" (141). The hourly companion may be truth, but it is "visible" only in the form of the book. The idealized image of the poet singing his or her own song of truth engenders even as it forecloses the idea of vocal immediacy—the marriage of poem and voice that is the recitation of the poem by the poet him- or herself. And of course the only way for those unidentified, transhistorical "human beings" to join in with the poet is through the temporal conjunction of reader and printed text; the "imagined communities" of print are the historical correlative to the idealized image of sociable (and spatiotemporal) accord feigned by the choral metaphor.[95]

And yet, this example forces us to recall that when we ask how the romantics recited poetry and, therefore, heard it as well, it is crucial to bear in mind that sociability and companionability are not only part and parcel of romantic reading, but constitute a lore of authorship that gets grafted back into literary history and even the texts of poems themselves. Famous anecdotal examples abound, like Keats's "half chant[ing]" delivery

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[94] All quotations in this section are taken from the previously cited edition of the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. The above is from p. 138.

[95] The phrase "imagined communities" is Benedict Anderson's. In particular, what he has to say about the rise of newspapers in the eighteenth-century resonates with the historical circumstances that lay beneath Wordsworth's flowery phrase about the poet "singing a song in which all human beings join with him," wherein newspapers "created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers" (62). See Anderson, Benedict, R. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (revised edition). New York: Verso, 2006.

of the *Hymn to Pan* from the first book of *Endymion* that had charmed Haydon—"most touching"—which Wordsworth saw fit to decry as "a pretty piece of Paganism";[96] or Lamb's praises for Coleridge's rendition of "Kubla Khan" prior to its publication, which brought "heaven & Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it," and even goes on to profess fears that "Kubla Khan" is an owl that wont bear day-light. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense."[97] In Lamb's view, the very nature of what made the poem beautiful—or poetical—was a quality of speech verging on song that was incapable of surviving remediation in print. The lore of vocal performance, however, could piece back together the texts, poets and the voices that readers never had access to in the typographic marks they read on the silent page, as when Coleridge and Wordsworth's voices were retrospectively immortalized by Hazlitt in "My First Acquaintance with the Poets."

> There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*.[98]

The vocal sounds of these poets' recitations could be, and must be, understood in two directions, as idiosyncrasy and generic veneer. And as is so often true with Hazlitt, the individual and the age are configurable if not mutually typifying. There is a mimetic logic at work here as well: Hazlitt heard both poets imitate qualities in their poetry while reproducing conventional (generic) criteria that were not inherent properties of poetic form or typology by themselves. Coleridge used performative, passionate speech closer to dialogue, which was a mode of delivery that resonated with Coleridgean poetics as well as his publication habits. For instance, Coleridge's comments to Wordsworth on the "White Doe of Rylstone" suggest that genre itself is linked with the manner in which a poem might be delivered. *"*The metre being—as you observed—rather dramatic than lyric, i.e. not such an arrangement of syllables, not such a metre, as acts a priori and with complete self-subsistence (as the simple anapaestic in its smoothest form . . .) but depending for its beauty always, and often even for its metrical existence, on the sense

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[96] Quoted in: Butler, Marilyn. Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 136.

[97] Byron was purported to be "highly struck" (See, Hunt, Leigh. Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries. London, 1828, p. 304.) As we will see in the following chapter on Coleridge, Lamb's doubts proved well-founded, but this will also lead us to speculate how Coleridge used the medium of print to achieve similar effects. The quotation is from a letter of April 16th, 1816. See, The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb. Ed. Edwin J. Marrs, 3 vols. Ithaca: 1978, III. 215.

[98] in The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt, Ed. Duncan Wu. 12 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998, IX. 105.

and passion."[99] Coleridge's preference for the dramatic here stems from his linking of lyric with mechanism, a forcibly arranged pattern of sound in place of an organic sonority of sense and passion. Yet Coleridge himself filled pages and pages of his notebooks with scansion and metrical experiments, and he even indulged in less formulaic measures to assure that the aural comprehension of his poems had particular oral precedents. For instance, when he published "The Raven" in the *Morning Post*, (March, 10 1798), he included a note that "[t]he poem must be read in *recitative*, in the same manner as the Aegloga Secunda of the Shepherd's Calendar."[100] The invocation of recitative urges the reader to *hear* the dramatic precisely at the expense of the lyrical (or the recitative at the expense of song, or aria).

Hazlitt's remarks suggest that Wordsworth's "chaunt," was an imitation of voice that resisted the sounds of speech (or dramatic speeches). We could speculate that Wordsworth's "equable, sustained, and internal" delivery yielded syllables in isochronous rhythms and never rose to sharp climaxes, perhaps conveying a meditative monotone. Regardless, it was Coleridge who comes closer to using the language really used (by actors to imitate) men. And it forces us to wonder about the extent to which diction alone counts as "language really used," and what other qualities of verse count as the "music of harmonious metrical language" without decisively splitting Wordsworth's poetic voice from Wordsworth's poetic reputation.

Coleridge's own reflections of Wordsworth's expressive powers in "To William Wordsworth"[101] refer to the 1805 *Prelude* as,

> —An Orphic song indeed,
> A song divine of high and passionate thoughts,
> To their own music chanted! (l. 45-47).

That Coleridge literally heard Wordsworth recite the poem blurs our sense of whether the verse itself or Wordsworth's intonations did the chanting. The recital and the text become a consubstantial and continuous expressive phenomenon.

> …[T]hy work
> Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
> Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
> Not learnt, but native, in her own natural notes! (l. 57-60)

Using chiasmus to produce the linking he depicts amid references to music and song (spanning song, lay, Orphic deed, natural notes) Coleridge pinpoints the poem's composition and Wordsworth's triumphant poiesis as an act that "makes audible" truth.

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[99] *CL* 3:112 (21 May, 1808) in Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-1971.
[100] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Essays on His Times, in the Morning Post and The Courier. Ed. David V. Erdman, 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, 3:287.
[101] in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poetical Works. Ed. J.C.C. Mays. 3 vols. Bollingen Series LXXV 16. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, I.2.

And if Wordsworth made them audible, then Coleridge has heard, verified and versified this truth-telling into a printed record of its virtual existence. Thus the two poets mutually create poetic truth that neither sings nor says but does both, and yet it is printed blank verse that provides the silence that simultaneously occasions and produces this intertextual poetic history of truth's necessarily musical voice.

If print does indeed make immediate music available while providing the poet with an opportunity to make truth claims about its status as a powerful, incantatory utterance, then what readers do not have immediate access to is the talismanic power of the poet's *real* or "audible" voice. Instead, they are compensated with the production of metrical music that must fulfill a series of double-operations, as Wordsworth divulges in his remarks about "the lyrical": it must function as accompaniment and melody itself; and, more importantly, as a printed text, it must be equally repeatable and malleable so as not to suffocate power, passion and expression. The trouble that Wordsworth encountered in the mixed comprehension of his varieties of musical effect, however, points to the same problem that elocutionists seized upon when writing their manuals: there's no guarantee that your reader will hear and rehearse correctly. Neither is there a guarantee your reader will be "the musical reader," able to recognize the pulse and movement of poetic feet but also be capable of imagining (or remembering, if one has attended a performance), the verse's connection to music—an act of mental listening and aural imagining all at once. "The musical reader will find, in that song [Milton's *L'Allegro*], strong illustration of the comparative length and shortness of syllables resulting in the connection of verse with music" (Mitford 122). So when Wordsworth suggests that "the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification—as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem," he is defining the rules of art similarly to Mitford's definition of musical reading, but underscoring the reader's agency in place of what for any elocutionist would have been the assumption that the reader's agency is problematically circumscribed by his or her literacy. Yet we know that Wordsworth sounds rather elocutionary when faced with real life consequences of mixed comprehension. If there is a point of connection between sound whose status ought to be "fully residual" and the sound of "immediate music," it plays out in the restive meeting places between Wordsworth's generic aspirations and the difficulties of bringing those aspirations safely into printed existence—at least beyond the bounds of his fellow poets (like Coleridge) in whose good company sociable "song" was under no threat from dull ears.

Some Rehearsals of Lyricism

If Wordsworth believed that he had achieved a voice made efficacious by unmatched musical variety when he published the *Excursion* in 1814, the goal is projected in his shorter poems and *The Prelude,* where the musically efficacious voice manifests as a necessarily personalized one—a private myth where musical logic forms the poet's mind through his attuned ear. Heather Dubrow and Friedrich Kittler are instructive here. Dubrow teaches us that we can understand early modern lyric by learning how to read "the allusions embedded in myth and trope," which "provide the

most extensive and intriguing evidence of how the early modern period saw lyric." [102] Despite the intrusion of certain figures into non-lyrical forms, the "data bases of myth and figure, remain resonant as descriptions, if not as definitions"(16). Kittler's ideas complement these in a German Romantic context. In his study of the "discourse networks" of 1800,[103] Kittler identifies Nature as the figure of "primary orality" (25), one which is constellated through a (frequently gendered) group of homologies that we can readily read back into British romanticism: the mother who teaches literacy orally (e.g Blake's illustrations of reading nurses and mothers); oral culture that speaks from nature (e.g. Wordsworth's rustic murmurers, chatterers, singers); and the voice of nature (e.g. much of the entire canon). Kittler argues that the alphabetization of European Languages in the context of an expanding readership and expanding literacy was concomitant with a turn to nature that produced an ideology of "oralization" in a range of discourses, including poetry (32). Thus, seeking "wisdom" becomes a matter of listening to nature, rather than a consultation with books.

> Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife!
> Come, hear the woodland linnet,
> How sweet his music; on my life
> There's more of wisdom in it. ("The Tables Turned" l. 9-12)

For both Dubrow and Kittler, mythic motifs of genre and medium accrete into tropes as the given period unfolds; along similar lines can we read Wordsworth's constellated invocation and evocation of heard and printed *song*. He stages ideal vocal utterance along the lines he frames "the lyrical"—writing as a re-hearing and reading as a form of active listening. He charts the middle ground among print, the printable voice, the active ear of a listener and the music of nature from which language mythically emerges, allowing him simultaneously to build up personalized tropes in which he can become the voice that speaks for nature—and these frequently through the overtly vocal/rhetorical trope of apostrophe. Before turning to some key passages in the *Prelude*, I would like to proceed by reading some vital instances in "The Solitary Reaper" and "O Nightingale, thou surely art."

> Behold her, single in the field,
> Yon solitary Highland Lass!
> Reaping and singing by herself;
> Stop here, or gently pass!
> Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
> And sings a melancholy strain;
> O listen! For the Vale profound
> Is overflowing with the sound.

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[102] Dubrow, Heather. The Challenges of Orpheus. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. p. 16.

[103] "Discourse networks" is likewise the title of his book: Kittler, Friedrich A. Discourse Networks 1800/1900. Trans Michael Metteer, with Christopher Cullens. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of Travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
No sweeter voice was ever heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy far off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened till I had my fill:
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more. ("The Solitary Reaper")

In "The Solitary Reaper" the line between speaking and singing engenders a stark difference; the speaker is radically a speaker, not a singer, and the reaper's song can only be transcribed as a series of assumptions drawn from the speaker's prior literary/cultural knowledge (of folksongs and balladry). While we could argue that the richness of the verse can be read as a compensatory music for the music that is otherwise unheard,[104] more important is the fact that the poem chooses a breakdown in communication as a central conceit, which is doubly important given its robust textual background. "This Poem was suggested by a beautiful sentence in a MS. Tour in Scotland written by a Friend [Thomas Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains*], the last line being taken from it *verbatim*."[105] This note, appended to *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), lets its reader shift focus from the mental drama of its interrogative rhetoric and the disjointing barriers it fails to breach (of music vs. speech, of English vs. Erse, of Scottish vs. British) to the

[104] For instance, Adam Potkay's Wordsworth's Ethics. Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2012. (pp. 110-133); Potkay also points to Susan Wolfson's "Wordsworth's Craft" in The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth. Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 111-13.
[105] Quoted in William Wordsworth, The Poems, p. 1013.

more rational music of the well-wrought English phrase—the "beautiful" sentence. If "The Solitary Reaper," as Maureen McLane notes, "only begins to suggest the always already fictive and 'written' nature of 'oral' encounters as they appear in Romantic poetry," [106] then we should also note how the inscrutable song of the melancholic Lass was written as under erasure, supplanted by the delighted melancholy of Wilkinson's phrase—which became something of a refrain in the Wordsworth household. As Dorothy Wordsworth writes: "There is something inexpressibly soothing to me in the sound of those two Lines… I often catch myself repeating them" (Letters, I.165) Less repeatable, or unrepeatable, is the fictive, sung subject of those lines. In fact, the more the poem speaks, the less we know: from its gaping rehearsal of what a ballad could be ("battles long ago"; "familiar matter of today") to its apophasis (No Nightingale did…/ No sweeter voice…), the object of the Highland Lass as well as the subject of her song blurs out of focus and the rehearsal itself takes center stage.

We could weigh "O Nightingale, thou surely art" in contrast to "The Solitary Reaper." Part progress poem, part musical experiment and part an emblematic representation of Wordsworth's assault against assaulting stimulation, "O Nightingale, thou surely art" reads more like an aesthetic manifesto than a poem of the imagination (or nature poem, for that matter). It is also, however, a poem in which Wordsworth's ruminations on the proper bounds of metrical expression meet with musical ideas, oral modes and generic qualifiers.

O Nightingale, thou surely art
A Creature of a fiery heart—
These notes of thine they pierce, and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent Night,
And steady bliss, and all the Loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves!

I heard a Stockdove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day.
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the Song, the Song for me!

[106] Balladeering, Minstrelsy and the Making of British Romantic Poetry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 232.

While the matter of the Nightingale is no more specific than the highland lass's from "The Solitary Reaper," Wordsworth deploys a speaker who suspends a seemingly frustrated, interrogative rhetoric ("Will no one tell me what she sings?") in favor of a rhapsodizing, declarative one.[107] His chastising remonstrance of the Nightingale depends less on the meaning he imputes to its call and more on the friction between the love song and the natural environment. Wordsworth obscures the voice of his Nightingale twofold: he frames its programmatic content in figurative speculations ("as if") and qualifies it with the word *harmony*—"tumultuous harmony" no less. On the one hand, Wordsworth's prejudice against harmony is common in eighteenth-century thinking (we could find a parallel in Rousseau's musical writings, or in the rise of European Classicism and *Mannheim* style in which expressive emphasis took shape through clear melodic themes rather than complicated harmonies and counterpoint), but he particularizes it as the embodiment and the sign of the unmeasured and irrational in art. Wordsworth's Nightingale sings a harmony that is unnatural, or figured as a rupture within its surroundings (e.g. an assault on the "steady bliss"). The Stockdove, by comparison, does not "pierce" with song but is, in turn, "buried"—located within a deeper communion with nature. The first line of the stanza prepares a strategic ambivalence: he *sings or says* his "homely tale;" the melody is fused with intimations of rational, tempered speech that still registers as something more, something elevated, something that crosses that almost indescribable difference between the language of prose and the language of verse. In another parallel between this poem and "The Solitary Reaper," we note that the Stockdove's melody is eternalized, "slow to begin and never ending" much like the Highland Lass who sang "as if her song could have no ending." But while Erse suspends the content of her song—intelligibility held in abeyance—the Stockdove speaks as nature speaks and is intelligible enough. Commonplace tropes and pagan myths are replenished by a song that is at once natural and alphabetizable ("sing or say") in the voice of the poet ("the Song for me!"). While human voices rise to the occasion of song, nature's music has risen to the occasion of verbal poetry in the ear of the poet.

In jotting down the Stockdove's song, Wordsworth intervenes between the reader and nature as a paradoxical (re-)mediator and producer of an oralized, culturally relevant voice of nature—one whose ear (even more than his despotic eye) holds the mystical key to romantic poiesis. As we see in the examples of Wordsworth providing an audience for Keats's rehearsal and Coleridge providing an audience for Wordsworth's, the possessor of a willing and acute ear is, in the final analysis, the one who can "sing or say." Wordsworth mythologizes this idea in some key passages in the *Prelude*, where books

[107] Geoffrey Hartman's identification of "surmise" (from the first chapter of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.) could figure here. Hartman identifies surmise with the "halted traveler," typified through "The Solitary Reaper's" stopping, questioning, and subsequent epiphany via "the shock of self-consciousness" (12). The declarative posture he adopts in "O Nightingale, Thou Surely Art" seems to stem more from his desire to dramatize connections among genre and sound phenomena. And yet, as we will see in the next chapter's study of Coleridge, surmising itself can be orchestrated through shrewd medial negotiations (like in the music of Wilkinson's phrase in addition to the arresting music of the Highland Lass).

resurface as necessary yet alluring ills and the progress of the poet's mind is couched in metaphors of song and music.

> Was it for this
> That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
> And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
> That flowed along my dreams? For this didst thou,
> 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 fields and groves. (*1799;* 1-13)

Though it was later incorporated into the *1805* version, these passages speak through a coordinated logic of rhetoric and metaphor that arguably better articulates the kind of dithyrambic fervor he confesses five (in reality six) years later. In this version of the *Prelude,* however, we are faced with a conspicuously absent antecedent, but I would argue that the antecedent can be read in two ways—grammatically (the antecedent of "this" in the first line) and intertextually, and both ways, though different, are important. As much as these lines provide an idea of birth—a birth of voice and a birth of dialogue with nature—and therefore provide a biographical foundation, or context, for reading what follows, they also echo themes upon with which *Tintern Abbey* was composed. And these themes predate *Tintern Abbey* itself despite Wordsworth's claim that the lines occurred to him spontaneously. In 1796-1797, Wordsworth recorded the following verses in a manuscript that we can, in retrospect, read as a rehearsal for future poems.

> Yet once again do I behold the forms
> of these huge mountains, yet once again,
> Standing beneath these elms, I hear thy voice,
> Beloved Derwent, that peculiar voice,
> Heard in the stillness of the evening air,
> Half-heard, half-created.[108]

[108] These lines quoted from the Headnote to *Tintern Abbey* in The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Fourth Edition. David Damrosch and Kevin J.H. Dettmar, General Editors. Volume 2A, *The Romantics and their Contemporaries*. Eds. Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning. New York: Longman, 2010. The headnote helpfully reviews the connection of these lines to *Tintern Abbey* as well as Wordsworth's omission of them when recounting the process by which the poem was written.

Instead of the Wye, as named by *Tintern Abbey*, the river is here the Derwent, suggesting either an interchangeability of Wordsworth's musical rivers or a return to an original setting. The reincorporation of the voice of the Derwent into the *Two-Part Prelude* (i.e. *1799*), however, emphasizes the meeting of autobiographical self-making and the aurality of the creative imagination (the half-creating faculty). Clearly, this "peculiar voice" is not a particular voice of nature, but a virtual voice of something *a priori*, which Wordsworth, in the present moment of the text, can shape through his hearing—an idea to which we will return shortly.

By themselves, the opening lines of the *Two-Part Prelude* play more immediately with vague antecedents.[109] The question "Was it for this" and its repetitions in line six ("For this didst thou") and line seventeen ("Was it for this") issue with intensely rhetorical force. Kevin Barry reads musical significance in this place, specifically in the word "this;" he understands this "music" to be born from the pronoun's non-significance. Empty signs, he argues, suggest "a kind of music that is heard as if it were the more intense insofar as it is the more empty" and uses the example 'Was it for *this*...For *this* …Was it for *this*…?' "[110] This reading recalls Lawrence Kramer's concept "overvocalizing," which Kramer defines as "the purposeful effacement of text by voice…the disintegration of language by melisma, tessitura, or sustained tones."[111] His term implicitly refers to songs, but here we could apply the idea of vocal effacements to the poetic text, which would amount to the subordination of referential meaning to the voice as dramatized in verse that recalls the ideas Wordsworth discusses in the note to "The Thorn." I would suggest, however, that the pronoun "this" is not precisely the point of emphasis. The line itself, as a rhetorical phrase both visually and metrically ramified by its shortness, is emphatic and overvocalized in its entirety; its effects reach well beyond the circumference of an individual sign. This is not to say the poem begins with meaninglessness or a vague mood, but rather that its language begins as a forceful rupture—a surfacing of words whose uncertainty anticipates the trope of hearing articulate sound in the currents of a musical river.

The rupture of the first line also owes its force to the space around it: a visual silence. As Allen Grossman has observed, "[s]ome of the meanings of silence are : noise, darkness, possibility, death, "woman," chaos, ineffability, unconscious life, sin, the Curse of God"; and we can link this to the opening of the *Prelude* in light of a particularly insistent form of silence: "the white portions of the page which constitute a morpheme

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[109] As the Norton Critical Edition points out: "At no stage in his work on *1799* did Wordsworth provide an antecedent for the reiterated "this" of lines 1,6, and 17. As I will argue further on, I disagree with any implication that Wordsworth's lack of specificity makes the antecedent imponderable.

[110] Kevin Barry, Language, Music and the Sign: a Study in Aesthetics, Poetics and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 18-19.

[111] See Lawrence Kramer, Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 135.

meaning silence" (251).[112] Wordsworth creates a condition in which sound phenomena are perceived/imagined with heightened awareness, a context that readies them for the investment with aesthetic meaning(s). In his narrative, too, the hearing of silence often constitutes a significant way in which phenomena are given warrant to register aesthetically in the mind of the hearer. While he will not (and in his view undoubtedly should not) grant us an image of a reader hearing in silence, he nonetheless rehearses silence enough to make us understand that it is a constitutive part of the aesthetic vision of the *Prelude*. For example:

> …And when it chanced
> That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
> Then sometimes in that silence, while he hung
> Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
> Has carried far into his heart the voice
> Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven,
> Received into the bosom of the steady lake. (*Prelude*, *1805,* V. 404-413)

The episode of the *Boy of Winander* as it appears in *Book V* of *1805 Prelude* reveals an intense relationship between silence and Wordsworth's more mature conceptualization of the Imagination as "denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws."[113] Wordsworth's chief example is not the pronouncement of silence in line 406, but rather silence as a form of activity in the *hanging*—an ambiguously metaphorical motion whose very ambiguity lies at the heart of its sublimity. As Wordsworth notes from his reading of Milton, in certain scenes[114] or instances "the mind contemplates an object" as seeming—thus *appearing*—to hang rather than rest upon the surface of the earth. This imagined movement and suspension "gratifies" the link between how the mind can contemplate an object in a sublime way, and what the sublime object is. Here, hanging mediates the senses through representational tropes. Wordsworth's language in the *1815 Preface*, however, belies the aurality of hanging with its specularity. In the actual episode from *The Prelude*, the visual is mediated through the reflections of water's surface while the "voice" of mountain torrents is comparatively unmediated. The child's senses perceive the torrents directly, which prove to be the more insistent phenomenological agent by which sublimity is first

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[112] Summa Lyrica: Commonplaces in Speculative Poetics. The Sighted Singer: Two Works on Poetry for Reader and Writers. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992.

[113] In the *Preface to Poems* of 1815, III. 29. As many readings of the passage maintain, nature gently teaches those "fixed laws." "…Wordsworth supports the … idea of how resourcefully nature educates a boy entrusted to her rather than to a human agency" (Hartman 19).

[114] *ibid*. Wordsworth's chief example is an epic simile from Paradise Lost, II. 636-643.

taught to the mind (rather than, say, reading Burke), and visual mediation and aural immediacy are locked together in a single allegory of natural pedagogy.

When time as a temporal form of distance reflects back the image of the sound as a mental echo, it likewise becomes mediated by time and memory and figured into "music." Returning to the beginning of the *Two-Part Prelude*, the apostrophic rhetorical question erupts in a conspicuously specular white space, as if *in medias res,* and in catching both the eye and ear amplifies the urgency of the frantic questions as well as the praises that follow (dithyrambically folded in, as it were). Yet the narrative into which he places his questions also suggests that invocation alone does not a poet make.

> Yet were I grossly destitute of all
> Those human sentiments which make this earth
> So dear if I should fail with grateful voice
> To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
> And sounding cataracts…" (*1799*; Part II, 467-71)

Apostrophe alone will not do; and merely naming the objects of adoration is not sufficient. The "grateful voice" defines its ability to "speak" through a set of contingencies. Only in bearing a resolve derived from nature, "a never failing principle of joy / and purest passion" (*1805*; II.465-66) that unites the natural "communing" of his youth with his "more than Roman Confidence" in the post-revolutionary disappointments of the present, will he "speak" praises back upon the very nature that composed his mind in the first place. Thus to the extent that the *Prelude* dramatizes a search for a poetic voice, Wordsworth poses this search as a debt, reframing his ambition as duty and his desire for a powerfully praiseworthy (i.e. dithyrambic) voice as one that will screen out the influences and the despair of political disillusionment.

While the poetic voice defines itself against the mere ability to articulate apostrophically, Wordsworth creates temporal and dialogic complications as well. In each level of his structural reading of Apostrophe, Jonathan Culler[115] progressively sublimates the idea that apostrophe cannot answer back; otherwise the mode of address would cease to be apostrophe and plunge the lyric time of the poem back into a dramatic fiction (and the reading of lyric as dramatic monolog is something that Culler never ceases to rail against). Lyric is the "time of discourse rather than story" thus the "lyric is characteristically the triumph of the apostrophic" (66). Apostrophe seeks a mode of evocation whose function is perhaps best realized in elegy—bringing into linguistic existence that which is dead, gone, ephemeral or purely imagined. As long as the object of apostrophe does not answer or has not already spoken and no dialogue is present we remain squarely within lyric time, or the speaking reality that Roland Greene[116] has called

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[115] Culler, Jonathan. "Apostrophe." *Diacritics* 7.4 (1970): 59-69.

[116] In his enormously intriguing study of Petrarchanism, Greene identifies a shuttling of lyric utterance between the building up of fictions (through a series of poems) and a contrapuntal retreat back to more ritualistic and vocal modes in which narrative and fiction are abandoned. In this dyad, the constructed reality of fiction, though it looks like reality, is more artificial than the ritual, which though it resists forming a concrete reality, reveals the literal act of speech to which fiction is subordinated. See Post-Petrarchanism:

the "ritual mode" of lyric as opposed to a fictive one (15); the subjectivity constitutes itself as voice, and through that voice it gives both vocal and phenomenological presence to something that does not speak or is not present. To a degree, the figure of apostrophe organizes the self-proclaimed ambitions of the *Prelude.* If, however, the object were indeed to answer back, then the poet would have in some small way built up a dramatic fiction—e.g. Blake's rose shocks him by declaring that *he* looks even sicker. In this regard, that which is "lyrical" (dramatic apostrophes expressed in dithyrambic strains) would not be what we think of when we think of lyric as an utterance with special temporal claims. Moreover, the division of the speaking subject and the object that romantic poetry seeks to close down is at stake here. In a dialogic mode, the subject and object are sundered, each with its own subjectivity, agency and being. The fulfillment of apostrophe would destroy the very closing of subject and object it seeks in the first place. Most of the time, however, there is no danger of an object answering back—e.g. Keats's nightingale never hears or acknowledges the poet who addresses it. But an apostrophe to music or a musical voice or even a voice imagined as music carries with it a contingency that brings to bear the poet's belief about the nature of musical expression. Is music articulate? Can music convey meaning in ways comparable to the voice? Does music speak back to the poet or, oppositely, has it already spoken? As we know from our reading of Kittler, these are the central features (and one might also say predicaments) of romantic oralization.

This is precisely what occurs in the opening lines of the *1799 Two-Part Prelude*; both the union of subject and object and the possibility of a dialogue between them that apostrophe projects but does not obtain is undermined by the conjunction of poetic narrative and presence of Wordsworth's apostrophic address. Wordsworth complicates the apostrophe's temporal gestures by positioning his voice between modes of monologue and dialogue. His questions come at the beginning of the poem, not at the end,[117] and in so doing they frame a renewal of dialogue with nature that ultimately shifts its address to Coleridge, to whom his apology for deferring the composition of *The Recluse* refers to the search for a power in the present:

> …my hope has been that I might fetch
> Reproaches from my former years, whose power
> May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
> To honorable toil." (*1799*; 450-53)

The "this" of the first line is unmistakably the poem now unfolding, the search for a poetic power to which the antecedents lie in the resuming of a dialogue with nature figured through music, a thing that Wordsworth can continue to hear and perceive and with which he can speak in concert (I have noted in bold font those moments that suggest musical dialogism.)

Was it for this

The Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

[117] Recall Culler's argument that "poems which contain apostrophes often end in withdrawals and questions" (64).

That one, the fairest of all rivers, **loved**
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, **sent a voice**
That flowed along my dreams? For this didst thou,
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 fields and groves.

The apostrophes do more than establish a temporal node upon which objects can be arranged, they provide the genesis for a dialogic scene through which the past and the present can be reorganized; and where a musical figure for the continuity of past and present, self and nature, can be established and questioned—a process that will be borne out through the *Prelude*, as well as Wordsworth's more mature poems.[118] The apostrophes form a basis for an exploratory narrative as they build up into questions that arise from the ambiguously articulate, musical under-dialog—an idea that manifests variously but nonetheless runs straight through the *Prelude*, spanning all of its revisions, in which poetic voice and the undercurrent of nature are progressively linked. Thus Wordsworth's "meditation" after seeing Mt. Snowdon in Book XIII (*1805*), a long-awaited apotheosis expressed by the meeting of "under-presence" and magnitudinous obscurity:

…an under-presence,
The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
Or vast in its own being—" (ll. 71-73).

Initially, however, we see the idea develop in the progression of vocal and musical ideas in the opening lines of the *Two Part Prelude*. The movement of the Derwent's "murmur" blends with the human voice into "song," becomes itself a voice and then, with the child

[118] This early passage (which nearly commences what Matthew Arnold called Wordsworth's "Great decade") anticipates the complex exchanges among aural richness, spiritual blending and generic fluidity that Wordsworth would deploy in "The White Doe of Rylstone" (begun 1807-1808 but published in 1815). In an exploration of these ideas (among others), Peter Manning detects a "genre-shifting mode" that "might more deeply be considered as Wordsworth's inquiry into the borders of an event: when and how does and action begin? When and how does it end?" (274). Manning, Peter J. "The White Doe of Rylstone and Later Narrative Poems" in The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth, pp. 268-288. Eds. Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

presumably conversant, obtains the less articulate but more communicative thought-composing figure of "music." Once Wordsworth's poetic persona invokes this "music," increasingly complex musical ideas take root. The music provides a "steady cadence tempering…"—tempering, that is, through its double meaning as an "emotional state" and a form of "tuning." This "cadence" is neither melodic nor harmonic, but both. It initiates a sense of musical temporality, a teleology that ensures progression and order, thereby completing the musical conceit and leaving the infant Wordsworth, at last, "composed." This composing, moreover, is both unnatural in the sense that it is uncommon and yet hypernaturalized, having stemmed from the deed of music itself; a rare and vital "knowledge" is the final product and becomes the daemon that will guide him as nature's chosen Poet.[119] The musical voice, now singing, is born.

Music likewise provides a temporal framework that allows the "spots of time" to become organized. We see this composing function of music some fifty lines later.

> The mind of man is fashioned and built up
> Even as a strain of music. I believe
> That there are spirits which, when they would form
> A favored being, from his very dawn
> Of infancy do open out the clouds
> As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
> With gentle visitation—quiet powers,
> Retired, and seldom recognized, yet kind,
> And to the very meanest not unknown--
> With me, though rarely, in my boyish days
> They communed. Others too there are, who use,
> Yet haply aiming at the self-same end,
> Severer interventions, ministry
> More palpable—and of their school was I. (*1799*; 67-80)

Susan Wolfson has described this passage as a place where Wordsworth positions the formation of "I" (at the end of the paragraph) within a "trope for its own formalism" that moves from "reflector" to "formulator," or self-formulator, and in doing so elaborates the process with which the *Two-Part Prelude* began and frames the mind-music connection more didactically.[120] Wordsworth introduces a more staid idea of musical order through the figure of the "strain of music," building on the discursive partnership between the infant mind, the nurse's song and the voice of nature. The "strain of music," as a musical line, seems to espouse a genuinely musical logic: it progresses through any number of

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[119] Brian Bartlett has commented on this mingling, saying that it "suggests that whatever applies to one applies to the other" but ultimately "only affirms the harmony and sense of oneness in the experience" (177). His insight is instructive, but ignores the most crucial vocal element: the voice of the poet speaking of the very mingling that helped to shape him. See his "'Inscrutable Workmanship': Music and Metaphors of Music in 'The Prelude' and 'The Excursion.' " The Wordsworth Circle. 17.3 1986, pp. 175-180.

[120] See her Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 28.

melodic and harmonic contours and reaches an inevitable end—a return to the root harmony, but not necessarily the same pitch, nor necessarily in the same mood. This idea of departure and return, a motif recurrent in Wordsworth, suggests teleology but hardly fate. The self-formation that Wolfson identifies is animated by either a predilection toward "gentle visitations" or "Severer interventions." Music is therefore a formal paradox: a formless form whose syntagmatic progress guarantees a specific endpoint (a return to a root chord, a tonic resolution) but paradigmatically situates an infinite number of paths to this resolution. *The Prelude* itself is being written by the poet whose own mind it purports to trace: this temporal conjunction prefigures a determined end but leaves open an infinite number of ways by which its narrative can be contemplated, articulated and consecrated via the musical voice it imagines.

In order to connect these lines as they appear in the *1799* to the *1805 Prelude*, I would argue that their placement at line 270 does not eliminate the ideas we just traced. Quite to the contrary, musical self-formation ramifies poetically like an evolving refrain. In the "mind of man" passages, the presence of a musical idea endures, but subtle changes signal broader shifts in meaning. It grows longer. There is a shift from "strain," which suggests melody and harmony, to only "harmony."

> The mind of man is framed even like the breath
> And harmony of music. There is a dark
> Invisible workmanship that reconciles
> Discordant elements, and makes them move
> In one society. (*1805*; I.351-355)

In the *1850* version there is a further shift, from the "invisible," to the "inscrutable," suggesting Wordsworth's progressing sense that the harmony he identifies is utterly baffling. In the *1805*, however, the strain of music is severed into its constituents—melody (breath) and harmony. The use of "breath" connotes the relatively obscure (though not yet archaic in the nineteenth-century) idea of breath blown into an instrument. The word evokes a vocal absence, and with it the suggestion that the formation of the mind and its ability to organize its many experiences and the impulses that act upon it occurs outside the grasp of both the mind's own understanding as well as the ability of the self-examining poet to articulate it. The narrative counterpart for which this passage could be read as a gloss details the young Wordsworth's first experience of the sublime on the lake of Ullswater, which leaves the young Wordsworth with a corresponding "darkness" in his thought (*1805*; I.421). A second correspondence surfaces in the "mind of man" passage. The voice that still cannot fully know and therefore articulate the workmanship of nature's "severer interventions" reveals itself in the confused meter of this passage. Not until the invocation of "move" do the conspicuously hypersyllabic lines normalize, suggesting that the baffled voice in this manifestation of the Prelude's formative musical trope speaks with a compensatory but disorganized urgency, not stabilizing until the invocation of movement brings forth the final image of unity—"in one society."

With the specter of suspended agency looming in the "mind of man" passage, the power that first cultivated the imagination grows more remote, retreating into the darkest place of nature—interiority. It marks one of the *Prelude's* many moments of doubt, as

well as the gulf between the poet's voice and the formative power musically figured in the image of the river Derwent. Wordsworth keeps this separation alive through the *Prelude* via the telltale image of the stream, as when he says, sarcastically, that to trace the growth of the poet's mind or any mind is akin to claiming "[t]his portion of the river of my mind / Came from yon fountain" (*1805*; II. 214-15). Wordsworth later reintegrates the figures of voice and moving water in Book IV when he describes the stream that gets redirected from the wilds to the garden at his father's house and is "stripped of its voice." Wordsworth, though he once mocked it, thinks presently that it would have been just for him, then or now, to "pen down / a Satire on myself," having himself been thus pulled into the "eddy's force" at Cambridge (*1805*; IV.43, IV.54-55, III.11). The invocation of self-directed satire in the midst of the autobiographical *Prelude* issues with some particular—and generic—weight. His recognition of a possible counterpart in the voiceless, diverted stream does not lead to a loss of poetry but wrenches the genre to one of learned derision rather than the pursuit of lyricized self-discovery.

The vacillating relationship between Wordsworth's pursuit of voice, self-formation and his tenuous ability to speak back to the musical voice of nature with a musical voice of his own that first registered in the address to the Derwent carries anxieties as well as aspirations; his ideal model lacks the cultural, preservational and professional boons of type, paper and bindings.

> Oh why hath not the mind
> Some element to stamp her image on
> In nature somewhat nearer to her own, (*1805*; V. 45-47)

And why must its thoughts "lodge in shrines so frail?"(*1805*; V. 49) What follows is the Arab Dream.

Critically, the central issue of this episode concerns the way we comprehend the nature of the "blast of prophetic harmony" (*1805*; V. 99). Despite Mary Jacobus's view that the "blast of prophetic harmony" from the shell is an agent of destruction,[121] I would suggest that the apocalypse it heralds realizes preservation. Set in the fantasy of a dream, the images contained therein present orders of eschatological time rather than history, and likewise their antecedent scenario is, on both a conceptual and narrative level,[122] not evidence of actual destruction but a hypothetical fear (that Wordsworth expresses in the lines above *1805*; V.45-47) that awaits, and receives, consolation. The power of the song in the dream is ambiguously a nightmare and sign of wish fulfillment, where the "Ode" prophesied in the shell communicates in a music and language that are utterly transcendent, which both attracts and terrifies the dreamer (and by extension

[121] While I am willing to entertain the idea that we can read the "music and harmony in The Prelude" as having two functions: "one to build up the other to destroy" (180), the shell-as-book that encapsulates all human knowledge is less an agent of destruction than a vessel for its survival despite the apocalypse it foretells.

[122] Wordsworth explains that he relates his fear about the catastrophic loss of the passion and wisdom of the ages to an unnamed "friend" who then half reproaches and half sympathizes with him and proceeds to relate the Arab Dream to Wordsworth, which Wordsworth subsequently supplies in *1805*; 71-139.

Wordsworth, who in the 1850 edition claims the dream as his own). Upon placing the "shell / Of a surpassing brightness" to his ear, Wordsworth's friend hears an "unknown tongue, / Which yet I understood, articulate sounds," (*1805*; 94-95). The language, if it is a language, introduces the coming deluge but in doing so takes a generic turn:

> A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
> An ode in passion uttered, which foretold
> Destruction to the children of the earth (*1805*; V. 96-99)

The shell is known by both the "stranger" and the "friend" to be a book and a shell at once, as well as—

> …a god, yea many gods,
> Had voices more than all the winds, and was
> A joy, a consolation, and a hope. (*1805*; 107-09)

Afterward the stranger rides off, and is described as both *Don Quixote* and an Arab amid a glittering light in the desert that is also a flood, carrying the prophetic book that is also a shell, claiming to bury the shell safely while also being consumed in the flood. The dream synthesizes dualities that the dreamer cannot comprehend, and thus he experiences them in the form of nightmare. Even the shell unleashes pronouncements of doom while it harbors "joy, consolation and hope." The crucial image is the blast of harmony itself—the unifying agent that reconciles opposites and likewise emanates from the voices of nature that are both articulate and inarticulate. As John Hollander reminds us,[123] the shell in romantic poetry is a figure for the lyre as well as the inner ear, and the idea of harmony embedded within this wild tale of opposites proposes an idea of sublime interchange (imagined in the guise of a poetic genre that makes the most insistent claims for musical sublimity) that remains constant and is readily available in the forms of nature which become the stuff of books.

The awesome prophetic, apocalyptic power of the harmony heard in the shell also effects a kind of medial suspension—an apocalyptic lyric voice awaiting remediation. T.M. Kelley has made the case that Wordsworth knew of Josephus's *History of the Jews* and used it as a background for the Arab Dream.[124] In essence, ancient geometrical knowledge was said to be recorded through the erection of pillars—one of stone, one of brick—in the hopes that they would withstand fire and flood, preserving mathematics for future generations. Wordsworth substitutes these pillars with the stone (a book) and the shell (lyric ode/ source of harmony). Among the "implications of these adjustments" is the notion that the "ancient solution to the threat of deluge is apparently not available to the dreamer, who must find some other way to save the knowledge represented by the

[123] See, Hollander, John. "Wordsworth and the Music of Sound." New Perspectives on Coleridge and Wordsworth. Ed. Geoffrey Hartman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, pp. 41-84.
[124] Kelley, T.M. "Deluge and Buried Treasure in Wordsworth's Arab Dream." *Notes and Queries* 27.1 (1980): 70-71.

stone and shell" (Kelley 71). The ancient solutions are not available, but a romantic solution is, indeed, at hand. Wordsworth's "adjustments" point in the direction of the exchanges between medium and genre already at work in the *Prelude*. We can read such adjustments as a triangulation of prophetic vocal/poetic power imagined through a modernized medial situation. If "[t]he knowledge of the shell is" as Kelley rightly suggests, "worth more than the mathematics of the stone" it is also more precarious—as it produces sound—but also more assimilable (by the lyricism Wordsworth is mapping and pursuing), and therefore introduces a sense of just how ambitious the pursuit of a lyrical voice is—nothing less than prophetic poiesis.

As readers of the *Prelude* know, Wordsworth keeps the apocalyptic within his ken. In Wordsworth's apostrophe to the Imagination, an episode that is itself suggestive of an embodied ode, the power in the dizzy scene reconciles new, sublime discords that form the "Characters of the apocalypse" (i.e. "Tumult and peace") in the idea of "harmony" he had initiated earlier: "like the working of one mind" (*1805*; VI.568). Conventionally, the central question of the scene concerns whether or not the Imagination has detected a final power that works beyond the reach of nature itself—thus a power beyond nature.[125] Language is paramount here, since something removed to its ideal is never fully expressed by referential signs. It can be sublimely situated, indeed, but likewise lingers at a remove in that it requires verbal reference to bring it back. Here, unlike in the apostrophe to the river Derwent, the address objectifies Imagination beyond the boundary of the poetic utterance:

> Imagination!—lifting up itself
> Before the eye and progress of my song (*1805*; VI. 525).

In the space of the text, the power of the Imagination and the power of nature can only be said to be objectified, and an object is precisely what Wordsworth sees as the their obverse. The power that works through the "mind of man" and through the apocalyptic raptures, though linked, never enters into the control of the poet but never ceases to be desired.

Book Eleven, (recall the title, "Imagination, How Impaired and Restored") begins where the darkness of Book Ten ends but looks forward to its already implicit promise of the imagination's restoration:

> Long time hath man's unhappiness and guilt
> Detained us…//
> …Not with these began
> Our song, and not with these our song must end. (*1805*; XI.1-2, 7-8)

Then, invoking the breezes once again, he calls out:

[125] For a treatment of this question that goes to greater lengths to compare the 1805 with the 1850 version and set the stage for many later investigations, see Geoffrey Hartman's "A Poet's Progress: Wordsworth and the Via Naturaliter Negativa." *Modern Philology* 59 (1962): 214-24.

> Oh, that I had a music and a voice
> Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
> What ye have done for me. (*1805*; XI.20-23)

Thus the imagination once again builds up the ideal musical voice of nature, and therein suggests a tantalizing power to reconcile all things and make good on the gratitude that Wordsworth professes to nature, the same that he identifies as the criterion that will allow his voice to "speak." While the apostrophes to Derwent reveal the knowledge granted by nature's musical voice, the idea of a musical power that implicitly flows in the Derwent and more explicitly inhabits these lines leads Wordsworth to Yeats's question—Did [he] put on his knowledge with his power? Harmony at last takes on both a literal and an ironically non-musical valence. It marries the "music" and the "voice" and casts the figure of music back into the immaterial undercurrent from which it originated in the *Two-Part Prelude*. The suggestion here is that the self-forming, poetic powers positioned at once as source and subject of this autobiography return again in the figure of song. Thus the song for which Wordsworth vies is a quality, not a single poem but a loosing of lyricality into new shapes, new forms, a new genre and the constantly renewing vision of the developing mind—not the least of which is the actual mind speaking behind the textual mind and bidding for the very same power that it figures in order to constitute itself.

The Prelude tends to be fairly open about its ambition to collate folklore and broader literary and cultural histories.[126] In his brief but sweeping catalog of poetic forms following the Arab Dream in Book V of *The Prelude* Wordsworth historicizes a progressively intensifying relationship between poetic types and actual "tunes."

> That in the name of all inspired souls,
> From Homer the great thunderer, from the voice
> Which roars along the bed of Jewish song,
> And that, more varied and elaborate,
> Those trumpet-tunes of harmony that shake
> Our shores in England—from those loftiest notes
> Down to the low wren-like warblings made
> For cottages and spinners at the wheel
> And weary travellers when they rest themselves
> By the highways and hedges, ballad tunes,
> Food for the hungry ears of little ones
> And of old men who have survived their joy—
> It seemeth, in behalf of these, the works,
> And of the men who framed them (whether known,
> Or sleeping nameless in their graves),

[126] For this, see Maureen McLane's reading in Balladeering, Minstrelsy and the Making of Romantic Poetry. "The ethnographic and testimonial turns so prominent in Lyrical Ballads recur throughout the *Prelude* in an extended figuration and implicit defense of ear- and eye-witness. And Wordsworth emerges not only as inquirer into his own history but conspicuous editor and remediator of others' tales" (204).

That I should here assert their rights, attest
Their honours, and should once for all pronounce
Their benediction, speak of them as powers
For ever to be hallowed…" (*1805*; V.198-219)

He progressively rusticates poetry as he domesticates it, giving a Wordsworthian shape to hagiographic progress narratives of the kind he would have read in Gray's *The Progress of Poetry* and would later see, though in a negative light, in Thomas Love Peacock's *The Four Ages of Poetry*. The ancient, metaphorical "notes" that represent the peals of thunder and roaring of the foundational texts of Western Literature soften but also literalize into "tunes" that likewise complicate his earlier preoccupation with material books. These images supplant books—"the works"—with the scenes and figures contained within them, scenes where orality and a notable suppression of images of literacy prevail. His literary context is transhistorical, but his lyrical context insistently roots itself in the literary interests of his nation and historical moment. For once in the *Prelude*, Wordsworth nakedly reveals the connection between the mythic troping of a naturalized musical-lyrical voice and the broader context of the multi-medial underpinnings of romantic lyricism. Quickly, however, he assimilates them back into his scheme.

…only less,
For what we may become and what we need,
Than nature's self… (*1805*; V.220-222)

Wordsworth speaks at once with them and then for such cultural underpinnings so that he can ultimately subordinate them to the vocal and poetic registers of nature—the site upon which he has strategically shifted the origin of, his claim for and his debt to a musical voice of nature and nurture that is always already *fully efficacious*, whose "accompaniment of music is indispensable" and, in the fictions of autobiography, inexorable

To close on what may be a somber but brief note, Wordsworth's most extensive poem on sound—"The Power of Sound"—ought to be the grand inheritor of the lyricism shaped, imagined, mediated, forecast and claimed by the *Prelude*. Published in 1835, the poem arrives less than a decade before Wordsworth will be named Poet Laureate and held a place of high esteem later in his life. Its verses are encompassing, to say the least, with 224 lines comprising a furiously paced catalogue of sounds and sound-images, and apostrophes:

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of Voice
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves reborn
On with your pastime! (ll. 33-37)

Wordsworth proposes that the collection and collation of sounds (and their optimistic functions) are "A liquid concert matchless by nice Art" (l. 48)—or an art not of this earth:

> Point not these mysteries to an Art
> Lodged above the starry pole;
> Pure modulations flowing from the heart
> Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
> With Order dwell, in endless youth? (ll. 108-12)

The source of this Art is divine "Harmony" (l. 219), the allegorical manifestation of the "power" in the poem's title. But unlike the "prophetic blast of harmony" from the shell, and unlike books that could be destroyed by floor or fire—"Harmony" will survive outside of materiality of earth. In an Apostrophe to "Silence" near the poem's end (l. 217), Wordsworth asks:

> Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
> With her smooth tones and discords just,
> Tempered into rapturous strife,
> Thy destined bond-slave? No! though earth be dust
> And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay
> Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away. (ll. 219-224)

Thus the song of thanks and praise finds that the super-medium of Harmony, and all the world's collective activity of sound, is in fact the Logos, or Word of God. The kind of revision we can map between this late poem and the Arab Dream is accompanied by even severer interventions. As James Chandler has convincingly identified, this poem is in many ways a rewriting of earlier poetry—"a kind of echo-chamber of his own early lyric subjects."[127] Its chief revision, however, is a rewriting of the "…the secular power" of the "Intimations Ode," which strikes the older Wordsworth as dangerous"; in its place Wordsworth poses "the Word issued *and* received by the Lord God of all, a transcendental figure that dissolves all distinctions of read or said, declarative or imperative. The sound of this Word is not only virtuous but also virtual. It is the sound of the power of sound."[128]

What we may miss most in this formulation is the loss of the debt to nature that drove the autobiographical seeking in the *Prelude*. It has either been paid or gone into default. The "natural piety" that informed the Wordsworth of the *Poems* of 1807 gets substituted by Christian-Judeo Logos:[129] the sound of the world with which he held intimate conversation, and the sound his own words that he know revises and reorganized under the sound of *the* Word, perhaps now *must* grow in power. Now the conversation with Nature and her natural piety is a higher Art to be heard; and now the words of youth are a disturbance, impossible to erase, but perhaps able to be drowned out.

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[127] Chandler, James. "'The Power of Sound' and the Great Scheme of Things: Wordsworth Listens to Wordsworth." http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/soundings/chandler/chandler.html, paragraph 8.
[128] paragraph 19.
[129] "To put the matter in other, not less apposite, Wordsworthian terms, it separates 'natural piety' from Christian piety" (paragraph 12).

Chapter 2

The Music of Verse and Mediation of Voice in Coleridge's Poetry.

As Wordsworth's remarks on lyricism suggest, cooperation is needed between poet and reader when a poem is printed. In recited poetry or performed song, however, the audience is effectively exempted from wielding the "voluntary power" required to bring the pulses, pauses and "impassioned music" of the verses to sonorous life. Coleridge articulated a rather extreme view of auditors in the last chapter of *Biographia Literaria,* saying that the audience will "*live* for the time with the dilated sphere of [the reciter's] intellectual being. It is equally possible, though not equally common, that a reader left to himself should sink below the poem, as that the poem left to itself should flag beneath the feelings of the reader."[130]

Coleridge's remarks are intended to explain how his recitation of the unpublished manuscript of "Christabel" was capable of inducing disproportionate admiration and praise following its face-to-face recital, and equally disproportionate abuse by Jeffrey and Hazlitt following its publication in 1816. A conventional portrait (in the romantic era as now) of Coleridge as the verbose, nearly mesmeric conversationalist and reciter of poetry also emerges—as well as the notion that he was undone by the slings and arrows of publication. In Coleridge's mind, the problem was belatedness. While still in manuscript form, "Christabel" was frequently read aloud in literary circles, and its archaic, quantitative ballad verse coupled with Gothic supernaturalism inspired no less than Scott to write his famous (and lucrative) "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." Years later, Coleridge was anguished to publish "Christabel" in the guise of imitator rather than innovator. As Tim Fulford has demonstrated, Coleridge went on a doomed campaign to correct the record and by 1816 and onward (to the time he writes *Biographia Literaria* and beyond), was sadly reduced to apologist, left to explain in prose prefaces and a critical autobiography how successful recitation is a poor indicator of success in print.[131]

The meter of "Christabel" was also a sticking point in critical reviews, serving as a springboard form which critics could level a range of charges. Consensus was not forthcoming. An anonymous critic in the July, 1816 issue of the *Augustan Review* writes, "[t]he melody of his verse… often degenerates into a monotonous and affected pompousness"[132]; alternatively, an unsigned review from the *Academic*, dated the

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[130] See *Biographia Literaria*, 240. All citations of *Biographia Literaria* from: Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria.* Ed. James Engell and Walter Jackson Bate. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bollingen Series LXXV 7, 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press and Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1983. (Henceforward *BL*)

[131] Fulford, Tim. The Late Poetry of the Lake Poets. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. See the third chapter in particular: "*Print and Performance:* Christabel; Kubla Khan, A Vision; The Pains of Sleep" pp. 113-152.

[132] Jackson, J.R. De J. Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, vol 2. New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 262.

September 15, 1821, makes nearly the reverse charge. Quoting from Coleridge's own preface ("the metre of Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular"), the review attempts to lay bare the poem's arch irregularity, saying, "…it will ever be a secret to all but himself, how the two following lines, for example, may be accentuated so as to have the same regular metre." [133] The lines are as follows:

Ah, well-a-day (l. 264)

And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity (l. 277)

Monotone and irregularity are hardly the same thing, suggesting that if there was irregularity and pomposity it existed, perhaps, on both sides of divide between poet and critic. But the very purpose of Coleridge's meter was to produce the virtuous obverse of monotone and irregularity: sustained and sonorous lines that are likewise hugely elastic, hugely varied—capable, that is, of doing precisely what Coleridge said they could do: "…occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion."[134] Both the slowly unfolding line of spare syllables and the flurry of a line with many syllables imitate a highly literate kind of wildered song. In the example from *The Academic*, the four syllable line is an instance of a cut off line, much like other four syllable lines that the reviewer passes over: "What sees she there?"; "These words did say:" (l. 57, 267). These lines establish the motif of discontinuity in "Christabel"—pauses, or rests, in the progress of the poem. These are moments of suspense, or anticipatory silences that produce the effect of waiting or listening. The longer 14-syllable line has its full aural effect because of, not in spite of, Coleridge's metrical scheme. In metrical feet, for instance, it would sound plodding at best:

And DIDST BRING her HOME with THEE in LOVE and in CHariTY.

But in the four-stress, quantitative meter:

And DIDST bring her HOME with thee [*caesura*] in LOVE and in CHARity.

There is a caesura mid-line, between "thee" and "in"—a missing stress from the amphibrach-like line that takes shape from the four-stress scheme. Once we hear this, we may start to hear more. It may start to *feel* right to sing out the rising pitch of "HOME with thee" and the lower, finishing pitch of "CHARity," which is supported by the rhyming "ee" sounds in the final syllable of each. This, of course, brings us (as modern

[133] From Critical Heritage, p. 282. Note: I have omitted the reviewers references to page numbers and supplied line numbers in their place.
[134] In Poetical Works, I. 483. All citations of poetry from: Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Poetical Works. Ed. J. C. C. Mays. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bollingen Series LXXV 16, 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. (Henceforward *PW*)

readers or romantic era readers) back to the issue of Wordsworth's "voluntary power." Like a musician practicing before a performance, we have to work these things out.

In writing about "Christabel's" reception, Coleridge did not accuse his reviewers of failed comprehension; as usual, he turns his attention toward himself, calling the act of recitation "a species of Animal Magnetism, in which the enkindling reciter by perpetual comment of looks and tones, lends his own will and apprehensive faculty to his auditors."[135] Perhaps, but he lends his own voice as well. In becoming a performer of the text, instead of the absent author of a printed text that must stand by itself, Coleridge can direct the ear of the listener, and in choosing to read a passage in a certain tone, at a certain tempo, can shape the broader comprehension as well as the enjoyment of the piece. In fact, the incomprehensibility of the piece can be, in those moments, comprehended as forceful artistry.

Coleridge's disillusionment over the printed fate of "Christabel" had a counterpart in Lamb's prescient doubts. For Lamb, however, the issue is not "Christabel," but "Kubla Khan." In a letter to Wordsworth on April 16, 1816, Lamb, as we saw in the last chapter, writes that Coleridge's recitation "irradiates & brings heaven & Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it," but then admits that he is "almost afraid that 'Kubla Khan' is an owl that wont bear day-light. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense."[136] If the complimentary strain of Lamb's response—the "heaven & Elysian bowers" was the very thing that would be banished by the redacting lantern of typography, then the question is: what gets reducted (or redacted)? Lamb's descriptions of divine imagery have little to do with the poem and even sound a great deal like an impressionistic response to music, and indeed the easy answer is that the "music" of the poem gets redacted—lost in the silent, arid medium of typography. But enter the nay-saying Hazlitt: "Kubla Khan shews that Mr. Coleridge can write better nonsense verses than any man in England. It is not a poem, but a musical composition."[137] Hazlitt doubles down on the issue of the music of "Kubla Khan" by citing the "damsel with a dulcimer" passage as evidence for his claim, emphasizing the meeting place of verbal melody and obscure diction via the musical image (as though the image of the damsel with a dulcimer were in itself a tipping of the hand). Yet for Lamb to say that Coleridge's performance "irradiates & brings heaven & Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it," and for Hazlitt to use "musical composition" as a pejorative for what Lamb heard as heavenly singing suggests that "Kubla Khan" never failed to communicate its forceful music, regardless of its medium. Much more than in "Christabel," what we have in the diverse reception of "Kubla Kahn" is a failure to admire in print what was admired in oral performance—something "sung" in recitation, something "musical" in print.

The obvious questions here is—how *could* there be such a discrepancy between the response of readers and listeners? Fulford and others[138] have studied the reception of

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[135] *BL,* I: 239.

[136] The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb. Ed. Edwin J. Marrs. 3 vols. Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1975, III, p. 215.

[137] in The Critical Heritage, p. 208.

[138] Biographies are a fine source, but see in particular, Christopher Laxer's "'The Lantern of Typography': 'Christabel,' 'Kubla Khan,' and Poetic Mediation." *European Romantic*

the poems following their 1816 publication and Coleridge's responses to them, but the hovering question remains: how much "music" and performance did Coleridge create in poems outside of recitation and how did the poems themselves anticipate the printed form that they were destined to become? How did such a culturally savvy poet who lived a great deal of his adult life in the public eye (who also filled countless notebook pages with metrical experiments and who expressed longings for a "language of music."[139]) anticipate the intersection of the public ear and the medium of print when writing poems? The answers to these questions first need to be pried away from the attention perennially given to "Christabel."

"Christabel" is the historical, quasi-mythic signpost of high literary culture taking an unusual oral turn—where a poem begins in literary print culture, spreads influentially through entrancing face to face transmission for a time, and then returns to print deleteriously. It stands as a reversal of the prevailing direction of romantic remediation wherein preliterate orality gets appropriated, transcribed, forged or mimicked in (and/or by) print. The pre-print capacity "Christabel" to travel influentially is central to the questions of ownership, copyright, and plagiarism that have sprung up around the poem, chiefly its meter, in Coleridge's time as well as ours. As Margaret Russett has demonstrated, these proprietary (even legal) questions relate to the deeply Coleridgean proposition that the meeting place of his metrical scheme and metrical variety engender a Coleridgean essence made all the more essential for having been communicated through recitation—"orality becomes the proof of identity [of "Christabel"], an effect that persists in the absence of the dead letter."[140] For Coleridge more generally, the best poetic production would inspire copies but never be equaled in an essential way, a kind of negative theology of the anxiety of influence, and of influencing others. "If all writers are 'guilty of imitation,' as Coleridge remarks, literature is the domain in which such flattery secures the identity of the original" (Russett 775). Coleridge, however, contented himself to believe (as courts of law and the courts of New Criticism would later agree[141]) that

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Review 24.2 (2013): 167-184. Laxer compiles many first-hand accounts of Coleridge's recitations and suggests that there was a kind of prestige to be had by boasting of having experienced the poems' oral performance prior to their print publication.

[139] Coleridge's Notebooks, (2035 15.14) All quotes from Coleridge's Notebooks from: Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Edited by Kathleen Coburn. 5 vols. vols. 1-2, Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1957-1962; vol. 3, Ed. Kathleen Coburn. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973; vol. 4, Ed. Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990; vol. 5, Ed. Kathleen Coburn and Anthony John Harding. Bollingen Series L, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. (Henceforward as *CN*)

[140] Russet argues that, in Coleridge's view, the least imitable poet would eschew the "mechanism of an overpowering tune" in favor of a "compelling mechanism" as well as "charming modification": "a truly original spirit would imbue an iterable pattern with unaccountable variation" (776-777). Russett, Margaret. "Meter, Identity, Voice: Untranslating 'Christabel.'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 43.4 (2003): 773-797.

[141] For an illuminating analysis "of Coleridgeanism in legal scholarship" see Russett, pp. 777-783.

"the infallible test of a blameless style" is "its untranslatableness in words of the same language without injury to the meaning."[142] Words are moved, replaced, or paraphrased—or the metrical scheme is borrowed but the full effect of the metrical identity is not—and the verse sounds enough like and unlike the original to be a clear miss. But a question we could ask Coleridge is: how does one successfully mediate the untranslateable if the untranslateable extends beyond the scope of diction to varied meter? The answer may arrive at Coleridge's distinction between translation and transcription.

Heatedly defending Scott from suggestions that Scott plagiarized "Christabel," Coleridge declares, "And this, Sir! is what an intentional Plagiarist would have done—He would have *translated*, not transcribed."[143] In so doing, Coleridge knits together the idea that originality comes from an act of remediation (transcription), as opposed to a side-by-side, text-by-text, obscuring, or pilfering (or translating). This distinction is of a piece with his paradoxical notion of catching the spirit of a poem, or poetry, from outside one's self. "He who can catch the Spirit of the original," he writes, "has it already." And that Spirit is "not merely Passion but poetic Passion, poetic Imagination."[144] This process of catching and yet already having is akin to a variety of quintessential romantic maneuvers—the closing of subject and object; the eye and ear half creating what they perceive; negotiation between self-consciousness and phenomena. But Coleridge frames it as a decisively medial act.

If in Coleridge's mind a true act of Imagination can occur from remediating the deeply artistic sounds we hear—catching only to recognize that one has it—then I would suggest that "Christabel" has taken up too much critical attention where the matter of originality, self-consciousness, and oral and print conjunctions are concerned. My argument is that although Coleridge's voice and poetical music were certainly missed outside of performance, Coleridge situates traces of their presence in the way he repeatedly and imaginatively explores the multivalent exchanges of voice and the materials that mediate and remediate voice. Mediation, including print mediation, is both a liability and a tool for shaping, directing and calculating the way poetic voice can be heard in the auditory imagination. Moreover, many of Coleridge's poems can be read as a historiographic record of the process one poet took to materialize the auditory imagination—using the capacity of a silent medium to realize the sound that poetry makes or records (or ought to make and ought to record); and, as such, our readings of these poems should take stock of the double-edged nature of mediation as both a goal and a problem of printed poems.

David Bolter and Richard Grusin[145] have used the phrase "the double logic of remediation" to argue that any instance of a medium is in itself an intersection between

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[142] *BL* I.142

[143] in Samuel Taylor. Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-1971. (Henceforward *CL*). To an Unknown Correspondent (15-21 December, 1811) III; 357.

[144] *Ibid,* III; p. 361

[145] Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. Remediation: Understanding New Media. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.

accreting layers of mediation—the piling up of the materials of art and cultural history (without which, they point out, there is no history[146]). This contrasts with immediacy, which represents the illusion of unmediated communication or expression (5). To produce a sense of the latter, we employ the former, effectively hypermediating in spite of ourselves. This is not a new phenomenon. Bolter and Grusin trace it as far as the Medieval period, but, more to the point, "our apparently insatiable desire for immediacy" is apparent, I would suggest, in romanticism as well (5). Angela Esterhammer has found a double logic of remediation in the way *improvisatore* performances were received by the British Press, as well as by Coleridge in his later poem, aptly named "The Improvisatore."[147] She ends her essay by asking, "how does the experience of reading poetry compare to that of hearing it being improvised—or to watching a previously improvised piece being read aloud, or reading an improvised poem in print, or reading a review of an improvisational performance in a magazine?" (128). One thing that makes Esterhammer's questions so deeply resonant, in my view, is that, in addition to romantic medial practices, improvisation and extemporaneity are the unrelenting fictional frames of romantic poetry, and of lyric poetry as we have come to know it—a spontaneous utterance overheard, most able to be heard during moments of emphatic vocalization and localization: "Hark!" "And now…" "But lo!" "Adieu, adieu." Literary ballads, for instance, frequently take place in the present tense, an account of witnessed action, rather than the reported action, that unfolds in the moral and fabular narratives shared among preliterate cultures—the folk form the literary ballad purportedly copied. When lyric poetry wasn't pretending to be a song, and sometimes when it was, it was always engaged in the activity of pretending to be what it was not—a spontaneous utterance that belies the fact that a printed poem is always already remediated.

Print allows for a spontaneous uttering of poems (in recitation) much more than it facilitates a spontaneous recording of utterance. And, ironically, print could be marshaled to prove that it had little to no effect on creation, as Coleridge's apocryphal preface to "Kubla Khan" reveals. He records that, in a dream, he could "not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines…without any sensation of consciousness of effort."[148] Writing was a matter or seamless, entranced transmission: "On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved."[149] The man on business from Porlock notwithstanding, Coleridge uses the printed preface to create an eyewitness account of a seamless mediation—that which was "composed" in the dream he "wrote" onto paper. The third person perspective in which Coleridge writes the preface strategically distances him from his poem, as if to stand apart alongside the reader to bear witness to an authentic dream-fragment—the work of vanished moment, now readable. The medial seamlessness of that dream-fueled, extemporaneous poeisis is secured not only by authorial estrangement but by the printed adjunct of the preface—an

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[146] Bolter and Grusin write, the "mediation of the real is always a mediation of another mediation" (18). Thus all mediations are always already remediations.
[147] "Coleridge's 'The Improvisatore': Poetry, Performance, and Remediation." The Wordsworth Circle 40 (2011): 122-8.
[148] *PW*, p. 511-512.
[149] *ibid*

additional layer of mediation. It makes Coleridge a one-man show: he dreamt and then he copied, he mediated the poem, and then remediated via a successive layer of text intended for print. It is a process that recalls the glosses he appends to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," or the fanciful, but unheard, "rude" song fictionally remediated in "Love," or the editorial history of "The Eolian Harp" or the complex textual history of "Dejection: An Ode." His poetry stages a constant negotiation between the voice of the verse and the text and print mediations that deepen their dramatized authenticity.

Esterhammer's questions are also important because they shift our attention to the way in which print media dramatize the act of performing or the activity of consuming (as audience, as reader)—which is *especially* important since Coleridge often dramatizes acts of performance directly in his poems. One general aim I have in this chapter is to treat remediation as a concept that need not have a prior performance and latter performance—e.g., a speech delivered, and then the transcription of the speech. Like the vehicle of a metaphor whose tenor is never named or perhaps purposively suspended, I would like to read Coleridge's poems as remediations that do not distinguish between fancy and fact, heard phenomena or imagined sound but rather fuse them in verse and then elaborate them in the interplay of poetic "music" and the way that music gets shaped and reshaped by the way Coleridge mediates and remediates it. In fact, many of his poems suggest that there is another medium in nature, not to be copied but rather remediated in the immediate sounds of poetic verse—and close analysis of that verse reveals simultaneously how the printed passage produced, and at times necessarily produces, natural music. In arguing my thesis—and to argue effectively—I will devote attention to the way Coleridge's poetry and prose writing situates the experience of a performance as one of poetry's main objectives, molded through both the activity and the tropes of remediation that characterize his frequently revised, often generically protean poems. Nowhere is this more visible, or audible, than when print's most alien artistic medium (though one of poetry's most crucial), "music," is being performed—either as music or as language/sound intended to be heard.

The Songs of Immediacy and Mediation

In "Love," we encounter a poem steeped in medial, as well as intertextual, play. Its themes are an outgrowth of an unpublished companion piece, "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie"[150] wherein love is depicted as something ghoulish and lethal—both an emotion (love) and a situation (a love affair) that prove mutually ruinous. As a signifier, *love* equates to the handing over of spirit ("I gave my Heart, I gave my Peace") and body ("O Heaven! I gave thee all!") to a demon lover whose mercurial appearance portends ambiguously literal and metaphorical death (ll. 31-32).[151]

[150] PW I.522-525.

[151] The poem ends with the Dark Ladie fearful of the mysterious, nocturnal wedding that her intended, Henry, proposes. Panicked, her thoughts turn inward; and in a marvelous turn of subtle psychological horror, she mentally recounts her erstwhile plans for a well-attended, traditional noonday wedding while, presumably, Henry leads them off into the darkness.

"Love," (the poem) also concerns death, but its speaker/singer maintains a tenuous distance from death by singing explicitly about dying rather than implicitly falling into deathly clutches. "Love" literally mediates death in both its folkloric narrative and the music of a medieval ballad, which Coleridge, in turn, embeds within a framing ballad whose meter is so regular that one is hard pressed not to hear a dirge-like musical rhythm in it. Thus, "Love" reduces a medieval song to paraphrase and renders it in the metronomic metrical music of a new, albeit nostalgic poem, which induces us to read the poem through its framing devices and to pay careful attention to phrases like "mortal Frame" in the second line. The "mortal Frame" points to the medial interplay and foreshadows the link between ephemera, like the singer's body and voice, and durability, like the repeatable song whose context alters with the passage of history and the particulars of situation and setting. The death of voice is rescued by the life of future mediations.

Throughout "Love," music stands as the supplemental language that speaks beyond the capability of words. "She loves me best, whene'er I sing" (l. 19). And the mere "tone" of the voice, ambiguously musical and verbal, interprets meaning.

> I told her, how he pin'd: and, ah!
> The low, the deep, the pleading tone,
> With which I sang another's Love,
> Interpreted my own. (ll. 33-36)

Coleridge began "Love" shortly following his acquaintance with Sara Hutchinson, suggesting that the poem may have helped Coleridge sublimate the initial onslaught of romantic infatuation into verses. It was also in the context of his lovelorn pining for Sara, or "Asra," that Coleridge would turn to musical interpretation reminiscent of the "interpreting tone" in "Love." "O that I had a Language of Music/ the power of infinitely varying the expression, & individualizing it even as it is/ —My heart plays an incessant music/ for which I need an outward Interpreter/ —words halt over & over again! —and each time—I feel differently, tho' children of one family."[152] The continuous and incessant quality of music, which rhythmically unfolds in the forward movement of time, does not suffer the discontinuities and dislocations of speech that are encumbered by the halting, palimpsestic search for semantic specificity. But that's pure fancy; Coleridge knows he must write his music in order to speak.

Despite the high romance of "Love," there is a nudge toward present reality in it, one that takes place in the context of print publication. The medieval backdrop already telegraphs a kind of escapism, but when Coleridge first published the poem in the *Morning Post* (December 21, 1799), he supplied an editorial note that furthers the issue:

> …as it is professedly a tale of antient times… it is possible now, even a simple story, wholly unspiced with politics or personality, may find some attention amid the hubbub of Revolutions as to those who have remained a long time by

[152] *CN* 2035 15.14

> the falls of Niagara, the lowest whispering becomes
> distinctly audible.[153]

The political climate itself sharpens the ear of the listener—or some listeners. Coleridge's emphasis, caught in the phrase "distinctly audible" is on the one hand of a piece with Wordsworth's handwringing over the "savage torpor" of dulled ears, but it also subtends a social, even political valence: heightened attentiveness to verbal and vocal nuance, and sensitivity to the way the present mediates the past. And indeed, Coleridge plays deviously with the subtle duplications of past and present—the curse of history repeating itself.

> And so I won my Genevieve,
> My bright and beauteous Bride! (ll. 95-96)

The language "bright and beauteous" echoes the "Angel beautiful and bright," though as the knight knew "it was a Fiend" (ll. 52-53). It's a refrain of sorts, heard like all refrains are heard—similar for their repetitiousness but dissimilar for their context in the progress of time (or the song). In "Love," this refrain is a blurring of texts, historical timeframes, and music (the assimilation of a rude song into pristinely, almost too-well-finished iambic lines). When we read the poem in the context of its headnote in the *Morning Post*, the gothic self-consciousness of the singer figures the political self-awareness in the attentive reader: will we fall victim to the same "scorns" in the present as in the past?

The poem can work on a political level because of its remediation of a fancied past, whose own fictional pre-materials it creates via the act of mediation itself. In this way, the complexities of historical mediation in "Love" have an obscuring effect: the political present is smudged out, as are the imagined voices of the past by the nostalgic voice of the present. It simplifies, and its ballad meter and metronomic iambs simplify as well. A more extreme version of this process unfolds in "Dejection: an Ode," a poem that stands at the head of complex textual histories in Coleridge's body of work. Quotation, uncertain address (to Sara Hutchinson, to Wordsworth) and the revision of a confessional epistolary poem into a romantic crisis ode complicate its status as a single or stable text; but the common theme of loss is constant, like in "Letter To—" and "Dejection's" less gloomy poetical antecedent, the "Intimations of Immortality" ode by Wordsworth.

Loss invades the very fabric of Coleridge's vocal and generic choices. As Paul Magnuson notes, "Coleridge's letter is, not only an individual confession of depression, not only an attempt to distinguish himself from Wordsworth by explaining the causes of his own grief, but also his attempt to find 'timely utterance' in his blessing of Sara Hutchinson. His 'genial Spirits fail,' and his individual poetic voice is almost lost in the merely unique voice of a personal confession and complaint."[154] Paul Fry touches on "Dejection's" generic morphology by saying, "'Dejection: An Ode' turned out to be everything by turns: a Conversational Poem, a lyrical ballad, and—something like an

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[153] Quoted in Holmes, Richard. Coleridge: Darker Reflections, 1804-1834. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, pp. 252-253.

[154] Magnuson, Paul. Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 291.

ode…but only in an afterthought, a sliding apposition".[155] And yet, Coleridge's "ode" becomes an ode by suspending the central device of the ode's pursuit of self-consciousness: the dialectic. "…[T]here really is *no* dialectic in Dejection" (Fry 163). Both Fry's ideas of generic uncertainty and Magnuson's idea of lost voice are critical readings that insist on diminished poetic self-consciousness. But, contrarily, the very language of the poetry, moving from epistle to ode, gains a performative expressiveness through its successive versions.

The dialectic that Fry misses in "Dejection" is embodied in the poem's editorial process—one that becomes readable thanks to the emerging "music" in/of the poetry in "Dejection," which can only be partly "read" in its final instantiation:

> Those sounds which oft have raised in me, whilst they awed,
> And sent my soul abroad,
> Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
> Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live! (ll. 17-20)

While Coleridge cut a great many lines and altered others between the epistle and ode, line 66 and the lines quoted above are the only ones Coleridge added. Lines 17-20, coupled with the titular assertion that the poem is an Ode, mark a particularly emphatic shift in the way Coleridge's text (or texts) change. They are now the culminating lines of the opening strophe, and in that role have a special framing effect in the poem. The preceding lines are rife with images of sound, but all of the sounds have a Shelleyan and Keatsian cast. They roll through the mind[156] more than nature; they also may startle a spiritual languor into creative activity.[157]

The epistolary "Letter to—" and "Dejection" begin with the same allusion to "Sir Patrick Spence" ("if the bard was weather-wise"), but "Dejection's" newly appended epitaph enlarges the epistle's frame of reference. We now encounter the formal sign of the ballad genre itself in the opening of the ode, and one effect of this addition is that the entire beginning of the poem looks more like a meditation on imaginative mediation—between texts, between drafts, among genres, between voice and print. By affixing a ballad to an ode, a dovetailing of the ballad form's narrative teleology (toward disaster, as in Sir Patrick Spens) and the crisis ode's formal teleology (staged progress toward epiphanic crisis) converge. Like the "weather-wise" bard's folkloric prophesy in "Sir Patrick Spence" that foreshadows the seafarers' fatal outcome, Coleridge anticipates, and then reifies, the sounds and forcefulness of the forecast storm within a trope of lyrical drama that turns the "sobbing" wind harp to the "…Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds" (l. 108). The foreshadowing of the coming storm, like the teleological progress of the romantic ode as a crisis poem, is a foregone process. And yet, the poem never realizes (or

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[155] Fry, Paul. The Poet's Calling in the English Ode. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 180.

[156] Cf, "Mont Blanc," "The everlasting universe of things / Flows through the mind…" (ll. 1-2). The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Ed Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927, I. 229.

[157] Cf, "Ode to a Nightingale," "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains / My sense…" (ll. 1-2).

dramatizes) an abundant recompense for what it misses—"the shaping Spirit of Imagination"(l. 86); Coleridge leaves very little room for staging an epiphanic discovery of self-consciousness, and very little hope for the genial spirits.

As John Beer recognizes, however, "the very writing of ["Dejection: An Ode"] showed…elements in his poetic powers to be strongly active."[158] Beer notes the connection to a letter Coleridge wrote to William Sotheby:

> "In my opinion every phrase, every metaphor, every personification, should have it's justifying cause in some *passion* either of the Poet's mind, or of the Characters described by the poet—But *meter itself* implies a *passion*, i.e. a state of excitement, both in the Poet's mind & is expected in that of the Reader—"[159]

So while it would be incorrect to suggest that Coleridge discovers the excitement or passion or meter in this late instantiation of his poem, it is likewise vital to note that "Dejection" begins by transplanting the role of phenomena, which Coleridge says (in the following strophe) he can perceive but not feel,[160] into the verbal material of the poetry itself.

This expression through poetic materials forcefully crystallizes through "Dejection's" added lines. The wonted impulses of poetry literally startle the "dull pain" into spondees and are then followed by a phrase of insistent iambs: and MAKE it MOVE and LIVE. The accented verbs invoke poetry (to make), poetical music (to move), and genial creation (to live). There is transition of sounds (alliteration, consonance): **m**ake it **m**o**v**e and li**v**e. The vowels even have a pitch that descends from high to low through the long "a," long "o" and short "i." In other words, we have something like melody framing the forthcoming poetry—a system of sounds at work. Of course, lines 17-20 also surface doubts despite their seemingly "strong music" (l. 60). Coleridge can make his wonted impulses in verse, but they "*Might* now perhaps…give" / "*Might* startle…" (my emphasis). In a sense, the poem's driving feature is creation through construction—the making of poetry from the prescriptive materials of poetry (meter, form, genre). In fact, the ode itself plays host to other genres: the ballad frames the beginning, dramatic poetry frames the end. This generic movement becomes clear as we consider the substitution of Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray" (in "Letter to—" ll. 210-215) for Otway's sentimental tragedy *The Orphan* ("As Otway's self had fram'd the tender lay," l. 120). This also makes for a better parallel for the storm winds that rake the wind harp, which Coleridge describes as "Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!" (l. 108). The wind and sudden silence (as the wind stops at ll. 114-116) make for a moment reminiscent of the "Solitary Reaper" where Coleridge imagines thematic material germane to the sounds he hears.

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[158] "Coleridge as Critic," in Coleridge and the Armoury of the Human Mind: Essays on his Prose Writings. Ed. Peter J. Kitson and Thomas N. Corns. London: Frank Cass & Co, 1991, p. 8.

[159] CL To William Sotheby (13 July, 1802) II; p. 812.

[160] e.g. "I see them all so excellently fair, / I see, not feel how beautiful they are!" (ll. 37-38).

The passage seems very much like a cadenza, a performance of poetic language that engenders (in print) what is heard (in life). It is a kind of vocal drama in itself that parallels his dramatic referents. The first is discontinuous, discordant and percussive:

> 'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
> With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
> At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold! (ll. 111-113)

The other is euphonious, subdued and, in musical terms, more legato (connected):

> 'Tis of a little child
> Upon a lonesome wild,
> Not far from home, but she hath lost her way;
> And now moans low in bitter grief and fear
> And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear. (ll. 121-125)

The Ode achieves self-expression in the layering of drafts, genres and different registers of voice. It amounts to a roundabout way of achieving what Geoffrey Hartman calls the genre of "surmise"[161] and what Douglas Kneale calls the trope of "eureka"[162]—moments in which poetry performs "the shock of self-consciouness."[163] Both Hartman and Kneale focus on the poem as self-creative act—a halting followed by the eruption of voice, or of writing. Kneale reads Keats's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" as an act of discovery representative of the poet's emergence *as poet*. The theme of discovery connects Cortez's wonder, the wonder of the men watching Cortez, and, as Kneale suggests, Keats's wonder at his own sonnet appearing before him—a moment of intense self-consciousness. Hartman opens his discussion of surmise with a reading of "The Solitary Reaper," exploring how the poem exemplifies the halting of a traveler and meditatively "multiplies moods" apart from "phenomenon"; it displays surmise's inward, non-social focus, which leads, in many poems, to "'whether…or' formulations [and] alternatives rather than exclusions…" (8). "The Solitary Reaper" also relays an elegiac strain of the surmise; as "the meditative consciousness" unfolds it "brings [the speaker] into the shadow of death," but the speaker finds an epitaphic consolation and "continuance rather than death: 'The music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more" (12).

Hartman and Kneale, however, both focus on poems that derive from complex textual mediations, which suggests that the performance of surmise/eureka and "the shock of self-consciousness" might also be said to stem from the poetic labor of finding and fine-tuning the right medial frame for that shock to take place. Absent in Kneale's discussion is the fact that Keats's "wild surmise" results from Keats's own reading of Chapman's mediation of Homer (and, by extension, the Homeric material Chapman

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[161] See, Hartman, Geoffrey. Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964. His use of the term "surmise" begins on page 8.
[162] See, Kneale, Douglas J. Romantic Aversions: Aftermaths of Classicism in Wordsworth and Coleridge. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999, pp. 91-93.
[163] Hartman p. 12.

mediates); the wonder Keats feels, engendered by the interplay of epic poetry and blank verse translation, prompts Keats to produce another mediation of that same sense of wonder, another speaking and writing "out loud." Hartman is more attentive to the textual prehistory of "The Solitary Reaper," but he stops short of saying that Wordsworth's surmise, and the optimistic rejuvenations Wordsworth secures from his melancholy, are themselves secured by shrewd textual mediations. The music that Wordsworth's speaker attributes to the Highland Lass, and the surmises that ensue, find "consolation" in a music that is more appropriately attributable to the music of Wilkinson's phrase, which Wordsworth assimilates in, "The music in my heart I bore / Long after it was heard no more"—a textual music that provides a neatly epigrammatic closing to wildered performances of voice.[164] In "Dejection: an Ode," there is no halted traveler,[165] but readying the text for a life in print involved more than whittling away scandalous references to Sara Hutchinson. Through its fine-tuning, editorial layering, generic playfulness, and, above all, its self-conscious attention to its own outbursts of voice, "Dejection" produces the very thing that print is often said to obstruct—a voice that becomes more active, more audible, and more a vessel of self-consciousness in itself. By surmising in mediation, so to speak, the poet-traveler is more a mental traveler than a halted one.

While the layering of genres and poems together takes shape through the editorial history of "Dejection", it takes place thematically in "Lines Composed in a Concert Room." And where Hartman looked for halted traveler, we see a consciousness departing its immediate surroundings and fantasizing—surmising—through other genres and ultimately, other media.

> Nor cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest
> These scented Rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
> Heaves the proud Harlot her distended breast,
> In intricacies of laborious song.
>
> These feel not Music's genuine power, nor deign
> To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint;
> But when the long-breath'd singer's uptrill'd strain
> Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment. (ll. 1-8)

Coleridge's distaste is obvious. The "proud Harlot," fixture of Della Cruscan entertainments, heaves her "distended breast" like some corrupted image of a songbird, suggesting that "Music's genuine power" is as unperformed as it is unfelt, coming neither from a sincere performer nor from nature. The over-blown, over-performed virtuosity and its eager acceptance by a "gaudy throng," however, prove a foil for the poem's latter

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[164] My reading of Wilkinson's phrase and "The Solitary Reaper" owes an immense debt to Peter J. Manning's chapter, "'Will No One Tell Me What She Sings?': *The Solitary Reaper* and the Contexts of Criticism." in Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 241-272.

[165] As Hartman points out, "[t]he halted traveler, of course, does not always appear so clearly and dramatically" (12).

stanzas. Coleridge's poetic persona, turning inward to his nostalgic memories, would rather hear sung ballads:

> …our old musician, blind and gray,
> (Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kist,)
> His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play, (ll. 15-17)

Coleridge goes on to assemble a short, hagiographic progress poem. After he evokes the value-laden comparison of concertizer/balladeer (the vulgar virtuoso[166] vs. the touchstone of the authentic poet-singer), he progresses toward the vital figure of "Edmund," whose breath and tears both convey "sad airs, so wild and slow," and then ends with the virtuously feminine "Anne:"

> But, O, dear Anne! When midnight wind careers,
> And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
> Makes the cock shrilly in the rain-storm crow,
> To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
> Ballad of ship-wreck'd sailor floating dead,
> Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!
> Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
> Whatever gentle tones and melancholy pleasures
> The Things of Nature utter… (ll. 35-42)

The ballad text obtains a powerful effect because of a more insistent performance of melancholy: the voice of Anne that "remeasures" nature's "melancholy pleasures." Anticipations of "Dejection's" concatenation of Sir Patrick Spense and the cacophonous storm, as well as "Love's" evocation of the "tone" that interprets Love into articulate (yet not semantic) vocal art, run through the passage and turn on the idea of remeasuring.

Melancholy re-measured is the antidote to the artifice of the concertizing "harlot." It brings the ballad text into closer, authentic communion with nature while also triangulating the socio-political background this poem, it turns out, suspends: post-revolutionary disappointment. An additional eighteen lines that Coleridge strung to "Lines Composed in a Concert Room" segues from the ballad to the choral image of "trump and timbrel clang, and popular shout" that is the "holier joy" felt by the overthrow of "Freedom's latest foe."[167] The added lines position music as both a metaphor and a

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[166] To reiterate a point made in the introduction, "virtuosity" in the romantic era can be seen as a site of cultural confrontation where matters of taste, politics, class identity and aesthetic viewpoints were fought out: "expression, sincerity, and the sublime" vs. "virtuosic 'world' of fashion, performance, and material luxury, all deeply associated with metropolitan musical culture" (7). See Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. Virtue and Virtuosity: Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[167] Critics have debated what precisely comprises the people, events and objects in the background of this poem: who is the Harlot, and Edmund and Anne; where was the concert room; what was the tower collapsing when "tower'd might" imploded from

point of origin for the "human feelings" that safeguard things that nature guarantees—like political freedom. They also substantiate the idea that poetry must engage the melancholic feelings (Anne's singing), rather than provide thrilling distractions (the concert room). The process of re-measuring that Coleridge describes is of a piece with the double logic of remediation: the term "remeasures" suggests that there was always some previous "measure" in place, something recognizable as a kind of articulate music.**]** The turn to nature in the time of disappointment is germane because in nature's music there is something available to be remediated.

> …birds or trees
> Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
> Or where the stiff grass mid the heath-plant waves,
> Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze. (ll. 42-45)

This is hardly the language and certainly not the meter of a ballad; it's a pure vocal performance in the printed medium of poetry—the verbal material that stands for what in nature is readily remeasured. Assonance, (m**o**an of **o**cean; st**i**ff grass m**i**d / mus**i**c th**i**n) and alliteration and consonance (**m**ur**m**ur and **m**usic th**in** of sudd**en** breeze); and patterns of stress that issue in clear rhythm, as we hear in the doubles: "…Ocean GALE in WEEDy Caves,"[168] or in the spondaic "STIFF GRASS mid the HEATH-PLANT." The Adamic naming of nature's wild musical objects becomes the true vocal music that the poem seems to miss in the comparatively sociable space of the concert room.

The dyad of sociable musical art and the music of the wilderness takes on deeper proportions in "The Nightingale, A Conversation Poem." The entire poem is an ode to self-awareness and self-consciousness, creating an imagined sociable space of "conversation" on the border between the forest and the outside world—the metropolitan world (of musical entertainments) and popular cultural memory (of the melancholic nightingale). Exploring this boundary means exploring the very thing that marks it—the possibility of natural song, distanced from cultural artifice. The artifice is the product of two things. The first is the conceit of the nightingale's melancholy singing—"many a poet echoes the conceit; / …who hath been building up the rhyme"—(ll. 23-24), which Coleridge traces as far as Milton.[169] The second is represented in the "hot theatre."

"absolute rout." In a period from 1789 to 1799 (to 1816 when we consider the date of SL), Coleridge worked and reworked this poem, it seems as though he himself became progressively unconcerned with its antecedents. For this background, see Lucyle Werkmeister's "Some Why's and Wherefore's of Coleridge's 'Lines Composed in a Concert Room." Modern Philology 60.3 (1963): 201-205.

[168] Technical point: the "O" of ocean is capitalized to denote stress, but in the above quote it is not typographically apparent. I have chosen to denote stressed syllables with capitalizations to avoid having my stress marks wander out of place when opening this document in different versions of MS Word. I, too, must take advantage of, and struggle against, my technical medium.

[169] He likewise explains, via a footnote, that Milton is not to be blamed: "'Most musical, most melancholy.' This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of

And youths and maidens most poetical
Who lose the deep'ning twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains. (ll. 35-39)

Poetry and cultural entertainments alike have provided wayward materials that Coleridge sets out to revise in the name of authenticity, and in so doing, to deepen the space of sacred communion in which his friendship with the Wordsworths can be said to inhere—

….we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices always full of love
And joyance... (ll. 41-43).

But the authenticity of nature, figured most vehemently in the contrast of natural music vs. music as cultural practice and entertainment, begs the question of how we can recognize and speak of that authenticity in the first place. In this, Coleridge's binary of the natural and the cultural consciously rehearses the double logic of remediation—the idea that there is in the present medium a prior medium now remediated. Nowhere is this clearer than in the language Coleridge uses to insist that the nightingale sings with its own kind of music, which is presaged earlier in the poem where Coleridge complicates the relation of the nightingale's "song" to "nature"; on the one hand, it "Should make all nature lovelier," and yet it should "Be loved *like* Nature!" (ll. 33, 34, my emphasis).

…So many Nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's songs—
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such an harmony, (ll; 56-62)

The forest now has its own chorus, and through musical figures that are likewise signposts of musical art ("songs," "capricious passagings," "piping," "harmony") and onomatopoeia ("swift jug jug"). Coleridge literally spells out an eyewitness (or earwitness) account of audible sounds that can be preserved in print and, in the license of poetry, worked into a scene more akin to musical concertizing than sylvan chirping. The paradoxical separation of song from nature and the location of the song in nature, brings the poem's identification of natural song precariously close to the conceptual margin between natural forms and cultural forms. The poetical trope of natural music dangles above a trap: concert music. This intensifies as Coleridge likens the flocks of nightingales

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mere description. It is spoken in the character of the melancholy man, and has therefore a dramatic propriety" (PW 517).

living by the quasi-Gothic "castle huge" (l. 50) to "an hundred airy harps," (l. 82) that the "Gentle maid" (first mentioned at l. 69) has often heard:

> Many a Nightingale perch giddily
> On blosmy twig still singing from the breeze,
> And to that motion tune his wanton song
> Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head. (ll. 83-86)

In the end, Coleridge has merely swapped the stock trope of the melancholy nightingale for a joyful one by deploying the stock image of the wind harp. The song obtains an essentialist connection with nature through the imagined tuning of birdcalls with the breeze—in other words, through the way Coleridge imagines how a fictional maid hears the song of the nightingale, and how those Nightingales remeasure the joy of nature amid a ruined edifice of human civilization.

It seems unsatisfying that Coleridge likens the flock of Nightingales to "an hundred airy harps" given that the birds, as producers of song, are incongruently split between being nature's agents of song and figures of man-made objects that passively produce sounds in response to nature's movements. I would argue that Coleridge veers toward the latter. In hearing birdcalls as song, his own figurations produce the natural artistry he can claim to hear. The image of the wind harp, in "The Eolian Harp," lets us see this same process from another vantage point.

In "The Eolian Harp," the harp ceases to be the figure and naturally becomes the site of figuration, but like the "The Nightingale, A Conversation Poem," there are poetic allusions that frame the way this figuration can be read. Through his echoes of Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanical Garden*, we can register Coleridge's "desultory breeze" and "plastic… intellectual breeze" as modernized (or romantic) versions of Darwin's Sylphs—divinities that grant Handel his musical excellence and likewise animate the Eolian harp (as Darwin imagines it), and thus he likewise imagines connections between instrumental music and nature's airy melody. Coleridge drew inspiration from the poem's figuration but not its fanciful model of mystical inspiration. Margin notes he scrawled in Kant's *Critik der reinen Vernunft*, suggest why he would have been at odds with such a model.

> The mind does not resemble an Eolian Harp, nor even a barrel-organ turned by a stream of water, conceive as many tunes mechanized in it as you like—but rather, as far as Objects are concerned, a violin, or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of Genius.[170]

The mind "plays" what Genius directs into it (the place from which Genius springs is a matter for another day). Much like in "The Nightingale, A Conversation Poem," where

[170] Marginalia III, p. 248. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Marginalia. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bollingen Series LXXV 12, vol. 3, Ed. H. J. Jackson and George Walley. Princeton University Press and Routledge, 1992.

the bird's song is separated from nature in order to formulate a song that celebrates nature, Coleridge frames the presence of music in the margin between natural phenomenon and the imagination—between what he can record and what he can render through figuration. Many of his musical images appear through extended similes and elfin fantasies:

> And that simplest Lute…//
> Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
> It pours forth such sweet upbraiding… //
> Such a soft and floating witchery of sound
> As twilight Elfins make …//
> Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
> Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise. (ll. 12, 14-15, 20-21, 23-24).

And not until the end of the second stanza do we even encounter the word "music." It issues ambiguously as both an allegory and literal identification, the very equivocation that runs through the center of the poem: **"**Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air, / Is Music slumbering on her instrument" (l. 33).

As Kathleen Wheeler has demonstrated, the idea of music of the poem is yoked with its exploration of silence, arguing "it demands silence and celebrates music," and she traces this contradiction through Coleridge's gradual identification with the wind harp itself. This paradoxical aim parallels a common feature of romantic poetics—the closing of the gulf between subject and object. The desire that undergirds this process is echoed in a later notebook entry, which also focuses on natural objects and the celebration of music:[171]

> O that sweet Bird!...calls with unceasing Melody to the
> Loves, that dwell in Fields & Greenwood bowers—;
> unconscious perhaps that it calls in vain.—O are they the
> Songs of a happy enduring Day-dream? has the Bird Hope?
> Or does it abandon itself to the Joy of its Frame—a living
> Harp of Eolus?—O that I could do so![172]

The passage sounds a great deal like a synthesis of thematic surmises Wordsworth expounds in "The Solitary Reaper," coupled with the subjunctive longing of the "Language of Music" passage from Coleridge's notebooks. The meeting place of these two things is both vital and relevant to "The Eolian Harp." The "sweet Bird" in the passage sings despite being caged, making it more a Blakean songbird than a Keatsian nightingale, whose joy seems simultaneously baffling and enviable. The desire that Coleridge expresses ("O that I could do so!") stems from interrogatives that invoke dream, hope and joyful abandon, which suggests that the happiness of the "unceasing Melody" could derive from all of these things or anything—the language of music can

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[171] Also quoted by Wheeler, Kathleen. The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry. London: Heinemann, 1981, p. 67.
[172] *CN* III 3314, 16 May 1808.

evoke any ideational content, which stands as the sign of the bird's lost freedom. To be a living harp of Eolus as well as an artistic agent means to live within a seamless "frame" that connects "Genius," self-expression and nature. Thus the other surmising "frame" in "The Eolian Harp":

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic Harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all? (ll. 44-48)

The final closing of self and nature lies in the unifying "plastic," or procreative, sweep that seamlessly unites all things in a Neoplatonic, spiritual-intellectual unity. The material of the world engenders a natural music that induces Coleridge to search beyond that same material.

Material, or musical materiality, is not something Coleridge is particularly comfortable with. The instruments that produce music and the context in which they are heard matters a great deal. In Coleridge's tragedy *Osorio*, [173] the unperformed precursor to his successful *Remorse* (performed in 1813), a dramatic, multimedia spectacle unfolds within the drama itself (complete with rhapsodic spells, incense and, of course, music and song). It is a kind of parody of overwrought dramatic artifice, used to intentionally dupe its audience within the play, and with tragic results. As the stage directions indicate, "*Here a strain of Music is heard from behind the Scenes, from an Instrument of Glass or Steel—the Harmonica of Celestina Stop, or Clagget's metallic Organ*."[174] The stage direction resonates with Coleridge's later insights that "[a] true musical taste is soon dissatisfied with the Harmonica, or any similar instrument of glass or steel, because the *body* of the sound…or that effect which is derived from the *materials*, encroaches too far on the effect from the *proportions* of the notes, or that which is *given* to Music by the mind."[175] Industrial substances like glass and steel never rise to the status of Aeolian harps or birdsong in Coleridge's more sincere poetical explorations of music. Coleridge's hot theatre in *Osorio* and its attendant materials are a case study in pernicious mediation and the illusory trappings of cultural practice turned to vulgar ends. The turn to nature, in effect, always marks their suppression and erasure.

Curiously, where "The Eolian Harp" explores music most directly we also discover Coleridge's most pronounced erasures in the form of editorial activity. His revisions all demonstrate a stripping away of passages that suggest literal music. Coleridge had asked his publisher, Cottle, to omit lines 23-25:

> "Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
> Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
> Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing."

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[173] *PW* (Plays III.i) p. 97
[174] *ibid*
[175] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Friend.* Ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols. Collected Works, Vol. 4. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 464-5.

This omission (had Cottle actually honored it) would have eliminated one of the clearer musical ideas in the term "Melodies," fantasy-laden though it may be. To suggest that Coleridge had this rationale in mind is supported by another revision. The closing lines of the stanza originally read,

> Where even the breezes, and the common air,
> Contain the power and spirit of Harmony.

In Coleridge's first version, the juxtaposition of "breezes" and "common air" underscores their disparate references. The double meaning of "air" as both atmosphere and song is something we can read in both versions of the second to last line, but "the common air" and "the mute still air" that would replace it are far from interchangeable things. The "common air" too readily invokes the folksong, and not only a folksong, but a species of song that specifically refers to place in the manner of a cultural artifact—the nation, local variety, etc. Where we, as Twenty-First Century readers interrogating the poem from the vantage point of historicist or cultural criticism, might wonder how the idea of nation, or some other culturally demarcated territory was operating through the playing, singing or simply the invocation of "the air," Coleridge utterly seeks to utterly erase the possibility of this significance from the poem. The clear idea of music as cultural practice is accompanied by editorial erasure and, conceptually, the poem amounts a uniquely unmusical poem about actual music, traceable through its palimpsestic fate.

But there is another music in "The Eolian Harp": the one that speaks amid the potentialities of silence. The synthesis of subjects and objects, as well as music and silence, have a counterpoint in the meeting place of heightened verbal music and printed blank verse. The blank verse of the poem was remarked upon by Coleridge in a copy of *Sibylline Leaves*—a passage that Abrams famously cites to define the Greater Romantic Lyric.[176] "I have some claim to…having first introduced this species of short blank verse poems…"[177] Crucial to Abrams's analysis is the poem's *rondure*, but Coleridge's interest in the poem concerns its middle—that which is contained within the capitulation and recapitulation of the *rondure*. In the same note, he writes, "it would gratify me, I confess, to see the lines from 9 … to l. 48 extracted in the Ed. Magazine."[178] Removing the preceding and succeeding lines would divest the poem of its conversational element and its *rondure*.

And what did Coleridge find appealing about "species" of the "Eolian Harp"? His proposed extraction draws our attention away from the form to the content—from the ode as a conversational type of poem to the type of music that the romantics would seek to create in spite of, or because of, blank verse. Suggesting that the extraction might appear in the "Ed. Magazine" would effectively reframe the poem through the medial device of print publication. I would argue that within Coleridge's imagined extraction (the

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[176] Abrams, M.H. "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric" in The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism pp. 76–108. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.
[177] Quoted in PW. i. p. 232.
[178] *Ibid*

descriptive, meditative lines between the initiation of conversation and its end), the language of the poem realizes a sound of verbal music in blank verse that creates a performance of an ideal voice specifically intended for print—one that becomes the medial objective correlative to the heard music that leads the mind of the speaker on to Idealist speculations. The prosody of the lines waxes to almost feverish sonority as the harp (or "lute") enters the description. The vowel sounds used to describe the placement of the harp (but not the music—that comes further on) create a kind of extended internal rhyme, marked by brief, percussive alliterations:

> And that simplest Lute,
> Pl**a**ced length-w**a**ys in the *c*lasping *c***a**sement, hark!

The description consciously unfolds in real time, rupturing the narrative temporality in the conversational ideas and introducing the presence of unfolding time more akin to musical tempo. When Coleridge details the actual music of the harp, rich "sh" sounds, themselves "[telling]… of silence," mingle with "s" and "soft g" "ch" sounds amid invented language ("sequacious"), which add up to a sibilant vocal music that insistently displaces the kind of open tones that we could expect to hear from a wind harp. There is indeed a pronounced attention paid to the transition of vowel sounds—like little chiasmatic arrangements (e.g. the "i" to "u"; "u" to "i" in "del**i**cio**u**s s**u**rges s**i**nk"), but the play of consonants is the most extensive, and the most continuous, display of verbal sonority. The transition from heard music to vocal music is nowhere more apparent than precisely where the harp is heard:

> And now, it**s** **s**tring**s**
> Boldlier **s**wept, the long **s**equa**ci**ou**s** note**s**
> Over deli**ci**ou**s** **s**ur**ge**s **s**ink and ri**s**e,
> **S**uch a **s**oft floating wi**tch**ery of **s**ound (ll. 17-20)

We do not encounter Coleridge's extracted text in the printed form he mused about. Nor do we see all of his proposed edits in the canonical text of "The Eolian Harp." Nonetheless, his engagement with the poem, as poet and editorial reader, lends a sense of what he saw as valuable in his professedly innovative composition—an experiment in creating a heightened verbal music in its own right, apart from cultural practice and conventional poetics, and fit for a printed medium.

"The Eolian Harp," in its canonical form, however, is a resolutely domestic poem, which, as Ashton's biography notes, finds a kind of contentment in prenuptial engagement while embarking on "a beautifully modulated mental excursion"[179] But the meeting of print and self-conscious vocal music could also be marshaled towards public ends, as we see in "France: An Ode,"—essentially a palinode for Coleridge's professedly erstwhile support for radicalism in the aftermath of the French Revolution. When the poem first appeared in April of 1798, the *Morning Post* provided an introduction that brought to bear the manner in which Coleridge, "so zealous and steady an advocate for

[179] Quoted in, Ashton, Rosemary. The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996, p. 76.

Freedom," and his poetic persona mutually construct a tangible symbol of recantation for British Radicalism while at the same time undergirding the vitality of "freedom" in English national identity: "The following excellent Ode will be in unison with the feelings of every friend to Liberty and foe to Oppression…What we most admire is, the *avowal* of his sentiments, and public censure…of France. The second, third, and fourth stanzas, contain some of the vigorous lines we have read." By 1802, however, Coleridge reads his own poem with other methodological exigencies. "The argument" he later supplies slowly modulates from what we expect in an "argument"—an outline—and proceeds to a set of instructions that suggest the fifth stanza's apostrophe to Freedom should be read through the images of the first stanza: "Fifth Stanza. An address to Liberty, in which the Poet expresses his conviction, that those feelings, and that grand *ideal*, of freedom, which the mind attains by its contemplation of its individual nature, and of the sublime surrounding objects (see Stanza the First)...[cannot] be realized under any form of human government; but belong to the individual man…" (*PW* I: 464). The first stanza (quoted below) reads like a poem in and of itself—a prior text and something to which the last four stanzas only gesture. The stanza gets pushed to a textual outside that only the Ode, the lyric form that formalizes discontinuity, could decorously contain.

> Ye clouds! That far above me float or pause,
> Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
> Ye ocean waves, that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
> Yield homage only to eternal laws!
> Ye woods, that listen to the night-bird's singing,
> Save when your own imperious branches swinging
> Have made a solemn music of the wind!
> Where, like a man belov'd of God,
> Thro' glooms, which never woodman trod,
> How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
> My moonlight way o'er flow'ring weeds I wound,
> Inspir'd beyond the guess of folly,
> By each rude shape, and wild unconquerable sound!
> O, ye loud waves, and O, ye forests high,
> And O, ye clouds, that far above me soar'd!
> Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!
> Yea, every thing that is and will be free,
> Bear witness for me wheresoe'er ye be,
> With what deep worship I have still ador'd
> The spirit of divinest liberty. (ll. 1-20)

Everything is chastened or made "solemn." The night bird's "singing" suggests the nightingale; whether singing for love or melancholy, but goes quickly unheard, drowned out when "the imperious" branches make an even less vocal "solemn music." The "solemn music," in turn, is replaced with an invocation of "wild unconquerable sound," ultimately uniting liberty's absoluteness with the final undefinability of sound in aesthetic terms. A turn comes at this vanishing point of meaning—the eruption of apostrophes in daylight: "Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!" The wandering in the forest,

therefore, at once figures the progress soon to be laid out in the revisionist history of the following stanzas (from ignorance to knowledge, from errant innocence to experience, from night to day) and also creates a fictional progress poem of the poet's voice that is inspired by forms that it can both know and not clearly define—the poet's vocation. (The "woodman," in contrast, enters the forest to bring something back; his needs do not drive him so deeply into nature's furthest reaches.) The poet, as imagined in the stanza, returns with something of that unconquerable sound—indeed the "sound" of the word *sound* itself—through both the creation and the effacement of poetic language. No other place in Coleridge's poetry has such an emphatic concentration of the apostrophic "O."—three times in lines fourteen an fifteen. And even as visual images take over amid these vocalizations, this "sound" runs through the line as well in "loud," "clouds," and "soar'd," and continues on in the next line, echoed in "thou." "Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!"

To dramatize the return to human civilization after a spiritually rejuvenating encounter with nature, Coleridge's poetic persona seemingly needs to bring something back—heightened vocality, imitative of natural sound, which allows him to articulate the transhistorical sublimity of freedom that lives on in spite of human political activity and failed revolutions. He finds in the music of voice that which he had previously sought through pure image—the "strong music" of freedom.

> Such symphony requires best instrument.
> Seize, then, my soul! from Freedom's trophied dome
> The Harp which hangeth high between the Shields
> Of Brutus and Leonidas! With that
> Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
> Earth's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.
> ("The Destiny of Nations" ll. 1-17)[180]

"Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Transcribing sounds allows Coleridge to blur reality and the imagination. The conjunction or the immediate sounds of poetic verse and the meaning of its language actively produces what Wordsworth describes in a more theoretical sense of perception and creation:

> …all the mighty world

[180] The lines would receive many small alterations through successive publications of Sibylline Leaves (1816, 1828 & 1829 [no change], 1834): e.g. "A fateful Music, when with breeze-like Touch / Pure spirits thrill its strings," which the Poet hears with his "heart." The drafts also refer to a "fitful music" and a "Starts of a shrill-music." Altogether, they forcefully emphasize the waking of spirits and likewise keep front and center the idea that a poet-auditor will hear spirit-waking harmonies. See The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed Ernest Hartley Coleridge. London: Oxford University Press, 1912, pp. 522-525.

> Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
> And what perceive… (*Tintern Abbey,* ll. 105-107)[181]

For while "remediation" suggests a process of refitting the content of one medium into another, the fact that language can both remediate real sounds and imagined sounds and make them indistinguishable (as in supernatural passages) just as easily as it can name these sounds as disparate oral or aural media (instruments, song, speech, noise) means that medial transfers happen both vaguely and constantly when poetry records auditory phenomena—doubly so since poetry immediately produces oral and aural phenomena. In "Kubla Khan: A Dream Fragment" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in particular, the way supernatural incidents can be heard (as music, as sources of power, as sources of creation) produces an interplay of immediate "verse-music" in conjunction with the organization of materials that can embody, structure or even rationalize what the inner-ear can imagine—remediation as reification.

"Kubla Khan," printed thanks to Byron's interventions (Byron having also heard Coleridge recite the poem), could be summarized in many ways, but it reads like a poetical thought experiment on the meeting place of language and sound, voice and image. The river "Alph" (l. 3) that runs through Xanadu, also runs through the aural/oral/inscriptural heart of the poem, evoking the idea of alphabet, mythic rivers (e.g. Alpheus), and an idea of continuity—the most important. In fact, Coleridge devises three ideas of continuity through the Alph. The first, and the simplest, is a continuity between the present poem and mythological sources. The second is a typological continuity. The river functions as an emblem of the impassioned and irregular lyric voice. As Cowley writes in "The Praise of Pindar":

> So *Pindar* does new *Words* and *Figures* roul
> Down his impetuous *Dithyrambique Tide*, //
> *Pindars unnavigable Song*
> Like a swoln *Flood* from some steep *Mountain* pours along.[182]

The "unnavigable Song" of the Dythyrambique tide is the marker of the voice that utters the lyric ode, one that is legitimated through Classical taxonomies. The figure of the moving tide will have become a motif by the time we reach Gray, exhorting his own "Aeolian Lyre" to "Awake" until:

> …the rich stream of music winds along, //
> Now rowling down the steep amain,
> Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
> The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar. [183]

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[181] Quotations from Wordsworth's Poetry are from: William Wordsworth, The Poems. Ed John O. Hayden. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. Cited by line.
[182] in Cowley, Abraham. The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley. London: 1684.
[183] "The Progress of Poesy" (ll. 7-12), in Gray, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Gray. Ed. Edmund Gosse, 4 vols. New York: AMS Press, 1968, I. pp. 29-30.

Coleridge displaces these musically figured Classicisms in his "dream fragment" but through the figure of the winding mountain river nonetheless enters into the traditional emblems of the ode. We can link this literary-historical continuity, additionally, to the third idea of continuity—that of unformed language infinitely unfolding in the present. The "Alph," as John Drew, Gregory Leadbetter and others have noted, is a "pun on alpha(bet) and aleph makes Alph the "sacred river" of language, therefore, on both an allusive and purely verbal level."[184] Leadbetter adds that "[a]llusively, it plays on the Cabbalistic idea that the first letter of the alphabet contains all others" (188). Thus the most sacred of all things, the potential field of all language, runs a notably musical course through the entire unfolding landscape, appearing at both the beginning and the end of the depiction of the landscape (in all, lines 1-30):

> Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
> Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
> Then reached the caverns measureless to man, (ll. 28-30)

The measureless caverns, however, stand in contrast to the image of the pleasure dome (l. 2). Coincidentally, it is there that the ear also asserts itself, and through the ambiguously mathematical, musical and poetic term "measures," brings forth the vague agency of the active listener, rendered passively ("was heard") and juxtaposed with the "shadow" of the pleasure dome and not the dome itself.

> The shadow of the dome of pleasure
> Floated midway on the waves;
> Where was heard the mingled measure
> From the fountain and the caves.
> It was a miracle of rare device,
> A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice! (ll. 31-36)

The "mingled measure" draws together opposites—shadow and substance, the fountain and the caves, the sunny pleasure dome with the caves of ice, and finally, perhaps, the closing vision and the long exposition of Xanadu's wildered landscape. Why this final link? Because the pleasure dome, whose decree seemingly leads to the walling off of Xanadu's "savage place," does not decisively exist in this poem. It is, in itself, the prevailing fragment in this fragmentary poem.

> In Xanadu, did Kubla Khan,
> A stately pleasure dome decree: (ll. 1-2)

It is decreed, but the dome's presence is perceived outside of this demonic Eden, upon the waves where the shadow of the "dome of pleasure" precariously "floated." Thus at a

[184] Drew, John. "'Kubla Khan' and Orientalism," in Coleridge's Visionary Languages pp. 41-48. Eds Tim Fulford and Morton D. Paley. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993; Leadbetter, Gregory. Coleridge and the Daemonic Imagination. New York: Palgrave, 2011, p 188.

great distance or remove, the dome was more composed than built—heard into a fictive existence, "a miracle of rare device." This necessitates the vision that situates the possibility of the dome's building within an impassioned use of the conditional.

> A damsel with a dulcimer
> In a vision once I saw:
> It was an Abyssinian maid
> And on her dulcimer she play'd,
> Singing of Mount Abora.
> Could I revive within me
> Her symphony and song,
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
> That with music loud and long,
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome! those caves of ice! (ll. 37-47)

Depending on how we read the word "with," we can suppose that the "I" makes one of two claims. If it can internalize the inspired music and work "with" it (i.e. in harmony with it) the speaking I can then build the dome. We can also read the claim that the "I" will use the music directly as a formative power from which the shadow of the dome will at last be erected "in air." Either way, the deed will not be seen until it is first "heard."

> And all who heard should see them there,
> And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread:
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drank the milk of Paradise. (ll. 48-54)

Our builder would have himself be a true maker, or a poet, vying for the strangeness of an impassioned language of music that can bring about visionary poetry. However we want to read the "honey-dew" and the "milk of Paradise," (inspiration, glimpses of transcendent truths, spiritual ardor, opium), the power of poetry this poem projects is one that isolates its prophetic creator as a monstrous aberration. This is perhaps the price of effecting, what Leadbetter calls "a revolutionary impact on society's ethical and spiritual constitution,"[185] but it also suggests something hauntingly unnatural about what this poem itself has *already* done: brought images of this dream into existence through the immediate sounds its verse. It does indeed become "heard" into existence in its own "mingled measure," coming ambiguously perhaps from literary inheritance and the dream Coleridge purports to have had. As Elisabeth Schneider noted long ago, "…important is the musical effect in which a smooth, rather swift forward movement is emphasized by the relation of grammatical structure to line and rhyme…One hears the texture of

[185] Leadbetter, p 175.

Milton…"[186] One also hears an aberrant inheritance of lyric form and prophetic laurels, rendered in illusive images and forceful verse music—heard, as his entranced contemporaries would attest upon actually hearing it, into existence.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," more of a permanent nightmare than fading dream, goes considerably farther than "Kubla Khan" in remediating sound into poetical existence. As "The Rime of the Ancyent Mariner" of 1798 became the "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in 1800, Coleridge demonstrates that he revised his poem in accordance with critical taste from an early date—words, phrases and incidents singled out negatively by reviewers got swapped, simplified and clarified in the new edition.[187] These emendations (and Coleridge's willingness to make them) suggest the foreboding voice that the wedding guest "cannot chuse but hear"[188] like a "three years child" (ll. 15, 18) derives primarily from richly prosodic verse, not obscure diction. Throughout, accentual syllabic meter augments into hyper-syllabic lines that seem purely accentual while the rapidly paced ballad stanzas churn out frequent repetitions and internal rhyme:

> The ship was cheer'd, the Harbour cleared—
> Merrily did we drop
> Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
> Below the Light-house top. (ll. 21-24)

Moments of interjected dialogue between the Mariner and the Wedding Guest also help to reify the face-to-face, oral encounter. The ballad's oral transmission is more than a generic fiction relayed via the meeting of typology and print—it is fictionally dramatized; the Mariner is indeed very much alive in the textual and narrative present:

> I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
> And thy skinny hand so brown,"—
> Fear not, fear not, thou wedding-guest!
> This body dropt not down. (ll. 220-223)

As the desultory tale unfolds, moving in uncertain directions and driven by uncertain causes,[189] it ultimately comes to be unified by strident points of vocal and metrical emphasis, all of which so mesmerize the wedding guest (on our behalf) that he misses the actual wedding (and so do we, but no matter).

The Mariner's purpose—to relay some moral message through his supernatural nightmare—also comes from oral/aural conjunctions. Narratively, when supernaturalism enters in the form of ghost ships, animated corpses and conversing spirits (the "first

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[186] Schneider, Elisabeth. Coleridge, Opium and Kubla Khan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, p. 286.

[187] For an extended, detailed account see a very old study by B. R. McElderry, Jr. in "Coleridge's Revision of 'The Ancient Mariner'" Studies in Philology 29.1 (1932): 68-94.

[188] Unless otherwise noted, my quotations are taken from the 1798 version.

[189] These have long been matters of confusion and speculation: we never find out why the Mariner shoots the Albatross; the direction taken by the ship is confusing and uncertain.

voice" and "second voice") are heard and assert the moral purpose of the mariner's wandering:

> Quoth he the man hath penance done,
> And penance more will do. (ll. 413-414)

This demonic commentary, however, is heard only in dreams—the "trance" whose ending hastens the spirit voices' departure. In reality, where the dead crewmates are "inspired"[190] we read that they "groan'd" but no one "spake," and the only suggestion that their return to work is part of some heavenly, if obscure, purpose is in their singing when daylight returns. Through a linked chain of similes, the "sweet sounds" their chorus produces are heard as songbirds and other natural sounds until both the verb tense and figuration shifts abruptly to the present:

> And now 'twas like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely flute;
> And now it is an angel's song
> That makes the heavens be mute. (ll. 352-55)

Coleridge would later use his glosses to emphasize that the figurative song is literal, if supernatural, song—"a blessed troupe of angelic spirits"—was responsible for the whole interlude (*PW* 1. 397). And while the Mariner hears the voices of the South Pole's demonic spirits and their demands for penance in a dream, the unspoken purposes of the heavens provide musical intimations of hope within the context of reality. In both cases, an idea that Coleridge would later record lies in abeyance: "Language & all symbols give outness to Thoughts/ & this the philosophical essence & purpose of Language."[191] What happens in the Mariner's tale, arguably, is that language gives outness to thoughts about how the language needed to grasp divine or spiritual essences and sublime (i.e. indefinite) moral ideas requires some special power, or takes place in communicative forms that lie beyond language's power. After all, the moral center of the Mariner's itinerant life lies most in his account of his "strange power of voice" that repeats the tale, and which the wedding guest seems to experience immanently on our behalf. The clear expression of the moral, which Coleridge would later think was too obvious in itself,[192] seems mundane by comparison.

> He prayeth best who loveth best,
> All things both great and small:

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[190] This is only implicit in the 1798 text; a note Coleridge supplies, which won't appear until 1834 (*PW* 1.399), refers to the "inspired" crewmates explicitly.

[191] *CN* 1.1387

[192] Anna Barbauld claimed that the poem had no moral. Coleridge disagreed, saying it had too much. In Table Talk he explains that the "fault of the Ancient Mariner consists in making the moral sentiment too apparent and bringing it in too much as a principle or cause in a work of such pure Imagination." See Table Talk, vol 1. ed. Carl Woodring. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 149.

For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all. (ll. 647-650)

Clearly stating the moral means nothing without both the story and the theater of the story. The mariner's pursuit of moral reconciliation lies in his power to (re)present the sublime ideals taught by his penitential seafaring and the sudden onset of "agony" that drives him to relate the tale (l. 583):

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach. (ll. 619-623)

The Mariner's power shadows a poet's dilemma; he bears witness to a world unseen, unheard or not experienced by ordinary people (or readers) but his recompense is "the strange power of speech," realized in Coleridge's poem as well-wrought prosody and telegraphed by a credulous auditor. The ideal poet and ideal reader mutually create one another, crystallizing around a quasi-supernatural performance of oral poetry and dramatizing sublime mercy through musical reference. It is a curiously appealing nightmare, for what writer wouldn't want such power, or access to it?

While we can read the glosses of the 1816 version as an augmentation of Coleridge's early pursuit of print-worthiness, they also have a curiously deleterious effect on the Mariner's "strange power of speech." The glosses evidence his willingness to take advantage of the typographical and topological surface of the page to demystify the poem's wildered, oral narrative. But in becoming a more rational print performance, the poem ironically becomes a much more discontinuous vocal performance as well. The glosses interfere with the forward progress of the poem and disrupt the manner in which a reader can subvocalize the text. Correspondently, the glosses obscure the ballad's chief typological feature—the performance of orality—by running between stanzas and literally voicing over the poem, leading to moments like this (ll. 341-353). (See reproduction on following page.)[193]

The horrific image of the revenant child working the sheets alongside the Mariner provokes an outburst from the wedding guest and reminds the reader of the fact of the oral performance and emotional import of the eyewitness account—the printed performance (the text) of an oral performance (the ballad narrator) of an oral performance (that of the Mariner, which gains authenticity in spite of, and because of, the wedding guest's interruptions). But as these layers of orality and print bring a horrific morality tale to life, the highly rhetorical, polished, well-finished voice of the gloss irons out the poems obscure wrinkles all too well. At the moment of high oral drama comes a diffusing printed assurance of a saintly plan as well as a typographical performance of remediation whose clarifications also estrange the reader from the drama of the oral effects.

[193] The text was copied from PW and reformatted into MS Word to precisely reflect typographical layout; actual image of text is a screen shot, used in order to preserve an accurate layout across variable versions of MS Office**.**

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

But not by the souls of the men, nor by daemons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain.
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly though their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Through their differentiation from the ballad voice they lend an added veneer of authenticity, but to do so they must likewise blunt the very performance of that authenticity.

By making the poem into a *lyrical ballad* in which the "lyrical" gloss (conveyed in richly beautiful seventeenth century language) contrasts with the language of the "ballad" (comparatively rude despite the fact that Coleridge's revisions had significantly thinned out its archaisms), the very genre of the ballad gets upstaged, and between the loss of the diction's antique cast and its overshadowing by the gloss, the Mariner's "strange power of speech" seems strangely disempowered. The loss of "obscurity" and the gloss's typographical emphasis of the tale's remediation leads to a text that arguably becomes a more obscure representation of what romantic readers prized about the ballad genre—authentic eyewitness accounts rendered through printed representation of a transfixing oral performance.

And yet, the poem becomes much more like a Coleridgean vocal performance as well. As Clement Carlyon writes in his memoir (1836), Coleridge's recitations of his own poetry were marked by frequent digressions and interruptions, leading him to complain that Coleridge "not unfrequently led us further into the labyrinth of his metaphysical elucidations, either of particular passages or of the original conception… to pause and analyse was his delight."[194] As much as Coleridge came to associate himself with the Mariner, he likewise produced a typographically nuanced imitation of his face-to-face performance habits.

Coleridge was frequently induced to recite specific passages, and in turn, certain passages proved more memorable than others. Inasmuch as Hazlitt's pejorative framing of "Kubla Khan's" status as a musical composition focused on the Damsel with a Dulcimer passage, the same passage survives in Thomas Noon Talfourd's recollections of Lamb as an example of utterly transfixing, if not transporting, auditory experience, "his voice seemed to mount, and melt into air, as the images grew more visionary."[195] Byron was immensely impressed by Coleridge's recitation as well, but Hunt makes the most

[194] Quoted in Laxer, p. 168.
[195] Quoted in Laxer, p. 179. (Laxer's article admirably gathers together many instances of first-hand accounts of Coleridgean recitations. Here, however, he mistakenly attributes the quote to Lamb himself.)

differentiated comment, noting that the poem, not Coleridge, is "a voice and vision, an everlasting tune in our mouths…a piece of the invisible world made visible…"[196] If a single comment could convey that Coleridge achieved his poetical aims as I have traced them here, this is the one. The connection between vision and voice and the invisible made visible speak of the fitting marriage of sound and image, of suspended meaning and the "suspension of disbelief" that bewitches the audience into contemplative reverie. The poetry works. It also lives, as Hunt says, "*in our mouths*," suggesting that, Hazlitt's venomous dismissals notwithstanding, the poem flourished amid the Hunt circle's sociable exchanges, which frequently included the recitation of poetry. The printed object may have lived among them as a means toward an oral, "tune"-ful end.

Conclusion

In the thirteenth chapter of *Biographia Literaria,* Coleridge embeds a letter—a letter he wrote to himself in the guise of a friend—that concerns a prospective and very lengthy chapter on the Imagination (intended for *Biographia Literaria*). His imaginary correspondent sends a mixed review, admonishing Coleridge for the chapter's incompleteness, difficulty and length, all of which become a justification for delaying a fuller explanation of Imagination (recall that chapter thirteen ends with his well-known, relatively pithy delineation of Imagination and Fancy). But indeed, the review is mixed for good as well as ill, displaying Coleridge's ardent belief in the merits of his views alongside his crestfallen doubts that his work will ever find a welcoming or comprehending public. Most notably, the imaginary correspondent's description of the chapter emerges in terms of the Burkean sublime: a "palpable darkness not without a chilly sensation of terror"; "what I had supposed substances were thinned away into shadows, while everywhere shadows were deepened into substances"; and the quote from Milton, "If substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd / For each seemed either."[197] The passage ends with an epigrammatic quotation from Coleridge himself, some lines from "To William Wordsworth," which the correspondent claims to have encountered in *The Friend*. In *The Friend*, Coleridge interrupted his description of skating on Lake Ratzeburg (in a section called "Christmas Out of Doors") to include a wintery, descriptive passage from Wordsworth's then-unpublished *Prelude*, using his own lines from "To William Wordsworth" as an epigraph:

> —An Orphic tale indeed,
> A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts
> To their own music chaunted![198]

In *Biographia Literaria* however, when the lines are turned back upon their author by the imaginary correspondent, there are minor changes in diction:

> —An Orphic tale indeed,

[196] Examiner, 21 October 1821, in The Critical Heritage, pp. 475.
[197] *BL* p. 301.
[198] *The Friend* I. 369

A tale *obscure* of high and passionate thoughts
To a *strange* music chaunted! [199]

The substitution of "obscure" for "divine" suggests a multivalent difference: Coleridge's poetics frequently refer to ideas of sublime obscurity—a key difference between the power of Wordsworth's Orphic (i.e. philosophical) sublimity and the power of Coleridge's metaphysical explorations. Wordsworth expresses the perspicacious truth of nature in a philosophic poem; Coleridge unveils the obscure operations of the Imagination in a poetic philosophy. Both projects change the way we see the world and poetry, but in different ways. This difference deepens with the change from the original phrase, "to their own music," to "a strange music." The substitution was necessary since, of course, Coleridge's imaginary correspondent is not reading Wordsworth, but rather reading Coleridge. The "strange music," however, is difficult to parse in terms of value. Is Coleridge demurring or is he celebrating strangeness? I would argue the latter, since the association of musical chanting and the revelatory experience of reading are linked. While Wordsworth's "music" and chant were the product of his own voice as he read from the *1805 Prelude* in 1807, the "strange music" in Coleridge's chapter was entirely produced by print—and in prose, no less.

I wouldn't argue that Coleridge is making a systematic effort to demonstrate that his prose ought to be read as poetry, but we can read his fake letter as a nudge toward an ideal that Coleridge pursued, dramatized and lamented not having adequately achieved: printed texts that could engage an audience and inculcate his deepest visions as successfully as the performance of speech.

[199] *BL* p. 302

Chapter 3

Voice vs. Song: A Reading of Orality, Music and Mediation in Blake

"Never seek to tell thy love
Love that never told can be
For the gentle wind does move
Silently invisibly"

-*Untitled, from Blake's Notebooks*

Blake's short, untitled poem quoted in the above epigraph tells a brief, fable-like story that turns on a mix of folksy wisdom, didacticism and mysticism. It foregrounds a fact that matters to lovers and poets alike: love is not only a deep, enveloping feeling but also a sign—"love." To speak of it is to bring about the end of its ideality, to set into a verbal form something that still reaches out for its immanent, pre-linguistic existence. Death, figured in the remaining lines as a "traveler," is the only one who can take lovers with the plenitude of unspoken desire.

I told my love I told my love
I told her all my heart
Trembling cold in ghastly fears
Ah she doth depart

Soon as she was gone from me
A traveler came by
Silently invisibly
He took her with a sigh[200]

This poem, which could have very well found a place among the *Songs of Experience*, rehearses a narrow cross-section of Blake's recurring experiments as a poet/engraver: the possibilities and pitfalls of finding modes of representation that can explore the often hidden or at least unacknowledged seams between thought and language, speech and song, image and music that structure the multimedia art(s) of romantic poetry. The very stanzas that typologically facilitate the integration of a tale about speech gone wrong into a ballad both blur and create distinctions between two oral modes: speech and song. Song, a ballad in this case, makes vague, counter-rational, didactic claims and endows them with the unalloyed authority of folk wisdom. It likewise creates an oral form different from (or other than) the one that fails the poem's speaker or song's singer. And indeed, which is it? Who are we reading when we read this poem? A speaker or a singer? We are urged toward the second choice by the presentation of two competing form of vocal utterance—one of which is happening (the voice of the stanzas) and one of which

[200] The poem contains no punctuation. From Blake's Poetry and Designs. Ed. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979.

purportedly happened. In its song form, "told" speech is fictional, presented alongside a fictional "her" and a fictional "traveler."

These brief, unpublished verses give us an important glimpse into Blake's medial world in the way that they provoke questions about the difference between speech and song. In light of Blake's illustrations—his "composite art"—there are other questions to be asked. For instance, how does the immanence of seeing and reading—what we could call the phenomenological encounter with the text—play out against Blake's part-idiosyncratic, part-late Eighteenth Century textual world? Most especially, as we are invited both by the task of reading and by Blake's implicit desire for us to "hear," how do we hear when the immanence of the text is most appropriately a visual one? Who is the voice, where is the song, and what is the music that he so often writes about? And what are the stakes in suggesting that music, voice and song are not all the same thing?

In my reading of Blake, I am interested both by his constant manipulation of oral, aural, visual and textual media as well as by the way that the most multifarious of these categories are the oral and the aural—different phonological modes (speech, nonverbal vocalizations, singing, chorale, instrumental music) are necessarily heard and not heard throughout both collections of songs, themselves "contrary" but interrelated states. My interest also stems from what I will call Blake's mediation scene—a prefatory poem in which the poet sets a fictional, medial and hermeneutic stage for the forthcoming poetry in which he or she "stages" both possibilities and questions about how the following poems can be considered both as inscriptions (a book or texts) and vocalizations (a collection of songs). I will explore his mediation scene—the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence*—as a touchstone for reading through the rest of the poems in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. My ulterior motive in this analysis is to pry apart several often and easily conflated modes of utterance, speech, voice and song, and theorize, via Blake, how we can distinguish them. As a critical point of departure, I will very briefly outline some formulas for reading Blake's "contrary states," and likewise take a position against the binary mode of analysis that undergirds readings of Blake's "imagetexts" posed by W.J.T. Mitchell[201] John Pierce's[202] opposition of inscription and orality.[203] I want to read the work of these commentators as primary sources as well as criticism, stationing them as readers of a poet whose works constantly hypothesize the place of the

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[201] "Visible Language: Blake's Art of Writing," in Picture Theory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 111-150.

[202] The Wond'rous Art. London: Associated University Press, 1993. I am primarily concerned with Pierce's Chapter "Scenes of Writing." pp. 37-66.

[203] This hardened binary has at least been softened by Nicholas Williams who notes that "the poem as it exists does not allow for the linear logic of [Heather] Glen's and Mitchell's arguments, does not trace a line of transmission by which writing is delivered from bondage in speech or vice versa" (55). He refers, nonetheless to "the ghost of orality" (56)—the very ghost that, to use a visual metaphor, is the white light before which I would like to place a prism. Ghost or no, different oral modes correspond with aural ones—(hearing speech vs. hearing song vs. hearing pure music). The multifarious nodes of orality and aurality is the dialectic I will study here. See, Williams, Nicholas M. Ideology and Utopia in the Poetry of William Blake. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

reader. From them, I will analyze how the binary of orality/writing unravels insofar as one of its terms—orality—contains within itself a secondary binary that must be given room to work out its oppositions within the course of the imagetext as we encounter it in Blake.

In the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Blake presents us with a series of "Memorable Fancies" which brings two things into focus: the general aims of his earlier poetry, and the problematics of reading the musical significance of the "illuminated books." In one "Memorable Fancy," Blake depicts an angel who swoops upon his speaker and says "O pitiable foolish young man! O horrible! O dreadful state! Consider the hot burning dungeon thou art preparing for thyself to all eternity…"[204] The angel then shows him conventional scenes of hellfire, devils, and a scaly dragon, as well as the curious image of "black and white spiders." But when the angel leaves and the speaker finds himself alone, the scene changes and he is "sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by the moon light hearing a harper who sung to the harp. & his theme was, The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind."[205] The hellish scene—scaly dragon and all—turns out to be an image of hell, not hell itself. It appears so because of the angelic presence and the "metaphysics" to which the angel clings dogmatically and seeks to impose on the speaker's vision. For Blake, Hell represents energy, a source of both creativity and creation unbound by the inhibiting shackles of religious or legal doctrines; to see this energy as either bad or good says more about the beholder than about the object beheld—where the angel sees a dangerous and tormenting version of Hell, Blake's more heterodox speaker sees another. The traveler in hell is very much like Blake's "Mental Traveler," the poem in which we find the popular Blakean aphorism "the eye altering, alters all." It is worth pointing out that this line's chiasmus, alliteration and assonance drives home the auricular counterpart to the verbal message about re-visualizing the world through experience, but in large part Blake is concerned with the senses as something that both mediate and are mediated by the mind's faculties, and Blake undergirds these mediations with high stakes by suggesting that how we perceive determines the way in which we insert ourselves into history—either as passively abused subjects or actively engaged reformers. Thus, in the "Memorable Fancy," Blake does several things at once: he builds his argument through symbolic investiture; he decries the privileging of reason over energy, authoritarian doctrine over imaginative freedom, and inhibition over desire; and, lastly, he seemingly practices what he preaches—he is engaged in a kind of revelatory (rather than visionary) poetics, conceived and produced, as far as he is concerned, under the powers of imagination unoccluded by institutional stricture and his own personal modes of production. Insofar as we are reading, seeing and in our mind's ear, hearing text, we too have the opportunity to determine how we will read. How we shall perceive is tantamount to how we shall proceed.

When we consider how tightly aesthetic, moral, religious and political beliefs are bound up in Blake's thought, it should not seem like too much of a stretch to say that,

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[204] p. 95. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from poems are from Blake's Poetry and Designs. Ed. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979.
[205] p. 96.

embedded in this two-fold scene of Hell, there lingers among the political low-hanging fruit an aesthetic argument which will both bear on and reveal some aspect of Blake's poetics. And indeed, when the picture of the scene transitions as two different minds (and therefore two contrary states of mind) gaze upon it in turn, we see an image of text become replaced by an image of song. When Blake's speaker looks out over Hell and asks the Angel, "which [is] my eternal lot? [Plate 18]," the angel replies, "between the black and white spiders" chasing their prey. The implications of the color contrast are obvious, too obvious; white connotes good and black evil. But it also suggests printed letters—that is to say printed, black and white, twisting capsules of the very laws that would indeed prey upon Blake's visionary speaker. They are the alphabet that makes up the angel's "metaphysics" of good and evil, ready to be set down into the form of print. In the speaker's vision, however, these "black and white spiders" are supplanted by a harper singing a song that distinctly echoes one of Blake's "Proverbs of Hell." 'Expect poison from standing water." Proverbs, as Blake[206] and Mitchell[207] point out in their own ways, have no single author, but signify a collective wisdom or "character" of a nation. Yet here, in the song of the harper we hear a song about the importance of mutable attitudes and an embodiment of the true voice—here a singing one—of the "nation." When one considers this scene in the context of what came before, we see a transition from print to song, from a static text to a text that is being sung and is possibly changeable; we see an image of remediation and transformation; and we see how the voice of the harper which speaks in unison with the collective voice of hell suffuses a revitalized, re-envisioned landscape with music—actual music from an instrument and voice as well as iconographic music in the image of the harp or lyre.

Throughout his work, Blake cites "bondage" and the prospect of being "fetter'd" as poetic pitfalls inherent in unchanged form and static diction. Vibrant, energetic composition is as important as a vibrant, energetic creative spirit – they share common threats, common ideals and common stakes. And in this way, Blake's early work is not without Romantic, perhaps even Wordsworthian complaints about contemporary (i.e. late eighteenth century) poetic diction, a radical belief in the imagination's powers (like Coleridge) and the need for a new poetic language.

> WHETHER on Ida's shady brow
> Or in the chambers of the East,
> The chambers of the Sun, that now
> From ancient melody have ceased; //
>
> How have you left the ancient love

[206] See [Plate 6] p. 88: "As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyment of Genius, which to Angels look like torment and insanity, I collected some of their Proverbs: thinking that as the sayings used in a nation mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell she the nature of Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments."

[207] See p. 139: Mitchell is quite right to point out that proverbs, "by definition, can have no author, no individual source. They are impersonal, authorless sayings whose authority comes from their repetition, their efficacy in articulating a collective national authority."

That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few. (ll. 1-4, 13-16)

The "languid strings," "forced" sound and paucity of "notes" with which Blake ends his complaint recall stock images of the Orphic Lyre and musical emblems of poetry but with an ironic twist. The stock images are the very forced sounds and unvaried notes that Blake's speaker is decrying. His solution, however, is not that of Wordsworth—to claim and to some extent perform a radical break from eighteenth-century poetics—rather, it is to grasp for those "ancient melodies," in part by continuing to develop these antique tropes in subtle ways, both in poetry and in his illuminated books.

For Blake, the antique imagery of lyres and harps recalls ancient traditions of Orpheus or, more appropriately, of David, and endows Blake with an authority that transcends the poetic vogues (or lack thereof) of his time while allowing him to form the basis for an iconographic signifier for poetic voice that can accommodate visionary utterance. And indeed, we can argue on very strong footing that Blake's intersecting visual and poetic art and the privately controlled conditions by which he produced it reveal his determined commitment to live out what so many of his productions dramatize: a poiesis in which printed language and divinely conveyed vocal power exist harmoniously.

> When this verse was first dictated to me I consider'd a Monotonous Cadence like that used by Milton & Shakespeare & all writers of English Blank Verse, derived from the modern bondage of Rhyming, to be a necessary and indispensible part of Verse. But I soon found that in the mouth of a true Orator such monotony was not only awkward, but as much a bondage as rhyme itself. [208]

This prefatory passage to *Jerusalem*, a four-part prophetic text where Blake poses himself as the spiritual redeemer of England, links *Jerusalem's* aspiration to effect a spiritual rebirth with the finding of an oratorical voice that both stations itself in the history of English poetry while simultaneously intervening in that history. More broadly, the troubled political fate that *Jerusalem* seeks to correct is something that his "verse" must perform as well as depict by being unshackled or "energetic," to use Blake's preferred term. Blake's "measure" must re-measure what the fettering, compass wielding figures of Newton or Urizen (as the "Ancient of Days") and the codes of law have measured deleteriously. "Poetry Fetter'd, Fetters the Human Race! Nations are Destroy'd, or Flourish, in proportion as Their Poetry Painting and Music, are Destroy'd or Flourish!"[209]

Poetry at its best is able to determine and communicate its stakes in some form or another, but Blake's stakes are inordinately high; the crushing weight of the human race's well-being is contingent on the efficacy of printed writing to convey divine dictates that themselves seem to be super-linguistic. The obverse of this dilemma is a worse dilemma:

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[208] *Jerusalem,* p. 313.
[209] *ibid*

that writing is degraded speech and cannot effect what the voice, silenced in print, might effect. Even in this double bind, however, there is wiggle room via the eighteenth-century view that writing was a gift from the divine that had become degraded—a position toward which Blake pivots.[210] A short prefatory poem to "the reader" implicitly addresses this ordeal and likewise predicts his success. Its radical of presentation, to use Frye's handy phrase, draws explicit attention to the fact that Blake is marshaling the conventional aural harmonies of verse and rhyme he will thenceforth eschew to underscore his claims of material transcendence.

> Reader! lover of books! lover of heaven,
> And of that God from whom all books are given,
> Who in mysterious Sinai's awful cave
> To Man the wond'rous art of writing gave,
> Again he speaks in thunder and in fire!
> Thunder of Thought, & flames of fierce desire:
> Even from the depths of Hell his voice I hear,
> Within the unfathomed caverns of my Ear.
> Therefore I print; nor vain my types shall be:
> Heaven, Earth & Hell, henceforth shall live in harmony.[211]

Everything is expressed in parallels; each literal figure turns figural in a succession of tropes that embeds everything from biblical history (Sinai's awful cave) and natural phenomena (thunder and fire) to bodily sense (caverns of my Ear) and creative passion

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[210] Mitchell draws a number of connections between radicalism and the press and reactionary insistence on the value of oratory and speech, as well as the "rationalist corruption" of writing vs. writing as "divine gift" (118-130, quotes from 127). Nicholas Hudson (in Writing and European Thought, 1600-1830. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) examines a two-pronged tradition in the late Renaissance where both occult and Old Testament accounts of God-given writing served as a basis for all subsequent writing. As such, "it was venerated not for its clarity or contribution to public communication, but rather for its capacity to disguise hallowed truths from all but an elite group of philosophers and theologians, the inheritors of an ancient tradition of secret knowledge" (9). Pierce acknowledges Hudson's comments and provides a brief account of William Warburton's opposition to these attitudes, noting that Warburton saw writing as "something that developed along with human culture, moving from the predominantly ideographic dimensions of hieroglyphics to the phonographic forms of alphabetic writing" (39). Blake, of course, had strong affinities with the mystics, Renaissance Christians and Christian mystics for that matter. This fact eventually loops back to Mitchell's political bent via Derrida insofar as Derrida reads Warburton's historical survey of the "natural" development of writing as something that disguised an ideological investment in writing as "the instrument of abusive power." See "Scribble (writing power)" trans Cary Plotkin. *Yale French Studies* 58 (1979): 117-147, p. 124. On all counts—aesthetically, religiously, historically and politically—Blake is the self-nominated redeemer of the wond'rous art.

[211] *Jerusalem*, p. 312.

(Thunder of Thought, & flames of fierce desire). The "harmony" of the last line, however, is best found in the image of "books" and "types." Rather than modulate from literal figure to metaphorical one, these images simultaneously denote literal things. "Books" refers both to the Biblical prophecies (e.g. Ezekiel or Isaiah) as well as the scroll or codex that record them—the broader historical tradition in which Blake claims to be stationing himself. "Types" is an even busier word. It conflates several things: the figures and/or archetypes that Blake's prophecy records; his resistance to established types (i.e. styles or *genres* of verse); and the tangible, movable type of the printing press. However, Blake's types will also not be "vain" because his types were, in reality, only metaphorically "type." The copper plates he used to print his verses held the form, or type, of his manual inscription—a more immediate, personal process in which the presence of the recording hand is evident in the printed result. In this way, the printed word is full of multivalent and yet immediate presence—the presence of God, or the presence that first "dictated" the poem that would become *Jerusalem*.

This would suggest, however, that Blake is both conscious and in pursuit of a scriptural practice that seems to suggest some level of awareness and engagement with what we now understand as a Derridean "metaphysics of presence."[212] Blake's divine voice (the one that is "dictated") is heard but immaterial; the trick he must perform is giving presence to that voice by mediating that presence in written signs; but it must be translated *into* signs, unlike the mere recording of spoken poetry into language by an amanuensis (which, of course, has robust romantic examples in the figures of William and Dorothy Wordsworth or Coleridge and Sara Hutchinson).[213] Blake's prefatory poem mythologizes the simultaneity of the divine voice's absence and presence and its creation or recreation through the inspired selection of "types." If Blake is actively hoping to put a rent in rational language and the troubled British history to which it has given rise, his counter-rational types might be best summed up in Derrida's logocentric crux—"desire." "I have identified logocentricism and the metaphysics of presence as the exigent, powerful, systematic, and irrepressible desire for [a transcendental signifier]."[214] But, as we know, Blake is willing to idealize writing in opposition to what Derrida identifies as the logocentric suppression of inscription and its corresponding movement toward voice on the basis of deep-seated (and, perhaps, deep-seated) phonocentric ideology. The "heritage of that logocentrism," he explains, is "the absolute proximity of voice and

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[212] Derrida, Jacques. Of Grammatology (corrected edition). trans Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 49.

[213] Since I draw substantially from Mitchell in this chapter, I should point out that he sees the phonocentric tendencies of the romantics as a sign that they were "imaginative iconoclasts," resistant to the fixity and materiality of print and part of a tradition invested in "a deep ambivalence about the lure of visibility" (114). He illustrates the point with the example of Wordsworth claiming that "a poet is a man 'speaking' (not writing) to men" (117). Mitchell may be drawing too deep and conclusive a line between Wordworth's rhetorical style and the anti-visual ideology he imputes to it. Andrew Bennett provides an alternative, and thoroughly illuminating, historicist account of Wordsworth's more idiosyncratic aversions to writing in Wordsworth Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[214] Of Grammatology, p. 49.

being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning."[215] This holds up fairly well if we examine voice as a property of writing, but what about voice as the substance of reading? Should the manner in which writing's materials or media structure the text fundamentally influence how we define a given text's logic of absence and presence?

Mitchell explores this question forcefully when he redresses the hermetically textual circumference within which the dispossessions and dislocations that Derrida seizes upon operate. In his view, Derrida forecloses the whole gamut of immediacy and presence too insistently and with too great a degree of hermeneutic narrowness.

> What is it that writing and grammatology exclude or displace? Nothing more or less than the *image*—the picture, likeness, or simulacrum—the *iconology* that aspires to be its science…Writing is caught between two othernesses, voice and immediacy, the speaking and the seeing subject. Derrida mainly speaks of the struggle of writing with voice, but the addition of vision and image reveals the writers dilemma on another flank. How do we say what we see, and how can we make the reader see? (114)

There is no full repudiation of Derrida here, more of an adjustment along medial lines that leads Mitchell to substitute logocentricism with a "graphocentricism" through which Blake's counter-romantic "ideology of writing" stands in opposition to the normative "hostility to the printed word" (117). Along with Blake's "scenes of writing" and calligraphy (or "the wond'rous art of writing") Mitchell will demonstrate how Blake treats "writing and printing as media capable of full presence, not as mere supplements to speech."[216] The key lies in his broader medial engagement and the immanence of pictographic presence. Thus far, I am with him.

In seeming opposition, John Pierce takes up a position against Mitchell's view that Derrida is a helpful critical provocation or a "friendly dialectical contrary."[217] Derrida's work is of course something that both these critics must acknowledge and position themselves alongside since the topics of writing and inscription cannot possibly escape deconstruction's territory on either intellectual or professional fronts. Pierce, however, aims to deepen the substance of the engagement between Derrida and Blake's texts and so to no small extent he triangulates his readings among Derrida and Mitchell. Pierce is not out to deconstruct Blake (he does, at one point deconstruct his own reading), but rather finds in Blake's "scenes of writing" indispensible and multivalent alignments between Blake's narratives of inscription—chiefly the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*—and Derrida's descriptions of phonocentricism and logocentricism. For Pierce, the act of "reading" the poem dramatized in its last lines

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[215] Of Grammatology, p. 12.
[216] "Graphocentricism" and the following quotations are taken from "Visible Language," p. 117.
[217] "Visible Language," p. 114.

creates a symmetrical, reflexive "counternarrative of creative response."[218] This attains a reenactment of what is otherwise a poem that passes[219] out of innocence "virtually at its moment of utterance," where innocence is a homology for full presence or "creative plenitude."[220] "Such a reading returns a sense of force and energy to the poem and throws into relief the complex relation between the presence of breath and speech, on the one hand, and the apparent separation and absence characteristic of writing, on the other."[221]

As both of these critics read Blake with or against Derrida, a general accord and a fearful symmetry emerge, one that more or less encompasses the entire field upon which the general disagreements in Blakean criticism see their lines drawn. As for the accord, both critics tie the stakes of their reading to historical circumstances that I am quick to endorse as well. "Blake's composite art is an attempt to fulfill the Piper's fantasy of a "writing" that would preserve the uniqueness of the hand-inscribed manuscript and yet be reproductions that 'all may read' and 'joy to hear' the poet's message."[222] The dissemination of texts consecrates the power and presence of voice within them, and Blake is everywhere conscious of this as he tropes, dramatizes and, quite literally, produces his texts in his engraver's shop (notwithstanding the fact that they did not travel widely prior to the twentieth-century). So how do we read vocal presence in a material form? Mitchell is the symbolic or archetypal reader, finding in the imagetexts a synchronic presence of immanent image with verbal text and an ideological commitment to the power of inscription. Secondarily, he is able to read Blake's poetic narratives in the context of their graphocentric revelations. Pierce, by contrast, is the diachronic reader—taking direction from Blake's spatial narratives, he molds his theories in the chapter

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[218] The Wond'rous Art, p. 47.

[219] Pierce calls this a "poem of passage;" the helpful phrase is borrowed from Thomas R. Frosch. "The Borderlines of Innocence and Experience," in Approaches to Teaching The Songs of Innocence and Experience. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1980, p. 74.

[220] The Wond'rous Art, pp. 46, 47.

[221] This allegorically Derridean position parallels even Derrida's syntactical and rhetorical structure: "From the moment that nonpresence comes to be felt within speech, writing is somehow fissured in its value. On the one hand, as we have seen, it is the effort of symbolically reappropriating presence. On the other, it consecrates the dispossession that had already dislocated the spoken word" (Of Grammatology, 166) Pierce quotes this same passage in his introduction and then again later in this chapter. He was either possessed by Derrida's voice (or Spivak's voice of translation) or working very directly from the passage throughout. "Force and energy" are likewise teasingly Blakean, Derridean ideas (from "*Writing and Difference*) explored in Pierce's Preface: "…deconstruction, unlike structuralism, finds resistances in all texts and that it is these resistances that constitute texts as force and energy rather than stable structure or form" (12).

[222] Visible Language, pp 131. Pierce, from his own critical axis, arrives at the same conclusion. "The ongoing vitality of oral forms of language modifies Blake's scenes of writing, but orality cannot stand on its own…While the vitality of writing is in its connection to speech, the actual power of speech resides in its dissemination through writing" (59).

"scenes of writing" chiefly from the "Introduction" to *The Songs of Innocence* and "London" (two poems that narrate the movement through space). Deconstructive reading strategies enable him to find in Blake's "scenes of writing" allegorical parallels between the transformation of creative presence into fixed inscription and, correspondingly, the fall of innocence into experience and the blighting social injustices that follow. From this ground, he can interrogate illustrations and pictorial illustrations as representations of the same. In sum, what these two readers and their readings have in common is a reliance on a provisional binarism, one that rests in the very crux of their readings and, for their purposes, is perfectly instrumental but likewise ought to provoke further examination: orality (the vocal) vs. materiality (inscription).[223]

Pierce sees the whole movement of Blake's "Introduction" as a narrative built on a "binary structure" with creative presence on one side and disseminable writing on the other. Presence and orality (spoken or heard) line up together. "Despite the labor of writing, the auditory experience it gives rise to reintegrates inspiration and execution. Writing thus becomes a complement to orality as orality is to writing."[224] As this equation develops through his argument, orality is specified but ultimately reduced to speech. It remains a broad medial concept, rather than conceptualized as a discrete medium of voice. The issue here is not that Pierce's argument is incorrect because he fails to theorize what might be significant about differing modes of orality, but that his argument itself is governed by a static, uniform concept of orality that prohibits such examinations. The complementarity of writing and orality leaves aside the question of how the supplementarity of differing modes of auditory expression (music, sound, voice, speech) could be integral in both Blake's scenes of writing and his scenes of singing in the *Songs of Innocence* (and *Experience* too).

Mitchell's reductive binarism is even more trenchant. Like Pierce, he cannot do without connecting phonocentrism to vocal presence because it supplies a paradigm that he can appropriate and overturn through his analysis of Blake's "graphocentricism." In this stance, aural and oral forms are reducible to one another under the fairly homogenous heading of anti-pictorialism, and he links this, by implication, to what we commonly call romantic ideology. "It is commonplace in intellectual history that the relation of the 'sister arts' of poetry and painting underwent a basic shift in the early nineteenth century, a shift in which poetry abandoned its alliances with painting and found new analogies in music" (115). The either/or of sound vs. inscription is already codified in the terms of ideological intervention that Mitchell has in store. He lumps together as he links together music and vocality. Ultimately, Mitchell argues that Blake has concocted an "ideal form of writing that will play across all the semiotic, social and psychic boundaries that constitute an artistic practice" (130). This ideality, born of the imagetexts' mixed media and Blake's self-conscious, self-referential deployment of them, can be examined in "the way Blake's utopian concept of writing, his commitment to a divinely given 'visible language' that would fulfill the Piper's fantasy of full presence, expresses itself in 'scenes of writing' and in his concrete practice as a calligraphic and typographic designer" (130).

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[223] To be clear, I am not refuting Pierce and Mitchell, both of whom have written great works of criticism that have been vitally illuminating for me. I simply want to, in Mitchell's terms, position them as "friendly, dialectical contraries."

[224] The Wond'rous Art, p. 49.

Here I veer off from Mitchell's (and Pierce's) reading of Blake's composite art and their use of the methodology-molding "scenes of writing." But for added weight, Mitchell doubles down on the opposition of orality to imagetext, stamped into emphasis via his assurances of "symmetrical clarity" (135). He creates a "table of binary oppositions" that neatly and visually opposes Blakean opposites via a right column and left column—"book" with "scroll", "life" with "death"—twelve oppositions in all. But two of the line items have doubled terms in the right column. The first doubling is "energy" and "imagination" (opposed with "reason"). These are reasonably consistent with Blake's thought, and I can accept the doubling. But in the very last line, we see "writing" opposed with "Speech / Song." Here, I suggest we encounter a problem of over-simplication. Speech and song themselves could just as easily display a symmetrical clarity, so too could "writing" and "speech" or "writing" and "song"—or other things that fall along the lines of the phonocentric spectrum that makes, as Mitchell himself points out, "music" analogous with poetry. The question is, why does Mitchell lump these two different ideas together and weaken his notably assertive claim that the opposition reveals a "symmetrical clarity?" In so doing, he forecloses the possibility that there is a significant formal, phenomenological or typological difference between an utterance that we could refer to as "song" and one that we could refer to as speech and brings us directly back to the concerns that began this chapter. Perhaps Mitchell could counter-argue that these are all "unheard" in the Keatsian sense, but Pierce's narrative attentiveness could lead us to scenes of troubled hearing (mainly in *Experience*) that bring the significance in fluctuating orality to bear. Conflating speech and song is Mitchell's best move critically, but this also reveals how musical ideas stubbornly complicate an aesthetic inquiry that erroneously conflates them within the paradigm of speech. And what could be less Blakean?

"Speech/Song," is a necessarily problematic category when the kind of medial distinctions that Mitchell instantiates are imposed on Blake's works. The possibility that orality is in itself host to important binaries distorts stable distinctions between speech and writing, music and voice and other seeming binaries between the media that convey poetic texts—most especially those texts we call lyrical. The terms in either pole of a medial binary can be reconstituted into binaries of their own, and with those other binaries, different arguments or theoretical axes are either opened up or foreclosed. The ontology of the object of study slips accordingly. For instance, writing and print often stand in opposition to voice or speech, but print could just as easily be diametrically opposed to writing—i.e. private manuscript vs. public text. If this were the case, the binary makes an implicit argument about the respective status of a manuscript and a printed one. Voice and speech could also constitute their own binary insofar as voice can be purely vocal and expressive while speech is discursive and representational. The implicit argument prefigured in a speech-voice binary might concern the embodiment (or disembodiment) of voice, prosopopeia or the pathetic fallacy. This latter binary—voice vs: speech—intensifies when critics conflate "song" with voice. It is likewise a dangerous proposition to say that song can simply be gloss for speech, nor would it make sense to say that song is the same thing as music. Instrumental music and song introduce their own range of crucial distinctions, especially in a period where instrumental music and song invoke heated aesthetic debates and culturally ordained symbols of status (the symphony orchestra vs. the ballad sung up and down the streets). Even the music that

could accompany song comprises its own binaries—e.g. practical ones such a melody vs. harmony, or conceptual ones such as program music vs. absolute music. Mitchell's two-column chart serves his purposes, but a better graph would look more like a tree where every branch yields two or more branches above it—not Blake's fallen tree from "The Human Abstract" but an appropriately complex "humanist abstract" so to speak.

As I now embark on my own reading of Blake's imagetexts, I would like to do so by foregrounding the questions that arise from these readings. How is it that phonocentrism is so heuristically reducible to "orality?" The phonological counterpart to the graphocentric nature of Blake's text lies in the abundance, not the uniformity, of aural and oral meanings. Perhaps we could better refer to the continuity of language and image as multimedia form of "phonographic" representation. The "phonograph" itself (and the many technologies that supplanted it e.g. the cassette player, the CD player, the mp3 player) is something that speaks, sings, plays sounds, plays music and reproduces a whole range of distinct or at least distinguishable aural and oral media. Our altering eyes, however, are the needle that reads the grooves (or lines). Prior to the phonograph, what kind of phonographic functions could the visual text be said to compose, or produce, or convey?

The Visual Phonologie of Blake's Mediation Scene

What I am calling a "mediation scene" (as opposed to "scenes of writing") is the poem that defines how the forthcoming texts might be read as it defines the expressive operations that Blake or his fictional proxies will undertake—namely, the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Experience*.[225] I would like to pay attention to the phonographic dynamics it proposes for Blake's *Songs*, or how it coordinates poem, narrative, figuration and pictorial image among discrete varieties of oral expression and aural impression. I would not say that pictures or imagetexts replenish the lost music dramatized in the "Introduction" to *The Songs of Innocence,* but rather we can read them as supplements for absent music and signposts for discrete verbal modes that can help us to coordinate the finer differences between the representation and production of different species of oral and aural presence as figured by Blake.

From the "Introduction's" outset, we must find a better way to describe the Piper's playing than an emblem of the "fantasy of full presence." It might be better named the Piper's "task," not his "fantasy"; that particular fantasy belongs to the voluntary reader, not the author. Insofar as the Piper is the poet/printer/orality surrogate in this poem and the "child on a cloud" is more appropriately the hearer/ reader/ aurality surrogate, we can better explore the desire for the fantasy of full presence as something that falls in the reader's, more than the writer's camp. The trick, I argue, is to devise a way of accommodating the child's fantasy with a theory of reading discrete forms or vocal and musical expression through textual and pictorial interrelation. This forces us to

[225] The chief mediation scene is of course the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence*. But other poems fit this role to varying degrees, notably the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Experience* and, in a retrospective sense, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" from the end of *Experience*.

bear in mind that the counterpart[226] to orality is aurality, and the way we hear or are able to hear (an equivocation for which Blake's Innocence/Experience dyad provides a vital, if provisional heuristic) is linked with our ability to find a mode of speech, verse, song or immanent music that will allow us to say what we wish we could say.

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

'Pipe a song about a lamb!'
So I piped with merry cheer.
'Piper, pipe that song again.'
So I piped: he wept to hear.

'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer;'
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read.'
So he vanished from my sight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

The poem's purpose is to illustrate how the expressive quality of the music that first catches the child's attention may survive transmission into writing (and, its dissemination through print).[227] The poem itself expresses this hope via its final line: "every child may joy to hear." Depending on how we comprehend "may," we could suppose that every child has access to these songs now that they are written (and

[226] I use "counterpart" in order not to use "opposition."

[227] In addition to Pierce and Mitchell, my reading of this poem closely parallels readings by other critics. In fact, most readers of Blake have read this poem in highly similar ways. See especially McLane's reading in Balladeering, Minstrelsy and the Making of British Romantic Poetry, pp. 215-220. McLane likewise notes the remediated transmissions, the notion that program music and absolute music can define the differing stages of the "song," and likewise examines aspects of the poem's relationship to its preceding illustrations. For my awareness of the reed/read rhyme I am indebted to her reading (p. 218) as well as Andrew Cooper's in William Blake and the Productions of Time. Ashgate: Austin, 2013, pp. 59-60.

therefore some of the power of that music might survive beyond the end of its playing and singing) or the piper hopes that this process will function *as* he hopes, that every child *may* joy to hear (otherwise, *can* or *will* would suffice). If we sense that *may* is ambiguous depending on how we read it in the line, we find that the nature of the piper's music is ambiguous as well; the straightforward narrative belies the poem's musical complexities. The child on the cloud asks that music of pure affect ("songs of pleasant glee") obtain a program—a descriptive meaning. The pipe turns breath into music, not words, and both the child and piper take for granted that musical meaning expresses a concept—a lamb. But emotive responses stand in the place of critical ones, and the simplicity of the poem does not accommodate a complex story of the lamb. Whatever makes the child weep with joy connotes either a lamb or the same things the idea of the lamb connotes. We are left wondering whether the absolute quality of sweet, joyous, innocent music expresses a feeling that makes the performer and listener in the ideal circumstances created by Blake picture a lamb or whether something familiar to them—an extant song divested of (and then reinvested with) lyrics or the act of piping in a pastoral scene—provided some context in which it is clear that the music has something to do with lambs. In this regard, Blake forcibly reifies what Donelan, borrowing a phrase from de Man, sees as a main criterion of absolute music—the "suspension of meaning that defines literary form."[228] Here, however, it is Blake who suspends by paradoxically hinting at and withholding the possibility of an extant textual basis, an innocent ignorance musically reified from the first textual moments of his collection of songs. Innocence develops as varied modes of phonographic suspension stand in the stead of knowledge.

The idea of innocence in this scene acts as a keystone for the rest of the collection: that the transmission of creative energy, beauty, innocent wonder and uninhibited joy functions through, or in spite of, the worldly materials or cultural contexts in which they are articulated. In actuality, they do not; rather, seamless transmissibility and perfect authenticity are given the status of archetypes of innocence. In *Innocence*, for instance, the lost "little boy" from *Experience* would presumably have no problem expressing his unadulterated, anti-Theist belief:

> Nought loves another as itself
> Nor venerates another so.
> Nor is it possible for Thought
> A greater than itself to know. ("A Little Boy Lost" ll. 1-4).

In Experience, however, the boy is "burned…in a holy place" (l. 17). The infanticidal horror of the image also evokes the image of book burning, suggesting that the reactions of the boy's auditors, the destruction of his dangerous innocence, and the destruction of dangerous books are linked by the reverse logic that yokes innocence and unproblematic remediation in the "Introduction."

The disparate nature of the visual, the oral and the aural bear further consideration; in the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence* the first indication we have

[228] See Donelan, James A. Poetry and the Romantic Musical Aesthetic. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 99.

of movement between sight and sound arrives in the phrase "merry chear" and the manner in which the piper's emotional performance is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the emotional tenor of the child's reactions already hinted at. The child, as an eager listener, may very well be more, or less, or at least differently moved by the music than the musician, but in Blake's scene this different affective experience is underscored by a subtle change of medium that takes place well before the far more obvious examples in which the child asks for the piping to become singing, singing to become writing. They share the same space, and therefore the meanings that they communicate dialogically is supplemented by their physical presence. This is especially important since it is only the child who "speaks," the piper only plays music, sings songs and writes—thus we should remember that four, not three, modes of vocal expression are featured here.

Visual cues appear in tandem with the initial act of hearing. When the child asks that the piper transliterate music into language via song, he rewards the acquiescing piper with tears of joy, a seemingly effective and affective source of inspiration, likewise an oral (wordless crying) and visual one. Also, the piper pipes with *merry chear*. The OED defines "cheer" as a "disposition, frame of mind, mood, esp. as showing itself by external demeanour, etc. Usually with qualification as 'good', 'glad', 'joyful', or 'sorrowful', 'heavy', etc;" coincidentally, as one of its examples for this definition, it lists "so I piped with merry cheer." Whether language is defining Blake or Blake is defining language, it is impossible not to consider the implications of the visual emphasis imputed to the act, if not the music, of the piping as well as the inclusion of "merry" where the preceding adjective is to be placed, conventionally speaking. If indeed we sense that the merry cheer of the piper has as much to do with the spectacle of his performance—as something "showing itself by external demeanor"—then it is all the more striking that the child's response if not only of a different emotional order, but registers his delight at what he hears through his pantomimic response: "He wept to hear." From a prosodic point of view, we could wonder if Blake selected "chear" to facilitate a necessary rhyme, but insofar as it rhymes with its aural counterpart, "hear," it is difficult to say which rhyme purchased the other. Instead, they appear to be linked by both rhyme sound and a subtle discrepancy in visual and aural emphasis. As a consequence of these divisions, the child on the cloud becomes hard to read as a projection of the piper's genius or imaginative daemon[229]; though a fanciful image, he is clearly alienated from the consciousness of the piper. He likewise thrusts interpretive instability into the foreground of the poem's inherent arguments about the transmission of ideas through music and proposes implicit questions about the seeing of music, the hearing of image.

The pictures that visually frame the presentation of this short, narrative frame further suggest that "hearing" and "seeing" are modes of perception that function with a principle of interchangeability. The Frontispiece reveals a fore-image of what will

[229] Both Pierce and Peggy Meyer Sherry (whom Pierce quotes) see the child as a dual subjectivity, one that is both an aspect of the speaker but also, in Sherry's words, "a transcendent embodiment of the fiction of origin upon which both the writer and reader of the songs depend…" See her "'The Predicament' of the Autograph: 'William Blake'" *Glyph* 4 (1978): 130-155, p. 143. See also Pierce, pp. 46-47.

become the exchange between the child and the piper [Fig. 3]. [230] The piper's fingers are posed in the midst of their activity, placed over the stops of his pipe, but his face expresses surprise. The child has clearly interrupted him and has made himself known with outstretched hands. As Gardener points out, he has no wings or corporeal signs of supernaturalism, "no angel, but mortal, an idea of inspired alertness" (217).[231] I hesitate to suggest that a figure can be both mortal and "an idea," (especially when it floats in air), but the emblematic significance of a real-enough, child-auditor hovering over the figure of the artist does a great deal to establish the partly mythic, partly historical underpinnings of the way in which the printed book is created, by the influence of the child-muse, and why it was produced, "so every child may joy to hear." Insofar as the piper will become an author after the moment arrested in the Frontispiece's image, the corresponding point at which the book supplants the piper likewise switches the spatial placement of these figures. If we read the Title Page [Fig. 4] in succession with the Frontispiece,[232] then we can see that the figure of the emblematic child has now been literalized in the two children appearing to look at a book held by a mother or nurse, perhaps "joying to hear." They are seeing, of course, as much as they are hearing, and in the background, hovering above the actual children, the piper plays while standing on the curvature of the "I." The song of the piping is here present in image—a suggestion that the remediated music of the piper (from instrumental music to song) is fully remediated as image.

So what of the middle category—song? We can consider again that the "song" first mentioned by the child is either a malapropism or an indication that the piper's playing conveys some tangible idea of a lamb to the child. While this may show an extraordinarily sincere view of the power of musical expressiveness on Blake's behalf, of more interest is the way that "song" gets applied equally to each of his three media—pure music, music and verbal text, and writing. Likewise, the word "hear" accompanies each instance of song, but hearing, as we have seen, concerns the eyes as much as the ears. Such transfers between sense and phenomenon, catalogued, categorized, hierarchized, mechanized and materialized by ancients and moderns alike, are tenuously synaesthetic

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[230] Herewith, whenever I include a [Fig. #] please see the appendix for the corresponding image.

[231] Gardner, Stanley. The Tiger, The Lamb and the Terrible Desart. London: Cygnus Arts, 1998. Gardner also claims that "the shepherd's arms are flung wide, and the picture seems to carry his voice" (217). I do not know what shepherd Gardner sees or believes he sees. The child's arms are "flung wide," but I do not see how one could logically conflate the image of the child with a shepherd. Perhaps he has discerned a shepherd's lineaments in the lines of the twisting trees that run in the foreground and background of the picture. I have not.

[232] Seeing these images as linked is by no means a critical necessity. For the viability of such reading, see, for instance, WJT Mitchell's earlier readings in Blake's Composite Art. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. While he points out, and I agree, that reading the two Frontispiece, Title Page and "Introduction" in a group is "wholly justified," it is nonetheless an assumption, and "it is not 'given' by the text or its illustrations, but must be arrived at by a series of associations, transformations, and creative inferences" (6).

in "state" of Blakean Innocence. Nowhere is the tenuous nature of this more evident than in the rhyme schemes (or perhaps we should say, schemes of rhyme) that Blake deploys. On the one hand, the first stanza and its descriptions of pure piping and the penultimate stanza in which the book is requested and begun have alternating (ABAB) rhymes while the rest have only a single rhyme. The intervening stanzas in which the transition to the intermediate—yet the most literal—form of song along with the last stanza in which the completed book is finally intimated have fewer aural clues that suggest the idea of poetic "music" so to speak. The pure potential suggested through the music and the auditor it seems to attract is linked with the process of setting down the vestiges of that potential into a visible form. Secondly the read/reed rhyme conveys the same sound but marks a visual difference on the page.[233] The effect is that the reed turned pen—which both writes *and* illustrates—is mutually dependent on the ear and the eye. In reality, however, even the reed and the pen are as much a part of the pre-production of the book as the fictionalized piping. Despite Blake's singing of his songs (which he is known to have done) and his drafting of his poems (which he undoubtedly did), it was copper plates that literally created the material outlines of the book and its images and filled the pages with visual meaning inexpressible in conventional printing processes.

Of course there is one last layer to this poem, one that decisively points the reader into the rest of the collections: the tension between the rigid formalism of the poems as songs on the one hand and the music, extempore singing, speech, weeping and laughter on the other, a motif that runs straight through Blake's *Songs*. The presentation of characters, narrative, dialog, piping, singing, plucking, staining, writing and aspiring that takes place issues in song stanzas—reminiscent of both ballad and hymn—the forms of song that are in place before the conditions of its creation are mythologized. The rapid transitions of dialogue that make this poem almost unreadable during an initial encounter[234] seems to beg for a well-voiced (i.e. carefully acted) reading—one that can restore the brisk-pace and driving rhythm and vocally differentiate the piper's narrative voice from the child's supplicating one. Just as the piper answers the child's words with

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[233]For a reading of this reed/read rhyme that considers Blake's interplay of aurality and writing, see Maureen McLane's Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 218. See also Andrew Cooper's William Blake and the Productions Time. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. pp. 59-60.

[234] Blake's originals provide no quotation marks. Subsequent editions include them—an aid to reading purchased dubiously. Part of my basis for saying this comes from observational evidence. When teaching this poem to undergraduates directly from the illuminated text (accessed online), they frequently do not grasp or fully process the dialogic encounter until they hear it read or performed. With quotation marks, the poem becomes more readable, but the dynamism and struggle to hear and recognize dialogue and discontinuity is lost in the process—they read less theoretically as the text is obscured by its own clarifications. Successive remediations (illuminated text/ editorially amended print/ digital experience) alter the way in which readers grasp the oral remediations represented in the text itself. The altering eye alters the ear. Moreover, the adult reader (envisioned by the poem itself) would necessarily have to inflect this dialogue fully to convey it to the child auditor.

different forms of song, never dialog, the text of the encounter that features a piper's voice and the child's voice are likewise conveyed in the form of song with images in place of notation. Formalizing innocence into song might be the most threatening transformation of the "Introduction." Formalizing is the task of the poet, yet, as Stathis Gourgouris astutely notes, "shaping forms is always, in the last instance, misshaping, de-forming. Hence [Plato's] alarm at the poet as a shaper who (trans)forms morals—an entirely political, not ethical, decision, which leaves no fate for the poet but exile from the city."[235] Etymologically speaking, even *innocence* itself is derived from the Latin *in* (not) and *nocere,* (to hurt or to do harm). The act of writing speech into song is an act of violent revision: this dark remediation is caught in the ominous portent—"stain'd the water clear." The adjective "clear" is lost. If we read "clear" as a flat adverb (thus I altered the color of the water to make it clear water), then the stain stands as the fulsome obverse to what is actually happening—that the formalized songs remain "happy" despite the fact they are no long "wild." The School Boy wonders as much when he asks,

> How can the bird that is born for joy,
> Sit in a cage and sing?" ("The School Boy" ll. 16-17).

He and his poem appear in *Experience*, and for a time "The School Boy" was the last poem in the collection (prior to the late migration of "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"); thus palimpsestically he closes the two-part collection by complicating its original premise. Blake's innocent speakers are frequently more "happy" and deluded.

That song can bring to light the uneasy relationship between voice and singing arises in the ritual of hymning and formations into which hymning innocents are arranged in the "Holy Thursday" poems (the first in *Innocence* and the second in *Experience*). These two poems explore the way that innocence conceals the more cynical, "experience" that clothes, literally, ecclesiastical pageantry in innocent guises. In a historicist reading of Holy Thursday's (*Innocence)* not so innocent cultural contexts, David Fairer reveals how cultural anxieties over the adult fate of indigent children (their ability to spread poverty and ignorance through sexual reproduction; their capacity to form uprisings if too well-educated) along with the more obviously cynical yet necessary need to raise money, were as important as good will in shaping traditions like the procession and chorusing dramatized in "Holy Thursday."[236] Fairer notes that the questions this scene conceals return in "Holy Thursday" (*Experience*), and thus the latter poems reads its counterpart through its acrimonious rhetorical questions. To an extent, this could be true of any pairing between the two sets, and indeed depending on how we identify a pairing (e.g. do we restrict ourselves to shared titles, or look to any number of other patterns or duplications?), we can extend this manner of intertextual "reading" to virtually every *Song*. What makes "Holy Thursday" particularly interesting, however, is the extent to which the pageantry it contains seems to coordinate with the vocal imperatives that frame either innocence or experience.

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[235] Gourgouris, Stathis. "*Poiein*—Political Infinitive" *PMLA* 123.1 (2008): 223-238, p. 225.

[236] See, Fairer, David. "Experience Reading Innocence: Contextualizing Blake's 'Holy Thursday'." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.4 (2002): 535-562.

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty! (ll. 5-8). [237]

The rhymes are practically lost (joy/poverty) and the indignant questions weigh down the pace and rhythm of the lines. Aurally, the stakes of the hymning in Holy Thursday's innocent counterpart are thrown into question by a voice that dislodges itself from the passages of its own song form—a discordant voice, witnessing broader discord. The well-rehearsed music and the calculated effect/affect of the hymning children, in the eyes of the naïve observer,

…like a mighty wind raise the voice of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among (ll. 9-10).

Hearing the cry as either song or the inarticulate expression of pain undergirds the ethical purpose of the poem—and perhaps both poems if we agree with Fairer. The provisional answer to this verbal question needs must lie in what, precisely, we hear in the cry—a necessarily musical question. But we cannot hear it; we can only see music under the sign of visual art that remains in the stead of music—a visual supplement for an absent music. The transfers between visual and auditory arise both in verse and in image through the depictions of children. While in the innocent Holy Thursday the children are arranged into pairs and those pairs into lines, lead by the "gray headed beadles" of line 3, the children in *Experience's* "Holy Thursday" are dead, weeping or clinging to a mother slumped against a tree. The necessary harmony of the choral music is either illusory or broken in the pastoral images in which even nuclear families are separated into misery and disunion.

At issue in "Holy Thursday" is the act of fraught listening, a major concern of the songs of Experience, where in *Innocence* the emphasis tends to center on singing and immanent listening. When orality is "heard," the kind of "creative plenitude" it has is confused (as in the cry of "Holy Thursday") or reduced to one specific vocal or aural sound. The "Introduction" to the *Songs of Experience* establishes a secondary framing device of skeptical listening or the shock of realistic hearing:

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future sees
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word, (ll. 1-4)

Radically compressed, it portrays a corrupted vision of the transmissions dramatized in the Introduction to the *Songs of Innocence*. The imperative "hear" links the speaking as well as the hearing of the bardic voice back to the utterance of an original code of law, presumably Biblical texts that stagnate in their subsequent re-hearing and create the

[237] From *Experience.*

chains that the feminized "Earth," "Chain'd in night" exhorts the Bard (or the voice invoking paternal Bardic authority) to break: "Break this heavy chain" ("Earth's Answer" ll. 14, 21). Sometimes this fallenness crystallizes as a failure to listen well (or well enough)—

> And because I am happy, & dance and sing,
> They think they have done me no injury: ("The Chimney Sweeper" ll. 9-10)

—or as a recontextualization of innocent voices, singing or laughing:

> When the voices of children are heard on the green
> And whisprings are in the dale:
> The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
> My face turns green and pale." ("Nurses's Song" ll. 1-4)

"London" contains the most robust and well-known examples, including the acrostic HEAR in its third stanza. To a large degree, these examples of hearing-in-experience impress the extent to which the listening subjects, or the images to be heard, are injuriously shackled, manacled or chained.

The figure of "the chain" itself links hearing with the displacement of historical time into astronomic time; in other words, night and day archetypally figure the past's binding of the present and often with aural import. Its most robust (and tintinnabulatory) example is found in the Four Zoas.

> The girdle was formed by day by night was burst in twain,
> Falling down on the rock an iron chain link by link lockd.
> …the bloody chain of nights & days" (p. 341).[238]

Throughout the *Songs of Experience*, too, Blake develops the chains that will figure prominently in his later prophecies. They signify a range of losses—like the loss of creative energy or sexual freedom, "Can delight / Chain'd in night / The virgins of youth and morning bear?" ("Earth's Answer" 13-15)— but distressed hearing is almost always central to chains and chaining. Take, for example, the "mind forg'd manacles" heard in London's "midnight streets" tether Londoners to the Magna Carta (London 8, 13). The manner in which the boy from "Little Boy Lost" is heard when he innocently contradicts church dogma, leads to his attack by the priest and his zealous followers:

> They strip'd him to his little shirt,
> And bound him in an iron chain. (ll. 19-20)

As his parents protest, their voices are lost as well, either as a result of inarticulateness because they "wept" or because they simply go unheeded and weep "in vain." In a similar way, the voice of the Bard whose ears have heard the holy word, can only, in turn, be heard one way—as vocal speech, not as song. Lastly, the sunflower (from "Ah! Sun-

[238] Citation refers Johnson and Grant edition. Blake's original would be: p. 60; V. 90-92.

Flower"), though necessarily presented in daylight, is doubly tormented for it. It is not only doomed to follow the sun heliotropically, but does so eternally. Chained, as it were, to the earth, it has the uniquely tormenting distinction of being written into the only song in either *Innocence* or *Experience* that does not contain a complete sentence or independent clause—thus trapped in miserable timelessness, reified grammatically.

> Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
> Who countest the steps of the Sun,
> Seeking after that sweet, golden clime
> Where the traveler's journey is done.
>
> Where the Youth pined away with desire,
> And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
> Arise from their graves and aspire,
> Where my Sun-flower wishes to go. ("Ah! Sunflower")

It is worth noting that Blake does not always supply question marks where they belong (e.g. both "A Little Boy Lost" or "The School Boy" in *Experience*), and if this is the case here, though unlikely, then the word "who" would initiate a complete sentence in the form of question. Nonetheless, the apostrophe would still remain, underscoring the text's enduring literary present, and the presence of the question would add a note of cruel mockery. Either way, the sunflower's own "mind-forg'd manacles" condemn it to endless watching, failing to hear the voice of experience that addresses it, which, by the end, turns its address from the second person to the third, leaving the sunflower as a frozen image and not the recipient of a voice that fictionally and poetically (as apostrophe) it will not and cannot heed nor hear.[239]

We can further the connection between *Experience*'s hearing and the final images of *Innocence's* "Introduction" by considering the ways in which singing and hearing are themselves sometimes productively, sometimes sententiously linked together.

> When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy
> And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
> When the air does laugh with our merry wit,

[239] There is no sunflower in the illuminated text; thus there is not pun or play on an image of a sunflower "rooted" in the page, which would have made for a wonderful consideration on the permanence of the printed medium. But whether "my" is possessive (the speaker has a sunflower) or rhetorical (the sunflower that concerns his poem) is difficult to determine. Either way, it makes us wonder *who* is the "I" behind the "my"—a gardener? God? A passer by? Regardless, the voice of the collected "songs" seems at times to make entries as if to nudge our attention back to the idea of its vocal presence—but then this can only be true if we read the songs as a collection. I would suggest that Blake invites us to do in no small part due to 1) the placement of what I have called the "scene of mediation" that commences the *Songs of Innocence* and 2) the more obvious correspondences between both collections (*Innocence* and *Experience*).

And the green hill laughs with the noise of it.

When the meadows laugh with lively green
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths sing Ha, Ha, He.

When the painted birds laugh in the shade
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread
Come live & be merry and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha, Ha, He. ("Laughing Song")

The intertextual background beyond Blake's work is considerable: Marlowe, Pope, Shakespeare and, thanks to the visual likeness between the central figure [Fig. 5] and Blake's illustration of Comus, Milton.[240] *Comus* does a great deal to implant the possibility of an infernal backdrop. In Blake's illustration [Fig. 6], Comus is featured holding his necromancer's magic wand in one hand and a goblet of wine in the other, ready to ruin the honor of "the Lady" on every conceivable level. He likewise tries to persuade her to join him via conventional *carpe diem* tropes:

List lady be not coy, and be not cosen'd
With that same vaunted name Virginity."[241]

Perhaps *carpe noctum* is the better term; nonetheless, the echo similar exhortations to the Marlowian "come live & be merry." Against the invitations of Marlowe or the machinations of Comus, Blake writes a veneer of chasteness into this song. Gleckner sides with this view by noting the cool indifference of everyone seated at the table. And a parallel chastening runs throughout the poem where, in his view, orgasmic "round" mouths are induced to laughter in a manner similar to Pandarus's Song from *Troilus and Cressida*:

For O love's bow
Shoots buck and doe…
Yet that which seems the wound to kill
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!"[242]

But Gleckner may go too far in chastening Pandarus's song. Oh! Oh! could equally mean pain, and ha! ha! he! subsequent pleasure—Blake's quotation could be read as a subtle affirmation of sexual congress or a context-driven chastening of sexual pleasure into pleasant gleefulness. Aside from that, Thomas Dillworth notes an entirely different

[240] For all but Pope, see Robert Gleckner's "Blake's 'Dark Vision of Torment' Unfolded: *Innocence* to *Jerusalem*." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 95 (1996): 708-711. For Pope see Andrew Cooper, p. 69.
[241] *Comus*, 737-8.
[242] *Troilus and Cressida* (III.i.106-107, 122-113)

source: John Newberry's poem "How to Laugh," which first appeared in his collection A Pretty Book for Children (1761).[243]

> Nature a thousand ways complains,
> A thousand words express her pains:
> But for her laughter has but three.
> And very small ones, Ha, Ha, He.[244]

But "Laughing Song" complicates the easy elision of laughter and natural language by interposing "wit"—a term that emerges early in "Laughing Song":

> When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
> And the green hills laugh with the noise of it. (ll. 3-4)

While Dillworth points us to a valuable source (A Pretty Book for Children), he obscures the fact that the stanza was extant and in circulation prior to Newbery's 1761 publication. Ten years earlier, it appeared in a miscellany entitled The nut-Cracker. Containing an agreeable variety of well-season'd jests, epigrams, epitaphs, &c. Collected from the most sprightly wits of the present age. (It was printed for Newbery but published by a certain "Ferdinando Foot," a known pseudonym for Christopher Smart.) A century or so later, Leigh Hunt would underscore the same stanza's witty typology and point out its shortcomings in that "laughable fancies have at least as many ways of expressing themselves as those that are lachrymose," but Hunt conceals a certain sympathy for the verse, which he admits is "facetious."[245] The task of writing about "imagination and fancy," he claims, is nowhere near as difficult as writing a disquisition on "this laughing jade of a topic, with her endless whims and faces, and the legions of indefinable shapes that she brought me to see" (2). Blake's placement of wit alongside nature's laughter reaches forward to Hunt's insights into how laughter and humor and wit and the connection between them resist clear, formal analysis.

The forms and formations in "Laughing Song" pivot between the complex textual background it references, the pictorial likenesses it bears and the extemporaneous quality of its verses. On top of that, it is not so much a narrative as it is a "Song;" nothing comes to pass in it other than the creation of a drawn-out contingency. The repetition of "when the" suspends narrative action and suggests that when and only when these various laughters have been laughed and unified (no small feat) that the "come live & be merry and join with me" can at last be consummated and the verbal text, for its part, conjugated.[246] En route to this outcome, the stanzas synchronically build up phrases, colors, vernal imagery and a relationship among laughter, wit and song, moving from the

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[243] Dillworth, Thomas. "Blake's Argument with Newberry in 'Laughin Song.'" *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 14.1 (1980): 36-37.
[244] Quoted in Dillworth, 36. The Nutcracker [...]. London, 1751, p. 56.
[245] Wit and Humour, Selected from the English Poets; with an Illustrative Essay and Critical Comments (Second Edition). London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1846, p. 2
[246] See Andrew Cooper's similar reading of this syntax in William Blake and The Productions of Time, p. 70.

spaces of the woods and the pasture to a place—indoors or out—where "painted birds" and a table are set. Perhaps the painted birds are peacocks illustrated on the walls of a tearoom or spring birds with beautiful plumage: the joy and laughter doesn't discriminate. Pleasure and privilege and youthfulness and all the "green" of spring and innocence pervades. This multiplicity of ideas is less the problem and more the daring product of "Laughing Song." Its many suspensions (which will concern my reading herewith) organize both natural and social images of pastoral joy into a provisional unity—it is this provisional nature and the many suspensions the poem enacts that give Blake room to explore its complex auguries of *Innocence*.

Thematically and prodosically, the temporal suspension is mirrored through the suspension of two competing vocal modes—individual rhetoric and choral singing. The speaker of the poem itself seems to underscore this opposition through his use of anaphora (rhetoric) and the repeated desire for song (or the desire to have others join in the singing). But they are also tantalizingly linked through his anaphoric repetition of "when the…" and the metrical false start it produces. It tunes our ears to a triple meter that never decisively develops in this poem—or put another way, the poetic meter never eases into musical rhythm. The sounds of the poem produce an oral/aural performance that parallels the conceit of innocence that eventuates in the "come live & and be merry and join with me / To sing the sweet chorus of ha, ha, he."

Blake is perfectly willing to employ a musical triplet rhythm in other *Songs*, which makes it seem all the more conspicuously undeveloped here. In fact, in poems like "The Echoing Green" the musical rhythm is simple and pronounced at the expense of metrical clarity or regularity (catalectic lines, inconsistent numbers of syllables or feet); yet it produces verse of striking movement and fluency, unified by a dominating, musical triplet rhythm that supplants poetic triple meter (be it anapestic, dactylic, amphibrach). Coleridge's claim that there "must" be an essential difference between the meter of poetry and prose develops another essentialist layer. For Blake, there is an essential difference between the meter of poetry and the rhythm of song. In this, however, the reader matters. It is only if we yield to the rhythm and therefore suspend what we know about meter, that the language moves from temporality to tempo, or from unfolding syllabic patterns to isochronous sound. "The SUN does aRISE / And make HAPpy the SKIES. /*/ The MERry bells RING/*/ To WELcome to SPRING." ("The Echoing Green" ll. 1-4, asterisks are mine) We have made the transition to musical rhythm if we feel there must be a short (one-beat) pause where I have inserted my asterisks. This example of *melos* in the form of song-like rhythm is not unique to Blake, but it is pervasive in his *Songs*. The tension between metrical scansion and musical rhythm reproduced so irrepressibly by Blake suggests that the scene of remediation in the "Introduction" is meant to be one that will likewise carry forth; that the printed song will likewise be "heard" again—or *may* be. Likewise, its suspension can be "read" as well. The reciprocation, once again, is suggested by the closing image of the listening child. "Every child may joy to hear," recalls the initial image of the child in the cloud inducing the piper to continually remediate his song. The emblem of the innocent child is projected into the reality of the written book's use: the child asks to be read to, and the adult reader turns the writing into speech, and speech, in attaining musical rhythm, imitates as well as intimates song. The process, however, is indeed a reciprocal one, not a symmetrical one. That initial piping—the songs of "pleasant glee"—never fully returns as music. But the

threshold between metrical verse and musical verse can indeed be crossed in both directions.

The "ha, ha, he" that both slows the meter and gives us our most percussive moment is likewise the prevailing formal agent in the textual half of the imagetext—the link between innocent laughter and wit; the link between the human and nature; the link between voice and affect; the link between the figured sounds in the poem and the poem's own onomatopoeic sound. No wonder that it is such a miniscule common denominator. It forces wit's elaborate language into simplicity, and likewise forces nature's sounds or *vocalese* into writable language. Song stations itself as an intermediary between these disparate forms of speech and noise.

But this leaves aside the engraver's and illustrator's touch, which surfaces in both subtle and not so subtle ways as well. In the poem's most crucial line "come live & be merry and join with me," for instance, we encounter both an ampersand and the "and," thus a typographical difference. Reading the difference between these two marks might be perilously hairsplitting in that Blake often shifts back and forth between his use of ampersands and the conjunction "and" out of compositional necessity more than anything else. In long lines where he needs to conserve space, he turns to the more compact ampersand. For example, in "The Little Black Boy" he lists "And flowers and trees and beasts and men" (l. 11) in one place and "…Come out from the grove my love & care" in another (l. 19) where he seems about to run into his illustrative frame. These examples highlight, if nothing else, his consistency within the line. The long list of nouns are joined by "and," the double epithet by an ampersand. Yet in "Laughing Song" we see both used side by side. Why would he do this? One possibility is that, whether consciously or unconsciously, Blake means for these conjunctions to issue differently. And regardless of Blake's intentions, in phrases that are side by side, there could not but be a different visually wrought vocal emphasis between one sign of conjunction and another. Additionally, his series of conjunctions in "Laughing Song" is not a list like we see in "The Little Black Boy" but rather two verb phrases. His desire for his addressee to "come live & be merry" is a discrete thought; "join with me" is another one altogether. Blake therefore yokes together the imperative "join with me" to the infinitive "to sing" in a particularly insistent way. Though laborious, this reading allows us to see that the last two lines are an imperative with two parts: a general invitation to live in pastoral innocence, and a second, more personal invitation to unite with the speaker by uniting in song. But is a state of innocence obtainable by "joining in" with just the right oral medium?

It may have been an intrinsic understanding of the innocent overreach in this gesture that attracted Wordsworth's attention, prompting him to copy "Laughing Song" into his commonplace book in 1804. The date of this copying is intriguing given that during this time he had been composing the *Intimations Ode.* Wordsworth's own grasp of alienation from innocence and the alluring prospect of a return, qualified through the nonetheless resolute aim to "find / Strength in what remains behind" (ll. 182-83), finds a similar expression in the tension between the impossibility of recapturing lost modes of consciousness and the search for some other form of recompense. [247]

[247] From Wordsworth, William. William Wordsworth, The Poems. Ed John O. Hayden. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

"Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May! (ll. 169-175).

Not bards, but birds. The key phrase is "in thought," a conspicuously silent joining-in; the recompense is, in turn, the "song of thanks and praise" (141) or vestigial form of the Pindaric ode that stages the voice's exploration of its alienation between the lost "things that can be seen no more" and the future promise of "years that bring the philosophic mind." This philosophy, in Blakean terms, is an energetic, productive one. Wordsworth, like Blake, despite his invocation of philosophy, would never accept the dubious premise that innocence could be regained through experience's sophism. While Wordsworth's unfolding ode evidences some degree of the achievement of its philosophic aspirations, Blake's song suspends the enactment of this union. The final irony, therefore, of the anaphoric "when the…" is that despite the long suspended grammatical conjugation, the choral consummation is projected beyond the temporal frame of the poem. This arresting is advanced in the illustration as well (see again Fig 5). As already noted, the animated figure standing in the foreground is ignored by his counterparts. We as readers or viewers share his perspective, much as we, as speakers of the poem, articulate the gradations of voice's musical intensification. The polite conversations taking place among the well-dressed, ostensibly well-to-so society of which Blake was certainly not a part creates a pretty but muted backdrop. The conversational speech depicted here further fragments "voice" into separate voices. Near the bottom of the page, our painted birds from the poem are literally painted onto the border of the picture, bringing before our eyes the fact that the vaster natural scenes featured in the first two stanzas as well as the children (if we assume that Mary and Susan and Emily are indeed children) do not fit into the space of this image, only the poem. Put another way, the image figures what the text willfully suspends—disunity, a lack of vocal harmony that is necessary for the chorus implicitly desired by the speaker. Like a discord awaiting a resolution, the unity of space, childhood and adulthood, innocence and polite culture, polite culture and nature that is ever posed but outside of this multivalently oral/aural imagetext may finally receive its most precarious stamp from the transliteration of the laughing to "ha ha he." Laughing, after all, does not fit well into either poetic meter or musical rhythm; its rendering in either medium is a dubious premise at best. The feeling of joy in spontaneous laughter would be hard-pressed to survive the decisive structure of song. Its only inherent meaning (pleasant glee, for instance), would be lost. The innocence of this piece can only be understood as another rehearsal of the belief that one oral mode can survive and even profit from its transformation into another. The specter of experience lurks in the dubious simplicity of the poem. "Come live & be merry and join with me" that *may* come to be—if only it were that easy.

While the textual simplicity of "Laughing Song's" disguises bedeviling medial complexities, "Spring" intensifies these complexities so much that the poem requires an

illustration to clarify what it is and who it is we may be hearing. A song in three verses with a refrain, the key to the poem lies in the triangulation of image, inarticulate voice-as-song and the simultaneous presence of what I will call the nominating voice itself (to avoid, for the time being, the question of whether or not the voice sings or speaks). From a medial viewpoint, this makes the status of its innocence among the most precarious poems in the whole collection, as well as a particularly notable deconstruction of oral-visual "symmetrical clarity."

"Spring" pointedly mixes references to natural music, the playing of pastoral instruments and infantile sound—things that are, broadly speaking, connected throughout *Innocence*. Thomas Vogler has linked the piping of the "Introduction" to "Spring's" many noises—chiefly the cock crowing and the "infant noise." As he explains, "[o]ur visual recognition of the word, producing an image of the primitive musical instrument, needs to be supplemented by its etymology in the Latin *pipare*, meaning 'to peep, cheep, or chirp' …it comes to stand for the 'infant noise' and the 'bird noise'" (127).[248] Vogler carries forward his consideration of hatchlings far enough to consider that the newborn "peeper" is "undetermined and uninfluenced by the world outside, which it has not yet experienced" (127). As I mentioned earlier, *innocence* itself is derived from the Latin *in* (not) and *nocere,* (to hurt or to do harm; in Blake's *innocence*, there is no hurt yet done to the innocent actor nor any knowledge of it—or none that he or she is aware of (or willing to be aware of). Experience, by contrast, is often posed as a form of education unknown to innocence, like the Chimney Sweeper from *Experience*, presented as "a little black thing" who cries "…weep, weep, in notes of woe!" ("The Chimney Sweeper" ll. 1-2). The notes, though inarticulate, are not *infans* (i.e. prior to language, infant-like); rather he was "taught…to sing the notes of woe" by his parents and necessity—survival means sweeping, suffering means weeping.[249] Thus experience's tutelage provides musical analogs to narrative accounts, and through the sign of music weeping itself is de-naturalized; the indigent child is indoctrinated into a register of society that has nothing to offer him outside of hazardous drudgery (i.e. chimney sweeping in place of an education) and instead "teaches" him painful abandonment. The teaching is ironic, of course, taught not as a lesson but through neglect and religiously legitimated self-interest[250]—an utter failure of adult responsibility in any sense, Blakean worldviews included.

Despite Blake's implicit castigation of systematic neglect, he is elsewhere willing to invert the division between adult vocal experience and infantile suffering.

> My mother groand! My father wept.
> Into the dangerous world I leapt:
> Helpless, naked, piping loud:

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[248] Vogler, Thomas A. "Hearing the Songs" in Approaches to Teaching Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience. Eds. Robert F. Gleckner and Mark L. Greenburg. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1989. pp. 127-131.

[249] For the play on (s)weeping, see Hilton, Nelson. Literal Imagination: Blake's Vision of Words. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, p. 256. Cooper also notes the "wince-inducing pun" (59).

[250] e.g. lines 3-4: "Where are thy father and mother? say? / They are both gone up to the church to pray."

Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands:
Striving against my swaddling bands:
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk against my mother's breast. ("Infant Sorrow")

In reading this poem, we must either decide that an adult remembers being an infant or that an infant speaks. In Blake's illuminated text, we encounter a large illustration of a writhing infant before our minds read the text and register the uncertainty [Fig. 7]; and so, understanding that there are other ways in which this poem could be read, let us assume we are dealing with a speaking infant. The infant here has a subjectivity that is adult enough to recall and meticulously organize its hapless entry into the world. The infant poet employs parallelism, carefully arranges syntax and diction, and wonderfully varies the tempo of his lines—a tightly wrought composition. Yet the voice contradicts its self-constituting verses by claiming only to have piped and sulked. In the illustration, he is neither bound, nor held, nor weary but seemingly clamoring after his text (to which his doting nurse or mother is oblivious). In much the same way that everyone in the narrative is voiceless (e.g. the parents weep and groan) the child reaches with paradoxical futility after the material form that could grant him self-expression. Insofar as the piper and the child on the cloud were separable and worked out a procedure of transmedial relays of a "song about a lamb," the single figure of the sorrowful infant—both the piper/peeper and the child turned fiend all at once—constitutes a presence that paradoxically sits outside of its text.

Another version of this problem—being ambiguously in or out of the text—arises in "Spring," precisely where we ought to see both a parceling-out and gradual acquisition of various vocal and aural media (i.e. a child acquiring language). Take, for instance, the arresting and peculiar first and second lines of the poem. "Sound the Flute! / Now its mute." We must ask, is the flute muted in line two, or is it called for because it is mute but shouldn't be? The flute, a pipe substitute, conspicuously begins a poem in which lambs are referenced, described, illustrated (think of the "Introduction"). Textually, in place of a piper, we get songbirds singing in a diurnal duet.

Birds delight
Day and Night.
Nightingale
In the Dale
Lark in Sky
Merrily Merrily to welcome in the Year. (ll. 2-7)

In parallel, the figures of infant childhood grow in the shift between the composition of the first two stanzas and the third. The voice of the first two stanzas shifts to the first person, revealing a second persona. The infinitive refrain of "to welcome in the Year" (possibly attributed to the birds) changes to "we welcome in the Year." The child figure, in moving from infanthood to articulate, self-awareness join in the act of welcoming—a

gesture of reunion but one achieved through alienation, which is marked by the entry into language. [See Fig. 8 and Fig. 9]

In the transition of the first plate of "Spring " to the second, we see the movement of maturation, emblemized via human and musical figures. The child embracing the lamb supplants the reaching infant. The nurse (or mother), mentioned nowhere in the text of the poem, is conspicuously absent in the second plate; her nearest equivalent is the placidly watchful ewe. Lastly, the angel perched on the sheaths of wheat in the first plate and featured piping is followed by a series of other angels (and, here, I should point out, my sense of their order is informed of course by my diachronic reading of the text; it would perfectly conceivable not to follow my critical choice to "read" them in this progression). Despite Gleckner's claims that Blake found the idea of "frames" mechanical and abhorrent, [251] Blake nonetheless sees fit to allow images to work within the logical and aesthetic bounds of framing devices, if not frames themselves. The movement in "Spring" from child-object to child-subject tracks with the contextualization of different voices within the clear frame of a song with refrain. The speaker's reference to the "crow" of the merry voice turns into the child's language:

> Little Lamb
> Here I am.
> Come and lick
> My white neck.
> Let me pull
> Your soft wool.
> Let me kiss
> Your soft face.
> Merrily Merrily we welcome in the Year. (ll. 19-27)

Outside of the illustrated frame yet within the frame of the imagetext, something complicates this otherwise seamless picture: a hunched angel weeps. For what? For the very picture of innocence itself? Does it weep for the loss of infantile innocence and the acquisition of childlike innocence? Aging innocence, as Blake would have us know, means an entry into fraught state pointed decisively toward *Experience*. The silence of the angel's untold knowledge could itself foreshadow this post-infant, pre-adult existence.

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[251] "The "framing" of *Songs of Experience* that [the repetition of the Bard figure] effects, given Blake's abhorrence or such mechanical devices, is hardly sufficient or compelling reason for the presence of 'The Voice of the Ancient Bard' as the culmination of, or even as an "epilogue" to the *Songs* [of *Experience*]" (103). See Gleckner, Robert F. "The Strange Odyssey of Blake's "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." in William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience, pp. 101-122. Ed Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. I will shortly work somewhat against the grain of Gleckner's claims by suggesting that images do indeed frame medial ideas, if not the symbolic import of anthropomorphic figures like the Bard, that run through the combined volumes of *The Songs of Innocence and Experience.*

But there is indeed an adult subjectivity in this poem: the speaker. The question we must ask is whether or not the speaker has handed the poem over to the child, as I have argued thus far, or if he himself is still speaking. How heart-rending indeed, if "Little Lamb / here I am / Let me pull / Your soft wool" is uttered at an irreversible adult distance outside the illustrative frame altogether but inside the textual one. If so, the losses rapidly accrete in that the visual unity of child and lamb in "Spring" complements their textual unity of "The Lamb":

> He is called by thy name,
> For he calls himself a Lamb:
> He is meek & he is mild,
> He became a little child:
> I a child & thou a lamb,
> We are called by his name. (13-18)

In "Spring," the supplications to join with and touch the lamb dovetail with the conspicuous absence of "The Lamb's" religious invocations. Does the weeping angel weep for the maturing child or the adult speaker who sees an image of unity—lamb and child—that is no longer his? Does the noticeable procession of slant rhymes present in the second stanza and intensifying into the third (lick/neck/, pull/wool, and, most especially, kiss/face) suggest that the "song," is dissonant, divided from the facile chorus of natural music and prelinguistic joy intimated through "Cock does crow/ So do you / Merry voice / Infant noise"? In Blake's words, "can it be a song of joy?" Is this why the flute no longer plays?

The reading of "Spring" I propose is not an answer but the very question at which we've arrived: how do we decide between the two identities—the two voices? By admitting that we cannot, we recognize the instability that arises among the illustrations, the text, the trope of hearing music, and the poetic form of versified song. They are written "in a book" but likewise bound together in a supplemental set of relations—not one or the other can singlehandedly define or produce the meaning of the "song" nor clearly indicate whether we are reading experience or innocence. Nor can anyone of them be the controlling medial trope. Phenomenologically, we only see the imagetext, but the moment we begin to read, the inner-ear supplements the act of visual encounter, and the stakes of our reading are thrust into a set of medial and hermeneutic contingencies. Is this the voice of the child or the man? Do we take the adult voice at face value when he links the infant noise with natural sounds and music? If Blake nudges us in one direction or the other, however, I would be tempted to say that the possibilities of expressive plenitude muted with the flute and supplanted by images of birdsong, introduces a pathetic fallacy suggestive of the stain'd water in the "Introduction," which is either fulsomely clear or muddied with its own erasures.

So much attention gets focused on pipes; Blake deploys images of harps as well. I would like to end by touching upon the iconographic significance of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience's* larger frame—the image of the pipe and the harp. As the pipe inaugurates the *Songs of Innocence*, we might find it intriguing, if not fitting, that its counterpart, the harp, concludes the subsequent *Songs of Experience*.

Youth of delight! come hither
And see the opening morn,
Image of Truth new-born.
Doubt is fled, and clouds of reason,
Dark disputes and artful teazing.
Folly is an endless maze;
Tangled roots perplex her ways;
How many have fallen there!
They stumble all night over bones of the dead;
And feel -- they know not what but care;
And wish to lead others, when they should be led.
("The Voice of the Ancient Bard")

As I indicated earlier, Blake had shifting opinions about the placement of this poem. He composed it for "Innocence" but finally decided on "Experience," effectively making this the last "Song" of the combined collection. The distinction is important for Blake. Critics have long noted that states of "Innocence" and "Experience" are evoked in the texts of individual poems and the accompanying images (and even, in many cases, the style of the lettering) but "Innocence" and "Experience" are also bestowed contextually—that is to say, we read a poem as an utterance-in-experience because we encounter it among the *Songs of Experience*. As one might anticipate given the poem's shifting context, this "Song" seems dissonant. It is addressed to a "youth of delight" that through both description and depiction seem nothing like the forlorn, drooping, or writhing figures that fill the other pages of *Experience*. But most curiously, the title and image radically contrast even as they supplement each other. The Ancient Bard is introduced via the poem's title as a "voice" as if to emphasize that the voice is a non-corporeal, trans-historical presence that can speak from experience born in measureless cycles of time, underscored by the poem's millennial conceptualization of "night" and "day." The bardic voice described in the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Experience* "past present and future sees," may do so here if we accept that these two figures are sufficiently relatable—but they could hardly be the same. Either way, the voice is radically juxtaposed to the ephemeral "youth of delight," whom the voice calls to revolutionary action through its closing declaration, "And wish to lead others when they should be lead, " a phrase we could historicize as Blake's still-optimistic view of the French Revolution's early stages.[252] This disembodied bardic *voice*, however, is simultaneously re-embodied via the accompanying image.[253] Here we see the Bard standing before his audience, his mouth agape and his hand strumming the strings of a giant harp which extends from the ground

[252] "From its style, it seems that the poem was written at the end of the 1780s, most likely reflecting in it sanguine proclamations the optimism generated in the earliest days of the French Revolution" (Gardner 247).

[253] Perhaps his own innocence forestalled his eventual relocation of the poem, and if so, how do we read this act? As a revision of a poem that was conceptually ambiguous enough for Blake that it seemed to defy its context within his own system, or as a latent comment on his earlier views of revolution?

up past the point where it is obscured by the text [Fig. 10]. This is not a scene of inscription or writing; rather, it suggests a transformation of sound and image into the space of the imagetext itself. The image of the musical performance establishes the primacy of physical proximity and sensory encounter while the giant Harp itself quite literally imposes itself on the scene, along with its iconographic reference to a timeless poetic authority, which, like music, represents an ideal precondition of poetic language: it, like the music of the harp, affects its hearer immanently while harboring endless possibilities for utterance. The illustration, therefore, becomes not only a signifier of music but a supplement—perhaps an ironic supplement—for the very composite art for which Blake has named his own composite art: song. The music of song lies beyond the limit of the book, much like the power of the piper's playing or the authority of an ancient Bard. Musical ideas, musical principles and musical iconography frame these songs, just as visual designs can be viewed as a kind of elegy for music, one that by necessity cannot be heard in an "illuminated book" of poetry unless some human agent encounters it and in effect brings it to life, and even then, music, unless invented by its reader, remains entirely un-notated. The closest analogue for musical notation is (image)text—which, as we have seen, brings forward its own competing range of oral patterns, speech acts, narrative motifs and, in Blake's case, pictorial touchstones.

Blake is a helpful figure against which to read the finer tones of Romantic orality in that he both produces multimedia texts and dramatizes mediality itself inside his texts' fictional world. Granted, virtually no other poet provides us with illuminated works, and so the argument could be made that Blake's exemplarity as a pictorialist poet makes it hard to apply our reading of him elsewhere. Likewise, *Innocence* and *Experience* give us a lens that is both Manichean and productively unstable enough to further elaborate the finer tones of his oral and aural world making. And indeed: what about when the imagetexts are only texts? In all likelihood, our initial encounter with Blake is not the reading mother or nurse featured on the title page of *The Songs of Innocence*, but rather type-set reproductions bound in anthologies of poetry—a double loss, of sound and image. But Blake himself invites us to start irreversibly down the path of reading/hearing the meaning-making interplay of oral expression's disparate registers among groups of texts, depending on our willingness—our voluntary power—to "read" and to "hear" and to find and open up the illuminated texts (as well as their variations and textual indeterminacy). Insofar as it is common critical practice to consider poems in the context of their original publication—we might profit from venturing considerations of how mediation scenes, or even mediation schemes, likewise provide contextual apparatuses for understanding romantic poems and, with them, romanticism in a grander sense. But such reading requires a patient, creative engagement and a belief in one's own voluntary power. Perhaps, then, it falls to critics to be powerful volunteers and to encourage volunteerism.

Chapter 4

Lyric Intimacy: Sociable Singing and Sensuous Songs in the Poems of John Keats

In the previous chapter, we explored how Blake marshaled minute, but vital, discrepancies between visual and oral media, which, in turn, correlated with a range of sub-oral mediations: voice, song and wordless music. These fine gradations vibrantly construct a generic blueprint of multivalent orality and aurality that coincides with his quasi-mythic registers of innocence and experience. Altogether, this multimedia poiesis provides the engine for the full range of whatever religious, political or historical reading we could deem operative in his early and best-known work. These finer, discrepant tones—voice, written letter, song, instrumental music—operate in Keats's poems as well, taking their shape in response to a similar set of generic imperatives but formulated through Keats's experience as a coterie poet and the shifting impact this coterie had on his thought and work across his brief career. My study of Keats, therefore, is developmental in nature, as many studies of Keats tend to be.

The end point, if not the focal point, of any study of Keats's music must be the "Ode to a Nightingale" and "To Autumn," and that is precisely where I will proceed. I would, however, like to proceed with a problematic in mind pertinent especially to the Nightingale ode: how divested of "ideational content" is the "pure vocalese" of the Nightingale? I take these phrases from Helen Vendler's magisterial reading of the poem, a critical supererogation that has exerted force on every reading since (and likely shut out more than a few attempts). [254] Vendler's view makes sense insofar as she reads the Nightingale ode as Keats's examination of fine art (music, obviously) and a "meditation on listening" (81). As she explains, this naturally limits the scope of what we can expect to find in the ode. "Questions of ideational content and of social or moral value arise perhaps inevitably in criticism of literature, painting, sculpture, and even dance; but such questions become very nearly unintelligible when posed with respect to instrumental music" (78). In choosing the nightingale, she argues, Keats's was confronted with an emblematic "controversy over the sex of the nightingale and the import of its music" (81); i.e., the Miltonic claim that the bird is female and "most melancholy" and the Coleridgian argument that the bird is male and that its music is "full of love and joyance."[255] While I don't contest the accuracy of the statement, I would add that where music is concerned, Keats "inherited" a number of ideas, if not ideational content, about music that also impact the way the nightingale's vocalese can be read. Even a brief glimpse at them throws into stark relief how much more complicated "pure vocalese" can be then than Vendler leads us to believe.

Before proceeding, I must point out that I use Vendler here because her arguments about Keats's deployment of pure-music are so critically and intellectually tempting. In

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[254] Vendler, Helen. The Odes of John Keats. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985. Vendler's terms appear on page 78.

[255] My quotations from Milton and Coleridge appear in Vendler's reading as well. See, p. 81.

fact, I aim to reach conclusions similar to hers, but the critical narrative that will lead us to those conclusions is crucially different. I say "crucially," because the narrative I will trace complicates the way we read different instances of ideation-bereft musical images. Likewise, it complicates the way this poem and other musically significant "lyric" odes provide examples of—and even exemplify—the Greater Romantic Lyric. The speaker's undeniable isolation must be recognized and acknowledged, not because it conveys lyric solitude, but because of the way that its isolation is achieved: through Keats's most robust deployment of wordless song. I argue that it represents a deliberate estrangement from, though not a refutation of, the musical and poetical norms of sociability that Keats encountered through the Hunt circle, a multimedia (i.e. musical and poetical) dimension of his artistic evolution whose shape is revealed time and again through the musical motifs or, to use a Keatsian term, the musical "speculations" that evolve with his poiesis, and in turn help his changeful poetic project to evolve.[256]

To put this another way, there is a missing background in Vendler's reading that is familiar to Keats scholars—the politics and poetics of the Hunt circle—that complicates as well as re-energizes the kind of propositions that Vendler makes in her reading of the ode. Let's take the status of pure song as anti-ideational once more: any reader of "Ode to a Nightingale" could, as Vendler does, find a parallel between it and the early "Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke."[257] Keats invokes the name of several well-known composers of the day, ascribing to each a specific set of characteristics:

> But many days have past since last my heart
> Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart;
> By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd;
> Or by the song of Erin pierced and saddened:
> What time you were before the music sitting,
> And the rich notes to each sensation fitting. (ll. 109-114)[258]

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[256] "Speculation" is a term Keats used in a letter to Benjamin Bailey (November 22, 1817) to refer to provisional ideas and theories that Keats uses to contemplate poetics, philosophy and various opposites (like sensations vs. thoughts) in a playful yet incisive way. Outside of Keats's usage, the term also suggests "speculative music," or the erstwhile idea that the cosmos was formed in connection with musical logic. Since the Augustan age, tropes of speculative music, or musical speculation, could be said to continue in musical metaphors or conceits used to consider some aspect of nature, or the intellect, or non-musical art forms, (or anything). In the case of Keats, musical metaphors (or speculations) extend to a many ideas, including tropes of sociability and intimacy (which concern this chapter). For an account of the changing fate of speculative music in English poetry, see John Hollander's The Untuning of the Sky. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. My quotations from Keats's letters are from in Keats, John The Letters of John Keats in 2 Vols. Ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958. (Henceforth *KL*)

[257] While Vendler ultimately treats this as an instance of emblematic dissatisfaction, she proposes it as a clear instance of music "solely of sensation, not of thought" (78).

[258] My source for Keats's poetry is Keats's Poetry and Prose. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. Poems are cited by line number throughout.

There is indeed a fixation on sensation here, but we also see that Mozart is hierarchically superior to the other musical figures in the passage—"divine." Clarke, an old acquaintance from Enfield school, was instrumental in bringing Keats into the Hunt, or "the Cockney," fold, and as we'll see shortly, Mozart was nothing short of an earthly divine for the Cockneys—an artistic, political and cultural touchstone for the group. Mozart's instrumental music may have been bereft of verbal meaning, but there is a plenitude of political meaning—a different kind of content—in the invocation of Mozart's name. We can also consider that Mozart was well known to Keats and the Hunt circle for his operas (especially his songs or arias) as well as if not more than for his keyboard sonatas. Thus the praise Keats raises for the piano-playing of those earlier years is complicated by what Mozart meant to Keats, Clarke and Hunt and company in 1816 when Keats composes the verse epistle. The proper name is more important than the musical description.

On the topic of Mozart himself, Keats displays two rather opposite views in his letters that add another layer of complexity here. In one from December of 1818, he announces his annoyed frustration with Hunt circle and, above all, Hunt himself, declaring: "through [Hunt] I am indifferent to Mozart."[259] Yet two months earlier he recounted his infatuation with Jane Cox, a cousin of the Reynolds siblings, saying, "she kept me awake one Night as a tune of Mozart's might do—"[260] Mozart and the unattainable Jane are both at once trifling and yet consuming, and in either case music—Mozart's music—represents a lure felt internally, a preoccupied wish to join in that stands in marked contrast to the social disavowal aimed at Hunt. What I'll elaborate henceforth is that these anecdotal epistolary moments are far from off-the-cuff musings; rather, they are built on deeper associations between sociability and music, expressive art (be it poetry or music) and intimacy, and finally the necessary link between poetic text and musical song that organizes these associations in Keats's writing. The ultimate questions are, when we encounter the wordless song of the nightingale, how "musical" is it? What does it mean when Keats refers to music as "song" even though there is no identifiable song text? What is "song"—an oral form so abundantly recurrent in Keats's poems—supposed to do but doesn't do when he hears the call of the nightingale? To what extent are we reading about the music of an instrumental *vocalese* and to what extent are we reading an extension of the Huntian sociability when we know that it deliberately criss-crosses the boundaries of music and poetry? What do answers to these questions say about the quintessential lyricality of this quintessential lyric poet?

Heard Melodies

To begin, it is necessary to place Keats into the historical narrative of Cockney musical culture. Gillen D'Arcy Wood's reading of the Cockneys' politicized infatuation with Mozart—"a political form of leisure, an act of class self-identification"—is as complete and as definitive an account as one is likely ever to find; and yet, Keats does not

[259] *KL* (Journal Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 16 December, 1818 through 4 January, 1819) II. 11

[260] *KL,* (To George and Georgiana Keats, 14-31 October, 1818) I. 395.

figure prominently in this story.[261] The obvious reason for this is that much of the story Wood traces necessarily coincides with events that postdate Keats's death. Wood cites one of Mary Cowden Clarke's well-known reminiscences of "Keats leaning against the organ, 'one foot raised on his other knee'," a pose that Wood connects to "her later, last sight of the fatally ill poet, 'half-reclining on some chairs' at Hunt's house on the eve of his sailing for Italy" (123). Via an endnote, Wood links these auguries of death to Keats's outburst from the December 1818 journal letter to George and Georgiana quoted earlier:

> "The Cockney cult of Mozart finally proved too much for Keats. His falling out with Hunt in 1818 was synonymous, in Keats's mind, with alienation from Mozart: 'The night we went to Novello's there was a complete set to of Mozart and punning--I was so completely tired of it that if I were to follow my own inclination I should never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt **....**Through him I am indifferent to Mozart.' (n258)

In this picture of events, Keats continues to be undone by adversarial social forces: he was first, according to Byron, killed by bad reviews and is here featured cutting himself off from his most direct link to musical culture by the weight of Oxford Street's obsessions.[262] These lines prove troublesome to a critic bent on exploring the connections between Keats's poetry and music. Downplaying the dismissal, John A. Minahan notes how Keats was at least "alive to language" and observes the wordplay "*set* to of Mozart and punning" and "that *set.*" (He stops short, however, of commenting that Keats is essentially continuing one of the activities—punning—that he claims to have grown so tired of in the first place). He writes that "[p]erhaps Keats's annoyance is more at the company than at the use of music as entertainment. Such annoyance comes and goes in Keats's life."[263]

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[261] Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840: Virtue and Virtuosity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 125. I will work closely with Wood's chapter, "Cockney Mozart," pp. 118-150.

[262] In fairness to Wood, his history is necessarily a revisionist one, seeking to underscore the extent to which prominent figures in British musical culture have been likewise left out of the historical narrative of the Hunt circle. In a sense, Keats's critical fame readies him for the role of historicist foil in Wood's account. Take the figures of Thomas William Ayrton and Thomas Alsager for instance: "Ayrton was close friends with Alsager, whose literary posterity rests on his being the owner of the Chapman's Homer that found its way into the eager hands of Keats, and as one of the principal organizers of Hazlitt's lectures at the Surrey Institution in 1818" (140); or "[t]he Hunt-Alsager-Ayrton connection does not occupy a central place in literary-based histories of the Hunt circle, just as the 1817 *Examiner* is far better remembered for its role in the promotion and defense of Keats and Shelley than for its Italian Opera column" (142).

[263] Minahan, John A. Word Like a Bell: John Keats, Music and the Romantic Poet. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1992, p. 26.

There is much more to Keats's side of the story, however, particularly where his early work is concerned. There has never been any doubt that Keats's 1817 collection of *Poems* explicitly announces his affections and debts to his early guides, friends and mentors. Three early poems in particular—"How Many Bards Gild the Lapses of Time", "To Kosciuszko" and the "Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke"—frame the dimensions of Keats's musical ideas and metaphors, themselves instances of "the bonds—personal, poetic, political—that held the group together in life."[264] Much of this is concerned, musically speaking, with organizing textual allusions and sound phenomena into musical sounds, a process suggestive of poetic craft itself and an early marker of the way that Keats will continue to examine exchanges between musical aesthetics and *poiesis* both in his prose and in the lines of his poetry.[265] Music, just like poetry, can provide forms by which the innumerable signs of culture and nature can be read in certain political and sociable contexts.

"How Many Bards Gild the Lapses of Time," much like the epistle to Clarke, was a poem intended to display his poetic prowess to Hunt and company. Keats describes how the verses of the poets he most admires will often spring to mind when he himself is sitting "down to rhyme" (l. 5). The poem performs what it articulates: it arranges voices (e.g. Shakespeare's "delighted fancy"[266]) into a poem in the present, harmonizing them and calling attention to this act as a musical gesture. It goes without saying that this is a canny and shrewd performance before a group equally interested in poetry and music. The octave relates how the bards' "earthly and sublime"(l. 4) beauties "will in throngs before my mind intrude,"(l. 6) though he remains unbothered, as they are a "pleasing chime"(l. 8). In the subsequent sestet he develops the idea that not only time but spatial distance, in having the ability to separate a thought or phenomenon from its point of origin, "bereaves" it of its capacity to disturb. Divested of any disturbance, beauties remain. He elaborates the effect of distance on perception through a catalog of natural and manmade sounds:

> So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store
> The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—
> The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves
> With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,
> That distance of recognizance bereaves,
> Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar. (ll. 9-14)

It is a specific frame of mind that turns these sounds into music; the poet seems to find himself in the role of arranger, not composer. These sounds must be situated over or

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[264] Cox, Jeffrey N. Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley Hunt and Their Circle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 72. Cox's book is the most complete and, in many ways, the inaugural book-length study of the politics of the Cockney coterie.

[265] I mean "musical aesthetics" in a broad sense. In reading Keats I leave aside the broad field of Eighteenth Century musicological writing in order to pay attention to more immediate, insistent influences—primarily the Hunt circle.

[266] *As You Like It* (IV.iii.102)

within distance, which the speaker first poses as chronological time and subsequently as physical space. Even the solemn sound of the great bell can be pleasing provided that it reaches the poet in a state reminiscent of what Keats would later term *negative capability*—there is no philosophy or alienating framework that reveals the music in sounds, the mere edifice of distance permits the poet to listen to phenomena as one would simply hear performed music. The poet's task is to wield the nuances of diction, syntax and figuration to re-express this as music and dramatize the process of its making (i.e. poiesis). It was read disparately by his contemporaries. Clarke, in his *Recollections*, reports that Horace Smith, present at the poem's receipt, loved it—particularly the sestet and the final line: "what a well-condensed expression for a youth so young!"[267] How Smith's voice intruded into the poem's broader reception (as he read it aloud to the group) can only be guessed at, but a clue remains in Hunt's near-dismissal of the poem on metrical grounds in his review of Keats's first volume, evidencing the very first instance of musical disparities between himself and Keats: "by no contrivance of any sort can we prevent this from jumping out of the heroic measure into mere rhythmicality." Hunt, perhaps, hears the first line in a triple meter: HOW many BARDS gild the LAPses of TIME, rather than in an iambic sense (he could have at least admitted a stress on "gild"). It seems that the manner in which poems were shared and read in group settings may have very well left its stamp in the pages of the *Examiner*.[268] It likewise shows us that coinciding and dissenting opinions about the quality of a poem could refer to the sounds of poetry when recited in the ambiguously public yet private setting of one's peers. The formations of aesthetic sense and the hearing of meaning, in other words, was a group endeavor as well as poetic objective. And here, much like in the case of Coleridge, admiration spoken informally among friends and/or peers and criticism published by friends and/or peers equally mark how the sounds of sociable exchanges and the critical interpretation of meters (or meaning) in print both deepen our understanding of how poetry was "read" and how different experiences can imprint disparate opinions in history. Its purposes (social bonding; critical appraisal) shifted with the medium in which it was received and understood.

Musical supernaturalism and verbal sound enter into Keats's figures too, making a crucial, if often overlooked, appearance in "To Kosciusko."[269]

> Good Kosciusko, thy great name alone
> Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling;
> It comes upon is like the glorious pealing
> Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
> And now it tells me, that in whorls unknown,
> The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
> Are changed to harmonies, for ever stealing

[267] Quoted in: Bate, Walter Jackson. John Keats. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 90n.
[268] From Hunt's review of *Poems* of 1817, in *The Examiner*, July 13, 1817.
[269] Every Nineteenth Century instance of the name that will appear in this chapter features what seems to be the accepted misspelling, "Kosciusko." Unless quoting a title or line directly, I will use "Kosciuszko."

Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.
It tells me too, that on a happy day,
  When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
  Thy name with Alfred's and the great of yore
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
  To where the great God lives for evermore. (ll. 1-14)

The appearance of the name "Kosciuszko" in English is rather clamorous, aurally and visually speaking—something to which the poet of *Don Juan* was hardly blind (or deaf). In *The Age of Bronze* (1823) Byron writes about "That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear; / Kosciusko!"[270] Thomas McLean's study of England's (almost) unanimously positive attitude toward Kosciuszko touches here and there upon the sound of the name, most notably in his reference to one of Byron's journals. Byron mentions that, "we spoke of Kosciusko. Count R.G. told me that he has seen the Polish officers in the Italian war burst into tears on hearing his name" (qtd McLean 79). The sound of the Anglicized Kos-kee-us-ko was the source of the joke (the correct pronunciation is closer to Ko-shyoos-ko). Even if Byron knew better than to hear the *crashing* of the name, he seems to count on the fact that his reader will be less well informed and eagerly connected its extraordinary audio-visual presence to Kosciuszko's larger-than-life struggle for freedom.

The "music" of the name seems to have influenced Keats's poem in no small way, too, but this has as much to do with Hunt as with the cacophony it obtains in the absence of West Slavic phonemes.[271] Hunt wrote both a sonnet to Kosciuszko as well as an article in the *Examiner* that Keats seems to have had in mind when he penned his own sonnet on the Polish patriot. McLean notes that "Hunt hears 'new music, coming to us like a summer wind' when he hears Kosciusko's name," and "Keats expands on this idea" through his octave.[272] McLean more than sufficiently underscores the intertextual relationship between the sonnet and the *Examiner*, and likewise convinces that the sonnet is an instance of Keats seeking to "honor a man much honored" by the previous generation of poets and therefore expressive of "a wish to recapture [those poets'] earlier ideals," but I disagree that Keats "expands" on Hunt's musical figure—only on his enthusiasm for Kosciuszko himself (76). Using the political context of Hunt and Keats's writing as a common denominator, we notice something different about the relationship of the sonnet to the *Examiner* article: Keats's loses the particular force of Hunt's simile. Hunt invokes *new music*; the entire spirit of what Hunt is trying to express through this phrase is absent on two levels in Keats's "everlasting tone." Here is McLean's entire quote from the Examiner, which is more than sufficient to grasp the excitement of both Kosciuszko's re-emergence in European affairs, as well as the novel and momentary nature of Hunt's excitement.

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[270] My quotation of Byron is taken from Thomas McLean (see the two subsequent notes).
[271] McLean was the first to point out that Keats's direct influence for this sonnet was indeed Leigh Hunt.
[272] Thomas McLean. "'Transformed, Not Inly Altered': Kosciuszko and Poland in Post-Waterloo Britain." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 50 (2001): 64-83.

> "the glorious patriot, Kosciuszko, has appeared on the scene again, and is mentioned in the Paris Papers as about to return to his native country with the Polish troops. … We thought that he had been living in America, covered with wounds that disabled him from action. … The very mention of the name of Kosciuszko, after having been compelled to ring the changes *(sic)* so often upon the Bonapartes and the Ferdinands,—the mighty tyrants and the mean,—is like new music, coming to us in a summer wind."[273]

First, although each poet tunes into Kosciuszko's name so to speak, close to three years have elapsed between the revelation of Kosciuszko's appearance "on the scene" and the excitement of course will have dwindled. Hunt's sonnet likewise roots Kosciuszko in a range of scenes—"rural shade," (l. 2) "Stormier fields"(l. 6) "this worlds…/…green amplitudes" (ll. 10-11), "cities" (l. 13) and "the country old" (l. 14).[274] Secondly, Keats turns away from *new music* to an older, frankly unmusical type—celestial harmony. Though he speaks for his country by invoking "Alfred," there is a global (or at least European) and millennial idea at work through the celestial and musical figures. He develops the singular "tone" or the "harmonies" made from the names of "heroes" into an actual musical form: hymning, and these, "gently commingling" seem to point "to where the great God lives for evermore." What Keats has done here anticipates many of his later instances of hymning: he conflates the trope of celestial music with the earthly practice of vocal harmonization via choral singing. Keats's poem was clearly written with the intent to be published in the *Examiner*, and it was. As such, it organizes itself in the *Examiner's* open boundaries of poetic and journalistic response to the day's political circumstances. The musical fact of blended voice is a portent of voices blended in political accord (which was literarily realized in "How Many Bards Gild the Lapses of Time") and likewise stands as a musical emblem of group activity in which, perhaps, like-minded reformists, including Hunt whose sonnet to Kosciusko appeared alongside Keats's, are necessarily included. Certainly, the poem's publication permits it to be read that way.[275]

The younger Keats, however, does not yet possess Hunt's broader reach where varieties of cultural and aesthetic forms are concerned. Hunt navigates the political

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[273] McLean is quoting from a July 3, 1814 article in the *Examiner*. The quote appears on p. 69.

[274] Leigh Hunt, *Poetical Works*, p. 239.

[275] Other aspects of the poem's content and its appearance in the *Examiner* have garnered some critical attention: in particular, the names of other heroes and a reading of the last line as "a rhetorical turning of the tables on divine right" (Kandl 98). I must stress, however, that this happens *after* the February 16, 1817 publication of "To Kosciusko;" and so I accept Kandl's provocative reading but only in a highly contingent sense given the capacious critical frame in which he works (and is not always clear about, e.g. the middle paragraph on p. 98). See John Kandl's "Private Lyrics in the Public Sphere: Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* and the Construction of a Public John Keats." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 44 (1995): 84-101. In particular see pp. 92-99.

dimensions of music, poetry and current events with fluidity and fluency. What is the difference between tuning a name to "new music" instead of "an everlasting peal?" The answer lies in part in the Hunt circle's musical interests, and like Kosciuszko, it was not new to the world at large, but this is indeed how its force was felt inside the Hunt circle.

"New music" necessarily evokes political, even patriotic ideals in Hunt's mind and provokes questions about what relationship Keats, who was courting Hunt's approval at this time, had to music in general. To elaborate on what I briefly proposed earlier: Keats had known Clarke since his time at Enfield and had been taught and mentored by him. In retrospect, Hunt himself saw Clarke as someone who was "admirably well-qualified to nourish the genius of [Keats]."[276] Clarke "nurtured" Keats's interest in the *Examiner*, and by extension, Hunt. Andrew Motion relates that as Clarke "directed Keats's reading, he constantly discussed the *Examiner*, knowing that Keats had admired it since school," which "casts a very revealing light on his aims and preoccupations during this time" (56). The combined force of Clarke and the influence of the *Examiner*, however, introduces an overlooked context for Keats's selection of composers. Prior to Keats's composition of the poem, Clarke had long promised to introduce Keats to Hunt, and subsequently, this poem was one that Clarke indeed presented in the course of that introduction. Both what Keats wrote and how it would have been read are the issue here. Through both Clarke and the *Examiner*, Keats, already an appreciator of music, would have encountered Henry Robertson's opera criticism and through it would have encountered music in a political context alongside the lived experience he knew through Clarke. As Wood points out, Robertson frequently assailed the soprano Anjelica Catalani, a figure that he saw along the same lines that Coleridge, as we saw, views the bellowing soprano in "Lines Composed in a Concert Room."

> "…[I]t was the excesses of Catalani's tenure as *prima donna assoluta* at the King's Theatre in London between 1807 and 1813 that provided a lightning rod for Henry Robertson's penetrating criticism of the opera house in the *Examiner,* and brought the simmering conflict over the control of Italian opera in London, and the frustration of the Mozartians, to a head." (Wood 127)

This conflict between Italians and Germans reflects a broader investment in what Wood identifies as self-conscious "taste-making" carried out by the Cockneys—"[t]o make 'taste' rather than rank the standard for gentlemanliness is, of course, as potentially revolutionary a proposition as universal enfranchisement…" (Wood 119). In this regard, Mozart becomes a signpost for the wedge that Robertson, Hunt and company would use to pry open a politics of the British Operatic stage and advance reformist views in an otherwise theatrical arena.

In this case, Keats would have known that he was entering into a touchy political conflict through the mere invocation of composers' names. Tellingly, not a single Italian name occurs in his list, and there is no reason to think that Clarke, a well-trained pianist,

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[276] Hunt, Leigh. The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt. Ed J.E. Morpurgo. London: The Cresset Press, 1949, p. 273.

would never have veered into an Italian repertoire while touching the keys at Enfield. Prior to his composition of the poem to Clarke, the musical world as refracted through the pages of the *Examiner* would have etched out a frame for Keats's remembered selections. Most tellingly, Mozart is not only first on the list, but first in rank. For Keats, "divine Mozart" unites affect, sumptuousness and divinity through the luxurious warming of his heart. It also suggests that through Clarke's influences and his reading of the *Examiner*, Keats was not only attuned to the right the right politics and the right authors, he was in the know about the right composers too.

Musical Evenings

The most formidable musical presence where the Hunt circle was concerned is Vincent Novello, an influence not to be underestimated. He was, among other things, a successful composer, a cofounder of the eponymous music publishing company Novello and Company (which is still in operation), and an original member of the London Philharmonic Society. He also did a great deal to introduce Continental music to England and cultivate a British interest in it. He championed little-known liturgical music, including that of eminent figures such as Mozart and Haydn, and popularized this music through a variety of means, including written articles, print publication and musical performance. Novello also maintained a scholarly interest in music, and would go on to publish a number of articles as well as the first English language biography of Mozart. He would, as Motion and Wood have both pointed out, discuss music as Hunt discussed poetry—as a medium that could "embody and disseminate" an intermixture of aesthetic beauty and progressive social values.[277]

Novello and Hunt, who first met in 1816, briefly entertained the idea of co-creating a book called "Musical Evenings, or Selections, Vocal and Instrumental" in early 1820. It was intended to reproduce in book form the kind of activity frequently undertaken within the confines Novello's Oxford Street home. The book was never finished, and it survived for a time in manuscript form until it was transcribed and printed in 1964 by David R. Cheney. Cheney introduces the project as

> "…a program of songs and dances to be presented informally at small gatherings in the home. It is the form of a musical journey through Naples, Venice, Savoy, Spain, and Germany, with frequent illustrations and individual types of music—mostly serenades and arias from popular contemporary operas—introduced by historical sketches, explications, and settings."[278]

Hunt was also looking to "publish" the self-fashioned identity that his coterie actively cultivated. Explicit political discourse is suppressed in the description of a joyful evening

[277] Motion, Andrew. John Keats. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998, p. 159.
[278] Hunt, Leigh. Musical Evenings, or Selections, Vocal and Instrumental. Ed David R. Cheney. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1964, p. 1.

spent among friends and loved ones. He defines England as the product of its recreational objects: "this country of books, piano-fortes, and poets, and firesides..."[279] and subsequently spends a great deal of time emphasizing the joy and togetherness, men's and women's respective roles and his belief that the evening can be "advantageously diversified" by combining activities—music and poetry especially. In addition, we notice Hunt's inclusion—or intention to include—a variety of songs and arias from all over Europe, revealing a more nuanced picture of Hunt and company's judgments against Italian musicians and opera. It reveals that their antipathy was directed almost entirely at allegiances among Italian performers and repertory decisions that the Regency and privileged classes were able to exert over the theater. The Cockneys contrived this "cabal"[280] as both a literal and symbolic opponent in their broader views of English politics and cultural life. Italian music itself, and in the right context, was fine.

Hunt's choice to leave aside explicit political pronouncements effects a political act insofar as the book democratizes cultural capital. Blending the new with the familiar, he intends to gratify his readers' knowledge while also serving as an introduction to the musical world at large. His "object is to bring together some of the most favourite pieces of the day; to procure others that are less generally known; to add others, still less known, from masters who came earlier, particularly the Italian" (15). The Italian pieces are therefore his to reveal to you. From the outset he positions himself as an active, personable and even overwhelming presence: "the writer [i.e. Hunt] has imitated the tone, and pitched himself at once into the enjoyments, of the Evenings themselves" (18). Hunt of course needs to justify his book and his role as its author, but the intense, almost systematic need to clarify, specify, elaborate and programmatize is unrelenting and often contradictory. To no small degree it brings into focus the exact picture Keats paints in his frustrated letter from December 1818. Also, where Wood writes Keats out of the historical narrative of Cockney musical (sub-)culture, we also note that he leaves out a part of the letter that gives his "indifferent" feelings to Mozart more context:

> 'The night we went to Novello's there was a complete set to of [*sic*] Mozart and punning—I was so completely tired of it that if I were to follow my own inclination I should never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt… In reality he is vain, egotistical and disgusting in matters of taste and morals—He understands many a beautiful thing; but then, instead of giving other minds credit for the same degree of perception as he himself possesses—he begins an explanation in such a curious manner that our taste and self-love is offended continually. Hunt does one harm by making fine things pretty and beautiful things hateful—Through him I am indifferent to Mozart, I care not for white Busts—and many a glorious thing when associated

[279] Musical Evenings, p. 17.
[280] "…Italian star singers, who rejected Mozart's music and united with their aristocratic patrons against him to form what came to be known in English operatic history as 'the Italian cabal'" (Wood 375).

> with him becames [*sic*] a nothing—This distorts one's mind—make one's thoughts bizarre—perplexes one in the standard of Beauty.

Keats's dissatisfaction and anger may indeed have the markings of a tantrum, but the repeated reference to "taste," the disagreement about what perplexes the mind in the perception of beauty and the vituperative depiction of a kind of evening that "Musical Evenings" would outline brings these concerns into a sharper focus. The denunciation of taste undermines the foundation upon which musical and, more broadly, Cockney ideals are built. Thus we should make no mistake: Keats's disavowals paradoxically underscore the extent to which he is still thinking and writing along Huntian, or Cockney, lines, even as he idly threatens to discontinue his affiliation with the group.

The relationship of poetry to music is therefore worth further consideration, which, for Hunt, had much to do with poetry's capacity to offer music highfalutin praises, and reaffirm group identity and shared activity. His 1815 poem "A thought on Music" describes sublime, natural scenes and images of leafy gardens that rise up before the imagination's eye during musical performances. But the most profound experiences are the quasi-spiritualized purview of the ear "alone."

> Part then alone we hear, as part we see :
> And in this music, lovely things of air
> May find a sympathy of heart or tongue,
> Which shook perhaps the master, when he wrote,
> With what he knew not, — meanings exquisite,—
> Thrillings, that have their answering chords in heaven, —
> Perhaps a language well-tuned hearts shall know
> In that blest air, and thus in pipe and string
> Left by angelic mouths to lure us thither.[281]

The "meanings exquisite" that shook the master (in a wager, we would find a safe, if not a sure bet in glossing "master" as Mozart) are as sublime as they are sociable. While heaven possesses those answering chords, the listeners' well-tuned hearts "perhaps" will understand the language. Group identity is the matrix in which Hunt mixes the incommensurate categories of what we could call *absolute music* and its veritable opposite, shared language. First-person plural pronouns dominate the poem and carry forward the social-psychological activity of individual minds joined in collective activity, which Hunt firmly stamps in the poem's opening lines:

> Half conscious, half unconscious, of the throng
> Of fellow ears…

[281] Hunt, Leigh. The Feast of the Poets, Second Edition. London, 1815. (Hunt provides no line numbers).

The well-tuned hearts are tuned to each other as well as the music. In the end, heaven's divine answering is a fanciful veneer; the shared experience of listening is a fact of Cockney sociability.

The linking together of music and soul need not be read as a complex metaphysical conceit; finding divine music among the delights of the leafy, restorative bower is par for the Cockney course. It creates delight and restorative enchantment. This much holds true throughout the *Story of Rimini*, which is surprisingly spare in musical imagery (music's most elaborate moment comes when unfit harmony provides a brief conceit for unsuitable marriage). More examples of pleasant uniting over music are speckled throughout Hunt's poetry. In "To Thomas Alsager,"[282] music provides a "mingling art" between the like-minded:

> And never harsher sound, than the fine pleasure
> Of letter'd friend, or music's mingling art
> That fetches out in smiles the mutual soul.

One need not be a doctrinal Platonist to see the relationship between musical harmony and social harmony that undergirds these metaphors. In general, Hunt's musical interests may seem to lack the intellectual complexity that we might expect from them given the long engagement he had with figures like Novello and, in general, the brilliant minds with which he surrounded himself, but a certain dilettantism may have been desirable for him. Wood notes that in "reading Hunt's opera criticism, we recognize that dilettantism and frivolousness are integral to Hunt's 'Mozartian' style of opposition. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* both offer critiques of aristocratic power and license, but they are also vehicles of pure aesthetic pleasure and brilliancy" (148).

The implantation of aesthetic pleasure, or the aesthetic of pleasure, suggests a politically derived practice of claiming enjoyment and wonder rather than demonstrating expertise, a practice we see in Hunt's poetry: shades of this habituate in Keats's verses too. He often links the heavens and the earth through the traces of beauty and truth discoverable in the music of poetry and the poetry of music. In "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" Keats imagines an Elysium-like realm inhabited by great poets who, free of Earthly confines, enjoy unmediated communication and perspicuity. The "spheres of sun and moon" (l. 6) and "the noise of fountains" (l. 7) are things with which these bards can

[282] Alsager was a figure well known in both Lamb's and Hunt's circle. He was a journalist who remained active in British musical culture by publishing music criticism. He eventually bought up shares in *The Times* and devoted much of the paper to financial reporting—a novel idea at the time. As markets expanded, so did demand for the *Times*, which had already embedded itself as a "go-to" source for financial news. Alsager made a fortune. He used this fortune to advance the reputation and performance of Beethoven and other musical luminaries later in life. See his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See also Wood, pp. 140-142. In these pages, Wood supplies a similar reading of Hunt's poem to Alsager (p. 141), noting that "Hunt equates literature with music, and defines music in social terms: as a "mingling art," a cornerstone of Cockney friendship and fellow feeling."

"commune" (l. 5). The most striking example—and conceptually similar to Hunt's "Thoughts on Music"—however, is that of the nightingale.

> Where the nightingale doth sing
> Not a senseless, tranced thing
> But divine melodious truth;
> Philosophic numbers smooth;
> Tales and golden histories
> Of heaven and its mysteries. (ll. 17-22)

The conjunction of meaningful language and absolute music is given a clear, if otherwordly, existence. We humans are led on to this ideality through the "souls" that the bards "left behind,"(l. 25) which "teach…the way to find" them (l. 26). Art's didactic imperatives do not lead to heaven in a theological sense; Keats simply found an expedient model in the connection of an afterlife to the full realization of the aesthetic: "… another favorite speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated."[283] The finer tone he writes about in December of 1817 returns in the guise of "the daisies" that are "rose scented" (l. 14) and the perfume of the rose "which on earth is not" (l. 15)—the very flowers that provide objective correlatives for the intelligible nightingale.

The "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" is itself a musical number in being a *rondeau*. The first quatrain returns as the final quatrain, changing from a question to an answer:

> Bards of passion and of mirth,
> Ye have left your souls on earth!
> Ye have souls in heaven too,
> Double-lived in regions new! (ll. 37-40)

(The first stanza switched "Ye have" in the second line for "Have ye"; the answer is a clear "yes" in line five). Keats's song ends in a definitive statement, borrowing assurance from the ideality it imagines. This is often read as a "blithe"[284] precursor to the "Ode to a Nightingale," but would I suggest that it also refers back to questions left unanswered by the meeting of music and poetic language found in *Endymion* which, as I will argue, draws on Huntian norms of sociability but, through them, discovers musical complexities that assist Keats in developing his aesthetic ideas beyond the merely pleasurable limitations of those norms.

Dividing one's self from the norms of the group however, points the way to a subtle aesthetic tyranny in Huntian social praxis. In a measured espousal of what we could call "absolute music," Hunt makes the case that while music can express beauty, sublimity, certain moods, certain strains of vigor or certain kinds of gentleness, he stands

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[283] *KL* (To Benjamin Bailey, 22 November, 1817) I. 185.

[284] Bate suggests "the blitheness" of the poem "has completely disappeared in the rich, troubled stanzas that begin ['Ode to a Nightingale']." See John Keats. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 503.

firmly against programmatic thinking. "Music is, in this respect less critical and artificial even than poetry"; rather, he naturalizes music, calling it "something elemental in nature."[285] Absolute music was something that the Hunt circle seemed poised to resist, preferring literary language to music's open-ended plenitude—or preferring both together. They sound somewhat Hegelian, for instance, placing music below sung poetry because wordless music has "torn itself free from a content already clear on its own account and retreated into its own medium."[286] Shelley defends poetry at the expense of other arts—music included—by arguing that "language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression."[287] For Shelley, language is the substance of the mimetic art of the imagination, all other substances (paint, music, clay, stone) are "a cloud which enfeebles" by comparison; thus mediated, no non-verbal artist could equal the "fame" of poets, just as "two performers of equal skill will produce unequal effects from a guitar or harp." [288] In "A Chapter on Ears" Lamb zeroes in on the connection between textless music and the imagination by critiquing instrumental showpieces like "insufferable concertos" that "fill up sound with feeling [i.e. not language or thoughts], and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames…to read a book…and be obliged to supply the verbal matter…this empty *instrumental music*" (Lamb's emphasis).[289] Even though Lamb confesses that he has "no ear…*for music*,"[290] his confused displeasure evokes a commonplace view that instrumental music's sensuousness is inferior to literature's textual rationality. That the artist's work is one of suspended imagination means the listener's imagination can be seduced into directionless overactivity—the basis for Lamb's critique.

In his wonderfully amusing essay, Lamb self-satirizes his own fish-out-of-water sense of being overwhelmed by Novello's playing. The fun here turns on the quasi-religious experience of being half-seduced into the religion of his "Catholic friend *Nov*-." In fact, Christianity itself and Pagan myth, like the music, mix modes. In the end, we see a sarcastic rendering of what Keats and Hunt lay on with unabashed sincerity:

> But when this master of the spell [Novello at the keys], not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive[291]—

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[285] Musical Evenings, p 41.
[286] Hegel, G.W.F. Aesthetics, Lectures on Fine Art. Trans. T.M. Knox. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, II. 899.
[287] Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. 10 Vols. New York: Gordian Press, 1965, VII, p. 115.
[288] *ibid*
[289] Lamb, Charles. "A Chapter on Ears" in Essays of Elia. Ed Phillip Lopate. Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2003, pp. 90-91.
[290] p. 87.
[291] Cf *Twelfth Night* (I. 1. 9-11) [Following Orsino's desire to hear satiating music and then not to hear it]: "O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou, / That, notwithstanding thy capacity / Receiveth as the sea..."

> impatient to overcome her "earthly" with his "heavenly,"—still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted *German* ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride Arions *Haydn* and *Mozart*, with their attendant tritons, *Bach*, *Beethoven*, and a countless tribe…[292]

Thus we see Lamb finding out symbolic language and social context within which he can stabilize as well as contribute a view, so to speak, of both the power of music and the powerful role music played in the group. This highfalutin prose resonates with one of Hunt's admonitory asides in Musical Evenings, one that we might be all too primed to read in a broad social context, but in the context of Keats's attack in his letter about Mozart, it issues as an internal, anecdotal quibble:

> There are some thoughtful minds which have a propensity to attach ideas to every piece of music they hear. It is natural that they should do so, because it is natural to them to think at all times, and they are then thrown into a new mood for reverie…It is apt to over-excite and perplex us, and thus to injure the impressions which the vaguer and more soothing genius of the musician intended. (41-42)

It is hard not to see in this passage a sketch of the crisis in "Ode to a Nightingale." The "reverie" that Keats would explore is a refutation of the above view, and curiously ends with, "the fancy cannot cheat so well / As she is famed to do." Famed by whom? The conventional answer is: Keats himself, as he begins to question the value of indulgent fancy as a means toward poetic apotheosis, but the connection with Hunt is also enormously suggestive (and there's nothing to say that the "literal" answer couldn't point in many possible directions). Hunt's philosophy of the meaning of music and whence its beauty derives (of which the chief manifestation is Mozart), resonates with Keats's observation that "[h]e understands many a beautiful thing; but then, instead of giving other minds credit for the same degree of perception as he himself possesses—he begins an explanation in such a curious manner that our taste and self-love is offended continually." In light of Hunt's remarks and given that Keats had mentioned "Mozart" and "punning," Keats's statement suggests mounting frustrations with the way he encountered ideas of musical meaning and their connection to beauty. With this response evaporated the main supports of his ties to Cockney musical culture. Never again do we have a recorded mention of the name Mozart from Keats—but there are many more instances of "music."

Endymion and an Uncertain Path

At every turn, the world of music that Keats knew through the social dynamics of the Hunt circle and the musical ideas that his later poetry engages with show equal signs

[292] "A Chapter on Ears," pp. 93-94.

of connection and disconnection with Cockney praxis, sociability and counter-sociability. We see much more of fanciful musical speculation than an explicit engagement with musical culture. Put another way, why don't we ever encounter an "Ode to Mozart" or a rapturous "Lines Composed while Hearing Novello Touch the Keys"? In fact, we see instances of Keats writing musical scenes that specifically obfuscate historical reference, like the episode of Peona's song from the first book of *Endymion*:

> [Peona] took a lute, from which there pulsing came
> A lively prelude, fashioning the way
> In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay
> More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
> Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
> And nothing since has floated in the air
> So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
> Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand. (I. 491-498)

The poem goes on to speak of "invisible strings," "Delphic emphasis," "deep intoxication," and the melting away of Endymion's spirit (I. 499-502). We are led to believe that the exemplary "strangeness" of this music is born from the contact of human performance and divine power or madness. As a musical performance, Keats chooses to let Peona's "Delphic emphasis," emerge in the midst of a "lively prelude." While the terms "lively prelude" and "cadenced," and in a more vague way, "invisible strings" become fascinating as they suggest bridges between the supernatural circumstances of Peona's performance with the technical aspects of her performance, it is her hand and the lute that synecdochically lead "the way…her voice should wander," and her song itself is suspended, or reduced to voice and little else. Only the tone of the music, her voice and the fact of its historical disappearance seem to matter. This fuses a lost musical condition with the preconditions for song—in other words, if the lively prelude can no longer be heard, then neither can the song articulated through it. Seen in historical retrospect, the music in this mythic world cannot be connected with the music in Keats's world. Despite Keats's earlier claims for Mozart's divinity or Erin's sad and piercing songs, contemporaneous music is written out of this poetical world, not into it. Music and language develop their dialectical relationship alongside the dialectic of group dynamics and, from our viewpoint, the more traditional image of the lyric poet confessing in solitude. What Keats can't do in isolation, to put it another way, is shunt aside the bafflement that seems always to attend engrossing extra-historical or transhistorical music in favor of clear-headed discourse as Peona does.

> But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
> Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,
> And earnestly said: 'Brother, 'tis vain to hide
> That thou dost know of things mysterious,
> Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
> Weigh down thy nature. (I. 503-508)

Perhaps it was this swinging aside of the lute and the introduction of plain discourse that Keats so desired and brutally suspended in his "Ode to a Nightingale."

Lyrical isolation that is all too easy to recognize in Keats's musical moments—the pensive witness to the urn's unheard melodies; the melancholic auditor of the nightingale; the private lover of Autumn—seem to suggest that Keats's later scenes of music-making engage with precisely the kind of "over-excite[ment]" and "perplex[ing]" thought experiments to hear the historically transcendent music of permanent objects, wherein "the impressions which the vaguer and more soothing genius of the musician intended" can never be accounted for in the first place. In other words, just as Keats can use music as a signpost of literary sociability, many of his most insistently isolated moments—those monuments of lyric isolation—are accompanied by music that resists or suspends companionability and the meaning-making norms of group influence and become, in the end, productively unintelligible. But of course, there are many instances that fall somewhere in between.

Katherine Stimson has recognized traces of this fault-line in her comparison of robins and nightingales in Keats's poems. Each bird serves as a respective emblem for what we could call a public or sociable mode of reflection on the one hand and a decidedly private one on the other. Keats often consecrates his robins as emblems of intertextual sociability, like the sprightly inhabitant of "the bower" in the lines of "On the Story of Rimini." The bower itself is amassed from Hunt's images, and displays a prime example of a "textual and imaginative space that the writers and readers of the group collectively built...conceived of in terms of a physical space."[293] The robin provides a companionable presence that is normally otherwise inferred; as it is in Keats's epigram for "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," also taken from *The Story of Rimini*: "Places of nestling green for Poets made." The word "nestling," intended or not, intensifies the link between the earlier figure of the robin and this poem.

Another early experiment with the robin brings the relationship of music, language and genre into sharper focus. In "Stay, Ruby Breasted Warbler, Stay," Keats fashions the robin into a perpetual emblem of recompense for grief, aligning it with the seasonal change that it both literally and figuratively accompanies. It is one of the rare poems for which he explicitly—that is, paratextually—indicated an accompanying tune. Beneath his title he inscribes, "Tune—Julia to the Wood Robin." It marks an intriguing moment in his early career where he could foresee himself developing in many directions as a "lyrical" poet—as the writer of the great odes that we know him to be or as the writer of song lyrics as many of the best-selling versifiers of his day were known to be. The gesture sacrifices the autonomous claim to song that he would later make and develop as a dialectical theme in poems like "'Tis the 'witching time of night'",[294] where he dramatizes the literary present of poetry as the vocal presence of song:

> Hearken, stars, and hearken, spheres;
> Hearken, thou eternal sky—

[293] See Stimson, Katherine. "'Where Robins Hop and Fallen Leaves are Sere:' Keats's Robin and Social Imagination." *Keats-Shelley Review* 20 (2006): 58-68, p. 62.
[294] Included with a letter. See, *KL* (To George and Georgiana Keats, 14-31 October, 1818) I. 398.

I sing an infant's lullaby,
A pretty lullaby!
Listen, listen, listen, listen
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten, (ll. 11-16)

The sky hears his claim, which reduces itself into repetitious sonority, and counters by saying that he is not a child at all but a poet. The archaic "hearken" issues as a pun on hear/ken—the sky doesn't hear the child after all but sees it:

Child I see thee! Child, I spy thee, //
Child I know thee! child no more,
But a Poet *ever*more. (ll. 29, 31-32)

The heavens speak in turn, though it is unclear to whom they are speaking. From their perspective, they ambiguously command or cheer along the child below, calling out:

See, See the Lyre, the Lyre,
In a flame of fire,
Upon the cradle's top
Flaring, Flaring, Flaring
Past the eyesight's bearing—
[…]
It stares, it stares, it stares;
It dares what no one dares;
It lifts its little hand into the flame
Unharm'd, and on the strings
Paddles a little tune and sings
With dumb endeavor sweetly!
Bard art thou completely! (ll. 33-37, 42-47)

The lyre exists beyond sight and sound—possible to imagine, but not to perceive. Becoming the lyric poet who appropriates the emblematically audiovisual power of the lyre is a far cry from the poet that selects a tune for the verses he has written. The lyric imagined in the magical, and perhaps somewhat sarcastic cadences of "'Tis the 'witching time of night'" presents a drama of problematic isolation, where even the "nigh" mother could only be read a reference to the unheard voices of the heavens that respond in the poem's second half. Self and other—be it poet and audience, artist and muse—are dislocated due to unattained poetic power. The poet of the song lyrics, by contrast, (one who would have understood himself to be a much more conventional form of lyric poet), generically produces social relations through intermingled media—the public tune and the private, overheard verses:

Stay while I tell thee, fluttering thing,
  That thou of love an emblem art;
Yes! patient plume thy little wing,
  Whilst I my thoughts to thee impart. (ll. 5-8)

The calling out that Keats articulates toward the beginning of the poem is reified through the meeting of his words with the extant popular melody and, subsequently, projects a performance scenario in which face to face contact between singer and audience creates in itself a community or partnership envisioned through both the figure of the robin and the desire for a sympathetic listener. Before he was taken in to the fold at Hunt's, Keats found ways of creating company when it suited him.

Ideas of music provide other ways of thinking through differing forms of poetry, and for Keats they trace out the spaces between communal poetics of a shared space and the equal and opposite force of the individual poet hypothesizing historically circumscribed spaces where the divine company of bards is both seductive and problematically empty. "On Sitting Down to read King Lear Once Again," for instance, is a poem that deals explicitly with genre and is usually read as another poetically rendered moment of his growing ambition as a poet, and it is.

> O golden-tongued romance, with serene lute,
> Fair plumed siren, queen of far-away,
> Leave melodising on this wintry day,
> Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute.
> Adieu! For, once again, the fierce dispute
> Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay
> Must I burn through; once more humbly essay. (ll. 1-7)

Music and its poetic trappings enter into the purview of remote sirens. In this posture, Keats can remove himself to the role of reader and watch "fierce disputes" play out in the social context of drama. The burning ceases to be a self-burning desire to write beyond one's perceived limits and social/historical conditions and figures that we see in "On Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair."

> When every childish fashion
> Has vanished from my rhyme,
> Will I, grey-gone in passion,
> Leave to an after time
> Hymning and Harmony
> Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy life;
> But vain is now the burning and the strife,
> Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife
> With old Philosophy,
> And mad with glimpses of futurity! (ll. 23-32)

Instead, he imagines an instructive solitude through which inspiration can be attained without coming at the expense of "burning" passion for poetry.

Keats also hints at a distinction between dramatic poetry's terrestrial conflicts and non-dramatic poetry's otherworldliness. Even in the course of fantasy-laden narrative poetry, the remotest, most absent nooks and crannies of the worlds wrought through "golden-tongued romances" are its siren songs. Moreover, in a work like *Endymion*, which was completed mere months before Keats wrote about the lock of Milton's hair

and *King Lear*, the long, multi-book narrative is interrupted both by its episodic progress and by songs, themselves *lyrics* in every sense of the word. If its mythic setting provides, as Susan Wolfson aptly puts it, "a readily available idiom through which to explore present mysteries of the imagination,"[295] then the narrative couplet romance that Keats finds so decorous for this idiom provides a readily available *medium* whose vocal elasticity and episodic and oral discontinuities (i.e. speech and song) can in turn mediate the imagination's relationship to the materials that express, or impress themselves upon, subjectivity.

A clear example is the "Hymn to Pan" from the first Book of *Endymion*. It provides an interlude in the lengthy descriptions that fill the romance's first few hundred lines and consecrates the sweeping range of Keats's poetic influences—Ovid, Chapman (and Homer), Sandys, Browne, Spenser, Jonson, Shakespeare, Fletcher, Lempriere and Wordsworth—[296]in a paean to Pan, the divine spirit moving through nature:

> …be still the leaven,
> That spreading in this dull clodded earth
> Gives it a touch ethereal, a new birth;
> Be still a symbol of immensity,
> A firmament reflected in a sea,
> An element filling the space between,
> An unknown—but no more! (I. 296-302)

Much like Gray's "Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West," the entire "Hymn" suffers the literary-historical fate of Wordsworthian consternation. As with Gray, the disapproval is illustrative of broader issues. Marilyn Butler suggests that Keats had sprinkled inadvertent salt into wounds Wordsworth was nursing after "Coleridge's censures of the *Lyrical Ballads* in the *Biographia Literaria*, with their hint that he had not always lived up to his destiny as a great Christian poet."[297] Butler points us in the right general direction: the uncertain and divisive role that Classical myth plays. The story of the encounter comes to us through Haydon, a friend of both Wordsworth and Keats.

> Wordsworth received him kindly, & after a few minutes, Wordsworth asked him what he had been lately doing. I said he has just finished an exquisite ode to Pan [in *Endymion*] – and as he had not a copy I begged Keats to repeat it –which he did in his usual half chant, (most touching) walking up an down the room – when he had

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[295] See Wolfson, Susan J. The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 207.
[296] Keats alludes to them. While I would have liked to detect all of these influences, the initial credit for these findings belongs to Finney and his old but nonetheless matchless source reading. See pp. 247-272.
[297] Butler, Marilyn. Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 136.

> done I felt really, as if I had heard a young Apollo –
> Wordsworth drily said
> 'a Very pretty piece of Paganism' –
> This was unfeeling, & unworthy of his high Genius to a
> young Worshipper like Keats – & Keats felt it *deeply*. [298]

Why does Keats's stumble into this trap? The question is beset by some important qualifiers: to a great extent, this passage tells us more about Robert Haydon than it does Wordsworth or Keats. We rely entirely on Haydon's memory; he plainly confesses that it was his idea for Keats to recite the particular passage; and we have only Haydon's word that the infamous phrase "a pretty piece of paganism" was spoken by a poet who typically enlisted obnoxious alliterations as a joke[299] or when writing in the guise of rustic characters. Questions about the ideological dynamics and literary stakes of this encounter needs must be refracted through Haydon as the figure that provokes, directs and later mediates it. If nothing else, this renders questions over *why* Keats performed this passage for Wordsworth somewhat moot; Keats's intentionality is a red herring in whose place, I suggest we read his social performativity.

Keats's correspondents (e.g. Bailey) were quick to note how much he adored the mythic scene of Apollo's creation in Book IV of the *Excursion*. Building on this fact in light of insights Butler makes, Derek Lowe suggests that the youthfully sincere Keats read at face value what the older and seasoned Wordsworth wrote at an ironic distance.[300] Ultimately, an intertextual reading of the two poets points to the way Keats "became Wordsworth's unintended, 'unenlightened swain,' rehearsing the Greek Myths just as a 'young worshipper' might be expected to…"[301] Keats indeed found inspiration in the very sort of "paganism" that Wordsworth only admitted as passing displays in an otherwise Christian landscape, but Haydon's story points to another difference in the way that Keats's Hymn was read; rather, it wasn't *read* at all. It was recited. The act of recitation is crucial here on many levels. The passage Keats recited was not an "ode," as Haydon asserts, but a hymn, which in the original text is preceded by the phrase "thus a chorus sang."[302]

The circumstances of Keats's performance and reception culminate in a breach of reality and fiction; in Keats's fictions, communal and social concord equals musical concord—ideally. And as with much of Keats's writing, the same motifs that figure personal disillusionment tend to figure political and historical problematics. Forlorn Endymion, for instance, sits apart from the pastoral Hymn singers and subsequently eschews the dances that spring up around "the swift treble pipe, and humming string" in

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[298] Quoted in Butler, p. 136.
[299] See, for instance, the *Prelude*: Nor will it seem to thee, my friend, so prompt / In sympathy, that I have lengthened out / With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale." (*1805*, I. 645-647)
[300] Lowe, Derek. "Wordsworth's 'Unenlightened Swain': Keats and Greek Myth in 'I Stood Tip-Toe upon a Little Hill.'" *The Keats-Shelley Journal* 57 (2008): 138-156, p. 145.
[301] Lowe, p. 149.
[302] *Endymion* I. 231—the line preceding the first line of the "Hymn."

favor of sitting by a contemplative "aged priest / 'Mong shepherds gone in eld" (I. 314). When Lamia encounters Hermes in *Lamia*, she claims to have already had a vision of his present melancholy and describes it thus:

> I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
> Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
> The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
> The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,
> Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
> Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.[303]

Hermes will explain that he is ardently seeking an unnamed nymph rendered invisible by Lamia's spell, and in exchange for her he will transform Lamia from her serpent form into a beautiful woman and deliver her to Corinth, the home of Lycius. While there exists a question as to whether Lamia deviously planned this all out or not, she nonetheless measures the depth of Hermes's melancholy by his ability to remain unmoved by the divine music of Olympus, the memory of which seemingly leads Lamia to spill over into a hypersyllabic alexandrine (depending on whether or not we elide "melodious" into three syllables from four). Later, in the *Hyperion* poems, Keats twice relates Saturn's vision of a restored Titanic rule through the images of communal song, implanted in a celestial cityscape ("clouds metropolitan") as if to emphasize the idea of a musically suffused—thereby functioning—cultural space:

> Yes, there must be a golden victory;
> There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
> Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
> Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
> Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
> Of strings in hollow shells…[304]

In *The Fall of Hyperion* he further emphasizes the passing of the golden age by couching lines similar these in a more dire description of Saturn's voice, which, "with sad, low tones…sent / Strange musings to the solitary Pan."[305] Pan, after all, was the focal point of communal celebration and song in *Endymion* as well in Classical tradition in a broader sense. Seeing him as a "solitary" figure adds another layer of social disfigurement to the poem.

In reciting the choral "Hymn to Pan" to Wordsworth, Keats's presentation foregrounds a species of collective, communal voice that to his mind may well have demonstrated an affinity with his the voice of his hero, whose *Excursion* was one of the "three things to rejoice at" in his age—or so he wrote in January of 1818 (roughly a month *after* the notorious encounter). The collective voice of the hymn and the adoption of visionary mythopoeisis that he gleaned in Wordsworth's verses amounted to a joining-

[303] *Lamia* (I. 70-75).
[304] *Hyperion* (I.126-131) For the parallel in *The Fall of Hyperion* see I. 432-36.
[305] *The Fall of Hyperion* (I. 410-11).

in—a text he wrote under the influence of one of his (living) poetic idols and which he now "half-chanted" in his company. The face-to-face manner of the sharing ought to underscore the importance of the encounter as much as the subject matter. Wordsworth's phrase, "a pretty piece of paganism" that proved so gloomy to Keats, points us both to the "paganism" as well as to the fact that the recitation was itself a "pretty piece." And indeed, Haydon's words preserve the experience of Keats's performance above all: "when he had done I felt really, as if I had *heard* a young Apollo" (emphasis added). For Wordsworth not to be inspired by Keats as Keats was by him—even to a small degree—is something that we can read as an opting out that was, quite accidentally from Wordsworth's perspective, codified by Keats's own use of song forms. Likewise, it seems only fitting that Haydon should remember the long passage as an "ode" sung by a singular young poet, rather than a "hymn" propped up by an array of influences and sung by a chorus of pastoral denizens.

Keats's half-chant, though apparently a habitual apparatus in his poetic recitations, dovetails with another rare instance of Keats specifying a tune to his poems, though it was a great deal more vague than the one he supplied for "Stay, Ruby Breasted Warbler, Stay." Beneath the title of *Endymion* he wrote "the stretched metre of an antique song"—taken from the tenth line of Shakespeare's Sonnet XVII. While Shakespeare's use of the phrase is a self-effacing acknowledgement that future generations will recognize his specious poetic license, Keats's use suggests what the poem displays in its narrative content: an intention to negotiate literary history with the historical present, and the role of his poem's own materials in situating a mythological past against his contemporaneous ambitions. The imaginary space of the romance allows him to dramatize one form of poetic authority: grasping for an aesthetic link to a world in which the archaeological poet finds his materials and raises them back to new life. At the same time, it also elegizes these materials by invoking "song." Particularly in the case of the "Hymn to Pan," the musical world from which the antique song could be said to spring exists at a stark remove from the present—its meter may be stretched but the music that suffuses it is lost utterly. Keats engages with this by placing his "Hymn to Pan" alongside music that plays at an absolute historical remove. As the voices bring the hymn to its conclusion, "a shout from the whole multitude arose" (I. 307), while:

> Young companies nimbly began dancing
> To the swift pipe and humming string.
> Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly
> To tunes forgotten, out of memory: (I.313-316)

Rather than label this as mere nostalgia, I suggest we read it as a moment of the poetic imagination finding its limits not within the scope of its own powers but in its evocation of conjoined media. A roving half-chant can bring choral numbers to life, but the very tunes that unite the voices of those self-same voices are necessarily absent.

Endymion was, as we know, a self-conscious proving ground for Keats that marks out a middle phase of his very brief career—a time when he was struggling for independence from what began to seem like the imperious influence of Hunt and building up a system of personal myth that, according to commonplace critical history, reaches its fullest expression in the Odes of 1819. When critics juxtapose the earlier poems and the

later poems, a Manichean view of Keats the Poet and Keats the misguided pupil of Hunt emerge, one that these same critics are enticed either to underscore or challenge. In so doing they are able to prove the excellence of the mature, independent Keats or to recuperate the earlier texts despite of (or in light of) Cockney influences—or to dismiss them outright. The text and context of *Endymion*, however, does not cooperate well with the basis and bias of these literary-critical value judgments. Keats's letters at the time reveal his hostility to both the Hunt circle and to the readership that will undoubtedly and deleteriously connect his name to his coterie.

The nice neat narrative of gradual departure, however, never fully materializes in the text of *Endymion*; disavowal doesn't engender divestment. At the time of the poem's composition, Keats laces his letters with resentments about Hunt's interference, positioning his friend and mentor as a nuisance and roadblock. After the poem's completion, these views hardly change: "Since you all agree the thing is bad, it must be so—though I am not aware there is any thing like Hunt in it, (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt)…I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the Public—or to any thing in existence,—but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty."[306] Keats's references to "things" suggest his frustrations with emerging from concentric barriers to his becoming as a poet: the bad text, the signposts of Cockney influence, the opinions of his times. The "thing" to which Keats specifically refers is his first preface, not his poem, though the poem itself would only exacerbate the criticisms that he sought to sidestep. The lushly verdant Huntian bowers, motifs of refreshment, the emphasis on the "now" and the sociable refuge of pastoral romance are all on full display in *Endymion*. Both the biographical anti-Huntianism and what could be called Huntian pleasurable aesthetics are written into a robust, simultaneous existence.[307] We could also consider the fact that *Endymion* was written alongside (and in competition with) Shelley's *Alastor*, and likewise written as a rejoinder to the post-Waterloo despondency of Wordsworth's *Excursion*; yet similarities to the former and debts to the latter are arguably more striking than its opposition to or disengagement from either.

The text, therefore, doesn't seem to fit in anywhere, as Keats himself is quick to point out in both of its prefaces, using apologetic language that keys into motifs found throughout the poem. In the second Preface, he writes, "the imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain…"[308] This puts a biographical cast on what in the first preface had been an apology for artistic shortcomings: "I fought under disadvantages. Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this Poem must be rather consider'd as an endeavor than a thing accomplish'd." At the finish of his opening proem in Book I, the same motif of uncertainty holds the final word in the journey's commencement:

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[306] *KL* (To J.H. Reynolds, April 9, 1818) I. 266.

[307] See Ayumi Mizukoshi's analysis of Keats's ambivalent Huntianism in *Endymion* in Keats, Hunt and the Aesthetics of Pleasure. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

[308] For the text of both Prefaces, see pp. 147-8 in Keats Poetry and Prose. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009.

…I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green… (I. 58-61)

A similar scenario greets us just after the proem to Book II: "For many days," we are told, "[Endymion] has been wandering in uncertain ways" (II. 47-48). The author, the verse narrator and the hero all wander in uncertainty.

One way to read this "uncertain path" is to observe that just as Keats never decisively turns his back on his coterie (far from it) nor does he excise their influence as he looks ahead, hoping to construct himself into the figure of the Poet that is the polestar of his personal ambitions. We can tread a middle path through this place in Keats's development by examining the ways in which he appropriates the soft and leafy sociable trope of Huntian bowers while allowing them, and the pursuit of idle pleasure they represent, to remain unsatisfactory.[309] Much as we might balk at the idea of Keats merely luxuriating alongside Hunt while hearing Mozart (instead of remaining attentive to the composer's interplay of beauty and intricacy), it should please us to see that in poetic analogues to that group activity, Keats eschews the path of least resistance and builds up a stronger conceptual lattice-work in his Huntian tropes than his Huntian counterparts (and perhaps his ear and mind for Mozart were also more incisive than those of his fellows). Part of the instrumentality of *Endymion* is not the production itself or the writing of 4000 lines, but the manner in which Keats uses it to develop far-reaching metaphysical conceits of what had already become his choice trope of sociability—sensual pleasure and intimacy. In fact, *Endymion* thrusts intimacy and love so far into an ideal that it takes on supernatural proportions. The joys of human relationships are "the chief intensity," which are better, Endymion claims, than even art, or stories, or music. But friendship and familial bonds by themselves won't do—friendship and his sister's love are not enough. Even romantic love itself won't do: "…if earthly love has power to make / Men's being mortal, immortal" then why not keep "a steadfast aim" on "a love immortal, an immortal too" (I.843-849). It is this divine reach (or overreach) that will

[309] Pleasure itself seems only a temporary aegis against the "despondency" of delayed fulfillment; as Ayumi Mizukoshi aptly notes, when Endymion sinks "into despair" or grows "despondent" or "reach[es] and impasse, he is simply sated, and then yearns for new refreshment" (137). The Spenserian bower that serves as the Huntian locus of companionability and, by extension, social restoration becomes more of a checkpoint that is neither sufficient nor insufficient in and of itself. Secondly, the bower of refreshment has firmly spatial dimensions. The bower and the pastoral landscape provide fictional spaces in which the group can enact sociable literary production—the space of the poem provides a fictional terrain and behaves as textual space in which group identity can be written, projected. This is especially exigent in the closet dramas of the group, which turn away from the metropolitan environs that the group inhabited and concoct pastoral reference points that engender alternatives to the actual London stage. Dramatic space is therefore generically subsumed into literary places, where drama's key purpose—the recreation of social encounters—can be reimagined along the political, cultural and aesthetic lines favored by the Hunt circle (or any circle).

(*pace* Endymion's beliefs) give rise to the place of music in this poem and the poems that will follow it.

Joining together the bodily and the divine, the musical numbers in *Endymion* narrate as they foreshadow the destined consummation of poet and goddess, but simultaneously cast a dubious light on both language and music (and bowers) to effect this union. Though never reaching a decisively emblematic purpose, Keats's sociality invests itself in a kind of *speculative music* in his poetic romance, providing a conceptual middle ground between his earlier use of music and musical ideas (as a way to declare his place in the coterie) and the later use that we encounter in "Ode to a Nightingale" and the other poems in which music purposively blurs boundaries between self and other, meaning and non-meaning, heightened awareness and trance—a musical basis for the complex temporality of lyric isolation that never fully divorces itself from the social context out of which it evolved.

The appearance of the lyre (and other stringed instruments) brings some of these ideas into focus. It has multiple points of reference: it is the intellectual/spiritual resonator of the poet's soul; it is a literal source of music that organizes poetry into song—more broadly, we know it to be the emblem of the lyric poet. In this way, consummations of voice and music played on the lyre or lute intimate consummations of body, spirit and the ideal (call it "beauty" or "truth" or both). Insofar as Keats projects an image of his poetic self through his eponymous hero who has been drawn into (what will become) a transcendent love affair with the moon Goddess, the connection of soulful music and the material of the poet—language—figures the stakes of this transcendent consummation, or rather draws its stakes from the fiction of that mortal/immortal consummation. But music serves a purpose that is ambivalently aesthetic and metaphysical; the resonating string or the warbling voice engender affective responses in the listener, but they also resonate with the interiority of the listening subject. The pleasures of music and song, in other words, serve to isolate the listener by confining him more forcefully in the circumference of his own self, which accretes into a pointed connection between isolation and death.

> O did he ever live, that lonely man,
> Who lov'd—and music slew not? 'Tis the pest
> Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;
> That things of delicate and tenderest worth
> Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,
> By one consuming flame: it doth immerse
> And suffocate true blessings in a curse.
> Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,
> Is miserable. (II. 364-372)

Where music should be the basis for exchange and companionability given that it transpires between musician and auditor and unites them in the shared affect of the piece being played, it often results in stupor or is called for to facilitate an easeful transition into death ("Let me have music dying, and I seek / No more delight—I bid adieu to all" [IV. 140-141]) insofar as the poem suggests that sorrow leads inexorably to death.

Music is by no means alone in problematic limitations. In general, the trouble for Endymion (the character and the poem) is that immortal aspirations prompt a paradoxical

plight—the materials of existence and the "bar" of mortal limitations are not so "fragile" after all. When Endymion first reports that the cause of his pale-faced melancholy is the vision he had of Cynthia while dreaming—"a dream within a dream"—that "never tongue… / Could figure out"[310] (I. 575, 577), nor could the objects of nature provide "a symbol" that was adequate to describe her, he makes plain that language cannot provide a sufficient substitute for ideal experience. Every earthly "thing," to borrow Keats's plain epistolary term, was a sign of his disappointment and therefore ugly.[311]

Music's power, however, has other dimensions in the poem and is arguably the chiefly powerful material of worldly things. As song is the source of poetic activity in *Endymion* and music is the source of its power, music provides a step toward the transcendent consummation that Endymion seeks throughout: it provides form to the adventure (the stretched meter of an antique song), but the materials themselves have to be transcended for the transcendent moment to be envisioned. And to this end, music demonstrates an equal and opposite power—when joined with words or text, it has the power to animate and bring dead forms into being.

In Book III, Glaucus both sheds light on the dubiousness of the relationship between music and the enunciation of the poetic text and likewise enjoys the fruits of its transcendent potential. In a "twilight bower" he hears "a lyre / and over it a sighing voice expire" (III. 418, 420-421). Lured by the sound, he encounters Circe who promises that he will experience a dream-like romantic affair in bodily reality—"to taste a long love-dream" (III. 440). (Obviously, the parallels with Endymion are poignant.) He falls victim to the "rich speech" because she:

> …linked
> Her charming syllables, till indistinct
> Their music came to my o'er sweetened soul" (III. 443-445).

The lyre frames the music; the music frames the speech; the speech conveys music, and Glaucus is hooked. From her woodland throne, Circe, the "arbor queen," dispenses immortality as a punishment to those she has captured—engendering a hellish counter-figure to Cynthia. Music and magic go hand in hand as a fallen form of music and poetic art.

The many imprisoned lovers are not doomed; they await resurrection in Glaucus's watery bier and can be brought back to life by the breaking of Glaucus's wand against a lyre placed upon a pedestal (a monument much like that which marks Keats's own grave). As Endymion assists in the placement, "straight with sudden swell and fall / Sweet music breathed a lullaby to silence."[312] In the presence of the lullaby, fragments of a torn piece of parchment sprinkle. The parchment contained a written account of Glaucus's fate, as well as a prophecy that a youth matching Endymion's description would arrive and be able to assist in the breaking of Circe's thousand year old curse. This would revive Scylla, Glaucus's lover, restore Glaucus's youth and, for added measure, raise the other dead lovers back to life. Thus the spell contained within the dead letter of

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[310] i.e. "to find figurative language for"
[311] See the catalogue in Book I, 691-705.
[312] (III. 766-67) Note that "to" could be glossed as "for" or "in."

the scroll (condemned to a literary present) is brought to life through music (the art that takes place in the movement of time). Additionally, the flowery bower becomes the vehicle to music's tenor as the restoration of dead loves to living lovers unfolds:

> …There arose
> A noise of harmony, pulses and throes
> Of gladness in the air…
> Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
> Budded and swelled, and, full-blown, shed full showers
> Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine. (III. 790-92, 798-800)

The central episode of Book IV also turns on music; Endymion asks the Indian Maid to sing so that he might sink easefully into death. Her song dolefully recounts her days spent weeping by the banks of the Ganges, a time when she was beset by an allegorical manifestation of Sorrow. The first five stanzas formally reify the song and likewise give voice to a narrative of forlorn loneliness that may as well be Endymion's own anthem—in loving supernatural forms that live beyond her reach she becomes a lover of emptiness itself. The Indian Maid's song asks the allegorical figure of Sorrow why it has consumed her youthful vitality and then turns ironically back on its singer.

> To Sorrow
> I bade good-morrow,
> And thought to leave her far away behind
> But cheerly, cheerly,
> She loves me dearly,
> She is so constant to me, and so kind.
> I would deceive her
> And so leave her,
> But ah, she is so constant and so kind! (IV. 173-181)

As Sorrow attended the Indian Maid in her loneliness ("so constant") Sorrow becomes desirable ("so kind"). At this juncture, however, the song is interrupted by a comparatively biographical narrative in which the Indian Maid details how "Bacchus and his crew" appeared, roving about "to scare…Melancholy," which is seemingly how Sorrow appears when juxtaposed with ribald excitements. (IV. 196, 203) The drunken revelers bid her join their "mad minstrelsy" and for a time she does, watching as Gods and the Kings of Egypt, Abissinia, and India all fall under the intoxicating spell. At last, she loses hope in finding drunken pleasures (or pleasure *in* them) and wanders by herself into the forests where Endymion encounters her. The song concludes in its original stanzas, feinting an address to Endymion ("young stranger!") that turns out to be Sorrow again, who occupies the place of every form of loving human relation: "mother," "brother," "playmate," and "wooer" (IV. 273, 289-290).

Where the song turns to Bacchus and company, there is a marked shift in stanza form that we can read as an emphasis on the importance of the unheard music of this song. Miriam Allott notes that "the irregular stanzas and pictorial details [of the Bacchus episode] suggest the influence of Milton's *Nativity Ode*," but the return of the initial

stanza form at the end of the of the song suggests that this narrative interlude is both a thematic development as well as a musical one, and the last stanzas of the song are, thematically and musically, a recapitulation. This is a formal representation of musical structure—the ABA form.[313] The mythic tale that we would expect to enrapture the idealizing poet-hero Endymion seems utterly lost on him. He is infected by the experience of having heard the music, having witnessed the singing and having gazed on the Indian Maid's beauty. His response is notable for what is not said by either the poetic narrator or him because either it is lost on him or we can simply assume its truth—that her tale and his experience exhibit considerable similarities. As for what they *do* say, we discover a concerted focus on affect rendered in non-verbal, then musical, and then mythically musical terms. The narrator observes, "Oh what a sigh she gave in finishing," and then Endymion exclaims:

> … 'Poor lady, how thus long
> Have I been able to endure that voice?
> Fair Melody! Kind Siren!... (IV. 291-300).

This introduces some important questions. Does the Indian Maid's vocal and musical prowess foreshadow her divinity? Does Endymion—the young man—see music as an illusion in a way that *Endymion*—the poem—does not since the dangerous, deadly illusion of the Siren is in effect canceled out by the fact that the Siren-like Indian Maid is herself an illusion that conceals divinity within? Does music figure as a middle ground between language and the ideality (and "fellowship divine") that language can project but not reach on its own?

Answers come as Mercury enters swiftly and produces two winged "steeds jet-black" that transport Endymion and the Indian maid to the heavens (IV. 343).[314] On airy horseback, Endymion tries to grab and kiss the hand of the Indian Maid—his mundane paramour—who disappears and plunges back to the ground. Here, the specter of spiritual death for which Endymion has yearned enters—a final, long-deferred acceptance brought about by a slow, meandering dismissal of illusory paradox and the shunning of sensuous experience. He broods in the "Cave of Quietude," a place in the soul of "Happy Gloom" where the refusal either to desire or aspire helps keeps suffering at bay: "Enter none / Who strive" (IV. 531-32).

> Where pale become the bloom
> Of health by due; where silence dreariest

[313] John A. Minahan has called attention to the use of the ABA or sonata form in romantic poetry, particularly in Keats. His analysis returns us to the familiar ground of twentieth century lyric studies, following Abrams's description of the Greater Romantic Lyric—a poem that dramatizes the seeking of consolation or epiphany through an exposition, development and recapitulation.

[314] This transition from the Bacchic song of Sorrow to the dark Pegasus figure anticipates the Nightingale's "Away! away! For I will fly to thee / Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, / But on the viewless sings of Poesy!"—points of reference among other points of reference that point us decisively towards that later ode.

Is most articulate; where hopes infest;
Where those eyes are brightest far that keep
Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
O spirit happy home! O wondrous soul!" (IV. 538-543)

The anti-boon of the cave is a compression of Dickinson's gloomy joking that "the heart asks pleasure first"—a desire for non-desire, that impels us onto a desire for numbness and the demise of the suffering self. "Never since thy griefs began," Keats's verse narrator exclaims, "hast thou felt so content" (IV. 546-47) Blind to a masque of the Zodiac[315] that transpires around him, Endymion rides his flying steed back to solid earth and announces plans to create a chaste bower of pleasure in which (sexual) pleasure will be infinitely deferred. He tells the Indian maid (whom he still does not recognize as Cynthia) to leave him, and persists even when Peona arrives and claims that Latmos is rejoicing in the presence of Cynthia's arrival. The social restoration projected through Keats's fantasy of the mortal-empyreal love affair, in other words, is at hand.

The story's end is somewhat abrupt and notoriously unsatisfying; Endymion at last decides that his natural mortality and elected ideality were always bound to "make a mortal man / Grow impious" (IV. 960-961) What is most fascinating however, is that with this realization he sinks into what I would argue is his most death-like or trance-like state since Peona first played her strange music for him. Keats represents this as a descent, noting the futility of language to describe his thoughts and secondly by explaining that Endymion's mind silences the music around it:

…So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be found,
Deeper and deeper sinking until drowned
Beyond the reach of music. For the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar
Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full. (IV. 961-967)

The sensuous music, far swollen, soft and full, more than suggests an analogy to the lady in waiting, whom Endymion will awake to find directly before him—the second time he experiences the motif of Adam's dream in the company of Cynthia: "the imagination may be compared to Adam's dream,—he awoke and found it truth."[316] The question that asserts itself here is this: does the sensuously and sexually charged music, the very art that expresses things for which no wording can be found, lead him finally into the state where he can have a Blakean epiphany of the altering eye that brings about the Indian Maid's final transformation into the guise of Cynthia? Or has Endymion finally succeeded in forcing out the material blockage of art, leading himself beyond language and music and into a condition where he can pass the bar of earthly existence? The most

[315] What purpose this masque serves, other than simply to add a fanciful interlude, is unclear. But without it, the poem would fall about six lines short of being 4000 words—Keats's quantitative goal.
[316] *KL,* (To Bailey, 22 November, 1817) I. 185

interesting course to plot through this double bind—one that I believe Keats was very clever to have written into this narrative, if indeed he intended it—is to read the "death" and "dissolving" and "disappearing" as nodes of self-effacement that threaten or reward the poet depending on how he defines his participation with some *other*—be it aesthetic phenomenon or a lover or anything else. The reward is, as Book I sets out, "happiness," and the self-making company of the other that he first articulated when he set out upon his quest for Cynthia;

> "Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
> Our ready minds to fellowship divine
> A fellowship with essence, till we shine
> Full alchemiz'd, and free of space." (I. 777-780)

The corresponding threat is emptiness, hollowness—the mistaking of feeling for being that Endymion sees as the confusion of art for experience:

> "…when the airy stress
> Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
> And with sympathetic touch unbinds
> Eolian magic from their lucid wombs: (I. 783-786)

Moreover, he constructs a catalogue[317] of generic reference points to elucidate his ideas:

Ballads:

> Then old songs awaken from enclouded tombs;
> Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;

Odes:

> Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave
> Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot;

Epics:

> Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
> Where long ago a giant battle was;

A miscellaneous category (or *lieder*):

> "And, form the turf, a lullaby doth pass
> In every place where infant Orpheus slept.

[317] The catalog ranges from I. 783-794.

The problem with these old pieces is that they are artifacts; though we may rouse them to life when we invest our imaginations in them and give over our libation of blood, we remove ourselves from the sensuous world.

> Feel we these things?—that moment have we stept
> Into a sort of oneness, and our state
> Is like a floating spirit's. (I.795-797)

But notice how the thing that brings these old, dead songs into being is music defined as "the airy stress /Of music's kiss." We could read this as a synecdoche for the musician/singer, but to a great extent the music is naturalized. It is carried by free winds, and Eolian magic is more suggestive of a wind harp than a harpist. Curiously, the music is also sensuous beyond compare. The kiss, the sympathetic touch, the impregnation, the unbinding and the birth ushered in by the music is every bit, if not more sexual than any of Endymion's other erotic speculations. Also, the "sympathetic touch" adds a metaphysical touch—the term sympathetic refers both to sympathy but also to phenomenon of one string vibrating in the presence of a similarly pitched string. In other words, this ambiguously human and divine music can achieve the kind of transcendence that Endymion aspires too through natural principles as well as mystical ones, yoking them together and positioning them as the well-spring of poetry (or that which animates it)—he simply believes that they cannot do this *for him*.

Lastly, it is crucial to note the distinction that this passage makes between "song" (sung poetry that remains on earth) and "music" that is played by human craft, rouses immortal songs, and provides both form and inspiration of poetry; in the poem's fourth book, Endymion will claim to have a "triple soul" in that he is devoted to the human Indian Maid, the Immortal Cynthia, and the Muse. Thus the threat that song and poetry present is both engendered by and recuperated by music's paradoxically divine bodilyness, or empyreal sensuousness. It provides the speculative aesthetic material that, because unheard in print, cannot be fully accounted for by poetry and yet is able to participate with poetry in that the poem is both a verbal arrangement and able to house metaphorical conceit. Poetry in stretched, antique meter yields to the forms music exerts and the powers we impute to it. Thus, for Keats, the sign "music" provides a counterpart to the bowers of luxurious ekphrasis—it is an animating force of the pleasures of companionability, the heat that raises the mercury in Keats's "pleasure thermometer." It signals that we have moved from the livable space of the coterie to the social vanishing point of human and divine consummation. That this is rather fraught where conventional sociability is concerned is also suggested by the poem's epigram—"the stretched meter of an antique song." Where Endymion and Cynthia vanish abruptly and are seen no more, Shakespeare's sonneteer can at least look forward to a living addition to his textual coterie in his couplet:

> But were some child of yours alive that time,
> You should live twice, in it, and in my rhyme.[318]

[318] Shakespeare, William. The Sonnets. Ed Stephen Orgel. New York: Penguin Books, 2001.

The Poems of 1819

In "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil," tropes of sociability and its proxy, erotic intimacy, turn to the creation or recreation of folk songs to effect a union (in the case of "The Eve of St. Agnes") or to recompense its loss (in the case of "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil")—particularly when figures of paternalistic tyranny ruinously prohibit such unions. In "The Eve of St. Agnes" we see once more the familiar motif of music mediating social relations from the outset. The aged, half-frozen beadsman, hired to pray for Madeline's kinsmen, is a marker of the social fringe of the castle, but he is also marked as an outsider by his reactions to the music echoing within its walls:

> Northward he turneth through a little door,
> And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
> Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
> But no—already had his deathbell rung;
> The joys of all his life were said and sung. (ll. 19-23)

The word "sung" enacts an image of musical completion that stands in contrast to the almost allegorized, or at least capitalized, "Music" that drones on inside. This gives a social cast to Keats's earlier motif of the "continuing presence of music in nature,"[319] wherein natural music figures the continuing antiphon of summer's grasshopper and winter's cricket:

> The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
> On a lone winter evening, when the frost
> Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
> The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
> And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
> The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills. (ll. 9-14)

The illusion facilitated through "drowsiness half lost" amounts to a privileging of summer over winter—the pleasure felt in the scarcity of winter is to daydream beyond the present and imagine the grasshopper's "summer luxury." If the musical idea developed in "The Grasshopper and the Cricket" is indeed an instance of natural music, then by "The Eve of Saint Agnes" Keats seems willing to domesticate it, and in so doing he finds a figurative relationship between festive, ongoing music and the formal closure of a song brought to its conclusion. The beadsman is alive, but in social terms, he has already passed.

The two central characters, Porphyro and Madeline, have a similarly disharmonious relationship to the castle's music. Madeline, enchanted by the legend of St. Agnes Eve and eager for dream-visions of her future husband, dances around with

[319] See Vendler, p. 236. Here, I am taking up a position against Vendler.

"regardless eyes" (l. 64), but more striking is the fact that she hardly hears the music around her:

> The music, yearning like a God in pain,
> She scarcely heard… (ll. 55-56).

She is in a Keatsian trance, and while she moves and dances with the music, there is nothing animating in it, not for her at any rate. More drastically, the music of the castle is little more than a grating, perilous sound-phenomenon for Porphyro. Midway through his attempt to creep "Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness" (l. 250) toward the sleeping Madeline, a door in the hallway burst open and we read Porphyro's white-knuckled reaction through the verse narrator's free-indirect descriptions:

> O For some drowsy Morphean amulet!
> The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
> The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
> Affray his ears…" (ll. 257-260)

His antagonists' music antagonizes, itself a force that nearly undoes him.

The central musical episode comes amid the dramatic and sexual climax (one and the same) and is likewise a focal point for the way in which these perennially controversial climaxes may be read. Heidi Thomson has extensively traced out the significance of Keats's invocation of Alain Chartier's troubadour song "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," noting that the invocation of the song redresses the social norms of old romance in which oaths of undying loyalty for a love never to be requited are swapped for Porphyro's assurances that he will make good on his promises (i.e. the oath of marriage will follow the consummation, the latter now a *fait accompli*).[320]

While much of Thompson's attention is pulled into the storied moral quandaries and critical back-and-forth over the virtue or criminality of Porphyro's "stratagem,"[321] I would like to consider the placement of the medieval song in the context of what we have seen from Keats's use of song so far. The trope of frustrated longing cemented generically by the commonplaces of medieval love lyrics—which Keats would have

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[320] See Thomson, Heidi. "Eavesdropping on 'The Eve of St. Agnes': Madeline's Sensual Ear and Porphyro's Ancient Ditty." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 97.3 (1998): 337-351. In particular, see pp. 345-51.

[321] In Thompson's view, Porphyro's singing and Madeline's hearing of it enacts a partnership—an element of mutual consenst that complicates the critical narrative that the intercourse is a hostile, and/or victimizing sexual encounter. I have a hard time accepting this qualification in light of phrases like "still, still she dreams." As Thompson dismisses it as a tongue-in-cheek deflection for the censors, such a deflection only reintroduces the original, censorious problem: Porphyro is using a folk ritual to have sexual intercourse prior to the marriage ritual, and all the while his bride-to-be is sleeping. The possibility that their intercourse is consensual hinges on how we read "dreams." With such indeterminacy written into the text, it is unlikely that we could ever reach a definitive stance on the issue, which may very well have been Keats's intent all along.

understood as artifacts of *romance* proper—find a parallel in Madeline who was "hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amort" (i.e. dead, 70). Both of them are embodiments—one literary, the other human—of suspended wish fulfillment, reminiscent of the parallels laid out in *Endymion* between poetic forms awaiting musical fulfillment, or written texts that spell out the musical means by which dead, imprisoned or attendant lovers will resume life and intimacy (i.e. the Glaucus episode). These same elements are at work in "The Eve of St. Agnes," and I would go even further to suggest that our reading of the analogy between the textual/sexual encounter played out between Madeline and Porphyro need not resolve in critical judgment about the status of their sex act; I propose we can read this analogy in reverse in that an act of sexual subterfuge can figure a textual one. In other words, Porphyro's playing and singing arouses Madeline's "ear" and foreshadows even as it figures the intercourse that follows or may have possibly begun;[322] on the other hand, the intercourse itself figures the subversive resurrection of the medieval song, or the lyric song in the context of narrative verse whose descriptive detail and action are to be faithfully and clearly presented. In fact, Keats himself made the coy argument that if the sex act that transpired between Madeline and Porphyro was not clear—if there was "an opening for doubt what took place," —then "it was [Keats's] fault for not writing clearly & comprehensively."[323]

But of course, he couldn't have done—not if the poem was to go to press, and on that point, John Taylor, Keats's publisher, weighs in furiously.[324] "This Folly of Keats is the most stupid piece of Folly I can conceive," since it would assure sniping reviews and also alienate female readers in the process; importantly, women made up the bulk of the potential reading audience.[325] Disgust over Keats's "Disease of Mind," "moral Taste," and "Decency and discretion" pepper the letter, and culminate in a threat: "if he will not so far concede to my Wishes as to leave the passage as it originally stood, I must be content to admire his Poems with some other Imprint" (183).[326] For Taylor, the poem had

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[322] The easiest moment to pinpoint is "into her dream he melted, as the rose / Blendeth its odour with the violet" (320-21), but this description centers primarily on Madeline's experience—a congruent harmony of dream and reality. This does not, however, mark the first point where dream and reality have been integrated, only the first instance of harmonious relation. It substitutes the discordant, but nonetheless extant points of integrations at l. 295—"she panted quick—and suddenly / Her blue affrayed eyes open shone" followed by the "painful change" at l. 300. And of course, the "painful change" follows the initial act of singing the ballad. Therefore, it seems to me that their intercourse and the contours of Madeline's dreaming are related by shifting, periodically interrupted correlations and do not form a single moment we can pinpoint. As I argue, however, this vagueness is purposive: it dovetails with the implantation of song music within descriptive, narrative text.

[323] *KL* (Woodhouse to Taylor, 19 September 1819), II. 163.

[324] *KL* (Taylor to Woodhouse, 25 September, 1819), II. 198.

[325] *ibid,* "Had he known truly what the Society and what the Suffrages of Women are worth, he would never have thought of depriving himself of them" (II. 183).

[326] For an analysis of the relationship between Keats's public reputation and his troubled sexuality, see the lengthy introduction to Marjorie Levinson's Keats's Life of Allegory: the Origins of A Style. London, Basil Blackwell, 1988.

already stood at the limit, if not past it; Keats's further "clarifications" of the stanza (which Taylor had not seen directly as he only had Woodhouse's paraphrase at the time), were too much.

The slipping point between suggestion and outright description is typologically embodied through the presence of the "ancient ditty," whose effects and affects are rendered in musical, not textual terms; the ditty blurs the specificity of precisely what the literary object is that is nestled in the midst of, and generically ruptures, the narrative action.

> Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
> Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
> He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
> In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans merci":
> Close to her ear touching the melody;—
> Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd soft moan:
> He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
> Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
> Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone. (ll. 289-297)

The "hollow lute" has a figurative connection with Madeline, herself hollow and tranced with fancies; her dreams, her instrument and ultimately her body are about to be taken ("took") over by the "tumultuous" suitor armed with "tenderest" chords. But we wonder if Porphyro is out of his text, so to speak. The "ditty" he sang is hardly a ditty if we take Keats's poem at face value. His reference to "La belle dame sans mercy" invokes his own ballad of the same name. Surely, it has some obvious resonance: the device of dreaming, "fairy song," linguistic obscurity ("language strange"), and a ballad (i.e song) form—topics that my analysis will round back upon shortly. That said, I would like to leave aside Keats's poem and focus on one more widely known in Keats's time, Alain Chartier's *La Belle Dame Sans Mercy*, which presents a more intriguing set of problematics and possibilities. As for problematics: Chartier's version comes in at 800 lines, not exactly a brief song or ballad as would befit the situation in which Porphyro finds himself. Moreover, the text that Keats knew was Richard Roos's fifteenth century translation (866 lines), spuriously attributed to Chaucer until the early romantic period. The first lines of Roos's version are in fact about the act of translation itself, not a plot of sensuous romance, where the translator introduces himself as self-conscious and self-questioning (abetted by the pun on Roos, i.e. the verb "rose" and Roos's name).

> HALF in a dreme, not fully wel awaked,
> The golden sleep me wrapped under his wing;
> Yet nat for-thy I roos, and wel nigh naked,
> Al sodaynly my-selve rémembring
> Of a matér, leving al other thing,
> Which I shold do, with-outen more delay,

For hem to whom I durst nat disobey. [327]

The poem begins with the recollection of waking from a half "dreme," dressing and then contemplating how Chartier's text might be successfully rendered in translation. The device of the translator's textual frame enacts a question of how to remake an old text into a new one. If there is an unspoken question that haunts the intertextual crux of "The Eve of St. Agnes," this could be it. But Keats cleverly inserts "in Provence," directing us past the translation he knew (and perhaps away from his own version) and back to the original, indeed "long since mute," given the overwhelming popularity of the English translation.

Following Keats's lead, we see that the original verse narrator is likewise a forlorn figure:

Deeth hath take my lady and maistresse,
And left me sole…(ll. 34-35).

He claims that he cannot know happiness, and spends the rest of the poem acting the part of eavesdropper as *la dame* (the lady) repeatedly refuses the ploys and ratiocinations of *l'amant* (the lover). From the outset, the verse narrator (Chartier's) repeatedly disavows his ability to compose a poem about love or happiness, mentioning the failure of his "penne" (l. 47) and his "tongue" (l. 48) and making repeated references to songs (love songs, ostensibly) that he will leave to others: "ditties for to make" and "ballades and songs" (l. 38, l. 55).

The trope of unrequited love and female refusal parallels the trope of refusing to sing in poetic composition, and this is precisely what gets inverted in "The Eve of St. Agnes." The music of the "ditty…mute" that Keats references has a strong narrative presence; the medieval generic tropes, in contrast, play at a distance and suggest that we see the presence of "La belle dame sans merci" as something that is specifically subverted *by* its context and subversive *in* its context. In other words, the impossibility of writing the scene of consummation, which *Endymion* moves off-stage so to speak, has graduated from the metaphysical dilemma of featuring a transcendent love affair to the dilemma of writing about sexual unions when print culture, prevailing mores, friends and publishers were quick to frown upon, if not prohibit them. Music comes to the rescue. The efficacious voice and song that are suspended in Chartier's text are present even in the absence of any clear reference to the text of "La belle dame sans merci." Language falters throughout the subsequent stanza, replaced by "witless words" and Porphyro "fearing to move or speak"(303, 305). The song that Madeline hears in her half-dream is textually vague as well; even as she mentions his vows, she couches the description in terms of aurality and musicality.

'Ah Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now
'Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
'Made tuneable with every sweetest vow. //

[327] Lines 1-7. Levinson (cited in previous note) includes the poem in her appendix. My quotations are taken from there.

'Give me that voice again…'" (ll. 306-08, 312).

The word "every" raises the question of whether he uttered vows at all: is she referring to all of his vows, or is she referring hyperbolically to every vow that he could make? All we know is that he "play'd," and did not necessary sing, the ancient ditty, "Close to her ear touching the melody"(293). Does her dream idealize the music into language and make her a willing participant thereafter? All we can say for certain is that through Porphyro Keats has deployed a musical idea that will surface repeatedly in the odes—expression without precise meaning. In "The Eve of St. Agnes" this musical idea is both a narrative device and a metaliterary announcement of what it is that he can and cannot communicate. It is both a part of and emblematic of the complicated ritual that Porphyro and Madeline undertake, and something that warrants comparison to, and distinction from, the activities of the Hunt circle: it warrants comparison because here we see the familiar terrain of a bower, intimacy, pleasure, and ritual; and yet it warrants distinction because here we also see a far more complex and intricate mingling of music and poetry than the rituals that the musical evenings or literary had ever imagined or seemingly allowed.

In "The Eve of St. Agnes," Keats blurs the line between the sensual and the spiritual ear, which reflects a movement away from the pure Fancy that he had come to dislike in his own writing: "As the marvellous is the most enticing and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy and to let her manage for herself."[328] He qualifies this wish on two fronts, however, noting that, "I and myself cannot agree about this at all." Secondly there is a generic underpinning here: he will leave aside fancy to write "a few fine Plays—my greatest ambition."[329] Fancy therefore is something he will divest himself of methodologically, but as such it remains an object of poetic exploration—now more than ever. The ironic, self-reflexive cast of "The Eve of St. Agnes" represents a step toward the idea that "wonders are no wonders for me."[330] Musical traces of this idea arise in lines, such as:

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter… ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" ll. 11-12).

The "spirit" (to which the urn pipes its ditties) pipes in necessary opposition to the sensual ear (l. 14). Thus we can imagine the idealized music of an idealized musician "forever piping songs forever new" to our spirits (l. 24): novelty, beauty and immanence unparalleled by human musicians. But the familiar caveat returns in the guise of the marmoreal "cold pastoral" (l. 45), which we can read as precisely the kind of dead, entranced, imprisoned or socially dislocated thing that fanciful music otherwise resuscitates.

We have now seen how musical speculations inhere chiefly through the guise of "song," in that music both animates and resurrects voices, passions, lovers and texts.

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[328] *KL* (To Taylor, 17 November, 1819) II. 234.
[329] *ibid*
[330] *ibid*

There is an elegiac aspect to this as well: music repairs the dislocations of death, disappearance and isolation—which, as we saw in the examples of the poems and Glaucus, are strongly associated with texts (i.e. the dead letter). In "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil," this idea gets nuanced through the lens of balladry—in fact, we could say that song becomes a substitution for elegiac substitution itself. After Lorenzo dies, Isabella develops a fetishistic attachment to Lorenzo's vegetative emblem—a pot of basil that functions as a "fragmentary" or "consoling sign" that substitutes the lost lover, but one which in no way helps Isabel to effect what Freud called the "Work of Mourning."[331] When the pot of basil itself gets stolen, Isabella finds herself confronted with a second loss and is mortally aggrieved; the verse narrator explains the circumstances of her death as follows:

> O Melancholy, turn thy eyes away!
> O Music, Music breathe despondingly!
> O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
> From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
> Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way."
> For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
> Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
> Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet. (ll. 481-88)

Here, in stanza 61, Keats makes a series of notable changes. The first and third lines of the stanza reverse the exhortations of stanza 55:

> O Melancholy, linger here awhile! //
> O Echo, Echo, from some somber isle,
> Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh! (ll. 433, 435-36)

The most notable feature, then, is the unchanging second line. Music is still invoked twice and asked to breathe "despondingly" (l. 434). The purpose of this continuation—the perpetually desponding breath and the idea of continuity it evokes—becomes clear as the two closing stanzas unfold and Isabella's folkloric afterlife is described.

> Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
> Asking for her lost Basil amorously;
> And with melodious chuckle in the strings
> Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
> After her Pilgrim in his wanderings,
> To ask him where her Basil was; and why
> 'Twas hid from her: "For cruel 'tis," said she,
> "To steal my Basil-pot away from me."
>
> And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,

[331] See, pp. 4-5 in Sacks, Peter. The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985. In particular, see Sacks's first chapter, "Interpreting the Genre: The Elegy and the Work of Mourning" (pp. 1-37).

Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd.
Still is the burthen sung—"O cruelty,
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me." (ll. 489-504)

What Keats relates is the relation of the story via song—its continuity in the "desponding breath" that belongs both to singers and poets. The oral, sung transmission of the sung "burthen" relates Isabel's words and her story (and puns on the double meaning of "burden" as hardship and musical refrain), but the voice is not Isabel's voice. Even the small revision of "for cruel 'tis" to "O cruelty" changes Isabel's language from speech to the voice of song, already suggesting a process of change and erasure of her voice that the fanciful image of "melodious chuckle in the strings" heard in "her lorn voice"[332] imaginatively re-implants (ll. 491-492). Indeed, the re-forming of her living address to the "dead and senseless things" that cannot perceive it at some point is, of course, heard and accretes into a sad folksong or ballad. The real fantasy here is the creation of an artifact of oral culture that Keats's narrative traces back to a root source; as the song originates and takes shape it repeats a form of the initial message, shared among each living, sensible ear (and mouth) that *can* hear it (and sing it back). The "lorn" quality of the voice, however, is not simply a "love-lorn" mood. The idea of repeated song, the images of death and loneliness, the dripping melancholy and pining away sounds a great deal like a Nightingale—and "lorn" is conspicuously followed by "and so she died forlorn," in the first line of stanza 63 (l. 497). This brings us face to face with the "Ode to a Nightingale," where the idea of re-transmission of the same sounds and the musical and poetic stakes involved in hearing them get a profoundly different treatment—tested out in the dialectical form of the ode. "Isabella; or the Pot of Basil," on the other hand, contents itself to resonate as the final instantiation of a melancholic song. Perhaps this is why the sound like a bell heard here is heard overwhelmingly in the final stanza. The rhyme sound "or" is not only intoned in the three rhyme sounds demanded by the *ottava rima* stanza (forlorn/mourn/ born) but also in "Imploring" (l. 498), "Florence" (l. 499), "story" (l. 501) and more subtly "her love" (l. 500) and "burthen" (l. 503).

In the "Ode to a Nightingale," the aesthetic of sociability Keats's produces from his first musical speculations turns back on the very musical speculations that have

[332] Fascinatingly, Leigh Hunt heard this in a somewhat different light, drawn to the passage's startling use of diction: "It is curious to see how the simple pathos of Bocaccio, or (which is the same thing) the simple intensity of the heroine's feelings, suffices our author more and more, as he gets to the end of his story. And he has related it as happily, as if he had never written any poetry but that of the heart. The passage about the tone of her voice, —the poor lost-witted coaxing, —the 'chuckle' in which she asks after her Pilgrim and her Basil, —is as true and touching an instance of the effect of a happy familiar word, as any in all poetry. The poet bids his imagination depart." Hunt, Leigh. The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt (7 vols). Ed Greg Kucich and Jeffrey N. Cox. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003, II. 288.

helped it develop—from the shared reference of a coterie, to a metaphysical figure that vivifies or animates texts (*Endymion*) in dimensions that are both fanciful ("The Eve of St Agnes") and quasi-historical ("Isabella, or the pot of Basil"). As these speculations have evolved, the configuration of music and text—be it written or oral—into song has become an insistent common thread. In many of the odes of 1819, the figure of song continues its mythic and aesthetic evolution alongside Keats's continuing exploration of the dialectic of fancy and imagination. I will briefly turn to some of these examples as my reading of "Ode to a Nightingale" proceeds.

In the "Ode to Psyche," the absence, not the presence, of music is announced explicitly and emerges as the chief absence among Psyche's unformed rituals of worship. The basic scheme of the ode is mimetic. Its speaker situates these idealized lacks and promises both to be Psyche's priest and create that which he deems lacking. It likewise mirrors itself, chiasmatically reduplicating its own language as if to perform the very procedure it describes. (Shapes are a fascinating undercurrent in these odes, and Psyche's mimetic scheme and four-stanza form are tantalizingly consistent with the image of a symmetrical, four-winged butterfly—Psyche's metamorphic form and the animal likewise most associated with transformation itself). In its opening lines, the poem overtly compensates for its musical silence with apostrophic exclamations, oxymoron and homophonic irony.

> O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
> By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
> And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
> Even into thine own soft-conched ear: (ll. 1-4)

The "tuneless numbers" are wrung, not rung—a suggestion of technical work that confesses the process of writing even as it expels the illusion of musicality. To this end, the "pardon" begged in line three can arguably be read two ways. On the one hand, it is an apology for whispering back Psyche's secrets to herself, which makes for a convoluted moment.[333] On the other hand, depending on how we hear, and therefore read, the word "should," the line can also be said to express an apologetic admission that the poem is indeed not singing—Psyche's secrets *should* be sung, not written or spoken, into her soft-conched ear (which, of course, is an ear receptive to music in light of the conch-shell image). Moreover, in Keats's perfectly iambic line, "should" takes an accent and therefore enjoys a verbal emphasis provided by the very verse (tuneless numbers) that are the vessel for the un-sung words that the Goddess Psyche is asked to "hear" in the first place. What makes these lines so fascinating is the extent to which they self-consciously claim *not* to be singing, as if not singing was the more aberrant claim when juxtaposed with standard tropes of the ode like "I sing to thee Goddess!"

Of all the appurtenances that Keats's speaker subsequently details as absences and promised presences, music has the greatest non-presence/presence:

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[333] Andrew Bennett calls "the convolute" the "governing figure" of these lines and the poem as a whole. In Psyche, he argues, "communication is short-circuited" and engenders "the uncanny moment of reading by the poem." See pp. 130-131 in Bennett, Andrew. Keats, Narrative and Audience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe… (ll. 44-46)

True to his opening statements, these musical emblems are projected into the future. They are likewise the closest approximation of poetic activity named among the leafy luxuries that his poetry, in turn, will create. Keats covers his bases well. He will act the part of the collective hymn, the singing voice, the stringed lute, and the pipe—an instrument associated with Pan that balances the chastened "virgin choir" (l. 30) that the phrase "let me be thy choir"(l. 44) replaces. In addition to this, Psyche may have indeed been better off in coming "Too, too late for the fond believing lyre" (l. 37). The old emblem of lyric is fulsome, "fond believing," and perhaps encapsulates a pun on "liar"[334] given Keats's preference for the lute throughout the rest of the poem (the lyre/liar pun sticks out if we consider how the phrase "So let me be…/…thy lyre" would sound.) If, as Andrew Bennett argues, there is an uncanny element registered through Psyche, it could just as well be the radical portrayal of music dislocated from text—the latter present and the former suspended. Not surprisingly, erotic intimacy is also in suspended animation.

They[335] lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber, (ll. 15-18)

Accordingly, the idea of song is at once troubled but reassuringly promised—all but happening—and with it will come the amorous boons implicit in the many rituals and architectures enumerated at length through the poem's last stanza.

…all the soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm love in. (ll. 64-67)

In many ways, this ode is the perfect embodiment of Keats's trope of song and singing so far: the coming text and music amid worshipful ritual suggests that all-fulfilling intimacy is but a song away.

The warmth, the open casement and musical song are more pointedly integrated when Keats naturalizes them in the "Ode on Indolence." Amid his protests that the protean allegories of Love, Ambition and Poesy have interrupted the pleasant fancy of his "dim dreams," he claims:

[334] Neither Allott nor Stillinger note this pun in line 37, but Cox includes it in a footnote of his Norton Critical Edition. See Keats Poetry and Prose. "Keats puns on both "fond"—caring, devoted but also foolish—and "lyre"/liar" (464).
[335] i.e. Cupid and Psyche

The open casement press'd a new-leaved vine,
Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay; (47-48)

In wakeful reality, by contrast, Keats relies on the audiovisual figure of the silenced masque—a dramatic form filled with song, and a pun on the allegorical masks—to situate his annoyance alongside his paradoxically vehement attachment to inactivity:

How is it, Shadows, that I knew ye not?
How came ye muffled in so hush a masque?
Was it a deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days?... (ll. 11-15)

Though there are some passages in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" that I would like to review prior to the Nightingale ode, the connection between Psyche and Indolence forces our hand, somewhat, in that the dislocations between text and music, present and past, fancy and reality come to a head amid references to the auditors of ancient songs and opening casements.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. (ll. 61-70)

The conjunction of ancient song, fanciful song and the song of the "passing" night are united via the act of listening—a problem. Emperors, clowns and the inhabitants of faery lands are braided into a single accord, but as we have seen, Keats often features song—its musical components in particular—as something alien or historically circumscribed (e.g. the "now mute" ditty of the "Eve of St. Agnes" or the "tunes…out of memory" in *Endymion*); these musical performances uncannily resurface in the nightingale's song—and literally! Unless Keats has perfect pitch, he cannot assume that the call of the nightingale, a natural phenomenon, has or will ever change; only its auditors change. These auditors, of course, include both fictive personas as well as other poets like Thomson, Milton, Smith, Coleridge and a host of others who have likewise composed poems to the Nightingale's call, all of which can act as literary reference points for Keats; but his odes, as Psyche makes clear, are new experiments and not escapes to the mythic or literary past. Thus the song threatens to confine both the speaker and the present poem to 'accompaniment' that had already been deemed unfit by Psyche's ruminations in which Keats plans to replace the fanciful lyre of old tradition because it coexists with the "holy" cardinal elements that were edifices of bygone animism:

When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire; (ll. 38-39)

Hunt's critique of *Lamia* resonates here; "it is remarkable," he claims, that "an age of poetry has grown up with the progress of experiment; and that the very poets, who seem to countenance these notions, accompany them by some of their finest effusions."[336] Keats's progress, or his own place among the "grand march of the intellect" that he had intimated by writing about the thrill of scientific discovery in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" has instrumental touchstones. The lute, though by no means a modern invention in Keats's time, is nonetheless a string instrument that will turn the materials newly discovered by poets or science into new rituals and new art even as they mine the "inexhaustible"[337] forms of ancient poetry. The birdsong explicitly contravenes this kind of novelty or rejuvenation.

New poetry, therefore, requires new music. The "unheard melodies" of the urn, which, as Peter Manning rightfully observes, can be "judged sweeter than real ones because with them the gap between signifier and signified is widest, and the power of suggestion verges therefore on infinite,"[338] takes a quantum leap forward into the infinite when we take "melody" at face value—not only a code word for "poetry" but literally a register of absolute, expressive plenitude that even absolute music cannot produce. Keats accommodates both of these readings of "melody." He supplies animating inquiries[339] despite nominating the urn as "historian." Yet he prods us toward the musical sense of "melody" by locating a principle of endless expression in the piped, not sung, music featured on the urn's surface:

And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs forever new; (ll. 23-24).

How these songs could be realized is a question that neither the urn nor its viewer answer, but what is important is that Keats put the question into play. Nonetheless, the visual pipe produces songs without words, and in its musical and textual silence both it and the speaker seem rather "fond believing." Perhaps it is worth speculating for a moment that the non-Euclidian form of the urn itself,[340] when viewed from any one angle, always reveals the same two-dimensional profile: the outline of an urn, and the shape of a lyre.

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[336] "Review of Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poems," in Keats Poetry and Prose. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009, p. 519.
[337] *ibid*.
[338] See p. 116 in Manning, Peter J. Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
[339] As Manning put it: "Keats's Grecian Urn, animated by the inquiries of its beholder, itself speaks only teasingly or remains silent" (116).
[340] For a fascinating account of the Urn as a geometrical *torus*, see Adam Roberts. "Keats's 'Attic Shape': 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and Non-Euclidean Geometry." *Keats-Shelley Review* 9 (1995): 1-14.

As we just saw, however, unheard (not to mention wordless) music figures infinite expressive potential on the urn just as heard wordless music figures one kind of expressive problematic in the nightingale's song. The search for form amid expressive plenitude is therefore common to both odes, despite their differing focus on plastic and musical art. The form most readily available to Keats in the nightingale ode is, of course, song, and therefore the "Ode to a Nightingale" becomes the chief vessel by which Keats can explore the trope of song that he has relied upon as a mainstay of fancy (especially when it abides with *eros,* intimacy and community). What we see in this ode, then, is a whittling away of conventional song tropes until, at last, there is an approach to musical ideality that leads on to the very point at which all form becomes lost, which Keats shrouds with the figure of "easeful Death" (l. 52).

If we collect and examine the handful of different song types distributed through the ode, we can see that they are all fraught: the happy song of summer that is sung in "full throated ease," (l. 10) unites its object of praise and its occasion. The song of "ecstasy"(l. 58) is sung to no one (i.e. after his death "still wouldst [the nightingale] sing"[l. 59]). Likewise, the "high requiem," is sung for the dead, though of course this is highly provisional insofar as Keats refuses death. This is, however, is not the point: in none of these songs can the object of the song actually hear the song. Summer, which is not a fictional allegory or even an imagined object of address (like Autumn), cannot hear the happy song sung for it. Nor can any requiem be heard by the one for whom it is played. The "plaintive anthem," (l. 75) however, is far closer to being perceived by its object of address. An anthem is a song of commemoration, which, unlike the elegiac requiem, celebrates something that recurs, not something that has departed. But "plaintive" hardly leads us on to a clear object of commemoration. In fact, the nightingale's call only registers as an anthem at the moment it is said to fade.

> Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
> Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
> in the next valley-glades;
> Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
> Fled is that Music:--Do I wake or sleep? (ll. 76-80)

At the closing of these unfit forms of song, the very last word we encounter is "music"—pure, or at least formless, wordless expressive essence itself. But by this point in the ode, Keats has already been probing and sometimes complicating this kind of ideality, beginning especially the moment he declares, "Away! Away! for I will fly to thee,"(l. 31). Unlike in "Bards of Passion and Mirth," ideality and reality cannot be easily separated in "Ode to a Nightingale," nor can they be meaningfully integrated. In stanza four, (following "Away! Away!"), the light of the queen moon and terrestrial darkness are positioned against each other, and yet the light and darkness are not as disconnected as the regions to which they correspond. Rhetorically, a similar operation is in play throughout the stanza, where each unfolding statement refocuses the previous one and amounts to a series of semi-negating conjunctions, and where there are none, they are implied.

> Away! Away! for I will fly to thee,
> **Not** charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd round by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways. (ll. 31-40)

He will fly on poesy's ostensibly sober and viewless wings, although the brain itself is nearly as good as drunken; the Queen-Moon is shining in the sky, and there is *not* "no light" of hers on the ground because it filters through the swaying branches overhead. Contrary to claims, like O'Rourke's, that this "opens up the distance between [the speaker] and that imagined world" and thus "the ideal is beyond reach"[341], the real world and the ideal world are the same world; each one implicated in the vision of the other, be it through the traces of light that appear in the scene but fail to illuminate it or the brain that can choose between, but not escape the equal pull of blunting intoxication and clear-headed art. The speaker remains caught in a middle-ground, much as the bird sits somewhere in the trees between the darkness of earth and the light of the heavens. As the next phase of the poem makes clear, the path to the ideal, which is always a fraught one for Keats, doesn't lead to the sky; it leads from the poet's medium of language to the nightingale's medium of wordless musical song. The literal idea of joining with the bird ("with thee fade"; "for I will fly to thee") is displaced by the transformative aesthetic integration of poetic language and music into song.

The darkness of the following stanza is not, therefore, absolute in and of itself: the flowers at the speaker's feet are simply "viewless" like poesy—and in turn illuminated by it. Read at face value, we could assume that the scent of white hawthorn, eglantine, violets, and musk-rose is what allows him to "guess each sweet;"(l. 43) but read intertextually, which the poem legitimizes by linking itself (as a poem) to "the viewless wings of poesy"—a Shakespearian reference to the "be all for death" speech delivered to Claudio by the disguised Duke Vincenzo in Act 3 scene 1 of *Measure for Measure*—we can argue that poetry itself is as much the terra firma of this scene as any actual, physical space, and thus poetry provides the closest approximation of the ideal: a view of what ought to be there as much as what might be there. As almost every critic who reads this poems notes, Keats's sylvan bower in stanza five borrows heavily from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II.i.249-52).[342] O'Rourke notes that Hazlitt's lecture "On Poetry in General," turns to the passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "as an exemplary account of poetic imagination... 'let the poet or the lover of poetry visit it at evening, when beneath the scented hawthorn and the crescent moon it has built itself a palace of

[341] See p. 20, in O'Rourke, James. Keats's Odes and Contemporary Criticism. Florida: University of Florida Press, 1998.
[342] Fewer critics, like Finney and Stuart Ende, readily cite the passage; Ende also notes the possible debt to *Lycidas* (ll. 142, 148). See p. 67 in Ende, Stuart A. "Identification and Identity: The 'Ode to a Nightingale.'" in The Odes of Keats, pp. 65-73. Ed Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.

emerald light.'"[343] Where literary references could be seen as a wedge between Keats and aspirations toward the transcendent,[344] I would argue that we are face to face with a confrontation of the motif of sensuous musical animation that we encountered through the text of *Endymion*, complete with the double-bind of music leading both to sensuousness epiphany and death, to illusion and reality.

When "poesy" provides the extant materials for scene-making, the arrangement of language is of paramount importance, since this, in the final analysis, is how the poet effectively reveals him- or herself in the presence of literary allusion. What, then, determines the arrangement? If we assume that the speaker's attention is half on his utterance and half on the music of the nightingale, and we likewise assume that for Keats this ode is a "meditation on listening,"[345] then our attention should be drawn to the temporal order—music's chief characteristic—that organizes the unfolding of images in this stanza. The very fact that the bird is not mentioned here makes the pure music of her song more insistently present, and so the "music" that does not finally flee until the end of the poem is something we know to be playing throughout. It is most pregnant with expressive force when not apostrophized or described by the speaker. For instance, as the fifth stanza intensifies into the sixth, we meet with the phrase, "Darkling, I listen;" whose striking intransitive mode, semi-colon and caesura mark a textual silence that stands as the full sign of the music itself. The winnowing away of the senses accompanies and intensifies listening, effecting a crescendo (to borrow a musical term) in the music itself. The knowledge of this crescendo helps us to recognize the swelling music of the fifth stanza:

> I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
> Nor what soft incense hangs upon he boughs,
> But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
> Wherewith the seasonable month endows
> The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
> White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
> Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
> And mid-May's eldest child,
> The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
> The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. (ll. 41-50)

The musk-rose, which is still to come, has yet to bloom and the violets have begun to pass. The blooming objects (per Hazlitt) are literary ideals, yet literally located in the passing movement of cyclical time; the phrase "wherewith the seasonable month endows" is a provisional marker of this movement—a kind of conditioning statement

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[343] O'Rourke, p. 20. Hazlitt's quote (which I have quoted from O'Rourke) can be found in Hazlitt, William. Complete Works. Ed. P.P. Howe. New York: AMS Press, 1967. (5:9)
[344] This is the argument that O'Rourke sets out to make through his intertextual reading of the ode. "The proliferation of literary echoes accompanies the poem's loss of cathexis toward transcendence" (20).
[345] Vendler, p. 81. "The ode is remarkable by the fineness and profundity of Keats's meditation on listening."

which means that these are the flowers that should be blooming, should have bloomed or ought to be about to bloom. Thus the declaration "Away! away! for I will fly to thee" culminates in a temporal destination, not a spatial one. The all-at-once-ness of the moment is arranged into patterns of temporal progress—the here, the just past, and the about to be. The unfolding of the poet's voice and the act of listening to the bird's musical voice mutually reinforce the mental activity of being in the moment, lingering in the phrase just past, and abiding in anticipation that which is about to come. The familiar objects of a *Midsummer's Night Dream* are vocally discovered in musical time as much as they are a product of seasonable progress. Thus, fiction and reality merge in the presence of the Nightingale's song as language unfolds in musical order.

When the caesura of the next stanza silently resonates, Keats has ventured to the vanishing point of sensuous fancy that the intellect must nominate as Death and subsequently recuperate. The fancy cheats, but Keats is no fool.

> Darkling, I listen; and, for many a time
> I have been half in love with easeful Death,
> Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
> To take into the air my quiet breath;
> Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
> While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
> In such an ecstasy! (ll. 51-58)

The fallacy here goes well beyond the pathetic fallacy. It is a fallacy of egotistical prosopopoeia and aesthetic anthropomorphism: the bird pours out her soul, means to pour out her soul, gratifies my desire to escape the here-and-now via painless death ("where men sit and hear each other groan"[l. 24] and die very much in pain), and it is all *for me*—until Keats lets his hand tip in the final two lines:

> Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
> To thy high requiem become a sod." (ll. 59-60)

The "deceiving elf" of the last stanza therefore cannot be the nightingale, but fancy alone, as the fulsome mind of fanciful auditor and not the nightingale does the deceiving. For this reason, "music" itself turns out not to define the call of the nightingale nor stand as the ultimate sign of its quiddity. The sign of "music" wriggles away from the nightingale while remaining connected to the experience of the aural encounter. It is neither a metaphor for the birdcall nor the essence of the birdcall, but an idea metonymically linked with the birdcall.

> Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
> Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
> As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf,
> Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
> Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now ‘tis buried deep
In the next valley glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep? (ll. 71-80)

The music has “fled,” much as the nightingale has flown. The sound of language is no longer quiescent but its own oral and aural force: “Forlorn!” The word itself is not music, but gestures to that condition through the figure of simile: “the very word is like a bell.” With the reassertion of self-consciousness and its connection to language, the mounting isolation of the stanza witnesses a gradual effacement of any clear idea of music. Just as the nightingale is not interchangeable with fancy, Music, though connected with both the nightingale and akin to fancy, ultimately emerges as a third, distinct term altogether. Music is the pure aesthetic upon which the interplay between ideality and reality proceeded, and its loss signals the incommensurate nature of waking and dreaming. As a last point of interest, the choriambic stress pattern in the beginning of the last line places a strong emphasis on the first syllable of music:

FLED is that MUsic:—do I WAKE or SLEEP?

The mood of the voice speaking these particular tuneless numbers seems to say, fled is that *music*; the idea of music that was so clearly lodged in the mind of the poet-auditor has fled like the impression of a dream. Even the voice of his “soul self” registers it as something strange—strange, and undeniably absent. The caesura after “music,” unlike the grand pause after “listen,” figures pure silence by comparison. If, as Hartman suggests, the last phrase of the poem signals that “complete awakening is delayed,”[346] the question itself can only be asked by a lucid mind whose lucidity is secured now that the music has passed.

Conclusion

I would like to consider Hunt one last time, in particular, his words about musical hermeneutics from Musical Evenings and those “thoughtful minds” who “attach thoughts to every piece of music they hear” and become over-excited and perplexed. Keats’s distance from this stance is clear, due to his intellectually rigorous employment of birdsong as a stand-in for instrumental music. As such the underlying purpose of Hunt’s argument diverts from Keats. While Hunt comes close to proposing a kind of musical negative capability, his formulation rests on an idea of intentionality to which Keats ultimately bid “adieu.” As Hunt explains, attaching an exuberant train of thoughts to music will “injure the impressions which the vaguer and more soothing genius of the musician intended.” What Keats’s most poignant passage on music in “To Autumn” preserves of the musical evening, however, dovetails with Hunt’s depiction of being “Half conscious, half unconscious… / Of fellow ears” and rhapsodically depicting the

[346] Hartman, Geoffrey. “Poem and Ideology: A Study of Keats’s ‘To Autumn.’” in The Odes of Keats, pp. 45-63. Ed Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987, p. 49.

process by which he might "find a sympathy." But again, Keats outdoes his past mentor. He finds "a sympathy" with autumn, but likewise reimagines her as a subjectivity upon which he can organize the natural sound phenomenon into a music that supplants the "songs of spring" (l. 23), songs that have passed or proven illusory.[347] In the last stanza, he simply listens and coordinates. In a procedure very similar to the adumbration of the flowers in stanza five of "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats engenders his most social, intimate moment by triangulating himself among the chorus he discovers as the latent, still-singing products of the spring whose songs have now vanished. Both high requiem and plaintive anthem, Keats places the natural sounds present in autumn under the sign of music. His poiesis in the final stanza is devoted song-making, or *melopoiesis*:

> Where are the songs of spring? Ay where are they?
> Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
> While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
> And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
> Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
> Among the river sallows, borne aloft
> Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
> And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourne;
> Hedge crickets sing; and now, with treble soft,
> The red-breast whistles from a garden croft;
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. (ll. 23-33)

Nature and agriculture blur together as children mourning for a shared, passing mother even as they themselves pass on (into death, into adulthood[348] or onto warmer climes). The joining-in here constitutes a removal of boundaries inflected and perceived by human knowledge. Thus, each of them either sing in musical terms ("a wailful choir"; "treble" whistling;) or provide onomatopoeic calls ("bleat"; "twitter") that are seamlessly layered in with the music. Unlike the isolation that came from divorcing the idea of music from the call of the nightingale—a gesture that is the very essence of fancy's exorcism—community flourishes in the absence of problematic musical ontology. Hardly a leafy bower, the music of these stubble plains draws from and reimagines the full spectrum of the sociable and musical ideas that this project has been rooting out thus far.

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[347] Anthony Hecht, in one of the shrewdest readings "Where are the songs of spring, aye where are they?", points out that two or three months prior to the poem's composition, "between June and August [of 1819]," Keats wrote Lamia, "in which what initially seems to be a lovely woman turns out to be nothing of the sort, and finally vanishes altogether" (86). See, Hecht, Anthony. "Keats's Appetite." *The Keats Shelley Review* 18 (2004): 68-88.

[348] Though the "full grown lambs" could be read adjectivally—as fatted livestock ready for consumption—the image is more fascinating (and more consistent with the ode's well-wrought, temporal playfulness) when read oxymoronically—and therefore as the brief verge between youth and adulthood. It elongates the other forms of transition and transformation. It provides a developmental analogue to the bursting grape of joy, which seems to burst in perpetuity throughout this ode.

Lastly, the ode resists the very Pindaric turns and discontinuities that its form asserts, and the music at its end resists forced obtrusion in a way that his other songs had never achieved (especially the songs form his narrative work). Hartman cannily connects this unobtrusiveness to the coming of evening, and places it in the greater-lyric tradition via Collins's "Ode to Evening." "Instead of hastening some eclipsing power, or leaping into a fuller present," which are hallmarks of the invocatory, epiphanic sublime ode, "[Collins's] verse becomes a programmatic accompaniment to the gradual fall of night." Hartman intimates a broader romantic interest in the coming on of evening in which the darkling landscape permits the ear to outstrip the eye as the dominant sense organ: "…poets feel themselves part of a belated and burdened culture yet find their own relation to the life of things…the blind and distant ear notices tones—finer tones—that had escaped a dominant and picture-ridden eye" (Hartman 57, 58). In writing of the music of the very landscape to which he listens, Keats positions himself as an inheritor of a tradition of musical ode in which poetry could implicitly nominate itself the author of its own musical accompaniment, and forcefully enough that the notion, as we see in Collins, embeds itself as a trope of natural music that suspends the theatrics of human song.

> If aught of oaten stop, or past'ral song,
> May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
> Like thy own solemn springs,
> Thy springs and dying gales,
> O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
> Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
> With brede ethereal wove,
> O'erhang his wavy bed;
> Now air is hushed, save where the weak-ey'd bat
> With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
> Or where the beetle winds
> His small but sullen horn
> As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path
> Against the pilgrim, borne in heedless hum:
> Now teach me, maid composed,
> To breathe some softened strain, (ll. 1-16)

Keats, however, does not demur like Collins and ask to be taught. Collins depicts but does not fictively transform his persona into more didactic dythrambist that Keats constructs. But in the end, the Ceres figure of Autumn, brought into intimate concord with the world and the poet via shared song, who bestows her ripeness with egalitarianism, is very difficult not to see as a latent crop from the furrows of Cockney sociability—Mozart notwithstanding.

But this autumnal scene in "To Autumn" is also differentiated from the chummy sociability of the Hunt circle and the immediate audience it afforded Keats as a young, aspiring poet. Such a turning point, or the passing of such a juncture, is particularly painful to acknowledge in the study of Keats. The embrace of suspended maturation in "To Autumn" is concomitant with suspended dying and also, as criticism has long

assessed, a peak poetic performance by Keats. "To Autumn" is likewise a poem that travelled far beyond the boundaries of Cockney culture and carried little of that Culture with it (as compared with earlier works), and it found a readership—a community—Keats would not come to know, one that he would obtain posthumously. As I have argued, the odes ultimately reject intimate contexts, and these odes are in no small degree the major drivers of the now quite global circle of admirers and correspondents he has since acquired.

As a last consideration, I would like suggest that there may have been something in the "music" of Keats's voice itself, which, by growing in power from the very independence and self-determination he obtained as an artist, speaks to the aims of this project from a more oblique angle. As Byron writes in Canto XI of *Don Juan*:

> John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
> Just as he really promised something great,
> If not intelligible, – without Greek
> Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
> Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
> Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate:
> – 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
> Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article. (XI, 60)[349]

Speaking in English as the Gods "might have been supposed to speak" is no faint praise. In a lengthy postscript to John Murray,[350] Byron writes, "...I did not approve of Keats's poetry, or principles of poetry, or of his abuse of Pope,"—all things associated with the Hunt circle, and in contemporaneous criticism of Keats, the very markings of Cockney taste that allowed dismissive critics to elide Keats into Hunt's purportedly pernicious society. And yet, as Byron says, "…as he is dead, omit *all* that is said *about him* in any *MSS.* of mine, or publication. His *Hyperion* is a fine monument, and will keep his name." This change of heart marks more than a shifting opinion; it marks a self-conscious moment of historiography. Byron will not have Murray set down the criticisms that, in life, were said to have snuffed out Keats, "fiery particle" and all. *Hyperion*, however, makes for an illustrative example. As a fragmentary poem (which literally ends mid-line) that explores doomed prospects, it is easy to see parallels with Keats's life, his fate, and his gloomy sense of his own diminishing prospects—poetical and mortal. Additionally, the voices of gods are not necessarily musical emblems in themselves, but as Bailey recollects, Hyperion marked the point in Keats's development where another idea of music emerged in his thinking—the music of language.

> One of [Keats's] favorite topics of discourse was the

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[349] Quoted from, Lord Byron. Don Juan: A Variorum Edition. Ed. T.G. Steffan and W.W. Pratt, 4 vols., revised edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971. Cited by Canto and Stanza.

[350] Letter to John Murray (July 30, 1821). in Byron, Lord (George Gordon). The Works of Lord Byron. Ed. Rowland E. Prothero, in 7 vols. New York: Octagon Books, 1966, V. p. 329.

> principle of melody in Verse, upon which he had his own notions, particularly in the open & close vowels….Keats's theory was, that the vowels should be so managed as not to clash one with another so as to mar the melody, —& yet that they should be interchangeable like different music of notes to prevent monotony.[351]

The considerable number of lines the poem devotes to dialog fills its verses with voices "too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe," and this despite the poignant image of voicelessness in its beginning. As Saturn looks out gloomily in the opening passages, we read—

> A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
> By reason of his fallen divinity
> Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
> Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips. (I. 11-14)

In a sense, the loss of a once-mighty regime of what seemed like gods, engaged in godly correspondence, produces the opportunity for Keats to speak out in his own musical language, writing as he would have gods speak. His own intensely vocal stream rushes on, carrying with it musical effects into the pages of his poems, which, unlike "the dead" that fell and "did rest," continue on, and, in continuing, find new correspondents.

[351] Quoted in Bate, p. 414.

Conclusion

And as for love—O love!—We will proceed.
  The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
  Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
There's music in the sighing of a reed;
  There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

-Byron, *Don Juan*: XV.5

To conclude, I would like to observe one way in which Byron, perhaps sensing that *Don Juan*, by its fifteenth canto, was verging on the interminable, considered how he might continue. As if to signal irony from the outset, Byron matches his claim "to proceed" with a forestalling set piece about the sound of Lady Adeline's name. In it, he dashes off a radically compressed catalog of stock emblems of versification—the common store of images that the Romantics inherited and rejuvenated in their own desires to figure the ideal poet's genuine, naturalized voice. But Byron's figures do not compose a trite scene in a trite way (e.g. of unseen warbling); Byron's focus is the materiality of these musical and "tuneful" emblems. In fact, the etymology in Lady Adeline's surname—*munde*—is itself "echoed" in the mention of "earth" in the last line of the stanza. The material that makes up the earth, much like the writing that sets down and fixes the "pretty" and musical name both performs and plays with traditional dyads of the nature and idealized art, voice and writing, music unheard and music heard. We also note the juxtaposition between the "tuneful quill" and nature's musical voices: the sighing reed and gushing rill. The quill manages a tuneful artifice while the others, by contrast, possess the nonverbal artlessness of natural music. But the admission that the verbal musicality of Lady Adeline's name, alas, "*must* perch harmonious upon my tuneful quill" suggests Byron's resignation and admission of technical craft over medial transcendence, material over immateriality. Also important is the visually emphasized, homophonic rhyme between "reed" and "read." We too can 'read' it two ways—emphatically and ironically—as both a visual cue and aural clue announcing the way that material signifiers are what form the tenuous bridge between the sound of poetry and poetry's inscription.[352]

Byron's stanza radically compresses the topics that have interested this project, and the ironic cast in which he writes suggests that they were operative enough, for him,

[352] The reed/read rhyme (or homonym) is better known in Blake's "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence*. Two noteworthy readings of that line can be found in Andrew Cooper's William Blake and the Productions Time. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. pp. 59-60, as well as in Maureen McLane's Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 218.

to warrant such riffing. I would like to devote this conclusion to addressing Byron a little further and bringing in Shelley as well; both, I believe, deepen the emphasis this project has placed on the mediation of music in romantic poiesis. My interest in them also stems from how differently they approach the topic. They extend, I think, one of its most important undercurrents: the relations among genre and medium, or how different genres both get mediated and become tools to explore mediation. Blake's songs and Wordsworth's lyricism in particular suggest deep, energetic exchanges between genre and medium; Keats stages songs within the narrative of *Endymion* and then pursues the sociable musical significance of those songs deeper into the isolated liminal spaces of lyric; Coleridge hyper-mediates the lyric genre in pursuit a more immediate sense of the music and orality that stand as the markers of that genre. Byron works along different lines from these poets. He arrests an epic narrative to make inquiries into the meeting place of desire and immediacy by deploying figures of mediation, chiefly music, and effecting a sole instance of what *Don Juan* seems to otherwise lack: an honest love affair (or an honest beginning to one at any rate). Shelley on the other hand explores the thorny meeting place of ideality and mediation in lyric ("Ode to the West Wind"); his wildered *proing* and *conning* unfolds so that it might discover a way to cross the boundaries of inspiration, invocation and mediality, and in so doing, produce itself (as a lyric ode).

In Canto II of *Don Juan*, the absence of intelligible conversation sustains a prelapsarian love affair between Juan and a young Greek woman named Haidée who rescues him following a shipwreck. Byron adds stumbling block to this otherwise fulsome set-up by creating a language barrier—an absence of spoken medium that narratively permits a love affair but likewise permits the exploration of mediation itself. The absence of language creates *immediacy* in a literal sense, which Byron readily explores in images of other media—music, absent language and books. It is a love that, in Blake's words, "never told, can be."

Haidée speaks musically from the outset: "… in good modern Greek /with an Ionian accent, low and sweet." We may also note a double-meaning in *Ionian*. Whether or not Byron intended it, it's a fitting accent; Ionian is also a musical mode associated with the major scale. Its sound connotes stability, rootedness, and is analogous with resolution and return—nothing wildered, nothing melancholy.

Byron waxes progressively musical in describing the sound of her words—or in describing her words as sounds.

> Now Juan could not understand a word,
> Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
> And her voice was the warble of a bird,
> So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
> That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
> The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
> Without knowing why—an overpowering tone,

Whence Melody descends as from a throne. (II.151)[353]

In these unusual conditions, Haidée's voice bends toward the condition of music in Juan's ear—an array of pleasing sounds that convey feeling without content. Haidée, who is illiterate, speaks in music and is "all which pure Ignorance allows" (II. 190), virtually allegorizes immediacy. Ignorance has a negating valence—an absence of meaning as well as a lack of awareness of danger—but it has an equal and opposite positive valence—the immanent communication of feelings that are impossible of being misrepresented in language. Ignorance is music; it is also the bliss of Prelapsarian love.[354]

Haidée is at once the source of verbal music, and the source of non-verbal reading.

> And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,
> And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,
> And read (the only book she could) the lines
> Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
> The answer eloquent where the soul shines
> And darts in one quick glance a long reply;
> And thus in every look she saw exprest
> A world of words, and things at which she guess'd. (II. 162)

She can read the plenitude of articulate meaning in Juan's face—a "world of words" in which eloquent eyes and replying souls somehow carry on a conversation. This stanza, in concert with stanza 151, forms a medial dyad. The feminine musical language figured in the "warble of a bird," "finer, simpler music," "an overpowering tone," "Melody," describes Juan's aural comprehension of the feminine Haidée. Haidée, looking upon the aurally incomprehensible male figure, is described as a reader. She "read…the book" of his face; the "lines" of his face punningly associate verse and lineaments; she finds the visual nature of Juan's reply "eloquent"; and she recognizes in his every look "a world of words." Haidée's "reading" is akin to an encounter with hieroglyphic or unknown writing, which is at once the uncanny sign of writing and an incomprehensible assortment of signs. Yet she comprehends, and so does Juan. He listens to her words in a manner

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[353] A quotations are from, Lord Byron. Don Juan: A Variorum Edition. Ed. T.G. Steffan and W.W. Pratt, 4 vols., revised edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971. Cited by Canto and Stanza.

[354] For a reading of how this canto connects to a larger pattern, Byron's "refusal to exalt the individual word," in order to "display the multiple functions of language," see Peter Manning's chapter, "Byron's Imperceptiveness to the English Word" in Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Manning's reading of Canto II likewise informs my own. Of the voicelessness of the love affair between Haidée and Juan, he writes: "Voice is here an absolute presence, capable of doing without the agency of words and directly inspiring a response from its hearers. The less Juan and Haidée talk, the more intensely they share" (117).

reminiscent of someone listening to absolute music, yet paradoxically grasping a program within it. The dream of Prelapsarian love is pure medium, or mediation uncontaminated by what it mediates. Byron creates his most honest beginning to a love affair by shifting the real, or literal, objects and materials of poetry—ironic tunefulness, verses, and books—to a figurative and narrative remove.

While the hyper-articulate medium of poetry is where figurative language lives most robustly, Byron demonstrates that the absence of articulate, referential meaning creates a fruitful opportunity to use media themselves as a figurative language (books, lines, music). It is precisely this kind of interplay—of meaning and the medial materials of meaning-making—that could be said to shape romantic poiesis, but also act as the contextual situation in which the romantics inherit conceptual materials of poetry, like genre. For instance, the lyric of the Augustans and the lyric of the romantics had a great deal of formal continuity; they fused Pindaric and Horatian odes, as Stuart Curran as suggested: "a Horatian voice was invested with a Pindaric form."[355] The combination of the measured rhetoric of Horatian Odes and the irregular, impassioned verse and stanza forms of the Pindaric ode seem a straightforward generic conjunction, but, as our reading of Wordsworth suggested, Romanticism also inherited a lyric music that had to go somewhere—on the one hand a missing aesthetic quality, on the other an appropriable vacancy.

Along such lines, we can read Coleridge's sense of "obscure thoughts" in poetry—the basis of what we might call the purposive suspension of clarity.

> When no criticism is pretended to, & the Mind in its~~elf~~ simplicity gives itself up to a Poem as to a work of nature, Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally & not perfectly understood.[356]

Coleridge sounds like Keats delineating *negative capability*, which Keats ironically defines against Coleridge who was "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge."[357] Yet here is half-knowledge, fully endorsed. Coleridge's words resonate with Barbauld's view of Collins's poetry, who, she argues, was "not unfrequently obscure"; a reader, however, "who possesses congenial feelings, is not ill pleased to find his faculties put upon the stretch in the search of those sublime ideas, which are apt, from their shadowy nature, to elude the grasp of the mind."[358]

For Coleridge and Barbauld, Collins was chief among lyric obscurantists. Yet in the case of Coleridge, who frequently suffered a bruising reputation for writing obscurely, we might consider how the medial currencies of Collins and Coleridge

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[355] Curran, Stuart. Poetic Form and British Romanticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
[356] *CN* 383 21.37, January-May, 1799.
[357] *KL* To George and Tom Keats, 27 (?) Dec, 1817; i.194, in The Letters of John Keats 1814-1821. 2 Vols, Ed Hyder Edward Rollins. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.
[358] Barbauld, Anna Laetitia. "Introduction" to The Poetical Works of Mr. Collins. London: 1797, p. viii.

differed. Pindaric odes written by Collins (and Gray, and Dryden before them) were often composed with an idea of musical performance in mind. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* enjoyed a kind of unofficial reign as the highest of this kind of lyric achievement—a reputation that crossed into the Continent. As Voltaire summarized:

> Of all modern odes, that which reigns with noblest enthusiasm which never weakens, and which falls neither into falseness nor the bombastic, is *Timotheus* or *Alexander's Feast* by Dryden: it is still regarded in England as an inimitable masterpiece... This ode was sung, and if there were a performer worthy of the poet, it would be a masterpiece of lyric poesy. [359]

The integration of poetic text and its setting as an oratorio effected the highest manifestation of lyrical art in the hierarchy-obsessed views of many eighteenth-century writers. Even in the absence of a musical setting, music could still index the merits of a lyric composition. In the case of Collins's "The Passions: An Ode": "Other pieces of the same nature have derived the greatest reputation from the perfection of the music that accompanied them, having in themselves little more merit than that of an ordinary ballad: but in this we have the whole soul and power of poetry—Expression that, even without the aid of music, strikes to the heart."[360] The "expression" that is relatable to music—and that even does the job of music in the codes of the lyric genre—is part and parcel of what Wordsworth adapts, reconfigures, and remediates towards his own lyric-making ends. Coleridge, in contrast, intensified the metaphysics that he believed Collins's obscurity (not "expression," per se) licensed. He would know the consequences of this all too well. "I mean to write a Greek Ode—I mean to write for the prizes…I shall aim at correctness and perspicu[ity], not *genius*, My last ode was so *sublime* that nobody could understand it."[361] And yet, two years later, in a letter to his publisher, Cottle, he writes, "So much for an 'Ode' [*Departing Year*] which some people think superior to the 'Bard' of Gray, and which others think a rant of turgid obscurity; and the latter are the more numerous class."[362] By the time he publishes *Sibylline Leaves* in 1816, this reputation for obscurity will have become cemented—his "perspicuity" never having arrived. For critics, he is too much of everything—too metaphysical, too musical, too monotonous, too irregular, and ultimately, by his own estimation, too undone by print.

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[359] The text quoted above is my own translation. The original passage reads: "De toutes les odes modernes, celle où il règne le plus grand enthousiasme qui ne s'affaiblit jamais, et qui ne tombe ni dans le faux ni dans l'ampoulé, est le Timothée, ou la Fête d'Alexandre, par Dryden: elle est encore regardée en Angleterre comme un chef-d'oeuvre inimitable… Cette ode fut chantée; et si on avait eu un musicien digne du poète, ce serait le chef-d'oeuvre de la poésie lyrique." Voltaire. Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire: Dictionnaire Philosophique. Paris: Ch. Lahure et C[ie], 1860, p. 249.

[360] Langhorne, John. The Poetical Works: of Mr. William Collins. With Memoirs of the Author; and Observations on his Genius and Writings. London, 1765, p. 178-9.

[361] *CL* To George Coleridge (1 May 1794) I.80.

[362] *CL* To Joseph Cottle (10 February 1797) 1:309.

The topic of lyricism and fraught reputations brings us to Shelley. Arnold's well-known phrase that Shelley was "a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain" more than evidences the otherworldly, if not deathly image through which the invidious assertion that powerful effects and powerlessness went hand in hand in Shelley's poetry.[363] From a more adulatory stance, the Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Pieces by Francis Palgrave accomplishes a similar feat. It is easy and somewhat commonplace to beat up on Palgrave, both for its mischaracterization of Shelley and for what his anthology represents (as a lyric anthology): an early moment in which, as Virginia Jackson, Yopie Prins, Mark Jeffries, Rei Terada and others have studied with no small vehemence, "lyric enlarged in direct proportion to the diminution of the varieties of poetry."[364] Equally, if not more curious, is the manner in which the anthology builds up a connection among death, the dead and the dead letter. Palgrave insists on leaving out living poets and only including members of "a vast and pathetic array of Singers now silent."[365] In their silence they become permanent—fixed or fixable. Signs of life, public and private, are erased in the pursuit of editorial and poetical (i.e. theoretical) unity. Moreover, "the most poetical version," of each poem was identified and selected, "wherever more than one exists; and much labor has been given to present each poem, in disposition, spelling, and punctuation, to the greatest advantage."[366]

Unifying the voices of the dead is a strange pursuit for an anthology whose title adverts to typological heterogeneity: "Songs and Lyrical Poems." In silence, of course, there is no difference. "Songs" and "Lyrical Poems," terms that the romantics found richly exchangeable because of their vestigial differences and correlations alike, are here elided under the sign of a certain genre of poetry that would become "the lyric." Where lyric could mean song and therefore be medially ambiguous, song here simply means lyric—unambiguously, a "poem." In fact, with "song" silenced, Palgrave only treats the word "lyrical," and even then he demurs by saying that "lyrical has been here held essentially to imply that each Poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation." "Turn" may actually be the most important term in Palgrave's scant criteria. It suggests the *volta*, and therefore a kind of brief poem, like a sonnet, that expresses a single thought or feeling brought to a crisis or epiphany—a supposition that there is a focal point from which the poem's chief thought or feeling can be deduced. This theory of lyric suits the anthology—all the poems can be read along similar lines—and that they are "the best" seems to imply that they function in the same way as well as the right way. Of "the Best" he says, "we should require finish in proportion to brevity,—that passion, colour, and originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity, or

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[363] Arnold, Matthew. "Shelley," in Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold. Ed. A Dwight Culler. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961, p. 380.

[364] Jackson, Dickinson's Misery, p. 8. Jackson is not referencing the Golden Treasury directly in saying that, but the Golden Treasury absolutely represents an early, unambiguous instance of the phenomenon of lyricization.

[365] Palgrave, Francis. *Preface* in The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language. Cambridge: Macmillan and Co., 1861. The *Preface's* pages are not numbered.

[366] This and all following quotations of Palgrave are from the unpaginated *Preface*.

truth…above all, that Excellence should be looked for rather in the Whole than in the Parts…" Unity is all.

The pursuit of unity is, for Palgrave, voiced best by Shelley. "And it is hoped that the contents of this Anthology will thus be found to present a certain unity, 'as episodes,' in the noble language of Shelley, 'to that great Poem which all poets, like the cooperating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world.'" Palgrave's lyricization of poetry is consistent with his lyricization of Shelley. Typically, Shelley's afterlives are read through the lines of negotiation first set down by Mary Shelley, who, to recuperate—and to sell—her late husband's poetry, had to distance his often political poems from their poetical politics while simultaneously finding ways not to decisively sever his poetical legacy from his beliefs. But Palgrave demonstrates how this can play out on purely technical lines, regardless of how explicitly one might otherwise seek to neutralize politics.

Lyric and Shelley could be shaped together into something mutually stabilizing and staid. For instance, John Stuart Mill, who argues that Shelley's poetry suffers disunity and has "no picture," grants Shelley the prize of greatness when his wildered travels through "the fairy-land of his inexhaustible fancy" are course-corrected by a unifying feeling: "unity of feeling being to him the harmonizing principle which a central idea is to minds of another class, and supplying the coherency and consistency which would else have been wanting. Thus it is in many of his smaller, and especially his lyrical poems" (359-60). The association of lyric and Shelley was a two-way street. Arnold's comment that Shelley was an "ineffectual angel" combines Palgrave's neatly dead lyric Shelley with Mill's fairy fantastist, strains of which, as Timothy Morton remarks, developed into the twentieth century. "[L]yric itself becomes vanity [and] ineffectual beauty. This is taken to an extreme in F. R. Leavis's association of *Shelleyan* and *lyrical,* a label that brings to mind the way punks used to intone the word 'hippy'."[367]

These assessments were aided and abetted early on by the association of Shelley's poetry and music, not least because musicality could simultaneously refer to power and effeteness. Eliot seems to hover over the connection, lamenting that Shelley's lapses occur where puerile political views sour the verses, mirrored by tawdry verse music. "[S]ome of Shelley's views I positively dislike…others seem so puerile that I cannot enjoy the poems in which they occur. And…in poetry so fluent as Shelley's there is a good deal which is just bad jangling" (82).[368] In the previous century, Browning thought Shelley died too soon and sang too much. The "passionate, impatient struggles of a boy towards distant truth and love, made in the dark, and ended by one sweep of the natural seas before the full moral sunrise could shine out on him." But while he lived, Shelley was a "young Titan of genius, murmuring in divine music his human ignorances," and that music, was a "subordinate power," of poetic language, "moved by and suffused with

[367] Morton, Timothy. "Receptions" in The Cambridge Companion to Shelley. Ed. Timothy Morton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 39

[368] Eliot, T.S. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.

a music at once of the soul and sense, expressive both of an external might of sincere passion and an internal fitness and constancy."[369]

The long list of those who "censured" the music of Shelley's poetry had no shortage of "sonorous works" to choose from.[370] The shared orbit of Shelleyism, lyricism, and musicality however, might have struck Shelley as perfectly satisfactory, just a little incomplete or under-theorized. With infrequent exceptions, he is hesitant to use the term "song" and quite willing to use the term "music"; the art of music and the art of poetry are quite different things for him.

In his *Defense of Poetry* a subtly nuanced notion of the inherent sonority of words emerges, which Shelley represents through musical figures while simultaneously estranging them from actual music. His provisional stance is that meter, rhyme and traditional verse forms came into being through the meeting place of poetical instincts and musical practice. "[H]armony in the language of poetical minds" and their "relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language."[371] This formulation sounds primitivist—and it is—but rather than continue to follow the eighteenth-century line of reasoning (that the rules of art have grown too complex since their formation in Classicism), Shelley nuances his stance by suggesting that poetic traditions are akin to accumulated material. This becomes more apparent as the defense progressively explores variable ontologies of music (alongside poetry).

Put briefly, there are two kinds of music for Shelley—the spiritual or intellectual essence (an unheard melody), and the musical medium itself (the cultural practice). Shelley privileges the former, likening it to the source of inspired utterance, whereas the latter—the material—doesn't inspire so much as foreground the individual poet's need for "innovation" (114). In a sense, one need not be a poet by profession (or intention) to make poetry. "Plato" he explains, "was essentially a poet" in part because of "the melody of his language"; likewise, he "rejected" verse forms and measures that accumulated with musical practice—"the measure of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forebore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style" (114). Similarly, "Lord Bacon was a poet" thanks to "majestic rhythm" (114). And "the authors of revolutions" communicate with "periods" that "are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music" (115).

So what is intellectual, spiritual or "eternal' music? By connecting it with the "authors" of revolution, eternal music unites the figure of the revolutionary and the figure of the poet. History unfolds through the echo of this creative musical power. In itself, "eternal music" seems like a placeholder for some other name—something more animated than nature, something less theistic or deistic than "god," something

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[369] Browning, Robert. Robert Browning: The Poems. Ed. John Pettigrew and Thomas J. Collins. 2 Vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, I. 1006.

[370] The quotes are from Quillin, Jessica K. Shelley and the Musico-Poetics of Romanticism. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012, p. i.

[371] Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. 10 Vols. New York: Gordian Press, 1965, VII, p. 115. (All page numbers will correspond with volume VII, "Prose.")

omnipresent and capable of world-changing inspiration. We may catch our clearest dramatic reification of it early in Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound*,[372] where animistic choruses sing while the nymphs Ione and Panthea slowly awaken. As heard music fades "new notes arise" and make an "awful sound."

> IONE:
> Even whilst we speak
> New notes arise. What is that awful sound?
>
> PANTHEA:
> Tis the deep music of the rolling world
> Kindling within the strings of the waved air
> Aeolian modulations. (IV. 184-188)

The Aeolian "deep music" does not readily divulge its identity let alone its meaning. Ione relies on Panthea's interpretative prowess. Panthea goes on to spy two openings in the "overcanopy" of the forest. Through one, "two runnels of a rivulet" are visible which diverge and rejoin. The runnels "have made their path of melody, like sisters / Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles" (198-9). Intriguingly, Shelley's "melody" works like polyphonic music—the simultaneous playing of two melodies, which together can modify an underlying harmonic structure. Moreover, these runnels (or the melody they make) create an image of tension and resolve ("sighs" and "smiles"). Unlike ordinary music, however, this music is permanently fixed in the running of the water. Each new moment brings about the cadence Panthea figuratively describes. In the symbolic theatre of this primordial moment, all that would unfold as history, including music and poetic tradition, is contained in the way the mythic world can be *read* by being *heard* within the hybrid form of lyrical drama.

Seeing, hearing, music, poetry, lyric, drama—they are an unbound array of genres and media, but for Shelley, the exchangeability of genre and medium (i.e. imagining one within or fused with another) does not mean interchangeable. Equal is not equivalent. Outside of the liminal space of a mythic theatre, the medium of heard music plays a more subordinate, figurative role to poetry in Shelley's estimations. Throughout his *Defense*, Shelley refers to poetry and poets through an array of familiar musical terms—melody, musicians, lyres, nightingales and so forth. But he systematically invokes these terms among carefully deployed instances of metaphor and simile, distinguishing the musician from the poet, the musical instrument from linguistic instrumentality. "Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, *like* the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Æolian lyre" (109, my emphasis). This early passage in the *Defense* opens up an extended conceit of the self-modulating lyre, at once played by winds but able to provide the contextual matrix of harmony to inflect those sounds—"as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre" (109-110). The

[372] In vol. 2 of, Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. 10 Vols. New York: Gordian Press, 1965.

musician playing music figures the meeting place of passive and active mental activity, which, in turn, forms the basis for his elaboration of the poet's mind. Never, however, is the creation properly an act of unqualified musical production. The literal, or fully realized, vision of this process happens only through the fiction of the "rolling world" in *Prometheus Unbound* and its "Aeolian modulations."

Another key instance concerns the nightingale in a passage that pits avian metaphor against musical simile. Shelley remarks that "[a] poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are *as* men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why" (116, my emphasis). There is nothing to say that the poet-nightingale's "sweet sounds" and singing cannot be actual words. The auditors, by contrast, are "as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician." The entire simile, by virtue of its figuration, evokes what is in fact not transpiring. The effect of poetry it depicts is akin to entrancing music, but it is not music itself. The "sweet sounds" of verse, encountered from a vantage point where the poet is unseen, applies a stock image (the hidden bird) to figure an ordinary situation (the reader's encounter with the printed text of poetry). There is a kind of Coleridgean process at work: the poet was driven to write by obscure inspiration, to which the auditors don't have equal knowledge or access, but to whose aural effects they *do* have access. Thus they "feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why" (116). Shelley nuances his figuration to suggest that a force comparable to music conveys the essence of poetry through sound, but the poem itself remains under the sign of "poetry" through an intervening medium.

The differences between music and poetry, as well as the connection between an idea of song and poetry, deepen as Shelley turns to an exploration of process (i.e. of poiesis). The accommodation of expressive sounds to both objects and representation make up one of the *Defense's* most nuanced passages on the actual production of poetic verse. Sounds and thoughts alike can shape our perception of how thoughts relate to one another—both engender the sonorous order of meaning-making words that make up of poetry.

> Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. (114)

Sound impacts the way we think-out poetry, but this kind of sound, unlike the sound of eternal music (which is ambiguously audible), is heard indeed—a kind of first-order mediation. Sound provides the necessary medium for thoughts to take shape—shape they cannot have without sound. It is part and parcel of the "arbitrary" function of

the imagination. It is easy to gloss this term ("arbitrary") as "haphazard," but I doubt that Shelley would agree to that gloss. It more closely corresponds to a kind of meeting place of unconsciousness and judgment—precisely the sort of operations framed in the mutual modulations of sound and thoughts.

We could, at this juncture, attempt to flesh out the incipient cognitive model of language production that Shelley seems to be dangling before us, but of interest to my analysis here is how mediation enters the picture—first in the mind, then in materials. Shelley specifies that "language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression" (113). This is why "song," and poiesis for that matter, isn't something Shelley likes to associate with anything outside of the imagination. The process of *making* is inherently mediating. It inevitably dislocates the creative process from the technical process and therefore always threatens the resulting artwork. Shelley's ideal image of frictionless poiesis is Milton's "unpremeditated song," which ostensibly eliminates a great degree of "the gradations, or the *media* of the process" (136, Shelley's emphasis). The idea of an unpremeditated song unifies inspiration and articulation (it may help that the actual writing down of *Paradise Lost* was a concern Milton pressed on his daughters).

Shelley's organic conceptualization of poetry as both the act and the product of thought and sound inheres in a medial frictionlessness that, of all his terms for poetic art, most closely resembles "song." Neither pure language, nor voice, nor actual music—"poetry" is the highest, least mediated art, produced within the imagination itself only to degrade further into its medium.

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"[373] rehearses and deepens the interplay of poetry, musical figures and mediation he elaborates in *The Defense*. My argument is that it begins in a state of spatiotemporal formlessness—a correlative of pure imagination—so that it might steadily and assiduously imagine a condition of transcendent mediation—the transition of nature (wind) to sound (music) to language, and finally to print.

> O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
> Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
> Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
>
> Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
> Pestilence stricken multitudes: O Thou,
> Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
>
> The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
> Each like a corpse within its grave, until
> Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
>
> Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill

[373] In vol. 2 of Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. 10 Vols. New York: Gordian Press, 1965.

(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear! (ll. 1-14)

The stanza's global imagery (leaves that suggest different skin tones; the reference to Hindu deities Shiva and Vishnu in the closing line) and the intense awareness of the a present autumnal scene, for which the speaker may or may not be actually present, strains against the assiduous formality of the *terza rima* sonnet that makes up the stanza. Indeed, the wind is "moving everywhere" and therefore omnipresent; it is bound only by a large order of time—the change of seasons. The omnipresence has a correlative in the obscure causal relations shared among its opening images. In short, who drives the leaves? The verb phrase is an example of the passive voice, as if to disguise or resist naming the agent of the driving, which ought to be, but seems not to be, the unseen presence of the West Wind. The following simile ("like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing") induces us to believe that we are in the mental theater of Shelley's mind. Simile, as a self-announcing figuration (recall that its rhetorical ancestor is *apology*), can at least be said to admit that the figuring imagination is at work, rather than the faculties of object-naming perception. Order exists on cosmic scales (the turning of the seasons) but in the moment of this poem, there is no temporal order among objects, no clear relations. The poem suspends order so that it might create it, which for Shelley is a turn to pure imagination: "[r]eason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things."

It is not until the second half of the second stanza that any spatiotemporal specificity is invoked.

…Thou Dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher.
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain and fire and hail will burst: O hear! (ll. 23-28)

The "this" in line 24 is deictic, rooting the poem in time and therefore in space. With it, the "congregated might…of vapors," which brings the forthcoming elemental material of a storm, engenders a corresponding concreteness of the wind—a (suitably oxymoronic) "solid atmosphere" whose "[b]lack rain and fire and hail will burst." Using the future tense ("will burst") is a canny move on Shelley's part. The move from the first stanza to the second can be understood as a progression from blurry causal relations, of reality and fantasy undifferentiated (like leaves that are driven by unseen forces and ghosts that are leaves) to the concretizing gesture of wind transmuting into stormy material. While Coleridge, in "Dejection," claimed to hear a storm and used the ode's vocal license to stage emotionally charged rhapsodies that might secure some idea of continuity between nature and the aesthetic, Shelley installs the idea of unfolding temporality he previously suspended, and in so doing he tautologically allows the phenomenal materiality he

imagines organize imaginative ideality. Similarly, the wind is figuratively transmuted into an aesthetic form: a dirge, or funeral song. With this change, the addressee of the closing apostrophe, "O hear," becomes ambiguous. While the "hear, O hear!" of line 14 seems to be a cry directed at the wind, as if to say *hear me*; we can hear the "hear" of line differently. Is the reader impelled to hear the wind *as* dirge or is the wind impelled *to hear* the poem that names it? A new ambiguity reins, but it sharpens the medial elements of the poem as well.

In the third and fourth stanzas two key developments take place: the wind obtains a "voice" and the verse obtains an "I." The voice in the third stanza is the destroyer, the agent that wakes the "blue Mediterranean" and who inspires fear even in the "sea-blooms" in the ocean (ll. 30, 40); it is an extended episode of a pelagic pathetic fallacy that resonates with Edward Duffy's observation that "Shelley habitually situated himself in the largest contexts of his civilization… removed in the backward abysm of time and textuality,"[374] but the abysm allows him to organize abyss into form, a process developed through the remainder of the third stanza.

> Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
> The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
> Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
>
> Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
> And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
> Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
>
> All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
> So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
> For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
>
> Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
> The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
> The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
>
> Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
> And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear! (ll. 37-42)

The Mediterranean's dreams and the "sapless foliage" (who in the stasis of their amniotic existence are made to tremble at the "voice") read like the psychic projections of a disillusioned reformist, but the same projection telegraphs that more organization is needed to reach the apostrophes (forthcoming) that will provide him the means with which to mediate the sublime he feels in the wind. The sense "faints" at picturing beauty just as the underwater subjectivities tremble and despoil at the sound of the voice.

[374] Duffy, Edward. "Where Shelley Wrote and What He Wrote For: The Example of 'The Ode to the West Wind.'" Studies in Romanticism 23. 3 (1984): 351-377, p. 353

If Shelley's ode is a poem of elements in search of a fifth element, as Chandler and others suggest,[375] that missing element would arise from the intellection that can at once evoke tautology and paradox and then believe it possible to unpack them, through invocation, into creative, temporal processes. I believe that "medium" as the organizational, contextual instrument (rather than, say, the instrument of the "lyre," that merely gestures toward this condition) must be attained. But as we saw in the *Defense*, the material and media necessary for expression deform even as they provide the possibility of form—the *raison d'être* of the dramatic stationing of the struggle that this poem and its digressive progress elaborates. But now, as the final two stanzas move more decisively to the poem's resolution, its metaphors of material mediation cease to be subject to unclear movements (as in the first stanza) and enter the frame of this poem as Shelley speculatively identifies himself with them.

> If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
> If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
> A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
>
> The impulse of thy strength, only less free
> Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
> I were as in my boyhood, and could be
>
> The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
> As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
> Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven
>
> As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
> Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
> I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
>
> A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
> One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud. (ll. 43-56)

That Shelley could be the "dead leaf," which we can read as the "page" or the printed medium, gives him the equivocal status of the unbound wind. But this is a negotiation: in becoming more medial himself, he will likewise be "less free," yet mediality alone is not the problem. In a very Wordsworthian turn, Shelley indicates that with experience comes knowledge and disappointment "A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd, / One too like thee." While in youth he could believe that object (The Wind) and subject

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[375] Stuart Curran sees the wind itself as the encompassing element; see his Shelley's Annus Mirabilis: The Maturing of an Epic Vision. California: Huntington Library Press, 1975, p. 162. Chandler acknowledges this reading and also points to James Rieger's view that "ether" is the fifth element. See Rieger's The Mutiny Within: The Heresies of Percy Bysshe Shelley. New York: G. Braziller, 1967, pp. 169-71. See Chandler, James. The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

(Shelley) were closed and continuous, experience has taught dislocation; but this, too, is figured medially: "when to outstrip thy skiey speed / Scace seem'd a *vision*…" The medial self and its dislocation, for Shelley, becomes an object of torment. As the "wave," "leaf" and "cloud" that have structured his progress toward medial recognition group together, a self-violence, or image of self-destruction arises: "I bleed!"

The point at which irresolvable dualities—ideality and medium, formlessness and form, innocence and experience—reach possible disaster (the destruction of the self), it is "dying" itself that allows Shelley to imagine a way to reconcile what appears to be the irreconcilable gulfs that threaten to swallow him up and leave him in the poetic death, or silence.

> Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
> What if my leaves are falling like its own!
> The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
>
> Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
> Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
>
> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,
>
> Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
> Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
>
> The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
> If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? (57-70)

Here, we have media in great supply: music (lyre, harmonies, tone), text (leaves), voice (incantation), and, as a separate category—words. Musical harmony, unlike the instrumental over-mediation described in the *Defense*, unites the kind of first-order mediation that arises between sounds and thoughts—the "deep, autumnal tone"—and a strong link between nature and imagination results. The phrase "sweet though in sadness," suggestive of music that is more beautiful for being melancholy, effects a doubling down of Shelley's musical references. Turning toward music as an idealized mode of expression—something immanent, something absolute—could have provided Shelley with a nice, neat end to this Ode. But the musicianship is too complex for that. As James Chandler writes, "…not only does the wind become in two senses the poet's instrument, it is the work of the poet that is 'making' the wind that instrument. The wind will be the trumpet of a prophecy through the poet's lips" (545). I would build on this observation by suggesting that the intervening images of "ashes and sparks" that act as an intermediary image between the lyre and trumpet is an absolutely crucial feature of Shelley's instrumental references. The instruments are signs of the shifting media of poiesis. The wind turns from instrument to the force of textual dissemination:

…Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!

These leaves which fall as the forests leaves in the force of the wind, which carry at once "words" and an "autumnal tone," carry the incantation, but also secure a new birth—both of "the thoughts" that have died into mediation as well as their rebirth of those thoughts among a readership. Then, and only then, does Shelley ready himself to make the quasi-Promethean "Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth / The trumpet of a prophecy!"

Precisely at the point where we encounter the element of fire (ashes and sparks), we encounter it in the context of disseminating a medium. Its mediality—its protean capacity to shift and be an object of remediation itself, static yet changeful—that stands as the fifth element of this poem—the condition of remediation in romantic poetry, which Shelley can now view optimistically. Mediation is death. Remediation is resurrection. And the latter both necessitates death and promises rebirth via dissemination. To become the lyre (to which Shelley, by virtue of his name, already bears a relation), in essence is to become the lyric, which, ironically, is precisely what the Victorians turned him in to.

Mediation Scenes: a Coda

To end, I would like to return to the idea of mediation scenes, discussed in the third chapter, and venture beyond romanticism. In any period of literary history, a poet may refer to his or her own act of composing as "writing," or may refer to that writing as "verse," or may see versification as grounds for declaring that his or her writing is "song." We know that all of these terms appear with seeming interchangeability, yet the romantics prepare us to recognize that none of the terms can ever mean quite the same thing when opposed—disparate expressive modes or media instantiate unequal stakes among or between those media whether the poet wants those stakes or not. Robert Herrick gives us an unusually explicit illustration of a poet who creates and, less explicitly, resists those stakes. Below is "The Argument of the Book," the introductory sonnet that frames his collection, *Hesperides* (1648).[376]

I SING of *Brooks*, of *Blossoms*, *Birds*, and *Bowers*,
Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July*-Flowers ;
I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*,
Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides* and of their *Bridal-cakes*.
I write of *Youth*, of *Love*, and have Accesse
By these, to sing of cleanly-*Wantonness*.
I sing of *Dewes*, of *Raines*, and piece by piece
Of *Balme*, of *Oyle*, of *Spice* and *Amber-Greece*.
I sing of *Times trans-shifting*, and I write

[376] From, Herrick, Robert. The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick. Eds. Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly, in 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

How *Roses* first came *Red* and *Lilies White*.
I write of *Groves*, of *Twilights*, and I sing
The court of *Mab*, and of the *Fairie-King*.
I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)
Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all.

Despite the rich tapestry of pastoral, fanciful and (finally) religious imagery, the most striking feature of the sonnet are the interdigitated anaphoras of "I sing" and "I write." It is hard to believe that either casual readers or readers with specifically critical aims could help but be led to the same question: is there a logical or aesthetic principle that Herrick evokes in his shuttling between singing and writing? If so, what is it? "I sing" could be replaced with any number of subject phrases and the effect would be nearly the same: "I speak," "I celebrate," "Let us praise" and so forth. Why choose to write, "I sing" when the only activity he can be assured of doing is writing? Even if his "verses" and "lyricks" can be read either as poetry or as instances of song due to generic conventions that exist prior to his writing of any particular poem, the act of writing necessarily precedes the written articulation of one convention or another. He cannot not choose but to write—not as a writer at any rate. His claims of song can only issue in self-parodying context.

This leads us to a second question: in the fiction of his vocative claims, is there a distinction between matter fit for singing and matter fit for writing? He sings formally, in that the sonnet is the *sonnetto*, or "little song." He discusses the intent to sing (seven instances) more than he proposes to write (four instances), which vaguely suggests a preference for singing over writing, but a clear answer doesn't arise until the end: Hell will get written about while Heaven will get sung about. In fact, the placement of the parenthetical phrase "and ever shall" after "I sing" nuances the writer/singer's belief that Heaven deserves to be sung about and not written about. If the phrase "and ever shall" appeared after the complete phrase, "I sing /of Heaven," the claim would simplify into the more banal: he will never stop rejoicing over or singing praises to Heaven for all his days, but his syntactical logic emphasizes the qualitative difference, as well as his preference for singing. Thus, the obvious binary of bad vs: good aligns predictably with writing vs; song. On the other hand, the sonnet still contains twelve lines in which singing or writing seem to be used interchangeably, as if to suggest that to chose between these two modes of expression is an arbitrary act. Of course, what appears before the reader's eyes is writing, which becomes problematic (for Herrick's soul at any rate) in the Hell/ Heaven binary. He is literally and figuratively *writing* about both Hell and Heaven; he can only claim to sing about Heaven, and, perhaps, if he had indeed written a sonnet in which he claimed only to sing, he would be entitled to this fiction. He did not do this, however. He invoked the binary, and the point at which writing and singing have the clearest cause to differentiate themselves is also the point where the difference between them becomes most self-subverting. This puts pressure on us the reader to believe in the possibility that when the presence of a musical voice is conferred on writing (through genre or through the claim of song or both) we are looking at privileged speech, and perhaps speech that is singing, or could be sung.

In the end, however, the co-presence of writing and song forces one to consider the use to which the "book" might be put. Since claims to be either singing or writing may at any point appear before the reader, it forces one to question how the reading voice

might read, or hear, or inflect the poetry itself. As one of his epigrams suggests, the voice itself is "rare" (i.e. excellent), but "…when we sing / To'th Lute or Violl, then 'tis ravishing" ("The Voice and Violl" ll. 1-2). This ravishment is not only an intensification of voice, but one that will necessarily be communal or shared. When there is a singer, there is undoubtedly an audience, and we might also ask who, then, is singing? After all, a song can be sung and re-sung by any number of people in any number of contexts.[377] Thus Herrick's poem leads to broader questions: what are the stakes and import of the relationship between the poem's fictional speaker and the song's literal singer? To what extent do poetic "songs" accommodate or foreclose this kind of shared agency between poet and reader, singer and audience?

These questions become more important as the presence of musical song becomes more vital in a poetic song-cycle itself. In Herrick we can understand that in choosing to write "I sing" and "I write," Herrick reveals a facet of his historical moment: one in which the genre of poetry we would call lyric poetry was often sung but was also written down printed—an instability that still exists in romantic consciousness (and beyond). Herrick proposes that he is potentially doing both at the same time. So he plays with convention insofar as he claims to be singing while being fully conscious of the fact that he is writing, and the poem historicizes the starkness as well as the increasing irrelevance of this difference. (Though it is an irrelevance that is emphatically reversed by Eighteenth Century aesthetic treatises, changes to the arts of music to poetry and the relations between them, and renewed questions over the relation of music to lyric). Future poets will enter into this flux making even more insistent musical claims, and will thereby deepen the musical stakes of their works.

In *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927),[378] Langston Hughes deploys a frame via his first and last poems that installs a nocturnal, liminal stage upon which the blues—a powerful feeling and powerful musical performance—can be felt, sung and shared communally. The collection begins and ends following poems, with "Hey!" and "Hey! Hey!" respectively.

> "Hey!"
>
> Sun's a settin',
> This is what I'm gonna sing,
> Sun's a settin',
> This is what I'm gonna sing,
> I feel de blues a comin',
> Wonder what the blues'll bring.
>
> "Hey! Hey!"

[377] I am grateful to Heather Dubrow for drawing my attention to the fact that a poem's modes of address, along with questions of *who is speaking/singing*, are complicated when we consider when a poem refers to itself as a song that may be re-sung in differing, perhaps ironizing contexts.

[378] From, Hughes Langston. The Collected Works of Langston Hughes. Ed. Arnold Rampersad, in 16 vols. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001.

Sun's a risin',
This is gonna be my song.
Sun's a risin',
This is gonna be my song.
I could be blue but
I been blue all night long.

The repeated first line signifies the AAB blues form—the "classic" form for blues song lyrics. Here, these lyrics provide form for lyric poetry—fusing together these two terms that in themselves (and rather ironically) mark the latter-day, conceptual gap between poetry and song. Thus in a formal synecdoche, poetic form and musical form mutually frame one another. We should note that musical ideas run deeper than the poem's diction. To the reader who knows the musical conventions of an AAB blues song, Hughes's layout clearly accommodates musical principles and effects. For instance, the repeated lines signify chord changes common to twelve-bar blues. The first two lines would be sung to the root chord; the third and fourth to the subdominant and then (after the fourth line) the root chord again; and the closing dominant-subdominant progression aligns with lines five and six respectively. The repeated lines and assiduous use of phonetic spellings and diacritical marks appear as a kind of fastidious system of notation; the thing notated is not just a vernacular voice but a voice engaged in song, not mere speech. And so a sense of musical presence arises as the sun sets, reified aurally and visually in the poem and crucial for the expression for which the blues singer achieves a cathartic, existential resolve in this course of his or her singing. We further understand that the intervening songs, poems and ballads will issue within this performative frame.

In the cultural frame that Hughes writes and likewise substantiates through his framing poems, the "I" of the poem is always a "we," and so the paradoxical nature of authoring a set of blues songs likewise allows his "singers" to perform a range of identities (young, old, male, female) and relate personal narratives that are not his own but, nonetheless, all respond to a similar set of performative exigencies. For example, in "Young Gal's Blues," we encounter a hope for deliverance from blue feelings that issues on two levels: in the "young gal's" supplications but likewise in the simultaneous act of articulating and singing the causes or potential causes of the blues—what Ralph Ellison called, "fingering the jagged grain."[379]

When love is gone what
Can a young gal do?
When love is gone, O,
What can a young gal do?
Keep on a-lovin' me, daddy,
Cause I don't want to be blue. (19-24)

The interplay between despair, fear of isolation/abandonment and the painful yet punning acknowledgement that loving fulfillment is to be had through male sexual desire, in no

[379] Ellison, Ralph. Shadow and Act. New York: Random House, 1964, p. 79.

small part pivots on the "O" of line 21. The erotic overtones of the line suggest musical undercurrents. And indeed, from a musical perspective, it marks the most expressive moment of the stanza. It establishes the place in which verbal expression lapses and musical improvisations vital to blues singing, like "'bent' notes, slurs, pitch coloration, and melismatic effects," can take over.[380] In essence, it assimilates the vocal excesses of lyric poetry but contextualizes them in a robustly performative frame, engendering through form, cultural artifact and vernacular speech the very music a community's own songs of experience—songs that all may read.

[380] Tracy, Steven C. Langston Hughes and the Blues. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. pp. 145. Tracy is one of Hughes's best readers, and has written extensively on the relationship between the musical performance of blues and the various ways it registers in Hughes's poetry.

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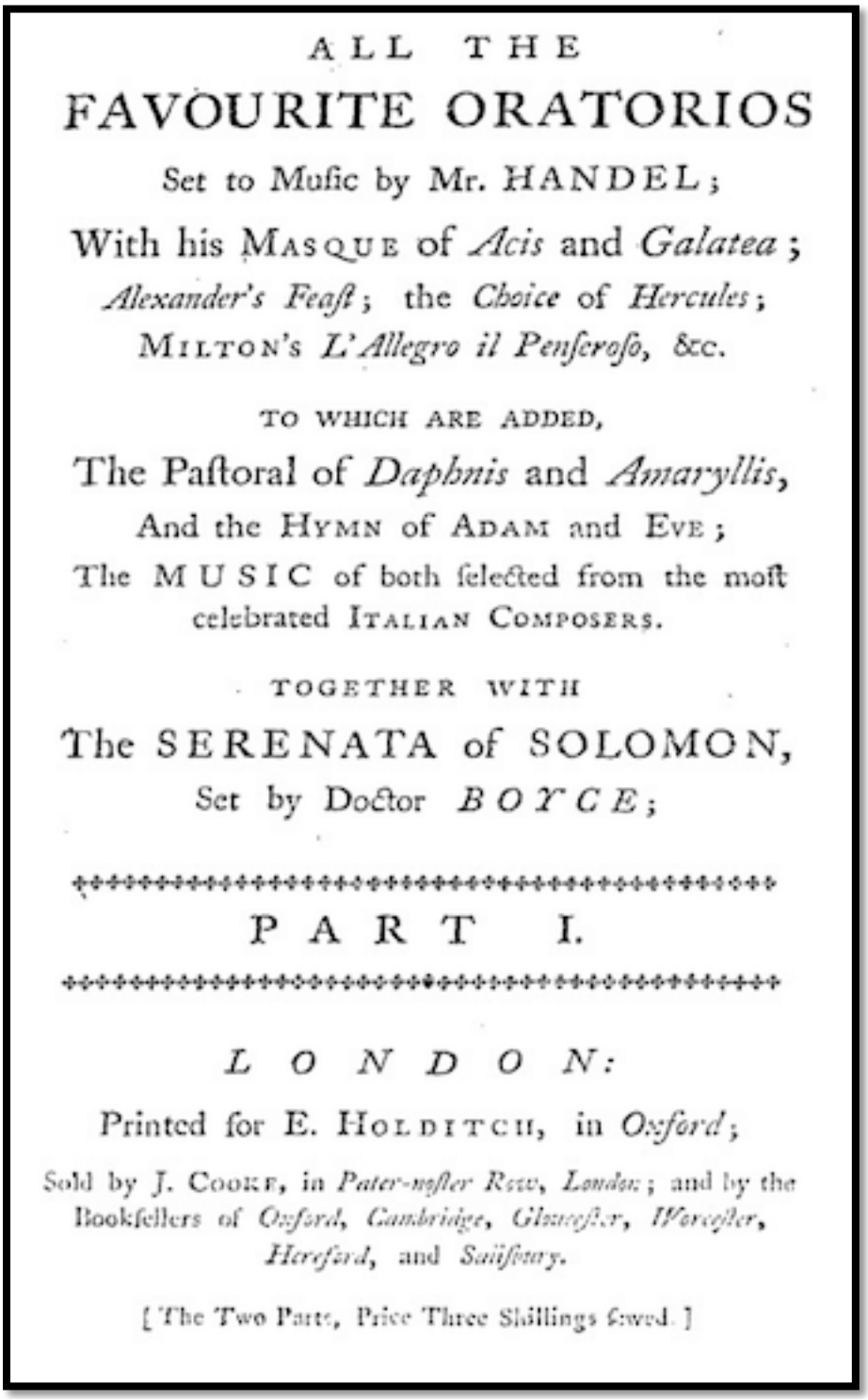
Collection of Figures

Figure 1



ALL THE

FAVOURITE ORATORIOS

Set to Music by Mr. HANDEL;

With his MASQUE of *Acis* and *Galatea*;

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MILTON's *L'Allegro il Penſeroſo*, &c.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

The Paſtoral of *Daphnis* and *Amaryllis*,

And the HYMN of ADAM and EVE;

The MUSIC of both ſelected from the moſt celebrated ITALIAN COMPOSERS.

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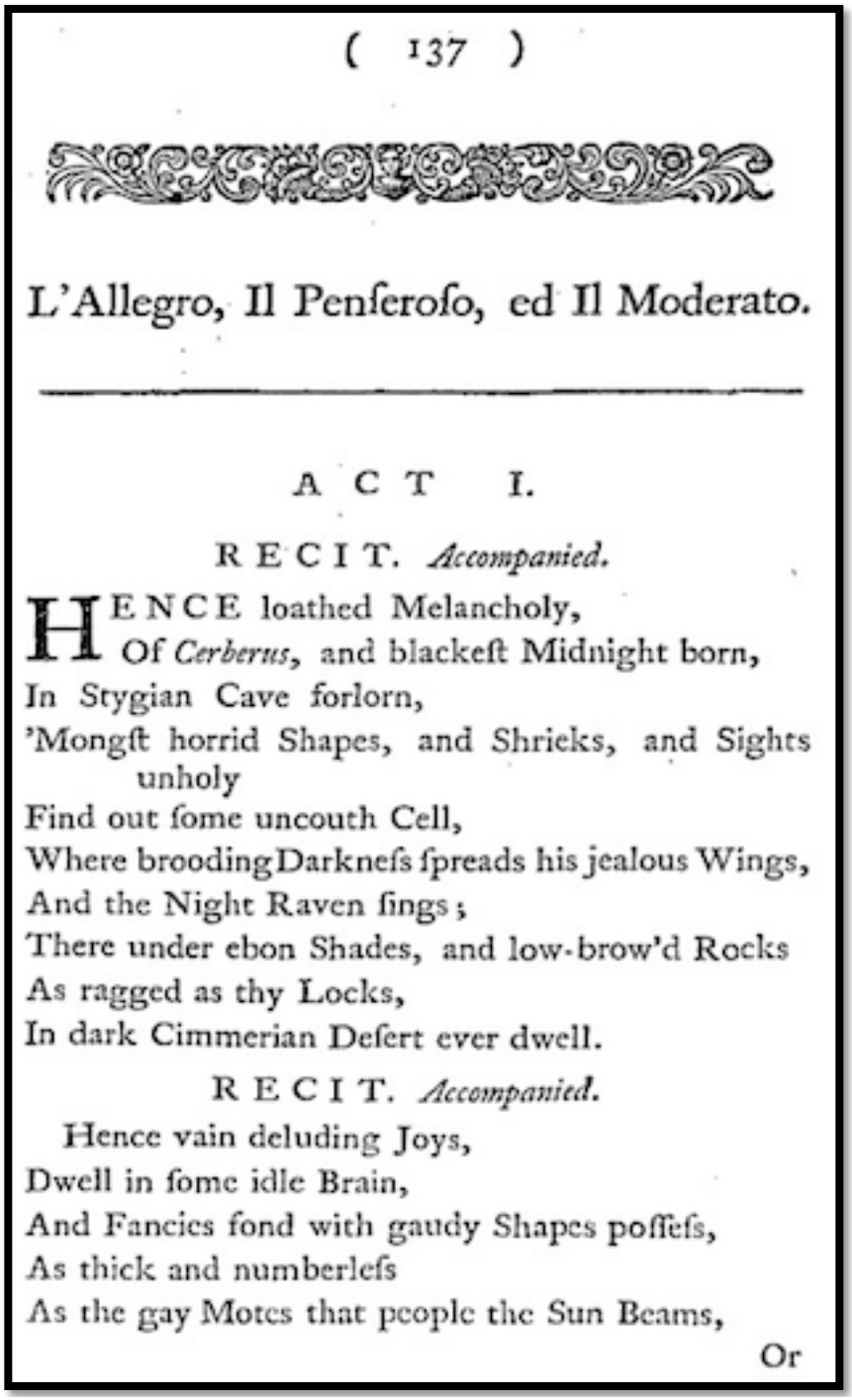
[The Two Parts, Price Three Shillings ſewed.]

Figure 2



L'Allegro, Il Penſeroſo, ed Il Moderato.

ACT I.

RECIT. *Accompanied.*

HENCE loathed Melancholy,
Of *Cerberus*, and blackeſt Midnight born,
In Stygian Cave forlorn,
'Mongſt horrid Shapes, and Shrieks, and Sights unholy
Find out ſome uncouth Cell,
Where brooding Darkneſs ſpreads his jealous Wings,
And the Night Raven ſings;
There under ebon Shades, and low-brow'd Rocks
As ragged as thy Locks,
In dark Cimmerian Deſert ever dwell.

RECIT. *Accompanied.*

Hence vain deluding Joys,
Dwell in ſome idle Brain,
And Fancies fond with gaudy Shapes poſſeſs,
As thick and numberleſs
As the gay Motes that people the Sun Beams,

Or

Figure 3

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Innocence, (Frontispiece)

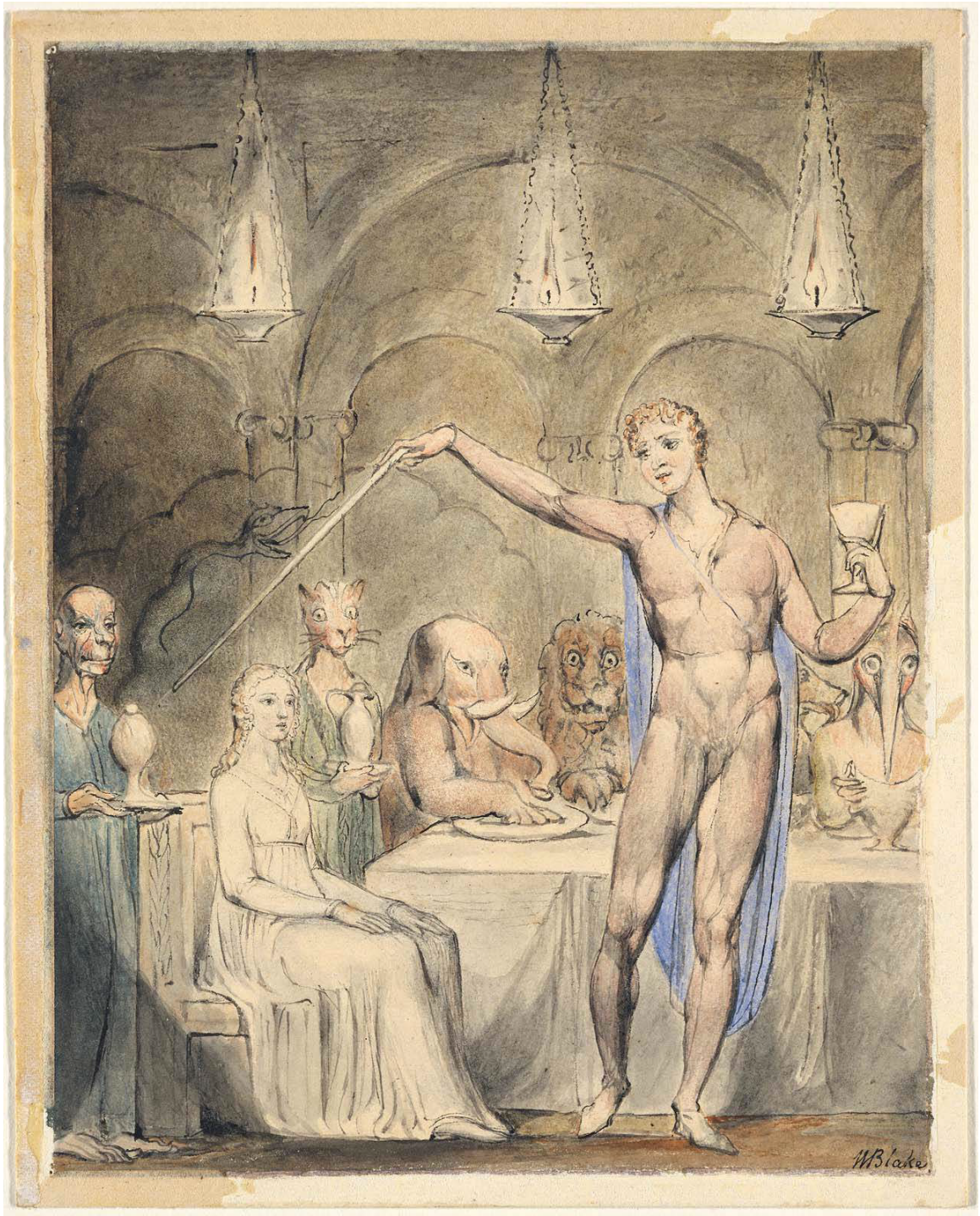
Figure 4

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Innocence, (Title Page)

Figure 5

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Innocence, "Laughing Song"

Figure 6



Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (with permission). “The Magic Banquet” Illustration to Milton's ″Comus,″ about 1815

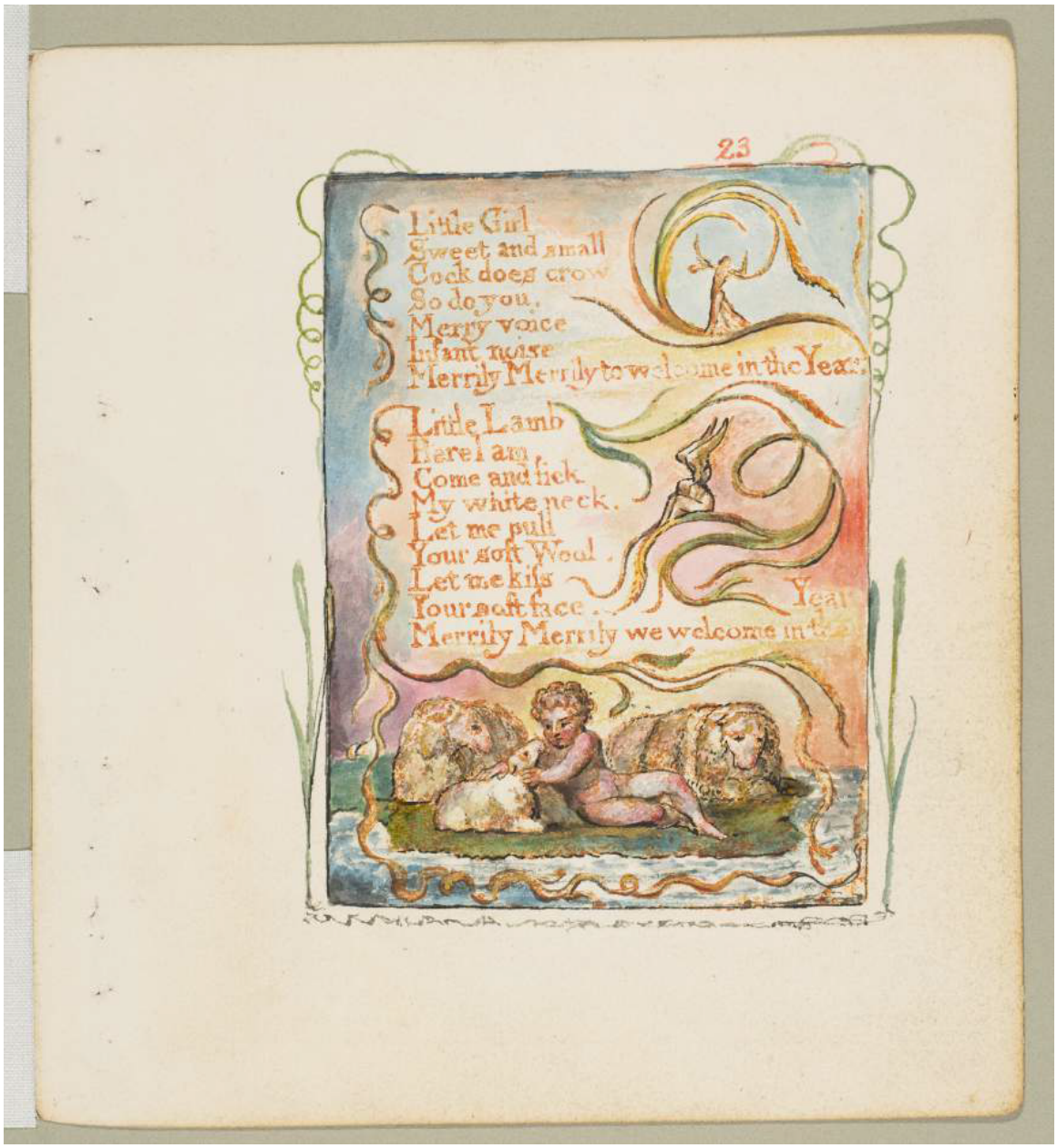
Figure 7

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Experience, "Infant Sorrow"

Figure 8

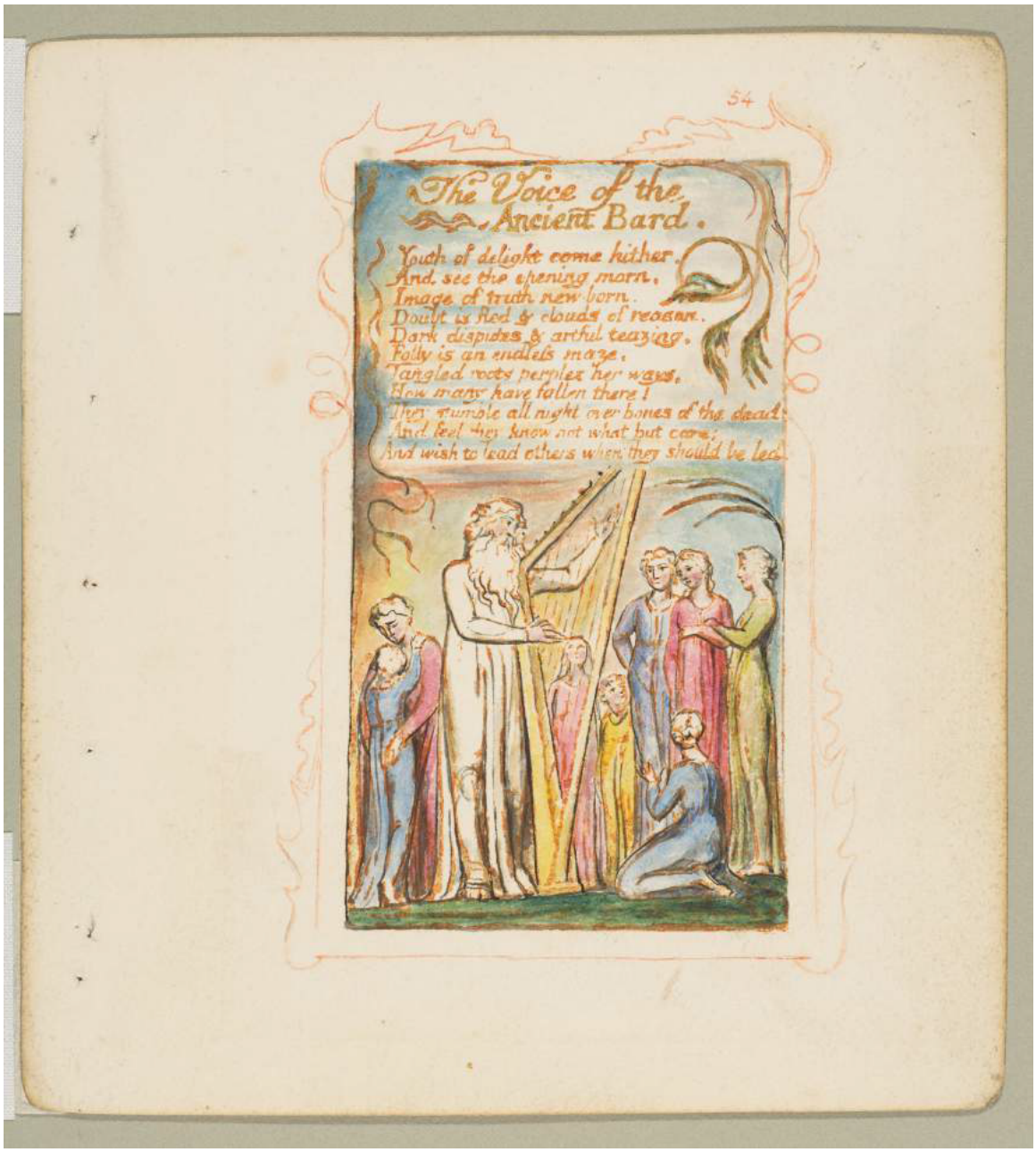
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Innocence, "Spring" (Part 1)

Figure 9



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Innocence, "Spring" (Part 2)

Figure 10



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917. www.metmuseum.org
Songs of Experience, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"