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Mary K. Cotter

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Roots and Repercussions of Romantic Feeling: Sensation and Affect in the Poetry of
Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth

by

Mary Kelsey Cotter

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Alan Vardy

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Kelvin Black

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Enlightenment emphasis on rationalism in philosophy and the arts prefigures Samuel Taylor Coleridge's and William Wordsworth's Romantic recovery of a subject's empirical relationship to nature and the phenomenal world. Coleridge and Wordsworth respond to philosophical precedents that emphasize rationalism and the autonomy of a subject while introducing empiricism and sensation as primary components of the speaker's experience. Renee Descartes' assertion illuminates the foundation of the poets' rationalism: "I thus realize that none of the things that the imagination enables me to grasp is at all relevant to this knowledge of myself ...and that the mind must therefore be most carefully diverted from such things if it is to perceive its own nature" (Schlutz 48). Coleridge and Wordsworth define a self-reflective speaker characteristic of the Enlightenment period and relocate him with attention to his physical as well as mental and emotional relationship to nature and the sensational. Joel Faflak elaborates on the role of empiricism during the Romantic period: "Romanticism does not eliminate the constructedness of the subject with which the empiricists struggled; it merely displaces this constructedness inward" (Faflak 56). The poets delineate a fluid shift from the Enlightenment to Romanticism through an interchangeable reliance on Kantian and Burkean philosophical methods. The philosophy of Immanuel Kant follows the Cartesian *cogito* toward a similar end of reducing human experience to circumstance bereft of

empirical influence or evidence. Alexander Schlutz explains Kant's motivation to "present the *a priori* conditions of any cognition, regardless of its specific empirical content. Only in this, their pure form, devoid of any empirical content, can the process of cognition be universally applicable to any experience" (Schlutz 83). Unlike Kant, Edmund Burke organizes the aesthetics of trauma and isolation to support the corporeal effects of the sublime. Their Romantic recovery of the subject in nature emphasizes emotion and feeling. Faflak and Sha explain: "Romantic experiments with emotion form the laboratory for current research on the interconnections between emotion and cognition" (Faflak and Sha 4). This thesis explores the interactions and contradictions of the interplay of affective power, psychology, and vacillating Burkean and Kantian aesthetic moments in a selection of poems and other writing by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* dissect the role of the sublime in effecting the mind and body of the individual. Kant emphasizes the role of the mind in imagining the terrible effects of the sublime: "Sublimity, therefore, does not reside in anything of nature, but only in our mind, in so far as we can become conscious that we are superior to nature within, and therefore also to nature without us (so far as it influences us)" (Kant 129). For Coleridge, Kant's philosophy provides a method for accessing the divine through the reasoning faculty of the imagination. The divine serves as the ultimate source of Coleridge's inspiration, and his *Biographia Literaria* manifests "the promotion of the major intellectual project of Coleridge's life—the adaptation of Kant and German idealism to the service of his Christian philosophy" (*Constructing*

Coleridge 17). Coleridge relies on Kantian rationalism, which Schlutz contributes to his consideration of how the divine influences his mind: “Coleridge...saw the self’s very essence as residing in its connection to the noumenal law of reason, which...was not merely a transcendental, but decidedly a divine principle” (Schlutz 215). Burke’s philosophy relies to a greater degree on the relationship of the body to the sublime in the phenomenal world. Burke describes the sublime as “productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling... the torments which we may be made to suffer, are much greater in their effect on the body and mind” (Burke 59). Coleridge and Wordsworth use the sublime to motivate an affective response in their speakers. Interaction with the sublime in nature requires an emphasis on the individual, which characterizes enlightenment ideals, but Romantic poets demonstrate an understanding of humanity’s dependence on social and psychological factors produced by external elements in nature. Thus, the two schools of thought become amalgamated in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth to reveal the intersection of philosophy, psychology, and the speaker’s affective responses to nature and the phenomenal world.

Moments of solitude and isolation in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth cultivate a self-reflective and emotional speaker who we characterize with Romantic literature. Solitude induces fear and anxiety in the speaker, and it forces them to turn inward. In *Isolated Cases*, Nancy Yousef traces the term “independence” to its origin in the early seventeenth-century “with its extended definitions of freedom from authority, influence, and other forms of reliance on others” (Yousef 12). Philosophers from then until the nineteenth-century stress the individual as a self-sufficient and autonomous subject. Yousef summarizes:

The self-defining Cartesian *cogito* is an invention contemporaneous with Hobbes's state of nature arrived at by an equally bold, unconcealed turn away from the received and the familiar. The work of philosophical construction (to build knowledge 'upon a foundation which is completely my own') begins *after* a narrative about the impulse or compulsion to isolate oneself in order to find truth or, rather, to found the truth on one's self alone. (Yousef 4)

Post-enlightenment thought retraces the origins of the individual as an isolated subject developing through self-determination and discovery in nature. However, Yousef asks: "when did we forget we were born and raised?" (7). Her question identifies the intersection between Enlightenment autonomy and Romantic affection in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

Coleridge's and Wordsworth's speakers negotiate the sublime in nature by alternating between moments of self-reflection and affect. The speakers' experiences illuminate the creative and personal crises of the poets. The poets experience individual creative and personal crises that influence their portrayals of a subject's interaction with nature. Coleridge's speaker experiences a psychosomatic response to the presence of what he perceives as the divine. His speaker's experience emanates from his crises of alienation from the divine and, therefore, loss of affect. In order to reach the divine via sensation, his speaker passes through reveries, and the intense feelings of pleasure and anxiety induce cognitive failure. However, the poem itself demonstrates his artistic success in capturing a moment of divine connection. Wordsworth's crisis is often determined by fear over loss of affect and, in turn, aesthetic failure. Their shared concern over feeling diverges in their distinct interests in cognition and empiricism as ends to self-actualization. Coleridge examines moments of cognitive failure preceded by reverie and sublime interaction, whereas Wordsworth explores his crises of alienation from affect

through recollection and the temporal space between the speaker and his experience. Both poets are interested in “how bodies mark and leave their mark within environments, not just with the body in mind, but as part of a whole sensorium attuned to the transports and shocks of lived experience” (Faflak and Sha 3). This thesis examines Coleridge’s and Wordsworth’s poetic response to their aesthetic crises.

Coleridge’s poetics demonstrate his speaker’s vacillation between Kantian rationalism and Burkean empiricism. For example, although the speaker in Coleridge’s “Effusion XXXV” physically interacts with “pensive Sara!” (1) his reverie mentally isolates him from her. The speaker negotiates the awe inspiring presence of the divine as a distinctly mental activity, but the physicality of Sara’s sensual touch supports feelings of pleasure associated with the effects of musicality prompted by the harp. Coleridge depicts similar cognitive isolation in “Dejection: An Ode” in which his speaker becomes confined to his own consciousness. The speaker’s anguish originates from “viper thoughts” that “coil around [his] mind” (94) and exemplifies Coleridge’s Kantian reliance on the primacy of the mind. The poem identifies total negation of affective release, which effectively pushes affect to the forefront of the poem’s crisis. The speaker experiences “unimpassion’d grief, / Which finds no natural outlet, no relief, / In word, or sigh, or tear” (22-24). In “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,” the speaker’s reverie involves a vision of his friends’ distant activity, which motivates his affective response. Although physically separate, he sees his friends “Beneath the wide wide Heaven” (21) and thoughts of their experience cause “A delight/...on [his] heart” (45). The poem demonstrates that Coleridge’s speakers are at once autonomous subjects and wholly dependent upon nature and the mental and physical presence of others. This paradox

reveals the poet's incorporation of the Enlightenment and Romantic periods through his balance of reason and emotional attachment to the phenomenal world.

Coleridge's account of the recuperative acts of his speakers demonstrates his primarily Kantian view of his subject's interaction with nature. In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant describes "A Kritik of pure Reason, *i.e.* of our faculty of judging *a priori*" (Kant 3). Kant emphasizes the superiority of rationalism over empiricism, which leads to further distinctions between mind and body in his *Analytic of the Sublime* where he argues "the sublime is not to be sought in the things of nature, but only in our Ideas" (Kant 109). Kant elaborates:

The Beautiful in nature is connected with the form of the object, which consists in having [definite] boundaries. The Sublime, on the other hand, is to be found in a formless object, so far as in it or by occasion of it *boundlessness* is represented, and yet its totality is also present to thought. (Kant 102)

Coleridge and Wordsworth draw upon the "*boundlessness*" of the sublime using their speakers as tools for expressing the cognitive and somatic activity that arise during a sublime moment. While Coleridge demonstrates a deeper concern for the mind in lieu of an emotionally responsive body, his speakers identify the mutually affective responses of their mind and body. The speaker's sensual attempt to experience the divine ultimately ends in cognitive failure. Coleridge depicts such failure through his speaker's recuperative act of pulling away from the feeling. The divine induces an overwhelming emotional and mental response in the speaker that Coleridge captures in his work. According to Kant, "[the feeling of the Sublime] is a pleasure that arises only indirectly; viz. it is produced by the feelings of a momentary checking of the vital powers and a consequent stronger outflow of them" (Kant 102). Coleridge's speaker considers a

“momentary checking of the vital powers” (102) during his recuperation from feelings of intense cognitive awareness. Although Coleridge’s concern is primarily cognitive in that his speakers attempt to rationalize sensations of the divine, he demonstrates an understanding of the relationship of the body to mental activity. In his article, “Coleridge on Broad Stand,” Alan Vardy describes Coleridge’s descent from the summit of Scafell that the poet recounts in a letter and later records in “Hymn Before Sunrise.” Vardy writes: “The letter gives us a glimpse of how an affective experience of terror can be translated into the sublime, a ‘fantastic Pleasure’ that may awaken within us an apprehension of the divine” (“Coleridge on Broad Stand” 9). Coleridge’s poetry reveals his tendency to amalgamate Kantian and Burkean experiences into a singular awareness of a speaker’s mental and physical relationship to nature.

Wordsworth demonstrates a similar vacillating dependence on his subject’s cognitive as well as empirical relationship to nature. In “Tintern Abbey,” the speaker addresses the power of nature to “inform / The mind that is within us” (126-127). Nature impresses upon the mind just as it influences the body as the speaker literally feels “in the mind of man, / A motion and a spirit, that impels / All thinking things, all objects of thought” (100-103). The speaker anticipates his sister Dorothy’s “solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief” (144) as a projection of his personal anxiety. His fear over isolation from feeling the affects of nature unfolds in the final stanza in his warning to Dorothy. Similarly, In “The Discharged Soldier”, Wordsworth depicts a socially dependent speaker whose affective response is conditioned by the sublime figure of the anonymous traveller. In this poem, romantic emphasis on feeling and introspection becomes most apparent in the speaker’s relationship to the sublime figure of the soldier. Emotionally, the speaker

reveals his “mingled sense / Of fear and sorrow” (420-421) as a direct result of the soldier’s presence. The soldier embodies the sublime and produces an affective response in the speaker, which demonstrates the physicality of Wordsworth’s aesthetics.

Although Wordsworth demonstrates an interest in the relationship of the mind and body to the sublime, his concern is primarily corporeal and affective. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke offers an analysis of the sublime as an empirically interested passion. Burke’s sublime is concerned with self-preservation during terror and solitude, which produces an affective response in the subject. He writes, “absolute and entire solitude, that is, the total and perpetual exclusion from all society, is as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived” (Burke 37). Wordsworth’s speaker experiences a somatic response to the sublime, which originates from his isolation in nature and anticipation of pain or death. Additionally, his speaker often navigates a natural, unruly setting that induces feelings of the sublime. Burke writes: “To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes” (Burke 58). Wordsworth demonstrates an awareness of Burke’s philosophy through his speaker’s affective response to the passion of the sublime. Where Coleridge’s speaker experiences anxiety over cognitive failure, Wordsworth’s speaker draws upon sensations of fear and anguish cultivated by the limits of his physicality. Wordsworth vacillates between empirical and cognitive realms as his speaker feels the effects of recuperative moments from his past.

In addition to examining philosophical and psychological aesthetic moments in their poetry, this thesis will identify the role of affect in the artistic and emotional crises

represented in Coleridge's and Wordsworth's work. The poems selected for analysis demonstrate the poets' view of the relationship of the mind and body to the sublime as an objective source of anxiety. Aesthetically, Coleridge emphasizes the role of the mind in resolving cognitive failure with the divine. His ability to recreate the speaker's visceral and mental reaction to overwhelming feeling constitutes his ability to resolve crises of cognition. Conversely, Wordsworth emphasizes the physical effects of the sublime. The Wye river valley and the soldier effect his speaker's mental and bodily reaction to nature. Wordsworth grapples directly with his fear over an inability to be effected by external stimuli, but his poetry verifies his ability to resolve this artistic crisis. Mary Favret explains:

Post-structuralism but also studies in cognitive psychology have since accomplished: the decoupling of affect and subject. Because of its location somehow inside and outside the individual body, scholars over the past 15 years have increasingly made visible how affect moves and thrives in a realm independent of individual subjectivity (Favret 1162).

Coleridge and Wordsworth demonstrate Romantic era poetry's style of the "decoupling of affect and subject" (1162). The affect produced by the sublime on the speakers in their poetry creates mental and physical reactions that disrupt the space of the poem.

Coleridge will serve as the first poet under speculation beginning with a discussion of his poems "Effusion XXXV" and "Dejection: An Ode." The poems depict Coleridge's examination of sensation and affect as the speakers feel their way through the anxiety of losing connection with the divine. He composed "Effusion XXXV" in 1795 and later named it "The Eolian Harp." In this poem, the speaker opens his mind and body to the music of the harp. The speaker's reverie provides access to cognitive exploration and corporeal affects of the divine as Sara Fricker, his future wife, rests in languor

against his arm. In 1802 Coleridge writes “Dejection: An Ode” in which he reveals his grief and depression over his failed marriage to Sara Fricker and his inconsequential love for Sara Hutchinson. The overbearing sense of failure and repression in the poem reveals the poet’s fear over his inability to think his way out of depression and feel his way into what he perceives as a divine experience. “The Eolian Harp” and “Dejection: An Ode” illustrate Coleridge’s exploration of the boundaries of cognitive and corporeal experience in states of heightened sensation and anxiety. Similarly, “The Nightingale,” which he composed in 1798, delineates the vacillation between empirical and cognitive realms in order to negotiate the speaker’s present understanding of the sublime. The speaker has an affective response to the sublime, which Coleridge captures through recording tiny moments of sensual experience. Coleridge’s “Hymn Before Sun-rise the Vale of Chamouny” follows “Dejection: An Ode” in its 1802 publication in *Sibylline Leaves*. In the poem, Coleridge depicts a sublime experience after hiking to the summit of Scafell. His recording of the experience after his descent illustrates the intersection of the Kantian cognition and Burkean empiricism at play in Coleridge’s work.

Chapter Two

Coleridge and Divine Sensation

As a point of entry into the study of Coleridge’s poetics, this thesis begins by considering the poet’s illustration of sensation and affect in “The Eolian Harp.” Coleridge seeks the divine in all things, and he organizes his experiences into poems that identify what it means to feel and make one feel the physical and mental forces that he perceives

as divine. The speaker in the poem passes into reverie and invokes his imagination in order to feel sensations of what he perceives as divine presence. Faflak and Sha quote Rei Terada in their book *Romanticism and the Emotions*: “*Emotion* is a psychologically, at least minimally interpretive experience whose physiological aspect is *affect*. Feeling is a capacious term that connotes both physiological sensations (affects) and psychological states (emotions)” (Faflak and Sha 5). The speaker experiences “feeling” and subsequently drifts into an altered state of consciousness via his faculty of imagination. Coleridge begins the poem with: “My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclin’d / Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is” (1-5). The speaker draws upon his physical intimacy with Sara as the subtle movements of nature become similes for their love as well as for the movement of sound emanating from the harp. The speaker continues: “that simplest Lute/...How by the desultory breeze caress’d, / Like some coy Maid half-yielding to her Lover” (12-15). Coleridge plays with the sensational experiences of his speaker through the poem’s conversational structure interrupted by asides directed to the reader. The speaker consumes the physical experience of Sara’s presence as their languor carries him into a state of reverie disconnected from a strictly corporeal revelation. Teresa Brennan explains that during the transmission of affect, “the ‘atmosphere’ or the environment literally gets into the individual. Physically and biologically, something is present that was not there before” (Brennan 1). The speaker indulges in the sound of the harp and in Sara’s touch, and he internalizes the physical sensations of the experience in a Burkean manner as he aesthetically reproduces the physicality of the moment. In his philosophy of the beautiful, Burke writes: “I likewise distinguish love, by which I mean that satisfaction which arises to the mind upon contemplating any thing beautiful...from desire or lust;

which is an energy of the mind that hurries us on to the possession of certain objects” (Burke 91). The speaker experiences similar “satisfaction” (Burke 91) as he imagines the sound of the “organic Harps diversly fram’d” (36) in the presence of Sara. The speaker describes the immediacy of beauty afforded by his imagination as “white-flower’d Jasmin, and the broad-leav’d Myrtle” (5) contribute to his affective response to the setting.

Coleridge’s aesthetics demonstrate the affective power of language to induce feelings occasioned by the speaker’s imagination. In “The Eolian Harp” he details intimate moments of intense feeling that create a softness to the scene in which he his imagination invokes the harps’ “long sequacious notes/ Over delicious surges sink and rise” (18-19). The poem achieves its aesthetic intent as a result of the speaker’s imagination that cultivates cognitive activity toward divine connection. First, the speaker must achieve a state of reverie, which he does through indulging in passivity with Sara on his lap. Coleridge writes: “and the world so hush’d! / The stilly murmur of the distant Sea / Tells us of Silence” (l. 10-12). He uses the sibilant sounds of “hush’d,” “stilly,” “Sea,” and “Silence” to create an aesthetically pleasing moment of suspension. Coleridge exposes the state of the speaker’s mind with: “Full many a thought uncall’d and undetain’d, / And many idle flitting phantasies” (31-32). The speaker’s cognitive state appears unconscious and inconsequential as his mind becomes wholly open to experience. Faflak and Sha explain:

...in Romantic feeling, experience and the aesthetic become intimately, irrevocably, unassimilably imbricated. Nietzsche reminds us that, as form’s expression of an ineffable content, the aesthetic works by a profound forgetting of its primordial being in sense. To (re)capture this (in)tangible source is to mark the political and ethical dimension of language’s mediation *as*, as well as *of*, life. (Faflak and Sha 6)

Coleridge succeeds in recapturing the “(in)tangible” (6) source of sensational experience through expanding on his speaker’s state of unconscious meditation. He writes: “And tranquil muse upon tranquility” (29) as the speaker affectively responds to his own passivity. The speaker’s reverie carries him closer to what Coleridge perceives as divine sensation, understood to be the force in and through all things.

Reverie provides access to a primarily cognitive connection to his experience of the divine. In his imagination, Coleridge invokes the sound of the harps, “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” (38-40). The speaker’s reverie culminates in a moment of intensity during which he feels the presence of the divine but cannot cognitively think his way through the experience as he attempts to rationalize “once intellectual Breeze” that ties together the divine and mortal beings. Coleridge writes: “These shapings of the unregenerate mind,/ bubbles that glitter as they rise and break” (47-48). Like the “rise and break” of the “Bubbles” the speaker cannot facilitate a purely divine experience without retracting from the intensity of the sensation. The speaker’s dependence on reverie and the faculty of his imagination demonstrates a transition from empirical to cognitive, and therefore Burkean to Kantian, experience. Alexander Schlutz writes:

Cognition thus depends on the ability of our minds to passively receive mental representations... while it cannot be completed without the active mental capacity to apply a concept to these representations and to *use* them as a means to cognize an object. Neither of these two fundamental sources of cognition has priority over the other in Kant’s rendering of the cognitive process, since we could not *think* about anything without the concepts of the understanding, while we would have nothing to think *about* without the intuitions that constitute their raw material. (Schlutz 81-82)

Coleridge aesthetically renders the reciprocal relationship between “the understanding” and “the intuitions” (81) as his reverie carries him to contemplate his access to the divine. The speaker exclaims: “Th’INCOMPREHENSIBLE! Save when with awe/ I praise him, and with Faith that inly *feels*” (51-52). In this way, “to feel is also to mark the autonomy of an existence beyond regard” (Faflak and Sha 2). The poem itself demonstrates Coleridge’s success in resolving what he anticipates as crisis of feeling. Reverie provides divine access and, therefore, an opportunity to feel the presence of the divine. Cognitively, Coleridge fails to understand the unknowable source of divinity, but physically he connects to it and artistically reproduces the intensity in order to recreate the experience for his reader.

“Dejection: An Ode” signals a dramatic shift in Coleridge’s ability to resolve his feelings of alienation from divine connection. The speaker of the poem demonstrates an acute lack of feeling, which represents Coleridge’s feared loss of affect. His personal crisis involves anxiety over his inability to feel sensations of the divine and aesthetically reproduce those feelings. However, his crisis also involves emotional strife over lost love. Where “The Eolian Harp” displays the potential for love and further physical and emotional connection to “Sara!” (1) “Dejection: An Ode” demonstrates the failure of that same love. Unlike the imaginatively rich and active harps in “The Eolian Lute,” the music in “Dejection: An Ode” becomes “the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes/ Upon the strings of this Aeolian lute” (6-7). The change in the tone of the music reflects the sedated imaginative faculty of the speaker in “Dejection: An Ode.” In the seven years between his composition of the two poems, Coleridge experiences a failed marriage to Sara Fricker and anguish over his fruitless love for Sara Hutchinson. Coleridge meets

Sara Fricker “in August 1794 in Bristol...and there was an understanding that Coleridge and Sara would marry” (Halmi, Magnuson, and Modiano 143). Following their meeting, Coleridge composes “The Eolian Harp,” in which he employs rich imagery of the sound of a wind harp, which creates his imaginative reverie that all “animated nature” could be such harps “that tremble into thought, as o’er them sweeps, / Plastic and vast, one intellectual Breeze” (37-39). Coleridge’s internal solace works through the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal in a Kantian manner of attending to reason. However, the speaker’s affective response demonstrates the vitality of Coleridge’s ability to feel a physical connection to Sara and sensations he associates with the divine. The loss of affect in “Dejection: An Ode” demonstrates Coleridge’s internal strife occasioned by his inability to love Sara Hutchinson and his alienation from the divine. His marriage to Sara Fricker, “began to fail in 1798,” four years before Coleridge meets Sara Hutchinson, “the sister of Mary Hutchinson, whom Wordsworth married on October 4, 1802” (143). What began as a letter of “stifling, drowsy, unimpassioned Grief” (18) to Sara Hutchinson, becomes “Dejection: An Ode.”

The power of “Dejection: An Ode” originates from Coleridge’s awareness of his loss of affect, and his inability to access feeling that would bring him closer to understanding the divine. Unlike the speaker in “The Eolian Harp,” the speaker in “Dejection: An Ode” loses his ability to feel sensations of love and the divine. The poem’s intensely personal subject matter echoes post-Enlightenment practices of reaching within the subject in order to establish connection to sources such as Sara and the divine. Coleridge writes:

Now sparkling, now bedimm’d, but always seen;
Yon crescent Moon, as fix’d as if it grew

In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel how beautiful they are! (34-38)

The augmentation of the “crescent Moon” (35) juxtaposes the shrinking of the speaker’s access to somatic feeling in its presence. The “cloudless, starless” (36) sky implies clarity and intensity, yet the speaker cannot feel its phenomenal effects. Coleridge uses sight in contrast to “feel” (38) in order to depict the speaker’s inability to filter the experience through his intellect and body and into a poem. The speaker can “see, not feel” (38) the beauty of his surroundings. However, the power of the poem emanates from the speaker’s affective response to failure, because in turn the reader feels the effects of the carefully manipulated lines. Ironically, Coleridge’s anguish over loss of affect produces an affective response in the reader. The speaker experiences a heavily sedated anguish over “joy that ne’er was given,” (64) but the reader feels the clarity of the “starless lake of blue” (36) and hears the wind that effects the “bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree” (100). Coleridge creates a sensational experience for his readers by capturing his feared loss of affect.

In “Dejection: An Ode” Coleridge invokes the faculty of the imagination as the speaker attempts to open his mind to the possibility of divine visions and sensation. Schlutz explains: “imagination’s connection to the body and the senses marks it as a constant threat to the rational faculties of understanding and reason” (Schlutz 4). However, In “Dejection: An Ode” Coleridge addresses the “spirit of Imagination” (86) in anguish over his loss of access to creativity afforded by it. He portrays the conflict between reason and emotion through his loss of affect and ineffective imagination. The speaker laments:

But Oh! each visitation
 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
 My shaping spirit of Imagination
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,
 But to be still and patient, all I can. (84-88)

In the wake of his loss of imagination the speaker, “patient” (88) and without feeling, waits for the moment of suspension to pass. In Kantian terms, Coleridge explores the power of the unconscious to interact with the faculty of the imagination. Faflak explains:

Yet by invading the realm of the noumenal, where reason addresses itself to itself, the imagination, by contemplating the nonobject of sublime apprehension, makes reason confront its own unconscious. Or as Kant writes, ‘[t]he point of excess for the imagination (toward which it is driven in the apprehension of the intuition) is like an abyss in which it fears to lose itself’. As the imagination reaches beyond conscious empiricism toward the purely psychical or unconscious—understood as the ‘purely’ rational—its ability to represent itself and thus fulfill the Kantian categorical imperative of rational understanding falters. (Faflak 47)

Coleridge’s fear over losing “Joy, virtuous Lady!” (64) consumes his conscious mind in the realm of the phenomenal. The poem drifts into a past tense tangent as the speaker explains: “This joy within me dallied with distress” (77). The flicker of joy loses ground in the phenomenal world of Coleridge’s distress over his failed marriage and loss of opportunity with his true love, Sara Hutchinson. In the poem, the “realm of the noumenal” (Faflak 47) acts as the primary force where the speaker’s “psychical or unconscious” (47) condition drives the plot. However, Coleridge experiences cognitive failure in his attempt to resolve alienation from “joy” (64) and the divine. The speaker’s inability to reason through his state of depression creates an affective response of grief in the reader and illuminates the interaction between Coleridge’s mind and the phenomenal world in which he seeks solace from an unattainable source, which is both his imagination and Sara Hutchinson.

Sensational pleasure is also at stake in Coleridge's poem "The Nightingale" as the speaker's interaction with bird song becomes clouded with cultural association.

Coleridge's "The Nightingale" first appeared in 1798 in *Lyrical Ballads*. As demonstrated in "The Eolian Harp" and "Dejection: An Ode", this poem provides a response to Coleridge's interest in capturing an unmediated affective response through depicting moments of Burkean sublimity. In "The Nightingale," Coleridge identifies tiny aesthetic details in the setting during the night in nature. He writes: "You see the glimmer of the stream beneath, / But hear no murmuring: it flows silently" (5-6). The "glimmer" (5) emanates ironically out of a lack of light, as there exists "no relique of the sunken day / ...no long thin slip / Of sullen Light, no obscure trembling hues" (1-3). The lack of light source produces a moment of obscurity characteristic of the Burkean sublime and sets a melancholy tone for the music of the nightingale. Burke writes: "In reality a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever" (Burke 60). The speaker exclaims:

A melancholy Bird? O idle thought!
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.
 --But some night-wandering Man, whose heart was pierc'd
 With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
 Or slow distemper or neglected love (14-18)

Coleridge plays with the relationship between "Man" (15) and his surroundings through capturing moments of reflection. The speaker identifies the source of the nightingales' melancholic reputation as man's "remembrance of a grievous wrong" (17). Thus, man "fill'd all things with himself / And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale / Of his own sorrows" (19-21). The speaker describes a man's projection of feeling onto nature as the source of the cultural associations. Cultural association conditions the speaker's affective

response to the birds' song in the dark orchard, and the dream-like setting causes an overwhelming sense of sublimity. Coleridge's manipulation of the setting enhances feelings of the sublime, which causes the speaker to turn inward and reflect on his cognitive relationship with the setting. Thus, he no longer addresses his lament toward Dorothy and William, but instead begins a self-reflective experience that disconnects him from their physical presence. Coleridge writes: "And I know a grove/ Of large extent... This grove is wild with tangling underwood, / And the trim walks are broken up" (I. 49-52). The grove consumes the speaker and the nightingales in darkness that juxtaposes the nightingales' "bright, bright eyes" (66). The sublime setting offers potential for cognitive stimulation, which Coleridge uses as a segue into a Kantian approach to reflecting on nature.

The sublimity of the grove in which the speaker experiences the melancholy tones of the nightingale causes him to internalize the effects of the experience. The melancholy tone of the bird's song and the obscure, dark setting of the grove influence the speaker's psychological appraisal of nature. The speaker's tale of a man who "fill'd all things with himself / And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale / Of his own sorrows" (19-21) introduces the pattern of reflection that Coleridge draws upon in his exploration of the relationship between empirical and cognitive states. The man in the speaker's tale projects his sadness onto nature, and in turn hears his own reflection in the bird's song. The powerful manipulation of the man's natural surroundings demonstrates the inherent psychological patterns in Coleridge's work. The speaker consumes the energy of nature surrounding him in the grove that "is wild with tangling underwood," (52) which motivates his affective response. Brennan writes: "any inquiry into how one feels the

others' affects, or the 'atmosphere,' has to take account of physiology as well as the social, psychological factors that generated the atmosphere in the first place" (Brennan 1). The speaker generates the atmosphere by projecting his melancholy feelings onto the nightingales in his presence. The emotional response of the speaker to the birds' song supports Coleridge's Romantic recovery of the subject through his response to nature. Faflak and Sha explain: "At its most magical and disturbing, emotion is profoundly anticipatory and prehensive, materializing worlds before we know or even desire their being" (Faflak and Sha 2). The speaker sees "their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full" (67) against the darkness of the grove, and he hears how his son "capable of no articulate sound, Mars all things with his imitative lisp" (91-92). Coleridge's careful attention to light, darkness, and sound reflects the speaker's emotion as well as his projection onto nature. Faflak writes: "Kant studies how the mind creates rather than just passively receives the phenomenal world through the categories, and so cannot avoid being as much a psychologist of the imagination as its metaphysician" (Faflak 46). The speaker's child cannot articulate his emotions, yet the speaker asserts: "He knows well / The evening star" (97-98) and proceeds to take his child out into their "orchard plot" (101) to calm the baby with the sight of the moon. Their connection results from the speaker's cognitive anticipation and anxiety, which surpasses the phenomenal and constitutes a noumenal realm of understanding.

The sublime setting of the moonlit orchard provides the risk of being overwhelmed, which produces an affective response in the speaker. Kant writes that the sublime "is the state of mind produced by a certain representation with which the reflective Judgment is occupied, and not the Object, that is to be called sublime" (Kant

trans. Bernard 110). Coleridge invokes the “reflective Judgment” (110) of the speaker in the final scene in the orchard as the child “capable of no articulate sound, / Mars all things with his imitative lisp” (92-93). The child’s lack of articulate speech creates a primitive quality to the scene and a sublime “state of mind” (Kant 110) produced by the reflection of the moon in the child’s eyes. The speaker notices the “fair eyes that swam with undropt tears / Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam” (104-105). The speaker consumes the image of the moon and feels its phenomenal and noumenal effects as he affectively releases emotions that the child cannot. Because the child cannot produce an affective response to the moon, the speaker instead becomes filled with sensations from the child’s presence and sound. The child “suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently” (102-103) which creates an aesthetically sublime scene through the totality of the silence and connection reinforced by the speaker and child’s shared appraisal of the moon. Coleridge and his contemporaries believe: “The human mind [is] not passive—‘a lazy Looker-on on an external world’—but active and creative” (Blanning 20). Coleridge creates a psychological and physiological moment confined in a child’s suspended tear, which reflects the intention of the romantics to establish the potential for introspection out of seemingly small, ineffectual sublime moments.

Coleridge provides similar sensations and affects in his poem “Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouny.” In the poem, Coleridge revisits the sublime experience of hiking to the summit of Scafell in the Cumbrian mountains. Coleridge “was one of the first people to stand on the summit of Scafell,” (“Coleridge on Broad Stand” 3) and the experience, which he later records in the poem, demonstrates the affective power of the sublime due in part to the space between the moment of cognitive failure and the

speaker's recording of the moment in the poem. The poem illustrates Coleridge's exploration of what it means to feel, and in turn record an experience that his reader can feel. After the experience, "Coleridge wrote to William Sotheby describing the composition of the poem in response to his experience on Scafell" ("Coleridge on Broad Stand" 2). Vardy explains:

The letter gives us a glimpse of how an affective experience of terror can be translated into the sublime, a 'fantastic Pleasure' that may awaken within us an apprehension of the divine. It describes the specifics of the descent as bodily, visceral, chaotic—as inchoate moments of unorganized experience—the stuff of future composition, events that may finally, in retrospect, have aesthetic or religious meaning. ("Coleridge on Broad Stand" 9)

Coleridge invokes a Burkean sublime in his description of the view. The vastness of his surroundings causes visceral sensations and he exclaims "Awake, my Heart, awake!" (28). Coleridge depicts a wild and unruly scene that threatens to overtake him. He writes: "Into the depth of Clouds that veil thy breast—/ Thou too again, stupendous Mountain!" (74). The vitality of the setting induces a sublime effect, and ultimately Coleridge seeks sensations of the divine. As Vardy explains, these experiences "in retrospect, have aesthetic or religious meaning" ("Coleridge on Broad Stand" 9). Coleridge introduces a series of questions that imply his religious connection to the experience. He asks: "Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven/ Beneath the keen full Moon? Who bade the Sun/ Cloath you with Rainbows?" (54-55) His questions organize the event, otherwise "bodily, visceral, chaotic" ("Coleridge on Broad Stand" 9) into a meaningful experience by directing ultimate attention to his possible connection to the divine via that experience. His knowledge of Kantian philosophy informs this experience through his cognitive

awareness of the unknowable source that is the answer to the questions. The experience is at once visceral and steeped in nature and also impossibly imaginative and metaphysical.

Chapter Three

Wordsworth and Temporal Space

While inextricably tied to the philosophical and poetical practices of Coleridge, William Wordsworth develops a poetics steeped in analysis of a subject's affective response to nature. Wordsworth produces poetry with the idea that "there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things" (*Lyrical Ballads* 87) and with that intention, he seeks to create language accessible by all readers. He writes of poetry that "its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion" (87). While Coleridge grappled with crises of dejection and cognitive failure during moments of great passion, Wordsworth experiences crises born out of his fear of aesthetic failure. Wordsworth relays his empirical and cognitive response to nature using the language of the common man, "and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way" (78). In his 1800 *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* he states that the purpose of his poems "will be found principally to be: namely to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement" (80). Two of Wordsworth's poems in particular, "Tintern Abbey" and "The Discharged Soldier," depict the speaker's affective response as conditions of temporal and cognitive distance. The relationship between the speaker

and his environment illuminates the degree to which psychological and physical, factors influence Wordsworth's poetry. In Book I of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes a proleptic event in which his young self could not know the meaning of the experience that the poet seeks to resolve as an adult. Teresa Brennan explains: "any inquiry into how one feels the others' affects, or the 'atmosphere,' has to take account of physiology as well as the social, psychological factors that generated the atmosphere in the first place" (Brennan 1). Edmund Burke's philosophy on the beautiful and the sublime informs Wordsworth's poetics, because the interaction between the speaker and the sublime in nature creates an opportunity for examining the speaker's cognitive and empirical experience in a state of excitement. Wordsworth's speakers perceive aspects of their environment after a period of introspection that allows them to reclaim an experience through attention to the aesthetic effects of the sublime.

Wordsworth demonstrates a primarily Burkean analysis of nature in his depiction of a speaker's perception of a sublime event. He traces the affective response of his speaker in order to recreate the intensity of moments in his speaker's past that hold significance due to their sublimity. Solitude and fear permeate Wordsworth's poems and reveal the poet's negotiation of physical experience to inform his artistic capability. Burke argues that: "absolute and entire solitude, that is, the total and perpetual exclusion from all society, is as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived (Burke 37). In "Tintern Abbey," which he composed in 1798, the speaker revisits the Wye valley after five years, and the temporal distance provides opportunity for clear recuperation of the experience. Five years later, the same setting produces similar solitude, but a different affective response in the speaker, which he owes to the necessary interval between the

initial experience and his understanding of it. The temporal separation causes the speaker to internalize the effects of the experience in order to capture a lucid picture of its influence on his physical body. Wordsworth's speaker in "Tintern Abbey" experiences absolute solitude in his recapitulation until he projects his fear over loss of affect onto his sister Dorothy. Similarly, in "The Discharged Soldier" within Part IV of *The Prelude*, solitude motivates an affective response in the speaker when he discovers the "uncouth shape" (403) of the weary traveller. The speaker demonstrates a somatic response to the sublime figure of the soldier as he analyzes the traveller's body with horror. Burke writes, "The passions which concern self-preservation, turn mostly on *pain* or *danger*. The ideas of *pain*, *sickness*, and *death*, fill the mind with strong emotions of horror" (Burke 38). The failure of the speaker to empirically understand the aesthetic experience of his sublime interaction reflects Wordsworth's fear over his inability to feel an experience and recapture it in the form of poetry. The theme of recollection and space between the experience and his present perception of it provides Wordsworth with an opportunity to aesthetically render his speaker's cognitive evaluation of sublime sensation.

Wordsworth often uses recollection and temporal distance in lieu of immediate filtration and perception of an affective experience. The space provides a period of introspection in which the subject consumes the sublime experience and records it after mentally and physically conceiving of its importance. Wordsworth's speakers consult memory as their primary access to a sublime event. The temporal adjustment places space between the poet and speaker so that the reader revisits the sublime moment at an anticipated distance. Wordsworth's manipulation of the speaker's momentary sensations introduces a mappable structure that reflects the speaker's ability to recollect a fear-

inducing event, perceive the moment as sublime, and record an affective response that thereby introduces the sublime to the reader. The separation of the speaker from his event invites the reader into the scene as if to create a parallel experience for the speaker and reader. Both witness the sublime through the memory of the speaker. In that the experience happened a priori, Wordsworth facilitates a Kantian atmosphere of relying on the mental faculty of the imagination to perceive the sublime. However, the speaker's somatic response to the events as they occurred in the past creates a Burkean atmosphere in the original scenes described, and affective responses for the reader.

Wordsworth depicts a temporal delay in his subject's recapitulation of an event in "Tintern Abbey," in which the speaker provides an adjusted perception of a previously ineffable experience. The intersection of the subject's experience in nature and his response demonstrates Wordsworth's approach to producing a self-actualized speaker and affecting his reader in the process. Ruth Leys explains: "What the new affect theorists and the neuroscientists share is a commitment to the idea that there is a gap between the subject's affects and its cognition or appraisal of the affective situation or object" (Leys 443). Wordsworth produces "Tintern Abbey" in 1798 after a walking tour of the Wye River valley in Wales. The poem exemplifies the parallel discovery of a self-actualized speaker and poet afforded by the space between an event and its resonance with the subject and poet. The speaker claims: "Five years have passed; five summers, with the length / Of five long winters" (1-2). Wordsworth depicts a scene characteristic of Burkean sublimity with:

...Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky. (4-7)

Revisiting the Wye River valley after five years, the speaker anticipates a change in his perception of his surroundings. The same “lofty cliffs” now “impress / Thoughts of more deep seclusion,” (6) thereby invoking the speaker’s cognitive assessment into what once, five years prior, constituted merely an unconscious meditation. The speaker revisits the same site in nature for a second time, and his appraisal of the scene echoes Wordsworth’s idea that: “our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men” (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* 79). The relationship between his past and present experiences demonstrates the speaker’s continued appreciation for nature’s beauty as well as his memory of its sublimity. He writes: “feelings too / Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps, / As may have had no trivial influence / On that best portion of a good man’s life” (31-34). The speaker’s affective response to the Wye River valley demonstrates his altered perception of the setting after a period of distance.

The time between the speaker’s two trips through the Wye River valley provides space between his unconscious and conscious perception of the same natural setting. The poet distinguishes between his first and second trips in order to demonstrate the speaker’s altered state of consciousness. Although out of sight for many years, the speaker claims: “These forms of beauty have not been to me, / As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye” (24-25). In the poem, the valley affects the speaker on a somatic as well as a cognitive level as “the picture of the mind revives again” (62). His absence from the scene affords time for recollection of the beauty and sublimity of the scene, which become physically

real to him again upon his visit. Regarding his first trip five years prior, the speaker contemplates:

I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite: a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye (76-84)

Wordsworth's first encounter with the valley resonates with Ruth Leys's idea that "affect is a matter of autonomic responses that are held to occur below the threshold of consciousness and cognition and to be rooted in the body" (Leys 443). Wordsworth reveals the speaker's subconscious experience through identifying how the scene "haunted" him "like a passion" (78). The speaker's initial experience in the valley "had no need of remoter charm, / By thought supplied" (82-83). He once viewed the picturesque with "an appetite: a feeling and a love" (81) without attention to the scene's aesthetic influence on his psyche. Prolepsis provides an instance of reevaluation within the space of the poem that Wordsworth uses to resolve his former interaction with the valley. Five years later, the speaker returns to the scene after contemplating its meaning and claims:

And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused (94-97)

The speaker's "elevated thoughts" and his "sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused" (96-97) reflect his cognitive appraisal of and emotional response to the scene.

In her evaluation of the work of affect theorists, Leys concludes: "affect is the body's

way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience” (Leys 442). Wordsworth depicts the speaker’s reexamination of the affective “intensity” (442) afforded by the valley through awareness that there exists “something” (97) inside of him conditioning a psychological and physiological response to the setting.

Wordsworth’s aesthetics of seclusion and solitude in “Tintern Abbey” provides space for evaluating cognitive and empirical experience, which comes to fruition in the speaker’s affective response to the sublime. The speaker’s “thoughts of deep seclusion” (7) and the image of the “hermit” who “sits alone” (23) support Burkean sublimity characteristic of Wordsworth’s poetry. Burke writes: “absolute and entire solitude, that is, the total and perpetual exclusion from all society, is as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived” (Burke 37). Solitude provides the speaker with space for meditation on the temporal gap between his visits, and it induces a mode of reflection that incorporates the speaker’s cognitive as well as empirical response to seclusion in the valley. Faflak writes:

Contemplation is Wordsworth’s way of responding to the psyche’s self-observational poetry, which ultimately confronts him with the textual trauma of an identity that lacks clearly definable empirical contours. He experiences this trauma in his analysis of solitude, wherein he confronts a psychic otherness that then gets repeated in his transference encounters with other subjects. (Faflak 78)

The speaker’s “trauma of an identity” unfolds in the final verse paragraph directed to his sister Dorothy. Wordsworth’s “textual” and aesthetic “trauma” (78) formalizes in the speaker’s projection of fear onto his sister. He forebodes:

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure, when the mind/
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms

.....
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with that healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me (139-146)

The passage suggests that the speaker's mind, "a mansion for all lovely forms," (141) contains the purest form of his experience in the valley. His invocation for Dorothy to remember him during her times of "solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief" (144) illuminates Wordsworth's personal struggle against those particular mental daemons. Temporal and cognitive distance steal his experiences with nature, and he attempts to resolve their loss through aesthetically reproducing his affective response to them over a period of time. However, he claims that the valley's absence only made its image "more dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake" (160). Within this, he addresses both Dorothy and the reader, who benefit from his struggle to reproduce his feelings into a poem. Andrew Cooper explains: "Arguably, the impetus for Wordsworth's greatest poetry is his fear that by internalizing nature, his supposed source of inspiration, he is generating an opaque self-consciousness that only screens him from her" (Cooper 641). By projecting his fear onto Dorothy, Wordsworth illuminates the fear of his incapacity to feel the effects of nature and reproduce its beauty and sublimity in a poem. Cooper continues: "Moreover, the closing address to Dorothy, intended to resolve the doubt that such imaginative projection might be deluded, in fact only reawakens it" (Cooper 643). Wordsworth suggests that time and space both threaten his aesthetics and also offer the "deep seclusion" (6) necessary for filtering the experience through his mind and body.

In Book I of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth uses prolepsis to illuminate the space between sensation and perception of a sublime event. The explicitly biographical content of *The Prelude* demonstrates the efforts of Romantic era poetry to embody the individual.

Wordsworth “said of *The Prelude* that it was ‘a thing unprecedented in Literary history that a man should talk so much about himself’” (Faflak 78). The speaker in Book I recalls, “one evening (surely I was led by her) / I went alone into a Shepherd’s Boat” (373-374). The child views the “huge Cliff” (409) and its effect resonates after the incident. As a child, Wordsworth consumes his sublime surroundings without perceiving their affect on his psyche. However, subconsciously the memory haunts him and he describes:

...in my thoughts
 There was a darkness, call it solitude,
 Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes

 But huge at mighty Forms that do not live
 Like living men moved slowly through my mind
 By day and were the trouble of my dreams. (420-427)

The speaker feels the effects of the traumatic event after its occurrence and it sparks sensations of “solitude” (420) that inflict pain upon his mind. His memory constitutes the “trouble of [his] dreams” (427) thereby interrupting his ability to cultivate reason outside of the sublime affect of the cliff. Wordsworth personifies the “Cliff,” and its apparent movement and size threatens the speaker. The experience reflects Burke’s theory that: “It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions” (Burke 51). The speaker’s “ignorance” (51) and his affective response to the sublime image of the cliff creates an intricate relationship between the faculty of the imagination and that of reason that Wordsworth seeks to resolve in his later years within the space of the poem.

Wordsworth’s aesthetics in “The Discharged Soldier,” or Book IV of *The Prelude*, reveal a similar pattern of solitude and sublimity. In his introduction to *The*

Prelude, Nicholas Halmi explains: “the central theme of *Prelude 1799* was the formative power of nature on the young Wordsworth’s sensibilities and moral development” (Halmi 162). In the poem, Wordsworth retraces encounters with the sublime in nature and reevaluates his understanding of their influence on his mind and body. His encounter with the soldier in Book IV exacerbates his feelings of extreme solitude, which echo Burkean philosophy on the physical effects of interacting with the sublime. Burke writes: “things that cause terror generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting danger” (Burke 105). The speaker analyzes the “uncouth shape” (403) from a distance and, “slipping back into the shade,” (404) he describes the parts of the man’s body that appear unnatural. The speaker disfigures the soldier and examines each part independently, which creates a Burkean sense of the man as more monster than human. The soldier’s “arms were long, and bare his hands, his mouth / Shewed ghastly” (411-412). The description creates a portrait of an inhuman figure “above Man’s common measure tall” (407). Although physically close, the speaker and the soldier each appear psychologically isolated. The speaker remains hidden until he perceives that the figure cannot pose a threat in his weakened condition from a supposed battle injury. The speaker recalls, “Long time / Did I peruse him with a mingled sense / Of fear and sorrow” (420-422). The speaker’s staggancy focuses the central conflict of the poem on the speaker’s relationship with the soldier.

Wordsworth’s manipulation of the sublime figure embodies Burke’s philosophy on the creative power of the mind to influence the senses. Burke explains that the imagination “is incapable of producing any thing absolutely new; it can only vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses” (Burke 18). The

speaker's affective response depends on the sensations he experiences while analyzing the soldier. The sublime involves "the passions which concern self-preservation," (Burke 33) and the figure of the soldier induces ideas of danger that cause the speaker to perceive the figure first in separate parts before understanding the being as a whole. Wordsworth presents the soldier as a sublime figure that produces intense feelings in the speaker in order to aesthetically render deep feeling in the reader's response. Psychological seclusion and solitude provide space between the speaker and the subject, in this case the sublime figure of the soldier, for the speaker to perceive the image in parts before consuming the whole being through cognition. The psychological space as well as the fact that the speaker recalls the event in the past tense demonstrates Wordsworth's use of temporal as well as psychological distance to aesthetically recreate a sublime event and its resonance with the speaker.

The speaker's affective response to the soldier demonstrates the influence of the external natural and social environment on his mental and physical states. Mary Favret's and Teresa Brennan's research on affect intersects in their beliefs on the permeability of a subject's cognition and senses to his environment. Mary Favret describes "the intractably social and material bases for romantic esthetics," (Favret 1163) which Coleridge anticipates through the relationship between the speaker and the soldier. Illustrating Favret's claim, the speaker recalls:

yet still his form
Kept the same steadiness, and at his feet
His shadow lay and moved not.
.....
I wished to see him move, but he remained
Fixed to his place, and still from time to time
Ant forth a murmuring voice of dead complaint,
Groans scarcely audible. (424-434)

The speaker's movement depends on the unnatural stagnancy of the soldier. The speaker hears the soldier's murmurs as a "voice of dead complaint," (432) and he emerges from his hiding place only when he senses the figure's disability. Teresa Brennan argues: "the emotions or affects of one person, and the enhancing or depressing energies the affects entail, can enter into another" (Brennan 3). The speaker senses the soldier and has an affective response to his presence. The speaker transitions in and out of "the shade / Of a thick hawthorn" (405) based on the movement, or lack thereof, of his subject. The soldier's presence in the solitary wooded area provide an opportunity for Wordsworth to manipulate the setting in order to make the speaker feel sensations of sublimity and evaluate their significance. Feelings of self-preservation cause the speaker to anticipate the soldier's movement and observe him with a heightened sense of awareness. The soldier, removed from society and clad in "military garb, / Though faded, yet entire" (415-416), introduces social dissonance that creates feelings of emotional intensity within the speaker. Favret explains that philosophers such as Edmund Burke are "(pseudo)-physiologists, who track poetry's effects through (an imagined) bodily response" (Favret 1161). Thus, the "material bases" for Wordsworth's poetics combines efforts of philosophy and physiology in uncovering the root of a subject's emotional intensity.

The speaker's psychological response to the sublime setting and figure of the soldier in "The Discharged Soldier" creates an atmosphere of intense feeling. The poet artistically develops the sublime through the interaction between the speaker and the soldier, which inflicts feelings of pain and danger upon the speaker and reader. Theresa Kelley describes his connection between aesthetics and social forces:

Prior to Wordsworth, the representational status of aesthetic determinations was a persistent theme among aesthetic theorists, especially Longinus, Burke, and Kant. Wordsworth's version of this theme is distinguished by its excavations of hidden, sublime figures and its efforts to compose the poetic surfaces, which those figures disrupt. And, unlike Kant's, his aesthetics is continually subject to ideological pressures. (Kelley 5)

The speaker's environment predisposes him to experiencing moments of emotional and physical intensity afforded by sublimity. Wordsworth uses the figure of the soldier as a tool for disrupting the space of the poem and the "poetic surfaces" (Kelley 5) upon which the speaker and his subject interact. The Romantic period supports Wordsworth's self-reflective process in the biographical content of *The Prelude*. Thomas Weiskel's argument agrees with Kelley's in that the Romantic period "provided a language for urgent and apparently novel experiences of anxiety and excitement which were in need of legitimation" (Weiskel 4). Wordsworth extracts "anxiety and excitement" from his speakers' experiences in such a way that demonstrates his departure from the Enlightenment and interest in, as Kelley concludes, the "ideological pressures" of his subject. "The Discharged Soldier" demonstrates the shift toward creating art in order to make an audience feel and subsequently theorize upon those intense feelings. Aesthetically, Wordsworth creates space for examining his speakers' emotional response to the sublime figure of the soldier.

The Prelude demonstrates Wordsworth's deeper, less confident narrative of maintaining aesthetic consciousness in the wake of artistic crisis. Wordsworth, as the immediate voice of the poem, reexamines past experiences as proleptic events worthy of

reevaluation and substantial reform. In Book 11 of *The Prelude*, the adult Wordsworth understands that certain events necessitate reconsideration due to their profound impact on the mind, but also due to their initially unknowable quality. Wordsworth writes:

“There are in our existence spots of time” (259). He describes these “spots” by continuing,

Among those passages of life in which
We have had deepest feeling that the mind
Is lord and master, and that outward sense
Is but the obedient servant of her will. (271-274).

Wordsworth reevaluates the significance of “those passages of life,” (271) and in doing so he aesthetically renders a turn toward examination of the individual. Wordsworth’s “mind / Is lord and master” (272) of his remembered events, and he reconciles his aesthetic recreation of those events with reassurance of an adjusted perception, and a newfound understanding of their impact on his cognition. Faflak and Sha describe the relationship between Romantic art and feeling:

In Romantic feeling experience and the aesthetic become intimately, irrevocably, unassimilably imbricated. Nietzsche reminds us that, as form’s expression of an ineffable content, the aesthetic works by a profound forgetting of its primordial being in sense. To (re)capture this (in)tangible source is to mark the political and ethical dimension of language’s mediation *as*, as well as *of*, life. (Faflak and Sha 6)

Wordsworth articulates his physical and psychological loss of certain “passages of life” (271) through aesthetically reproducing them in the form of a poem. He marks his recovery through manipulation that demonstrates his attempt to resolve his past experiences through a lens of heightened psychological and physiological awareness of his affective response to nature. The boy who views the cliff for the first time as overwhelmingly sublime recapitulates his affective response through an omnipotent speaker. Similarly, the passage of time between Wordsworth’s first and second visits to

the Wye River valley become commemorative of cognitive and empirical growth. In *Isolated Cases*, Nancy Yousef questions, “whether the... narrative of *The Prelude* is about loss and recovery... or about a recovery from self-delusion” (Yousef 135). She writes:

Subtle manipulations of narrative voice and temporal perspective in *The Prelude* also produce ironic self-reflection so that the intensity of a previously cherished conviction may be conveyed at one and the same time as retrospective awareness of error. At the very least, the admission of the possibility of madness and delusion—even in the context of dismissing and rejecting such misgivings—conveys anxiety about the visions recorded with such confidence and endowed with such value. (134)

Yousef examines the effect of isolation in Wordsworth’s poetry, and her research illuminates the poet’s psychoanalytic and metaphysical response to nature. Wordsworth’s affective responses to his past recreate fear that he initially held in the sphere of his unconscious. His unmeditated experiences coalesce to form a singular reflection on his attempts to resolve his crisis of aesthetic failure and the inherent threat that the past poses for the cognitive and empirical realms of his being.

Chapter Four

The Poetic Dialogue of Coleridge and Wordsworth

The poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth demonstrates their shared interest in the sensation and affective response of a subject to the phenomenal world. Their personal pain and fear of lost love, the idea of God, the sublime, and childhood memories haunt them, and their poetry provides a projection of their deepest individual crises. They inspired one another, and their art reflects internal as well as poetic dialogue. Both

experience creative crises over their shared fear of being unable to record sensational and affective experience. Wordsworth's poetry demonstrates his crisis as primarily creative, and, while Coleridge shares his anxiety, the latter illustrates an acute fear over being cognitively blocked from feeling sensations of the divine. Their shared and distinctive crises form the foundation of their poetic dialogue that illuminates their fraternal and artistic relationship. The dialogue becomes most apparent in Wordsworth's poetic response to Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison". Coleridge emphasizes the primacy of the mind as he arouses the speaker's faculty of the imagination in order to feel the sensations of what he perceives as the divine. Wordsworth responds to Coleridge with "Tintern Abbey" by emphasizing a return to the speaker's physical connection to nature.

In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," Coleridge depicts the interaction of the phenomenal and the noumenal in receiving sensations. He invokes the imaginative faculty of his speaker, which supports his Kantian reliance on the reasoning faculty of the mind, but the speaker feels corporeal sensations of joy when he thinks of his friends. He composed "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" in 1797, and in it recounts his physical inability to walk with Charles Lamb, William Wordsworth, and Dorothy Wordsworth because his wife, Sara Fricker, spilled boiling milk on his foot. Though separated from the corporeal experience of the walk, the speaker describes an affective experience afforded by his ability to feel sensations of the walk through invoking his imagination. Coleridge writes:

Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,
No scene so narrow but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to love and beauty! And sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,

That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share. (60-67)

Coleridge praises nature for appealing to “each faculty of sense” in his absence from the experience shared by his friends. For Coleridge, the divine exists as a source of unknowable power that provides sensations to the mind and body. The speaker suggests “that we may lift the soul, and contemplate,” (66) an act that Coleridge invokes in the majority of his work.

In “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,” Coleridge feels the presence of his friends by using the faculty of his imagination to escape the physical pain of his separation. Distance allows Coleridge to “lift the soul, and contemplate / With lively joy the joys we cannot share” (66-67). By invoking his imagination, the physical detachment between Coleridge and his friends dissolves into a singular noumenal connection to their experience. However, Coleridge’s letter to John Thelwall in late 1797 reveals his struggle to unify his mental and physical capacity to perceive the divine. He writes the letter following his composition of “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison” and in it explains: “I can contemplate nothing but parts, & parts are all *little*—!—My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something *great*—something *one & indivisible*—and it is only in the faith of this that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty!” (162). Coleridge continually seeks to feel sensations of the divine that he believes exists in all of the “parts” and can be resolved through thinking through divine experience. Just as the sound of the mocking birds and harps exist as a product of his imagination and anticipation of the divine, his vision of his friends provides a noumenal escape conditioned by realities of distance and anxiety in the phenomenal world. In order to reach unity of mind and body, Coleridge creates space for self-reflection in his poetry.

John Beer describes Coleridge's tendency toward self-reflection: "at the beginning of 1797 he was, as we have seen, being drawn towards sardonic self-isolation" (Beer 162). Coleridge's turn inward marks the shift from the Enlightenment to Romantic feeling in which the interiority of the subject becomes emphasized in art and literature.

Wordsworth responds to Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" with his portrayal of man's physical and mental connection to nature in "Tintern Abbey," published in 1798. Coleridge's writes: "Nature never deserts the wise and pure" (61) in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," and Wordsworth responds in "Tintern Abbey" with:

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty... (123-128)

In that Wordsworth began writing "Tintern Abbey" after Coleridge began "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," the lines echo Coleridge's depiction of nature as a source of joy even in its cognitive, and therefore intangible, state. Paul Magnuson explains: "The presence of these languages assures that vacancy or loss will not diminish their ability to communicate joy. But Wordsworth's assurance rests in his ability to return to the natural; and Coleridge's, in a movement away from it" (Magnuson 154). Magnuson supports the idea that the poets, while demonstrating obvious parallels in subject matter, diverge in their portrayal of man's relationship to nature. Wordsworth's speaker experiences a temporal delay in his perception of the Wye valley. Wordsworth "tries to integrate the present with his first visit to the Wye valley in 1793 and with some indefinite time before 1793," (Magnuson 166) which provides obvious physical distance from his original

experience. However, the speaker returns to the Wye valley as a means of restoring his physical connection with nature.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romanticism

Coleridge and Wordsworth record moments of sensation and affect in the self-reflective language of the Romantic period. The poets respond to a changing tide of aesthetics by emphasizing the autonomous subject in contact with the phenomenal world. Their work illuminates the philosophical discourse at play in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, and the affective response of their speakers embodies the major theme of Romantic literature. The shift toward romantic feeling becomes apparent in Coleridge's remark that philosophers constitute a special sect who "know and feel, that the *potential* works in them, even as the *actual* works on them" (Coleridge 465). The poets attempt to resolve the disparity between the internal, noumenal world and external, phenomenal world through employing speakers who experience a cognitive and emotional response to their environment. Their approach is both Kantian and Burkean in that they identify their speakers' noumenal as well as empirical reaction to settings and figures that produce feelings characteristic of the sublime. Ruth Leys explains that many affect theorists believe philosophers such as Kant neglected "the important role of our corporeal-affective dispositions in our thinking and decision making" (Leys 436). Rousseau's philosophy on "the primacy of the individual" (Blanning 11) justifies Leys's concern. A passage from Rousseau's *Confessions*, "begins with a programmatic

declaration of the primacy of the individual. The opening words are:... ‘My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself. Simply myself’” (Blanning 11). Where eighteenth-century philosophers divide the self from its emotional response to the world, Coleridge and Wordsworth aesthetically unite the two entities in order to create a more informed picture of a self-reflective subject. Their poetry represents the intersection of the self with the phenomenal world with attention to the speaker’s “experience of intensity,” (443) followed by self-reflection. The space between the speaker’s experience and his perception of it resonates with the unification of enlightenment philosophy and romantic literature.

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