Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory

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Authoring the Self
Self-Representation, Authorship, and the Print Market in British Poetry from Pope through Wordsworth
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My chapter on Thomas Gray is a slightly revised version of an essay of the same title, which appeared in *The Age of Johnson* 13 (2002): 207–37. A section of my sixth chapter is forthcoming as part of an essay entitled "Wordsworth's 'System,' the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority," due to appear around the time of this book's publication in *European Romantic Review*. My thanks to the editors of both journals, who have given me permission to reprint that material here.

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Introduction

1

At the beginning of the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,* Alexander Pope both invites his readers inside and slams the door on them. In one sense, Pope seals himself off from what he represents as a circulation of writings and authors that has proliferated out of control: parsons, poetesses, peers, and clerks all writing madly and circulating in person as authors along with their "papers," as they "rave, recite, and madden round the land" (5–6). Yet in another sense, despite its enabling address to Arbuthnot, the *Epistle* is really addressed to the print market reader, who holds the 1735 folio poem or the 1735 *Works* in folio, quarto, or octavo in his or her hands (if not one of the several pirated editions of the poem which also appeared during the year). Pope meanwhile had already received £50 for the poem, in his customary arrangement at the time with his bookseller Lawrence Gilliver for one year's rights of copy, after which the copyright would revert back to Pope as part of his carefully tended authorial property.[1]

The *Epistle* claims to define Pope's independent position at Twickenham against the threat of a print culture rapidly proliferating out of control. In addition to the closing door at the beginning of the poem, Pope also slams the door on the prospect of going "snacks" (or sharing profits) for sponsoring a poem to the booksellers, and he dissociates himself from the "hundred hawkers' load" and the "plaister'd posts, with claps in capitals" where his name stands "rubric on the walls" in advertisements (215–17). Yet even as he claims to shut the door on print culture, it is already inside, not only in his active marketing practices but in the relationship he sets up with his reader and the very terms of the identity he constructs. The independence that Pope claimed as a poet was not supported by any established social position or role, and in fact depended on the fortune he had amassed through his writings—both his savvy manipulation of patronage networks in his Homer translations and his equally shrewd exploitation of the new copyright law and the emerging marketplace. Even as

it claims to oppose print culture, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* participates in most of the commercial practices that it satirizes. Pope's claim in the poem to represent a traditional elite role mystifies his dependence on these print culture conditions, but traces of them remain throughout his self portrait. Even as he claims to fulfill traditional social and poetic roles that have become threatened by print culture, Pope uses that print culture to construct an unprecedented independence for himself as a poet and focus in unprecedented ways on his own personal identity.

Just over sixty years later, William Wordsworth constructed the figure of the Pedlar in his *Ruined Cottage* manuscript as an experiment in a different version of poetic identity. Unlike Pope in *Arbuthnot*, the Pedlar is not defined in opposition to print culture, but seems entirely removed from it. The poem's narrator encounters the Pedlar at the site of Margaret's ruined cottage, seemingly removed from all immediate social relations and contexts into a separate aesthetic sphere. Yet the Pedlar also fulfills his poetic role in ways that suggest the situation of the print market poet addressing a largely unknown public. As he narrates the tale of Margaret's tragic decline, the Pedlar educates the individual narrator, and through him the actual reader, in how to read the text of the ruins properly, thus developing that reader's moral and imaginative faculties. In the process, *The Ruined Cottage* deliberately sets up a hermeneutic encounter between Pedlar and narrator which resembles an imagined encounter between the author and the individual print market reader.

As he revised the poem, Wordsworth focused more and more on the identity of the Pedlar as a displaced and idealized version of his own poetic identity. Although the Pedlar is in one sense defined by his trade, the poem makes almost no mention of his wares or commercial function, alluding to his pack only twice in passing.[2] Instead, he is defined as independent, hearing nothing but the "music of his own sad steps" (296) in his solitary and meditative wanderings. As he walks "among the impure haunts of vulgar men/ Unstained," finding everywhere "a spirit of strange meaning" and "a secret and mysterious soul" (247–49, 335–36), the Pedlar's self-sufficiency seems almost complete: "He had a world about him—'twas his own,/ He made it—for it only lived to him" (339–40). The isolation that Pope presents as a last refuge from the violations of print culture in *Arbuthnot* thus becomes, in the *Ruined Cottage*, the defining vocational situation of the poet. Yet even as the Pedlar seems completely autonomous from a public, he fulfills his vocational function by ministering to the narrator as a stand-in for the unknown individual reader.

When *The Ruined Cottage* finally appeared as the first book of the *Excursion* in 1814, after much revision, it appeared in an edition of five hundred at the steep price of two guineas for the quarto and twenty-eight shillings

for the octavo: a high price and limited run which covered Wordsworth's publisher against potential losses after the savage reviews and poor sales of his 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*.[3] By that time, Wordsworth had already used the model of the Pedlar to construct a version of his own identity as a poet directly in the unpublished *Prelude* manuscript, even converting some passages from the Pedlar's biography to his own autobiography by simply transposing them from the third to the first person.[4] The Pedlar's seeming autonomy in the face of isolation and obscurity increasingly resonated with Wordsworth's authorial situation, as he used the Pedlar's vocational role in order to construct his own, imagining himself in relationship with readers of all social classes. Ironically, the high-priced *Excursion* offered this model through the rustic Pedlar to a small, elite readership—those who could afford to purchase such an expensive and potentially unpopular volume.

At first glance, it is hard to see similarities between these two very different poems and the models of poetic identity they construct. While the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* represents the poet as embattled by print culture, the Pedlar claims poetic autonomy and almost entirely elides social and commercial contexts. Pope fixes his identity at Twickenham against what he represents as the ungoverned circulation of writing and authors around him, defining himself in an aristocratic role through his estate (which he in fact rented). Wordsworth, in contrast, makes the Pedlar a wanderer, taking the same trope of the circulating author that Pope represents as a breakdown of social and aesthetic order and making it central to the Pedlar's claims of dignity and autonomy. Yet in both poems, the identity of the poet takes center stage in ways which bear the traces of print culture, including Wordsworth and Pope's need to authorize themselves in relation to a largely undefined print market public. I want to suggest in this sense that both Pope in the *Epistle* and the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage* are constructed specifically as authorial selves, in ways that respond to and depend on the print culture contexts of authorship.

In their provocative essay, "Lessons from the 'Literatory': How to Historicize Authorship," David Saunders and Ian Hunter claim that authorship cannot be equated with a single underlying consciousness or the history of a developing subject or self. Instead, they argue, we must recognize that authorship emerged contingently out of many different discourses and practices, "distributed unequally across individuals and institutions in a variety of ways according to a variety of cultural, legal, technological, economic, and ethical imperatives."[5] The legal definition of authorship, which developed through copyright debates mainly to support the interests of booksellers, should not be straightforwardly equated with the expressivist definition of authorship, or its moral or political definitions. These various strands do of

course interact and influence each other, but there is no single underlying "author" or "subject" to which they all refer.

The same is true, I will argue, of the self in general—except that the number of strands is infinitely more variable, weaving through almost every discourse and institution in different but related ways. This book claims that the lyric self which emerged out of eighteenth-century poetry, and which has since become a paradigm of deep personal identity generally, was a specifically authorial self, generated out of the conditions, tensions, and contingencies of print culture. From this perspective, what eventually emerged as the "Romantic self" of nineteenth-century lyric poetry, with its claims to autonomy, self-possession, and deep personal authenticity, emerged out of the century-long development of print culture. The traces of this influence are at times difficult to follow and often seem deliberately elided—as they had to be, if poets were to claim autonomy and construct their identities in this manner—but careful attention both to the context and form of poetic self-representation during the period of this study reveals the unmistakable shaping influence of print culture. Claims to autonomy react to the poet's increasing sense of isolation from a growing and fragmenting public and a corresponding sense of fragmentation in standards of taste. Claims of genius as self-possession build from the discourse of copyright, developed throughout the eighteenth century and increasingly centering attention on the figure of the supposedly disinterested author. Claims of independence from—or transcendence of—commercial considerations elided poets' dependence on the increasingly dominant literary economy of the marketplace. Wordsworthian self-representation would not have been possible without a century-long development of poetic identity as a worthy poetic subject in its own right, in the bard and minstrel tradition, together with the development of new hermeneutic relationships between the poet and imagined individual readers. The deep personal self of the Romantic poets, which claimed to be natural and universal, reveals itself in these and other ways as emerging out of the defining contexts of print culture, within which poets were increasingly forced to negotiate their own poetic roles and identities.

The distance from Pope to Wordsworth, in this sense, is not as great as period definitions and boundaries have made it seem. Both authors turn to self-representation in response to the rapid proliferation of print culture and its increasingly large and heterogeneous public. This rapid proliferation began after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, which removed pre-publication censorship and led to a boom in journalism and other forms of print supported by the expanding public. This expansion arguably reached a first peak in the 1720s, the decade in which the *Dunciad Variorum*

appeared and in which writers and readers began to feel themselves swamped by a sudden, unprecedented, and seemingly endless proliferation of print. Before 1695, printing was legally limited to a set number of printers and presses in London and the two university towns, and all publications had to be registered and licensed before printing. By 1730, London supported a healthy assortment of daily and weekly newspapers and a national network of print was firmly established throughout Great Britain, including a printer and newspaper in virtually every major town in England. The development of the print market did not proceed evenly or in a steady curve, but by the end of the 1720s it had supplanted patronage and coteries manuscript circulation as the clearly dominant context for poetry. The 1740s saw a further boom in publication of the novel, together with the rapid mushrooming of commercial lending libraries and an expansion in magazines and other forms of periodicals, leading to the foundation of the first critical review in 1749. From the late 1740s, the book trade would begin another steady bout of expansion, accelerating steeply in the late 1780s and 1790s around the time of the French Revolution and then experiencing another sharp acceleration in the late 1820s and 1830s.[6]

During the same period, copyright law developed and was increasingly defined around the identity and rights of the author. While the first copyright law in 1710 had been primarily the initiative of Stationers' Company booksellers, who used the author as a pawn in order to claim their own legal monopoly over publishing, legal debates beginning from the 1730s would focus increasingly on the author's unique individual style and genius as the basis of literary property. When the landmark 1774 *Donaldson v. Becket* case struck down the precedent of perpetual copyright under common law and defined the Statute of Anne's twenty-eight year limit as the maximum extent of such monopoly, it opened the way for authors to claim increased control over their authorial property and greater earning potential in the marketplace. The book trade was revitalized by the development of a public domain of material whose copyright had expired and which was now available for cheap reprints, and publishers were forced to court living authors more actively in order to secure new copyrights. The book boom in the late 1780s was fueled by this development, then further fanned by the events of the French Revolution, in which sensational journalism and controversial polemics dramatically expanded and polarized print audiences. Various forms of print periodicals, meanwhile, continued to expand and support more and more writers, paying ever more handsome rewards to authors. Poets never had an easy time earning their living through sale of their works, and even in the Romantic period of supposed independence most were

forced to rely on various forms of patronage or on their own independent resources. As best-selling authors such as Scott and Byron began to sell poems in the tens of thousands, however, a boom developed for poetry in the 1810s and early 1820s, both calling attention to the figure of the independent poet and generating an increased sense of distance between the poet and his or her public. Through all these developments, the figure of the independent poet became increasingly firmly established, and experiments in various forms of poetic identity eventually developed into explicit self-representation.

My next chapter will fill out this summary of print market developments at far greater length. Even this abbreviated narrative, though, makes clear both the continuity and differences in the print market culture which faced Pope in the 1730s and Wordsworth in the 1790s. Whereas many kinds of poetry during the Restoration and before were defined primarily through coteries manuscript circulation within a more or less defined social context, by the 1720s and 1730s the marketplace had become the defining context for poetry, and it had become all but impossible to write without reference to that market. Even poets who deliberately shunned commercialism and continued to circulate poetry within coteries, such as Thomas Gray, were forced to define their poetic identity also in relation to the commercial public—as Gray found much to his chagrin, when he was forced to print his own authorized version of *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* to preempt impending piracy by a commercial magazine. Poets from the mid eighteenth century onwards faced both an increasing sense of isolation in relation to a largely unknown public and a corresponding sense that the inherited genres, roles, and models of poetic identity no longer fit the radically different contexts of the marketplace. This book is largely an account of such poets' attempt to redefine their roles and construct a compensatory new version of independent poetic identity. Eighteenth-century poets inherited strong proscriptions against direct self-representation in their poetry. Over the course of the century, however, facing these new pressures of print culture, poets began to experiment with various direct and indirect forms of poetic identity. Eventually, poets such as Wordsworth built on these explorations by making their own authorial identity a central subject of their poetry.

Though the scale of print culture was different in the 1790s than the 1720s, and different again in the 1820s, there is an underlying continuity in the situation of poets during this period. As print and its audience continued to proliferate, poets faced a continual sense of an expanding public and increasing isolation from their readers, together with a continuing need to reconstruct their own identities in relation to new social and material contexts. In the process, poetry, which had long been defined primarily by genre

and social occasion, became increasingly defined around the person of the author, until it eventually became a kind of truism to understand lyric poetry as the private expression of the individual poet. What subsequently became generalized as the "Romantic self," I will argue, did not emerge as a break from eighteenth-century writing, but as a continuation of eighteenth-century poets' attempts to come to terms with the radically new socio-economic contexts for writing.

There are other intriguing parallels, in this respect, between Pope and Wordsworth, which have been disguised by the tendency to define a new "Romantic" tradition in opposition to Pope, beginning with the Warton brothers in the 1740s and 1750s. Robert Griffin's study of *Wordsworth's Pope* traces the early stages of these period constructions and argues that Wordsworth and Pope were in many ways similar.[7] Griffin points out that both Pope and Wordsworth defined themselves in opposition to the commercial market even as they depended on that marketplace for their sense of independence and their financial position (12–14). Similarly, both made strong claims of authorial independence which disguised their dependency on various forms of patronage. In fact, we know that Wordsworth and Pope were both remarkable for their active pursuit of emerging forms of literary property. Pope became the first author to defend his literary property consistently in court under the new copyright law, and he carefully negotiated with printers and booksellers to maximize his earnings in the literary marketplace and retain his own copyrights as much as possible for future reprinting of his works. Wordsworth showed a similarly unusual concern with keeping copyright of his own work, and although he lacked Pope's leverage in the commercial marketplace until very late in his career, he also attempted to negotiate with publishers in profit-sharing arrangements which maximized his share of potential earnings. Just as Pope was in the vanguard in using new copyright laws to the author's advantage, Wordsworth helped spearhead a campaign for the extension of copyright terms: writing large numbers of letters to M.P.s, publishing public editorials, and generally helping to coordinate the campaign that finally resulted in the extension of copyright terms in 1842, now explicitly defined for the benefit of authors. Wordsworth and Pope also both actively attempted to shape their personal oeuvres, which they made central to their own poetic and personal identity. Pope played a significant role in producing his *Works* in 1717 at the startlingly young age of twenty-nine, then brought out a new *Works* in 1735 and collaborated with his own literary executor, William Warburton, to produce a definitive posthumous edition. Wordsworth came out with successive versions of his own *Poems* beginning in 1815, organizing the poems through his own idiosyncratic categories into a

coherent whole as a kind of evolving monument for his own poetic identity.[8] As they attempted to shape their own identities in these ways in the literary marketplace, Wordsworth and Pope also tried to control their literary portraits and other commercial images, becoming among the most widely represented men of their generations.[9] Even as they separated themselves from commercialism in their poetry, Wordsworth and Pope thus established their own identities through active and innovative self-promotion in the marketplace, while at the same time becoming innovators in the development of poetic self-representation.

The differences between the two poets are of course as great, or greater than, their similarities: such differences spring to mind easily as the product of more than two hundred years of literary history, which has defined them against one another as central representatives of their respective literary periods. Their models of self reflect such differences. Pope's identity depended on his ability to claim a place in a social order within a defined hierarchy of roles and identity types—an order he increasingly tried to construct himself in his later poetry. Representing his independence as a kind of naturalized Horatian disinterestedness, Pope never directly embraced the marketplace or its public in his self-representation. Wordsworth in contrast tended to define himself as apart from existing structures of social authority, as if the poet could produce his own identity completely autonomously, and his poetry distanced him from commercialism while defining his vocational role in relation to a print market public. Wordsworth also constructed an individualized relationship with readers in a way Pope did not, and he represented himself as if from inside consciousness, while Pope tended to represent his identity as if from outside. The list of differences could be expanded indefinitely, including differences of temperament and social and political position. For both poets, however, self-representation emerged as a central poetic focus in ways that reflected, and were structured by, their implication in the commercial marketplace. Wordsworth and Pope both constructed their poetic identities in their writing in order to authorize themselves as poets and claim a position of dignified independence, distancing themselves in the process both from patronage and the commercialism of the marketplace. In both cases, this self-representation registers and reacts to a sense of authorial isolation from social contexts, in the face of an increasingly large and heterogeneous print market public. Responding to print culture in these ways, Wordsworth and Pope became central figures in the development of poetic self-representation. The selves they produced in their poetry were, in this sense, authorial selves, inseparable from the social and economic contexts of their authorship.

2

By ending my study with Wordsworth and claiming that he introduced a new model of the authorial self, I may seem to offer a new version of a familiar narrative which presents Wordsworth as the first and defining Romantic. Some readers in this respect might criticize me for being teleological—that by taking Wordsworth as the end of my study I am placing the middle and later eighteenth century in the familiar and now largely discredited category of "preromantic," as if Wordsworth's poetry represented a full emergence of poetic tendencies in which the previous half century of poets find their culmination. My own understanding of poetic self-representation, however, is far more contingent and makes no claim for Wordsworth as a teleological endpoint. Instead, I understand Wordsworth's poetics as one form of adaptation to the print market conditions that other mid to late eighteenth-century poets also faced. As the expanding commercial market and its public altered the conditions of authorship in ways that no longer coincided with inherited poetic practices, poets required new poetic theories and new forms which would enable them to continue to write within these altered conditions. The sense of experimentation and uncertainty in much mid to late eighteenth-century poetry can be seen as emerging out of an incompatibility between inherited poetic practices and an altered social and economic environment for writing, generating poets' attempts to adapt old forms to emergent print culture conditions.

Wordsworth's poetics of authorial self-representation responded to these environmental pressures by establishing the direction that one major line of poetic evolution would subsequently follow. To make this claim is not to argue that such a poetics was inevitable or that Wordsworth expresses the fullness of tendencies towards which earlier poets were blindly groping. Given the same conditions, poetry might have evolved differently, following the path of Cowper, for instance, or of Crabbe, and different poets did in fact work out different adaptive solutions. Other poetic lineages survived and continued to develop, not least of them the lineage of female poets developing from writers such as Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. Wordsworth's reputation also did not begin its dramatic rise until the 1820s and 1830s, when he emerged as a poetic sage and British cultural institution.[10] From the perspective of poetic self-representation, however, Wordsworth's innovations played a key role in subsequent developments. Such self-representation could only become generally accepted when overall social and political conditions, as well as the specific institutional conditions of the print market, allowed for such acceptance. It was not until the late 1820s and 1830s, when industrialization had transformed British society and the political reform movement

had gathered momentum, that Wordsworth's subjective and author-based poetics began to seem less politically threatening and more desirable, or even necessary, to a society increasingly defined as a collection of separate, self-producing individuals. Wordsworth's influence on the development of self-representation in poets even before this time, such as Shelley, Byron, Hemans, and Keats, should not be underestimated. To the extent that the subjective lyric is seen as the paradigmatic modern poetic form, Wordsworth's poetics of the self can be seen as central to the emergence of modern poetry: a fact reflected in Wordsworth's continued centrality in the British canon despite all its recent revisions.[11]

In constructing this new poetics of the self, however, Wordsworth drew on the accumulated material of a century of poetic experiments and innovations before him. Though his final synthesis was new, virtually all its materials came from somewhere else: the discourses of genius and imagination; the role of the bard as a figure of autonomous poetic identity; the isolation of the poet from audience, often in relatively unpeopled natural settings; the discourse of sympathy and its self-conscious appeal to the individual reader; and so on. In terms of the writers in this particular study, Wordsworth drew from Pope's commanding position of authorial independence and opposition to the commercial marketplace; Gray's bard figure and the poetic subjectivity of the *Elegy*; Beattie's account of the poet's development in *The Minstrel*; and Cowper's conversational blank verse and flexible first-person voice. Of course, all these poets also drew on one another (and on other poets) in various ways. One purpose this study hopes to serve, in bringing together these particular writers, is to show how they and other poets during the period borrowed strategies of self-representation from one another, recombining them in different forms and various inflections to fit their own particular needs and situations.

I focus on these particular poets in part because they are prominent examples of self-representation during the period and major precedents for later poets, but also in part because they do borrow from and react to one another so significantly. Though Beattie and Cowper have subsequently declined to lesser places in the poetic canon, all five poets studied in this book were major poetic influences during the period, wildly popular and widely disseminated not only through their own authorized works, but in piracies, magazines, other periodical reprints, review excerpts, miscellanies, and anthologies. Almost everyone interested in poetry during the period read Pope's *Dunciad*, and Gray's *Elegy* and Cowper's *Task* were among the most popular, influential, and frequently reprinted poems of the era. James Beattie's reputation, as the author of *The Minstrel*, reached similar heights during the final decades of the eighteenth century, and his model of poetic development

in that poem was a central influence on Wordsworth and other Romantic poets.[12] Ironically Wordsworth, who has been far more copiously written about than any of these other poets, was the least significant of all of them until the rise in his reputation during the late 1820s and 1830s, and his most important poem of self-representation, the *Prelude*, was not published until after his death in 1850, at which time it had relatively little impact on other poets. Nevertheless, of the poetry I discuss, *Lyrical Ballads* was influential and widely read, and *The Ruined Cottage*, though never published independently, appeared in revised form as the first book of the 1814 *Excursion*, considered Wordsworth's most significant and influential poem during his lifetime. Just as they influenced other poets, these poets were major influences on one another. They borrowed from one another as much as they did because they faced a common dilemma: how to define their identities in relation to an unprecedented commercial audience, in the face of a long-standing stigma against direct poetic self-representation.

I am not, of course, the first one to study how poets reacted to this dilemma. Though I would take issue with his definition of "preromanticism," I concur with Marshall Brown's sense of late eighteenth-century poetry as exhibiting a pervasive sense of restlessness and uncertainty.[13] I have profited immensely from Charles Rzepka's study of Romantic poets' construction of the self as consciousness, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats*. Although he does not focus on the material conditions of authorship or authorial identity per se, Rzepka shows how poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats constructed their identities in relation to a largely unknown public by imagining sympathetic individual readers, whose "greeting of the spirit" compensated for anxieties of reception.[14] My study also depends on the work of Jon Klancher, whose *Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* continues to serve as a landmark of cultural materialist scholarship.[15] Klancher's book explores the construction of audiences in periodical culture throughout the Romantic period, arguing that poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge constructed their poetic roles and identities in relation to such audiences. Klancher's discussion of these poets focuses more on the competing models of "reception" and "consumption" than on authorship as such, but he offers a pioneering example of how to combine the study of social and material conditions with sensitive reading of poetic and discursive forms.

Print culture and the social and material conditions of authorship have been increasing subjects of attention in recent years, generating a number of studies that overlap in various ways with my own: including Linda Zionkowski's *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784*, George Justice's *The Manufacturers of Literature: Writing and the*

Literary Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century England; Lucy Newlyn's *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: the Anxiety of Reception*; and Clifford Siskin's *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830.*[16] At the same time, there seems to be a growing interest in crossing established period boundaries, either in claiming a "Romantic century" or a "long eighteenth century," depending on whose perspective one takes (which tends to create considerable differences in emphasis).[17]

The current study certainly participates in these trends, both in situating literature within the socio-economic contexts of authorship and in crossing period boundaries. Needless to say, I draw on all these studies (and many others) in coming to my own understandings of the relation between authorship and print culture. In the process, I hope to demonstrate essential continuities in poets' relationships to print culture during the period, defined as a whole by the struggle to develop new models of authorship, poetic form, and poetics appropriate to the new commercial public. At the same time, I hope to avoid some of the potential pitfalls of cultural materialist studies: the tendency sometimes to lose a sense of forest among the separate material trees, or to focus more exclusively on either material conditions or discursive constructions without being able to account for the complex interdependence of both. This study does have a thesis, but I hope it will prove to be a thesis firmly grounded in particulars, which does not make any one poet or period defining for all the others. Every author represents him or herself differently, but as they borrow from and adapt from one another's strategies of self-representation, they also produce shared discourses and forms of identity, complexly situated within the overlapping material and cultural fields of print culture.

3

Defining a study in terms of self-representation begs the question of what self-representation is, which in turn suggests the much larger question of what constitutes the self. In some senses, self-representation can be defined pragmatically, as any reference to the poet's own specific identity or person. Yet as students are taught repeatedly from the beginning of high school onwards, the "I" in the poem does not necessarily refer to the specific person of the author. How then can we distinguish poetic self-representation from other forms of first-person discourse, such as the poetic persona or the conventional first-person speaker of some genres, such as sonnet sequences? What does it mean to claim that poetic self-representation in English only becomes significant in the eighteenth century, when poets had referred to themselves in English poetry in various ways for centuries? And what constitutes a distinctively authorial self?

In his book on *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591–1791*, Michael Mascuch distinguishes what he calls "self-identity," or general self-awareness, from what he defines more narrowly as "individualism," a particular modern form of self-identity which emerges out of specific historic and cultural conditions. For the purposes of his own study, Mascuch defines the individualist self as "a producer and consumer of stories about himself and other selves which place the self at the center of the systems of relation, discursive and otherwise—he is literally a writer and reader of modern autobiography."[18] Drawing on Charles Taylor and Alasdair McIntyre's theorization of the self, Mascuch argues that in order to be constructed as a defining site of identity and moral agency, the self must constitute itself as central to its own narrative.[19] All identity and moral action depends on narrative, according to this view; but the individualist self can be distinguished from other forms of identity in that it functions specifically as the "originator," "creator," or "author" of its own narrative: in Maschuch's words, "By acting as author, the individualist self becomes its own telos: it constitutes a beginning and an end in itself" (22). It is in this sense, Mascuch argues, that the modern autobiographer is a "prototype of the individualist self," as the writing subject becomes "both author and hero" of its own narrative (23).

This position of becoming one's own telos represents a radical claim of autonomy—a claim which Wordsworth makes in the *Prelude*, for instance, as he constructs authorship as both the defining category and telos of his identity. Such a position was rare during the eighteenth century, however, because strong assertion of the self was still associated with egotism, willful pride, and social and religious indecorum. In part for these reasons, Wordsworth did not publish the *Prelude* until after his death; and even so, he was blasted by contemporaries with the charge of "poetic egotism" for the far less self-focused poetry he did publish.[20] For the same reason, autobiography did not emerge as a credible genre in its own right until the nineteenth century. After surveying a wide range of early precedents for the genre, Mascuch offers James Lackington's 1791 *Memoirs* as the first fully modern autobiography in English: the first coherent and unified narrative of personal development in which the subject defines his own life course through the exercise of personal agency. Other scholars have explored the first emergence of the word "autobiography" as late as the 1790s, together with a rapid proliferation of the genre around that time.[21] In poetry, though, writing about the personal self and one's own particular circumstances could be considered a breach of decorum even as late as the Romantic period.

Although autobiography offers an explicit version of self-representation, in which the self literally claims to be its own author, self-representation can

also take place in more fragmentary or limited forms. Self-representation in this wider sense can be understood not just as a function of first-person discourse, but as any rhetorical gesture to the person, identity, and life of the writer. It can be distinguished from personas and conventional generic uses of the first person by its reference to the author's unique personal identity, as it exists outside the generic and discursive contexts of the poem.

Self-representation as such, of course, does not begin in the eighteenth century, and any number of poets before Pope had referred in variously direct or indirect ways to their own personal identities outside their poetry. Self-representation in this more general sense can take a wide variety of forms, in relation to various social and discursive systems of identity. The distinguishing characteristic of self-representation as it emerged during the period of this study, however, is its claim to self-possession, personal depth, and autonomy, all features which I will argue were connected to the construction of a specifically authorial self.

One might also argue that the authorial self predated the eighteenth century. Ben Jonson in particular made his authorial identity central to much of his writing when he famously supervised the folio publication of his own *Works* in 1616, a landmark of early modern possessive authorship.[22] There are four significant differences between the authorial self as it emerged in eighteenth-century poetry and this earlier self-representation, however. First, eighteenth-century self-representation offers much more specific, extensive, mundane detail about the personal life and identity of its author than earlier self-representation, which tends to remain more abstract or generic. Although Ben Jonson refers to his "mountain belly" in "My Picture Left in Scotland" and writes poems on the death of his daughter and son, these self-representations remain for the most part generalized, and Jonson does not make his own personal experience as such central to his work. Instead, as Sara van den Berg claims, he tends to represent his general intellect, principles, values, and feelings, positioning his identity in relation to the various addressees of his poems but not making his identity itself a primary focus. Though Jonson uses such positioning to construct his own identity, his unique individual identity is less important as a poetic subject than the more general positions he represents, which allow Jonson to authorize himself.[23] Most early modern poems that use the first person present a genre- or role-based sense of self, which may direct attention to the poet's extra-literary identity but does not emphasize that identity in the poem as individual or unique. In contrast, Leopold Damrosch argues that "Pope makes his personality and experience central to his poems" more often than any poet before him—especially later in his career in his satires and *Imitations of Horace*, in which his construction of his own identity

as author becomes inseparable from his larger social and poetic projects.[24] Pope still constructs his identity in terms of general positions and types, but the specific details of his individual life and experience have become crucial: how he tends the garden, what he eats, his personal illnesses, and so on.

Second, early modern constructions of self almost always position the self in explicit relation to an outside social order or hierarchy, rather than claiming a self-authorizing personal autonomy.[25] Ben Jonson provides an extreme test case in this instance also, as he asserted his own authority directly over his work and went so far as to instruct his patrons in proper models of aristocratic behaviour. Despite Jonson's strong claims of authority, however, his self-possession depended on the existing social hierarchy, as he grafted his own status as author onto that of the court, the king, and his various patrons. Although Jonson played his multiple patrons off against one another to gain a vestige of independence, as Eckhard Auberlen argues in *The Commonwealth of Wit*, his sense of authority would have been inconceivable without that patronage. His version of identity was also not a generalizable or independent model. His claims of authority depended on his unique status as masque-writer for the court and did not extend to other writers as such.[26]

Authors before the eighteenth century could not define their identities as authors, of course, because authorship had not yet emerged as a coherent category of identity in its own right, and authorial independence was not supported by existing institutions and discourses. Without legal property in their work, authors before the eighteenth century had very meager earning potential through sales of their writing and little control over their published works, which were often misattributed, unattributed, or altered in press.[27] Even if they could have supported themselves financially through their writing, however, authors could not have justified claims of independent identity. As Robert Evans argues in *Ben Jonson and the Poetics of Patronage*, even financial independence did not exempt authors from relations of patronage, because all of British society and the categories of identity and value it supported depended on the patronage model of social hierarchy.[28] As Arthur Marotti argues, front matter in Renaissance books played a crucial role in negotiating these social positions for all parties involved: including authors, publishers, printers, dedicatees, and readers. Before the modern idea of an autonomous aesthetic sphere, Marotti claims, "everyone acknowledged that literary communication was socially positioned and socially mediated: styles and genres were arranged in hierarchies homologous with those of rank, class, and prestige."[29] The self of the writer could only find authorization by situating itself among these sometimes contested social positions, not through direct self-authorization. Significantly in this respect, Marotti reports that an author's

social and political pre-eminence was more compelling for Renaissance poetry readers than that author's specific reputation as a poet.[30]

Third, early modern writers defined identity in terms of traditional types or models, rather than as personal, self-producing, and unique. Authorship as such was not among these established roles. As Richard Helgerson argues in his study of early modern poetic careers, "self-crowned laureates" such as Milton, Spenser, and Jonson wrote out of a sense of high poetic seriousness, in an attempt to distinguish themselves as authors in opposition to the norm of the gentlemanly amateur, for whom writing was only a source of social intercourse and rivalry, or a "gentleman's toy."[31] In contrast to this amateurism, the "laureates" directly asserted their own poetic greatness, deliberately seeking print as part of their authorial careers at a time when most gentlemanly writers avoided it. Yet even these unusually self-assertive writers depended, as Helgerson argues, on the precedents of Virgil, Horace, and Petrarch before them and the general Italian model of the court laureate, without which their position would not have been possible. Helgerson writes that the self-proclaimed laureate "went to the center, the 'still and fixed' center of himself, which ideally was also the center of his culture—the juncture or religious, moral, political, and artistic authority" (46).[32] With the partial exception of Milton, who defined his identity through political and religious dissent, it would not have been possible for such writers to go to the center of themselves without also claiming to go to the center of their culture, since their identities and authority depended on the traditional roles and precedents that such a center provided.[33] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets, in contrast, increasingly defined their identities through their own writing, apart from or even in opposition to the established norms and social positions of their cultures. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that independent "authorship" emerged and developed as a norm in its own right. Significantly, Alexander Pope depended on the model of Horace to construct his identity, even as he constructed that identity in unprecedentedly personal ways and set it in a new stance of social and political opposition. Gray, Cowper, and Wordsworth, by contrast, would all claim their poetic identity to varying degrees as individual and unique, even as they continued to draw from traditional models. In the process, I will argue, they created the new, unacknowledged identity type of the authorial self, which then provided a model for later poets.

This shift from a type-based to a self-constructed identity led to a shift also away from genre and occasion as the most important defining conditions for poetry. In *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth*, John Dolan traces a narrative roughly parallel to my own, in which poetry depended on specific

public occasions during the early modern period, such as a person's death, a national event, or an event in a patron or fellow writer's life, but gradually shifted to take the subjective events of the poet's consciousness as their own occasion.[34] Over the course of the eighteenth century, poets increasingly deviated from genre-based standards of subjectivity and identity, such as the model of subjectivity produced in the sonnet sequence, and instead claimed to offer unique expressions of an individual authorial self.

Fourth and finally, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authorship depended on taking possession of one's own work in ways that were inseparable from the development of copyright and the commercial marketplace. Although David Saunders and Ian Hunter have argued for the uncoupling of aesthetic, expressivist, and legal definitions of authorship, in practice such aspects did develop over the same period in mutually defining way.[35] The author's ability to possess his own identity fully depended, in this sense, on his ability to possess legal property over his own writing, together with the ability to dictate the conditions of that writing's appearance in print. Such control was not possible for an author who wrote mostly for manuscript publication or who had no legal rights with publishers. Ben Jonson again offers an extreme test case, as he intervened strenuously in controlling the print format of his *Works* and fashioning his authorial oeuvre. Although Jonson took possession of his own work through close engagement with the printing process, however, he did not base this possession on his commercial relationship with the marketplace or the general public, or on legal or commercial ownership.[36] Unable to claim independent possession of his work in these ways, Jonson's identity continued to depend on the social hierarchy of patronage. Jonson, moreover, was a relatively isolated case of authorial self-assertion. Despite his precedent, most collected *Works* of poets continued to be published posthumously, and authors' claims of legal property over their works before the 1710 Copyright Act remained fragmentary and occasional.[37] Deliberate commercial publication continued to carry a stigma for poets until the Restoration period, when the examples of Milton and Dryden made it more respectable. Despite the growing dominance of print culture, this stigma against commercial involvement continued on to the end of the eighteenth century, leading poets such as Cowper, Gray, and Beattie to dissociate themselves as gentleman amateurs from a marketplace that poets could no longer pretend to ignore.[38]

In *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century*, David Fairer argues that manuscript and print culture developed interdependently throughout the first half of the century, before print emerged as the clearly dominant medium.[39] Before the Restoration, though, manuscript circulation had been

the culturally dominant form. As Arthur Marotti argues in *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, such circulation placed poetry within a "scribal community" or coteries, in which the author wrote mainly to a known audience of similarly-minded readers, and in which poetry remained closely connected to its social roles and occasions.[40] Early *Miscellanies* offered a print simulation of such scribal communities, analogous to manuscript compilations, in which authorial identity remained fluid and authors were often not even identified.[41] Self-representation clearly did occur in poetry circulated by manuscript, but the medium did not foreground an authorial (or self-authorizing) self as the focus of attention, instead creating a sense of poetic conversation in which the poetry existed as the property of the scribal coteries as much as the individual poet. The selves in such poetry remained thoroughly embedded in social roles, structures, and occasions, and the poetic texts themselves were less fixed than in print, with manuscript readers taking a more active role in responding to and even altering poems in transcription.[42] Manuscript culture thus did not encourage the same kind of proprietary relationship between author and text that emerged through print and the development of legal categories of ownership.

Although poetic self-representation clearly predates the eighteenth century, the expansion of the print market during that century brought a major shift in the nature and significance of the represented self, which in the Romantic period expands into a decisive shift to an author-centered poetics. In his survey of eighteenth-century poetry, David Fairer argues for the existence of an early eighteenth-century "Romantic mode," following the psychology of John Locke and exploring individual subjectivity, internal space, and imagination.[43] This exploration of subjectivity did not, however, develop into an explicit focus on individual authorial identity as such until later in the century, when the print market had further developed the institutions and discourses of authorship.

Some common features shared by the poets in this study help to define how the authorial self emerged in relation to the new print culture. Although poets during the period continued to depend in various ways on both patronage and the print market, they tended to define their authorial identity as independent of both, claiming autonomy in a way that mystified such dependencies. Even those claims, of course, ultimately depended on the new position of the poet in the marketplace, supported by the development of copyright law and the discourse of genius with its related discourses of authorial transcendence and self-sufficiency. The evolution of literary property also made it more viable for poets to define their own identities through publication while still claiming a sense of dignity and autonomy. Gray, Cowper, and

Beattie all define poetry in various ways as a gentlemanly "amusement" or avocation and tend to disclaim commercial involvement, often not seeking payment for their work. Wordsworth and many of the poets who followed him, in contrast, claim poetry as a central and self-defining vocation in ways that depend on their claims to literary property in the marketplace. Even poets who self-consciously distanced themselves from the rewards of the marketplace, however, showed close attention to constructing and controlling their own poetic oeuvres. As forms of self-possession, literary property and poetic self-representation are closely related.

Similarly, even poets who avoided direct self-representation and maintained a strict poetic decorum began to make authorial identity or subjectivity increasingly central to the form of their poetry. In such writing, the poet's identity and his or her mental activity gradually substituted for genre and occasion in providing the poem's unifying structure. Thus Beattie's *Minstrel* is defined around the central poetic identity of its protagonist, and Cowper's *Task* is held together formally by the central subjectivity and first-person voice of its author. At the same time, there is an increasing tendency in mid to late eighteenth-century poetry to individuate the imagined reader in relation to the author, as a way of compensating for the isolation of the poet in relation to an increasingly large and unknowable print market public. The individual self of the author, I will argue, developed together as a focus of attention with this individual self of the reader. The appeal to the individual reader also allowed late-eighteenth-century poets to justify their poetic function in new ways, allowing them to claim that they wrote about themselves in order to provide a model and educate the individual moral and imaginative faculties of their readers. Such roles developed gradually over time, until by the 1830s the centrality of the author's subjectivity in lyric poetry and the individual relation between author and reader could be assumed as a given.

Authorial identity and the model of self it helped to produce can be understood as emerging in these ways within the general contexts of print culture. By "print culture" I mean the material conditions, social institutions, and discursive formations generated by and around print, including all aspects of its production, circulation, and consumption. Although literary studies mainly focus on certain forms of print, it is important to remember that literary forms do not emerge in a vacuum apart from other, more ephemeral and less privileged forms. "Print culture" in this sense included not only books, journals, reviews, and magazines, but newspapers, playbills, printed advertisements, broadsides, pamphlets, printed forms and invitations, official notices, sermons, trade directories, political broadsheets, almanacs, model letters, contracts, event tickets, tax tables, business catalogs, and so on,

distributed not only by booksellers, printers, and various located businesses, but also by what Ian Maxted calls an "irregular [. . .] army of flying stationers, chapmen, hawkers, patterers and travelers," continually circulating throughout the country.[44] Books were a relatively small part of this total output, little of which survives today. While seemingly distant from poetry, these other forms of print had a major impact in the commercial development of the publishing industry and its channels of distribution, through which poetry also reached its audience. In a large sense, print culture includes not only the material publications and the institutions directly responsible for producing and disseminating them, but also the construction of audiences; the emergence of print-dependent institutions such as coffeehouses, libraries, and reading societies; and the various ways that print shapes society as a technology of communication and social relationship.

My first chapter gives an overview of some of the ways print culture expanded during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, paying specific attention to how these development affected poets' identities and sense of relationship to the public. The chapter begins by exploring the dramatic burgeoning of print culture after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, especially the newspaper and subsequent forms of periodical publications such as the magazine and the critical review. I survey the significance of the commercial lending library in promoting literary publishing; the growth of the reading public and evolving scale of book production; the organization of the book trade; and the increased competitiveness among booksellers after *Donaldson v. Becket* ended perpetual copyright in 1774. The chapter goes on to explore developments in copyright and their relation to an evolving discourse of genius and independent authorial identity; forms of payment and poets' earning potential throughout the period; and the changing role of patronage as authorial identity developed into a category of dignified independence in its own right. Based on this overview of print culture, the last section of the chapter explores way that poets reimagined their relationship to an increasingly fragmented and heterogeneous public, in which it became increasingly difficult to appeal to universal standards of taste. What I call a "Romantic hermeneutics" developed out of this situation, with a new poetics centered around the identity of the poet and the individual author-to-reader relationship. The chapter concludes by summing up these developments and their contribution to poetic self-representation and the construction of a specifically authorial self.

The second chapter explores how Pope constructed his independent authorship by exploiting the tension between a traditional literary economy of patronage and an emerging literary economy of the marketplace. Pope's

identity emerged as increasingly central to his writing at the time when he began to claim literary copyright over his own works and market himself more actively to an expanding public. Involved in almost every aspect of print production and marketing, Pope built a massive fortune and distinguished himself as perhaps the shrewdest businessman of all English poets; yet at the same time, he constructed his identity according to a Horatian model of virtuous retirement, naturalizing himself as a kind of poetic aristocrat in seeming opposition to the marketplace. Focusing on the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and *The Dunciad* especially, I will argue for the correlation between Pope's self-representation in these two, seemingly widely different poems. In both poems, Pope presents himself as paradoxically both central to print culture and unimplicated in it, producing complex tensions in the identity he constructs for himself. In *Dr. Arbutnnot*, Pope naturalizes his identity at Twickenham by representing himself as the fixed center around which a chaotic and transgressive print culture swirls. In *The Dunciad*, his identity provides the structure that gives order to print culture, even as he claims to remain outside of it, ventriloquizing its voices in order to construct his own identity through its ostensibly foreign medium. In both poems, Pope naturalizes his independence as a poet as if it represents his rightful place in the social and cosmic hierarchy, contrasting himself against the so-called "hacks" and "dunces" of commercial print culture who lack such a place. Yet at the same time, his self-construction as a poet ironically depends on the commercial culture he satirizes, as he actively marketed himself to the very public he pretended to oppose. Pope's construction of poetic identity thus leads, in *The Dunciad* and the *Epilogues to the Satires*, to an ironically self-consuming position, in which he can neither claim a positive relationship to print culture nor define his identity apart from it. Through these ultimately self-consuming tensions, Pope made his own identity as author central to his later poetry, constructing himself as a towering figure of authorial independence and providing a model of self-representation for later poets.

The next chapter focuses on Thomas Gray and his construction of liminal or displaced figures of authorial identity. Caught between the elite model of coteries manuscript culture and the new dominance of print, unwilling or unable to identify himself exclusively with either, Gray found himself in a kind of no man's land of poetic identity. As a self-identified gentleman with a highly developed sense of decorum, Gray could not take his own identity directly as a poetic subject, but his sense of isolation from audience drove him to experiment with new, displaced versions of poetic subjectivity and identity. Gray's *Elegy* in this sense offers an ambivalent and liminal self, beginning with an unprecedented representation of individual consciousness by a narrator

who reappears, after a long series of general moral exhortations, in the poem's concluding third-person epitaph. Offered to an imagined "kindred Spirit" for solitary reading—a figure, I will argue, of the unknown print market reader—this final epitaph constructs the narrator's identity through the act of reading while at the same time withdrawing it ineluctably into the isolation of death. Other poems such as "The Bard" and "The Progress of Poesy" present similarly dissociated forms of poetic identity. Unwilling to embrace the print market and its public or represent his own identity directly, Gray nevertheless explored the possibility of poetic self-representation in relation to that public in displaced forms, creating an uneasily liminal version of the authorial self.

The following chapter focuses on the Scottish poet James Beattie's *Minstrel*, which offers a similarly displaced representation of authorial identity. Drawing on the popularity of the circulating bard or minstrel figure which Gray helped to establish, Beattie's poem offers a kind of poetic *Bildungsroman* of the poet's development. At the same time, *The Minstrel* presents a thinly disguised version of Beattie's own childhood and adolescence, merging his indirect exploration of authorial identity with more direct forms of self-representation. This clear identification between Beattie and the poem's protagonist helped to make the poem wildly popular in its time and provided a model for Wordsworth and other poets' autobiography. In the Hermit, first overheard singing to himself in a wild and secluded valley, Beattie constructs another figure of displaced authorial identity, representing the author's self-sufficiency and separation from audience. Beattie is unable to justify the poet's social role and responsibility, however, and the prospective Minstrel ends the poem by beginning a study of the arts and sciences under the tutelage of the Hermit for the more direct benefit of humankind. At the time he wrote *The Minstrel*, Beattie constructed his own authorship primarily through his position as a university professor, and poetry for him represented an "amusement" and diversion rather than a central vocational activity. Though his poem exhibits many aspects which would become central to Romantic self-representation, Beattie seems unable to justify the Minstrel's poetic function, and his construction of poetic identity breaks off before the poet assumes his vocation, evading the whole issue of the poet's justifying social function.

Chapter four explores Cowper's similarly ambivalent self-representation in *The Task*. Cowper published his poetry and sought a large print audience far more enthusiastically than Gray, but even after the massive success of *The Task*, when he undertook his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations in conscious rivalry with Pope, he continued to construct his identity as a retired gentleman amateur, writing for his own "amusement" and recreation rather than as

a vocation. As a result, though Cowper's conversational first-person voice in *The Task* offers a major poetic innovation, the poem does not focus on the construction of his own poetic identity as such. Presented as a virtuous private recreation, his "task" of writing claims only an oblique public function and remains in uneasy relationship with its public. Cowper's famous description of raising winter cucumbers reveals itself, in these terms, as a disguised meditation on authorship, defining his poetry like the cucumber as a kind of commercial luxury produced as a gentlemanly avocation. *The Task*, like many of Cowper's other poems, reveals his fascination with print culture and accepts his place in that culture, but finds no clear poetic function apart from his own self-cultivation. Despite its unprecedented poetic subjectivity, Cowper's self in *The Task* is digressive and conversational, without any clear sense of a grounding poetic function or identity. In "The Castaway," this sense of groundlessness takes a more tragic tone, as Cowper's pervasive feeling of personal alienation finds representation in ways which suggest also the isolation and groundlessness of the poet in relation to an ultimately unknown and unreachable public.

Gray, Beattie, and Cowper, like other mid to late eighteenth-century poets, tended to celebrate the figure of the poet in variously displaced forms, but they did not construct their own poetic identities directly in their verse. In part this tendency was a function of class. All three poets thought of themselves as gentlemen—Gray and Cowper especially—and none of them defined their identity or claimed to support themselves specifically through poetry. This displacement of authorial identity, however, characterized other poets of the period as well. Robert Burns is a major exception, but Burns wrote from the "peasant poet" tradition, which focused attention on the personal identity of the poet and his or her "natural" genius, thus allowing him to focus unapologetically on himself in a way more gentlemanly poets could not. William Blake provides another significant exception, but Blake claimed prophetic status and had no gentlemanly scruples against breaking decorum or authorizing himself. Poets such as Collins, McPherson, Chatterton, Smart, Beattie, and Gray, in contrast, did not represent themselves directly, but projected strong versions of authorial identity onto poetic precursor figures: including actual figures, such as Milton, Chaucer, and Spenser; mythical figures, such as King David and the bard or minstrel; and wholly imaginary ones, such as Ossian and Rowley. At the same time, such poets experimented in various new versions of poetic subjectivity, increasingly centering poetry on a first-person speaker, individual experience, and the independent figure of the author, as in the impersonal subjectivity of Collins' Odes with their celebrations of heroic poetic identity or the idealized first-person narrator of

Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. In the liminal spaces of the graveyard poets, the authorial self flits indistinctly under the cover of twilight; or else it emerges more directly in relation to others, in the often female-authored, late-century poetry of sensibility. By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the commercial print market had become the dominant context for poetry, yet poets continued to write in the poetic and cultural forms they had inherited from an earlier literary culture. These established forms of poetic identity did not allow poets to represent themselves or embrace the market directly, creating a pervasive sense of poetic anxiety or uncertainty.

My final two chapters argue that William Wordsworth responded to his own sense of uncertainty by constructing his poetic identity on a professional model, in relationship to a general print market audience with whom he imagined himself in individual author-to-reader relationship. In so doing, Wordsworth broke from many of his predecessors by construction his own identity primarily as a Poet, claiming a position of bardic autonomy and a sense of prophetic mission directly for himself. This position of poetic independence could only by maintained and justified, however, in relation to the print market public, which constituted the primarily audience for Wordsworth's writing and the object of his vocational claims. Wordsworth's turn to direct self-representation and his development of a poetics of personal subjectivity, I will argue, emerged out of his need to authorize his own identity in relation to this public.

My first chapter on Wordsworth charts his construction of poetic identity in relation to his involvement in print culture, arguing that his appeal to rustic subjects was part of a general strategy of self-authorization. By specifically opposing himself to poetic diction, embracing a common "real language of men," and defining his role in relation to a "leveled" public of all social classes, Wordsworth attempted to define his authorship outside existing structures of public authority and identity. He justified his role as a poet in relation to the imagined individual reader, whose moral and imaginative faculties he claimed to educate. In the process, Wordsworth's claims of disinterested professional service dissociated him from commercialism, patronage, and amateurism alike, defining his identity instead through his dignified professional work.[45] At the same time, he also defined his identity through his possession of literary property over his own works and his ability to define his own poetic oeuvre. Wordsworth is the first poet in this study to define his poetic identity as a vocation, and the first to define himself through his relationship with a general public. He is also the first to focus on an imagined one-to-one relationship with his readers. His claims of poetic autonomy and turn to direct self-representation, I argue, emerge from these positions,

authorizing himself as a poet in ways which reveal his dependence on the enabling contexts of print market culture.

The second chapter on Wordsworth follows the traces of these positions in his early poetry, arguing that he began to experiment in the late 1790s in various forms of poetic self-representation and identity out of the need to authorize himself as a poet, culminating in his direct, book-length self-representation in the 1805 *Prelude* manuscript. The chapter begins by interpreting traces of poetic identity and the print market in a series of early wanderers, onto which Wordsworth projected aspects of his own poetic function and identity: the Old Cumberland Beggar, the Leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence," and the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*. I contrast these figures with the less author-centered poems of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, such as "Lines, Left Upon the Seat of a Yew-tree," which dramatizes an encounter with an unknown print market reader but does not produce a central figure of authorial identity. These early experiments with poetic identity resemble those of other late eighteenth-century poets before Wordsworth, as he explores such identity in a variety of displaced or disguised forms. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth combines elements of these experiments in order to construct his own authorial identity directly. Though it presents the poet as autonomous, *The Prelude* also shows traces of Wordsworth's print market contexts, beginning in book one with vexing questions of audience and vocational role which recur in encounters such as the Winander Boy and Blind Beggar passages. The chapter ends by focusing on what I call "self-reading," a process of vocational self-authorization through which Wordsworth establishes himself in his poetry as his own primary reader, in order to take fuller control over the construction of his own professional identity. Wordsworth's poetic self emerged as central during the period of the so-called "Great Decade," I argue, because of his need to authorize himself in his self-chosen vocation as poet, in order to compensate for his sense of isolation from the public and lack of other forms of social authorization. After about 1807, with his sense of poetic identity relatively well established by the *Prelude* manuscript, Wordsworth turned to write again in more public modes and voices, in which self-representation plays a much smaller part. The emergence of the authorial self as central to Wordsworth's poetics can thus be understood as a kind of significant detour or side effect of his need to authorize his vocational relationship with the print market public. The Epilogue goes on to discuss how Wordsworth extended his model of subjectivity and identity to his readers as well, in part to justify his poetic role, and reflects on the overall relation between the authorial self and the modern deep personal self.

My overall argument, then, is that the model of self we have come to identify, and lately to deconstruct, in much Romantic poetry is modeled on the defining contexts, needs, and vocational identity of the author, in relation to print culture and its public. It is not so far, in this sense, from Pope to Wordsworth. The Romantic self of the Poet emerges out of the eighteenth-century development of print culture as a fundamentally authorial self.

4

Readers will no doubt have noticed by now that all of the poets in this study are male. Female poets, however, were often equally if not more popular and influential than their male counterparts during the period, especially towards the end of the eighteenth century and following the Napoleonic wars. Poets such as Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson also turned to self-representation in order to focus attention on their authorial identity and address a print market readership; and later poets, such as Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, participated in cults of authorial celebrity that rivaled Byron and Scott for poetic fame and influence. Critics such as Marlon Ross and Anne Mellor have argued that male poets defined their masculine independence, sublimity, and transcendence in opposition to these female poets, while at the same time appropriating traditionally feminine attributes such as emotion, sensibility, and compassion for themselves.[46] Making an extended argument for the importance of gender in self-representation during the period, Linda Zionkowski's recent book, *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784*, argues that the marketplace was masculinized during the course of the eighteenth century as the milieu for a specifically bourgeois model of productive male activity, self-discipline, and work. Zionkowski argues that the dignified, autonomous identity of the author was defined through independent engagement with that marketplace, in opposition to female poets, aristocrats, and amateurs, all of whom were associated with more private forms of writing and manuscript circulation.[47] While Zionkowski's study is compelling on many levels and has added much to my own understanding of gender during the period, I believe that she overemphasizes the attractiveness of the marketplace to eighteenth-century poets. I will argue instead that most poets tended to construct their identities by claiming to reject both patronage *and* the marketplace. Zionkowski and other critics, however, convincingly demonstrate the crucial role of gender in poetic self-representation during the period, influencing male and female poets alike in their engagement with the commercial marketplace.

Female poets, however, faced very different pressures than male poets in relation to the marketplace, resulting in different strategies of self-representation.

The personal lives of female authors tended to be more closely associated with their works than those of male authors, so that female writing, including both poetry and the novel, was typically read as a direct expression of the author's personal and moral qualities. Given the prevailing gender norms of the time, female poets were expected to write with specifically female themes and styles, constraining their range of expression.[48] The circulation of female-authored texts in the marketplace also had dangerous associations with sexual promiscuity and even prostitution; and the direct self-assertion of some male poets, such as Pope, Wordsworth, and Byron, seemed immodest and distinctly unfeminine for women.[49] As a result, women tended to publish more by subscription than men, often claiming to enter print at the urging of male authority figures or as part of familiar social and domestic circles. Female poets also tended to use manuscript circulation more extensively than their male contemporaries, and when they did publish, they often represented themselves in print in domestic roles such as mourners or mothers or as part of a community of other women writers. Whereas male poets often defined themselves in opposition to strong contemporary or precursor figures, female poets tended to include such figures within the circles of their identities, and female poets frequently denigrated or disclaimed the goal of future poetic fame.[50] Anne Mellor has identified a "poetess" tradition, including writers such as Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, that defined itself within these constraints of gender. Poets in this tradition wrote primarily about love and domestic attachments; accepted the idea of the sexes' separate spheres; claimed to reject or condemn the goal of poetic fame; and embraced the association of women with the aesthetic category of the "beautiful." Within such constraints, self-construction for these poets could uneasily blend into self-effacement.[51]

As a result, women tended to produce different versions of the poetic self, more relational, fluid, permeable, and inclusive of others than their male counterparts, with more of an emphasis on community and a tendency to reject the masculine, appropriative sublime.[52] Though female writers such as Smith and Hemans deliberately engaged with the marketplace and earned large sums from it, their self-representations tended to define them through their domestic and communal relationships rather than their relationship to the public. Smith and Hemans both claimed to publish out of financial exigency, in order to support their families, and they did not take the male Romantic stance of poetic independence that characterized poets such as Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley.[53] As such, the position of female poets resembles that of many mid to late eighteenth-century male poets, such as Cowper and Beattie, who deliberately wrote for the marketplace but claimed

to write for "leisure" or "amusement," and who did not define their identities in explicit relation to the marketplace or construct an autonomous version of the poetic self.

Chapters on self-representation and the print market in the poetry of Anne Finch, Anna Barbauld, Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, or Felicia Hemans would make an interesting comparative study (to name a few significant candidates). Lacking space to explore this comparison extensively here, however, I have decided to save such exploration for future studies. Female poets faced different pressures and constraints and defined their selves in different ways, and it would take me in entirely different directions to explore these issues with the full attention they deserve. For similar reasons, I have chosen not to write on working class poets, who also faced different pressures on self-representation. The idea of the working class poet as a "natural" and untutored genius actually encouraged self-representation in such poets, who were not expected to abide by elite norms of poetic decorum. Interest centered more on the figure of the laboring poet than on the actual subjects of their poetry, also encouraging a tendency towards self-representation. Robert Burns managed to use this stereotype quite effectively in order to promote his own identity and agenda. Most working class poets, however, such as Duck, Leapor, Yearsley, and Clare, were hampered from strong self-assertion by the pressures of patrons and readers, who often wanted to define these poets' identities for them within the expectations of class, rather than allowing such poets to construct their own identities and authority.

Even in focusing on a relatively homogenous set of middle class and genteel male writers, however, the development of self-representation should not be understood as single-stranded, monolithic, or continuous. Writers can be lumped together in sets or their differences reduced to the smooth curve of a historical graph in order to create the illusion of quantum period breaks or steady and continuous progress, but neither model comes very close to actuality. What trends are important, what counts as the defining attributes of a period, who is in the vanguard and who in reaction, depends on the particular historical and interpretative perspectives of the study. At the same time, different authors respond to the same general conditions quite variably, depending upon their particular identities, temperaments, and authorial situations. Even the same author, in different works or at different times in his or her life, will produce very different versions of poetic identity. Thus although I have framed this study of poetic self-representation in terms of the overall development of the print market, the individual chapters approach the emergence of poetic self-representation very much in terms of particulars, through detailed exploration of the social and economic situations, identities,

and (where relevant) personalities of specific authors, informing close readings of specific poems. In so doing, I hope I can offer a much more nuanced and comprehensive account of the relationship between print market conditions and the development of poetic self-representation than a merely general overview could provide.

In the same spirit, I will resist lumping together a poet's oeuvre for general discussion. The model of a unified poetic oeuvre was part of the larger development of authorial identity, as I will explore in the following chapters, emerging out of poets' tendency to construct (and take legal and literary self-possession over) their own collected poetic works for the commercial marketplace. Though I will discuss poets' engagement in such practices, I will focus my close reading on the level of particular poems. Formal patterns of meaning and rhetorical constructions emerge at the level of the individual poem which would not otherwise be visible at other levels of reading, and the authorial "self" tends to be constructed somewhat differently in different poems. Most of the poems for which I offer extended readings—including *The Dunciad*; *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*; *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard*; *The Minstrel*; *The Task*; and *The Prelude*—first came into their readers' hands as individual books, in a single material as well as formal unit. For all these reasons, I have chosen to construct my chapters for the most part around readings of one or more specific poems, within the overall contexts of authors' identities and publication histories, as well as the publication histories of specific poems.

A final word about method. Few of the poems I discuss comment on the print market directly (with the notable exception of Pope), though all of the poets do comment on the market and the reviews extensively in their letters and other writings. As a result, in reading these poems in terms of their authors' print market situation, I have had to extrapolate from the implicit as well as explicit content and structures of the poems. In exploring the relationship between poems and their print market contexts, I often argue in terms of symbolic or structural analogy: that is, I argue that aspects of a poem symbolically represent or structurally parallel the print-market situation in which it was composed. Often I will argue that poets negotiate their print-market situation by displacing or projecting aspects of that situation—that Beattie's Hermit, for instance, offers a displaced version of the poet's relation to a print market audience, overheard by an unknown individual while singing in solitude. In these displacements, however, the analogies are often disguised and the correspondence never exact. Such poems never just represent print market conditions, but in the manner of dreams are often symbolically overdetermined—Wordsworth's Pedlar, for instance, has many, overlapping significances—and

they often offer a kind of poetic wish-fulfillment which symbolically alters and thereby attempts to control those conditions. To use the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, the print market often appears in such poems in displaced or condensed forms. In any case, it is important to remember that the precise "reality" of the print market situation is itself a historical construct, which different writers registered in different ways depending on their particular social positions and personalities. Whether consciously or unconsciously, however, the poems of self-representation in this study all construct the self in relation to print market conditions, showing how poets struggled to redefine their identities, poetics, social function, and relations to audience within the rapidly changing social and economic contexts of authorship.

5

The "death of the author" has been much heralded in post-structuralist criticism, but the "birth" of the author in its social and material contexts is only now beginning to receive the full critical attention it deserves. At the end of his influential 1969 essay "What is an Author," Michel Foucault calls for just such a historical or "genealogical" contextualization of authorship in its various discursive and institutional forms, and increasing numbers of critics in recent years have begun to follow his suggestion.[54] Authorship, many of these studies suggest, cannot be adequately understood without reference to related material, economic, social, and discursive developments. Such critics have also begun to link the emergence of modern discourses of authorship, or the "author function" as Foucault calls it, with major shifts in the discursive forms and practices of modern literature.

By showing how poetic self-representation and authorial identity emerged out of the development of eighteenth-century print culture, this study hopes to participate in that wider movement. Many of the elements which we have come to know as "Romanticism" can be seen as emerging out of this overall socio-economic shift, including new models of poetic subjectivity; the focus on the individual experience of the reader and the development of sympathy and imagination as interpretive ideals; the idea that literature or "art" transcends social context; the opposition of true "art" to commerce; an emphasis on the organic unity of the artwork; the connection between literature, personal development, and authenticity; and the whole tendency to categorize and interpret literature in relation to the author's psyche, life, and purposes. Understood in this broader sense, developments which have been traditionally defined as "Romantic" do not represent a discrete or sudden break, but a gradual development in response to the proliferation of eighteenth-century print culture. Such a position is not narrowly

deterministic—I do not claim that it was inevitable that eighteenth-century print culture would produce such responses, and there were obviously many other social and cultural factors involved. Under these complex conjunctions of circumstances, however, literature had to respond in a way that would also be adequate to this changed social and economic context. In retrospect, Romanticism can be seen as one such response.

I want to illustrate this position by moving outside Great Britain for a moment to consider the opening of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, a landmark of modern autobiography. After his opening claim that the *Confessions* will represent himself as a unique and inimitable individual, Rousseau supports this claim by summoning before him both an imagined God and an imagined general public:

> Let the last trump sound when it will, I shall come forward with this work in my hand, to present myself before my Sovereign Judge, and proclaim aloud: "Here is what I have done, and if by chance I have used some immaterial embellishment it has been only to fill a void due to a defect of memory. I may have taken for fact what was no more than probability, but I have never put down as true what I knew to be false. I have displayed myself as I was, as vile and despicable when my behaviour was such, as good, generous, and noble when I was so. I bared my secret soul as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal Being! So let the numberless legion of my fellow men gather round me, and hear my confessions. Let them groan at my depravities, and blush for my misdeeds. But let each one of them reveal his heart at the foot of Thy throne with equal sincerity, and may any man who dares, say 'I was a better man than he.'"[55]

Rousseau here presents himself as the morally responsible author of his own life, and although he justifies himself before God, as the "Sovereign Judge" [*souverain juge*] and "Eternal Being" [*Ètre éternel*], he himself takes primary responsibility for his own identity. By baring his soul, Rousseau claims to establish that identity definitively, regardless of any factual mistakes he might make. Moreover, he bares his soul specifically in writing rather than in speech, by bringing his book before this imagined tribunal. As the passage concludes, however, Rousseau's primary audience shifts from God to his print market public, "the numberless legions of my fellow men" [*l'innombrable foule de mes semblables*] whom he rhetorically gathers around himself to sanction his *Confessions*. Though in one sense Rousseau calls upon God to assemble this public [*Être éternel, rassemble autour de moi l'innombrable foule de mes semblables*], in another sense this general public displaces God in the passage as

his primary "Other" and the ultimate ratifying "sovereign judge" of his identity. Rousseau's ability to construct and claim full possession of his own identity as an author thus comes to depend on his ability to address himself in writing to his imagined public.

This public, moreover, is imagined as both collective and individual at the same time. It is both a single "numberless legion" and a collection of specifically individual readers (or auditors), each of whom is called upon to compare himself individually to Rousseau and reveal his or her own soul in the same manner. This public is socially and ideologically leveled, constructed in relation to Rousseau's own individual authorial self without reference to the pervasive early modern system of social ranks and distinctions. Instead of a public structured by social rank or position, Rousseau imaginatively summons a public of readers all cast in his own image, his "fellow men," whom he calls upon to engage in exactly the same form of self-representative authorship that he offers in his *Confessions*. In the process, his readers are invited to construct their own unique individual identities according to the same pattern that Rousseau offers himself, as autobiographical authors of their own identities.

Religious writing and criminal confession were in fact two of the most significant genres of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century personal life writing. Over the course of the eighteenth century, scholars have argued, the secular "self" emerged from such writing and replaced the spiritual "soul" as a defining category of personal identity.[56] In Rousseau's *Confessions*, this shift from the spiritual context of religion to the secular context of authorship reveals itself directly, as the imagined general public replaces God as the self's defining "Other" and the author takes responsibility himself as the ultimate guarantor of his own identity. In making this move, the opening of the *Confessions* shows how the individuation of the author is inseparable from the individuation of the reader, as the author-to-reader relationship displaces other forms of social hierarchy and identity. At the same time, the author's self-representation depends on his ability to address himself to a generalized print market public, unconstrained by existing social hierarchies of rank and identity.

The development of poetic self-representation and authorial identity in British poetry, I will argue, followed a similar pattern, constructing the author's self in relationship to what is at once an overall print market public and an imagined individual reader. Although Pope addressed much of his later poetry to a general public, he did not single out imagined individual readers in this way, except as the specific addressees of his epistles. Pope also never leveled his public, but continued to position his own identity in relation to a model of social hierarchy, even if it was a hierarchy he in part constructed himself. Though later

poets such as Gray, Beattie, and Cowper imagined their relationships with individual readers in a variety of more or less displaced forms, none defined their own identity explicitly in relation to their readers. Wordsworth, by contrast, defined his identity both in relation to a general public and in relation to a specifically imagined individual reader, constructing his readers' individual subjectivities as echoes of his own in much the same manner as Rousseau in the opening passage of the *Confessions*. In the process, Wordsworth also "leveled" his public, abstracting the reader outside existing social hierarchies in order to create a new hierarchy of imagination, which placed the figure of the individual poet as the center of attention and authority.

This authorial self did not emerge out of a transcendental fiat, as Wordsworth sometimes liked to claim, but from instability and crisis, turning an imminent danger of self-dissolution into a new opportunity for self-making. As Hölderlein said, in danger there is opportunity—and also, I might add, necessity. It is not accidental in this respect that all of the poets in this study had particularly insecure or unstable identities. Pope was a hunchbacked Catholic and son of a merchant, claiming elite social status. Gray was the son of a milliner and scrivener, educated at Eton and Cambridge and trying to identify himself with a circle of aristocratic friends. Beattie began life as a rural schoolmaster before rising to prominence as a writer and circulating among the social elite. Wordsworth was effectively disinherited after his father's death and led a more or less vagabond existence for most of his youth and early adulthood, after he rejected a possible living in the church to pursue the marginal vocation of authorship. Of the five poets in this study, Cowper alone had a well-to-do lineage and started on a prestigious and clearly defined career path, as a barrister, but he went mad, lost his prestigious social post, and retired into country obscurity. These situations are of course personal and unique. In another sense, however, they represent the common situation of all authors who tried to define their identities through their own writing, since authorship was itself an insecure and unstable category of identity until well into the nineteenth century. Poets faced a particular dilemma, expected to function within an elite cultural tradition in ways that created an uneasy relationship to the marketplace and imposed limiting standards of poetic decorum. Yet as I will explore in the following chapter, it became increasingly possible for authors to make a living through the sale of their writing during the course of the eighteenth century, and thus to support a dignified position of independence. Faced with a liminal and uncertain status, increasingly feeling alienated from their public, poets turned to self-representation largely in search of such independence, in the attempt to authorize their own social positions and identities.

In the process of constructing these identities, such poets authored a distinctively modern version of the autonomous individual self. As the general social conditions of capitalist society increasingly resembled the particular conditions of the print market, with a sense of social breakdown, individuation, and personal isolation, the specifically authorial self of the poet was generalized into a universal category of identity. As a result, I will suggest in the Epilogue, the authorial self of the poet, constructed in relation to the specific social and economic contexts of print culture, became a significant strand in the overall confluence of the modern self.

Chapter One

The Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century British Print Market, the Author, and Romantic Hermeneutics

During the eighteenth century in Great Britain a major change took place which we now tend to take for granted—the emergence of the first "print society" in history. By the beginning of the eighteenth century print had been in existence in England for over two hundred years and had a limited yet well-established role, centered on the university towns and the London Stationers' Company, but during the century it was disseminated through all levels of society and all parts of the country. The mere increase in printers and book titles over the course of the century, while impressive, does not fully account for the scope and pervasiveness of the change. In the early 1690s, there were almost no magazines or periodicals in England; publishing was closely monitored and restricted to London, the two university towns, and the archdiocese of York; and there was almost a total lack of printed documents in the provinces. In Terry Belanger's suggestive catalog, there were "no printed posters advertising estate or agriculture sales [. . .] no theater bills or programmes, no newspapers, no printed handbills, bill headings, labels, tickets, or other commercial pieces. There were no printed forms meant to be completed by hand: no marriage certificates, printed indentures, or receipts." Yet by 1790 all these forms of print had penetrated throughout the nation and Britain had emerged as the first print society in history.[1]

Although Belanger in this passage makes it clear that printing is much more than a literary phenomenon, the expansion of "letters" in a wide variety of subjects was almost equally striking, especially to contemporaries. Samuel Johnson called his time the "Age of Authors" and complained of an "epidemical conspiracy for the destruction of paper," but he could just as aptly have

described it as the age of readers or the age of print.[2] Since we have been living in the age of print ever since, it is easy to disregard such complaints as hyperbole or mere ideological jockeying, but for writers and readers at the time, undergoing a sea change in the media of social communication, the sense of being overwhelmed by a flood of print was very real and immediate—much like our current sense of the Internet and the emergence of a new, electronic age. Yet even in the act of complaining or registering their anxiety, eighteenth-century writers only continued to add to this flood: not only through the traditional forms of religious tracts, sermons, prayer books, Bibles, almanacs, chapbooks, pamphlets, broadsheets, ballads, and literary and scholarly books, but through a massive new proliferation of newspapers, journals, magazines, reviews, novels, translations, essays, memoirs, popular histories and travel narratives, cheap reprints of the "classics," literary criticism, and so on. Together with these new forms of print, the audience expanded from what had been primarily a tight circle of scholars and elite classically-educated readers to include much of British society, especially the growing middle class. At the same time, a whole new array of institutions came into being to cater to this expanding public, including coffeehouses and commercial reading rooms stocked with a wide selection of the latest periodicals; book clubs and reading societies; commercial and later public lending libraries; literary and philosophical societies that gathered to discuss the latest publications; and, of course, a growing national network of printers and booksellers. The mass production of literature would not permeate all classes of society on a recognizably modern scale until the middle of the nineteenth century, but long before that time the production and reception of literature in Britain had decisively shifted from a court-centered economy of patronage to a national commercial market.[3]

This proliferation of print took a central role in the general commercialization during the eighteenth century of what we now call "culture": what John Brewer describes as the commercialization not only of literature but also of the fine arts and music, in the general shift of the arts from court dominance to a wider, middle-class public.[4] As such, print participated in the overall emergence of consumer society in eighteenth-century Britain, while at the same time helping to shape how that society ordered and understood itself.[5] These changes in the socio-economic conditions of print culture led also to general changes in the understanding and interpretation of literature: including the development of modern ideas of the author; the psychologizing of "taste" and aesthetic value in terms of reading reception; a new hermeneutics emphasizing the process of reading as a relationship between individual author and reader; the idea of the artwork as a heterocosm or self-contained

object of value; the emergence of "art" and "culture" as supposedly autonomous and socially disinterested spheres; the formation of "literature," and specifically a modern literary canon, as a discursive category of classification and interpretation; the growth of literary criticism as a field, together with new editing practices for "classic" literary texts in the vernacular; and the claim that imaginative literature plays a crucial part in educating the individual and in maintaining the overall coherence of society.

In this chapter, I will trace some of the relationships between the emergence of eighteenth-century print culture and these changes in the forms, hermeneutics, and conception of literature, specifically in relation to the evolving role and identity of the author. Before the eighteenth century, authors had possessed almost no commercial rights or property and little control of any kind over their published writings. With the development of copyright law, increased earning potential, and growing focus on the role and identity of author during the eighteenth and into the following century, authors developed increasing rights and financial leverage in the marketplace, leading to the gradual emergence of authorship as a dignified profession in its own right.[6] At the same time, the author gradually became central to new theories of literary production and interpretation, as the "author function" manifested itself as increasingly central to the emerging institutional forms of print market culture.[7]

This growing centrality of the author was especially significant in poetry, with the emergence of the lyric as a dominant form, the new genre of the "life of the poet," and an emerging "romantic hermeneutics" of sincerity that focused on the relationship between the individual poet and individual reader. The shift from mimetic to expressivist theories of poetry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been well documented, as the rise of the subjective lyric was accompanied by new understandings of poetry as expressing the unique private imagination, emotions, and consciousness of the poet, and as sincerity and personal inspiration supplanted mimetic accuracy as the ultimate criteria of poetic value.[8] According to such theories, the poet wrote from (and often about) his or her own private "inner" self, producing a poetry for which audience and public contexts putatively ceased to matter. These developments, together with the idea of self-sufficient authorial "genius," can be seen as a response to the growth of the print market and its public, allowing poets to authorize themselves in ways that compensated for their loss of an immediate sense of audience and shared aesthetic and cultural norms. At the same time and in response to these same pressures, poets increasingly turned to construct individual poetic identity through their own writing, as the figure of the poet became central to the movement we now

know as Romanticism. The increasingly important idea of sympathy allowed poets to justify this poetics by offering a new model of society, bound together through the circulation of print and the imaginative education of individual readers. Through this idea of sympathy, poets could claim to educate the individual imaginations of their readers and so claim to bind society together, even as they wrote about their own individual authorial selves.

The emergence of the print market during the eighteenth century thus had sweeping consequences for the emergence of the author as central to literature, together with a corresponding poetics of individual subjectivity. After presenting some of the economic and material developments of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century print culture, this chapter will discuss the connection between such developments and evolving models of authorial identity. It will then conclude by suggesting some possible connections between these developments and larger changes in the discursive construction of poetry, setting a context for the evolution of poetic self-representation during the period and providing a general framework for the chapters which follow.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRITISH PRINT INDUSTRY AND THE READING PUBLIC

When the Licensing Act lapsed in 1695, freeing the press from pre-publication censorship and removing legal restrictions on the number and location of presses, there were supposedly only twenty commercial printers in London with no more than two presses apiece, though in actuality probably at least twice that number of printers.[9] While the Licensing Act never succeeded in imposing more than partial control over printing, and while its removal did not lead to a dramatic proliferation in the number of printing houses, it did lead directly to the rise of a new form of printing that would be crucial to the growth of the trade and the general reading public: the newspaper. A wave of new papers came into being after the repeal of pre-publication censorship, culminating in 1702 with the founding of the first English daily, *The Daily Courant.*[10] Other London dailies soon followed, together with the increasing spread of journalism in weekly papers throughout the provinces, so that by 1730 John Feather claims that every substantial town had a printer and a newspaper.[11] The number of London daily papers grew to four by 1760, nine by 1783, and sixteen by 1793, not to mention large numbers of weekly and bi-weekly papers and growing numbers of papers in the provinces. Total newspaper circulation rose over the period from an annual sale of 2.25 million papers in 1711, to 7.3 million in 1750, to over fifteen million by 1790 and over twenty-four million by 1811.[12] The number and circulation of

papers continued to increase gradually but steadily throughout the period, until by 1820 Britain had over three hundred newspapers.[13]

As Raymond Williams writes, "the story of the foundation of the English Press is, in its first stages, the story of the growth of the middle-class reading public."[14] Together with foreign and domestic news or "intelligence," the typical paper included prices of stocks; lists of bankruptcies and obituaries; current prices of commodities, gold, and silver; shipping schedules; accounts of imports and exports—in short, a convenient survey of important commercial information. After the first few decades papers also began to print essays and letters on the arts, cultural reviews, and "light" literature such as certain kinds of poetry, reflecting the growing cultural as well as commercial self-understanding of the middle classes which formed the bulk of their audience.[15] The growth of the reading public during the eighteenth century was stimulated primarily by this growth in journalism, together with other forms of periodical publication.

As a central development of commercial print culture, newspapers also directly stimulated the growth of others forms of print. Advertisements of various kinds, including advertisements for books and other publications, were from the beginning an important part of the periodical press, but they became even more important with the appearance of the *Daily Advertiser* in 1730, which became the most popular paper of the mid eighteenth century and provided the model for the new genre of "advertiser," with a main emphasis on commercial advertisements.[16] Newspapers both spread the habit of reading and became the primary means of advertisement for other forms of print. Although most books were advertised in the London papers, provincial newspapers also played a crucial role in establishing a national audience through the growing networks of agents, booksellers, and hawkers who served them—a network which could then be exploited by London publishers in marketing their publications.[17] Thus although English book publishing remained centered on London throughout the century, a mutually beneficial arrangement came into being between London publishers and provincial distributors and retailers, who catered to a large and ever growing provincial audience. Although provincial printers rarely published fine literary editions and focused more on single-sheet publications and ephemera than on book publication, provincial printing and bookselling networks were crucial in opening this national system of distribution. Publishing remained disproportionately centered on London, but readership did not, as print culture rapidly "colonized" the provinces and the provincial market grew more rapidly during much of the eighteenth century than the London market.[18]

In addition to newspapers, this proliferation of print was stimulated by other forms of periodical literature, as the essay-paper, the magazine, and the book review successively rose into prominence, expanding the print market audience while also directly advertising and encouraging the sale of books. Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, which appeared six days a week from March 1711 to December 1712, is widely credited with the formation of a general public of readers, though it is impossible to judge to what degree it caused the growth of the public and to what degree merely allowed an existing public to emerge into general view.[19] In either case, the *Spectator* was followed by a veritable flood of essay-papers—by Alexandre Beljame's account, at least 106 different publications between 1709 and the appearance of Johnson's *Rambler* in 1750.[20] These essay-papers tended to stimulate their readers' appreciation for literature and for the arts in general, as in Addison's famous essays on the "pleasures of the imagination," but the subsequent development of the magazine and then critical review stimulated the sale of literature even more directly by providing extracts, reviews, advertisements, and lists of book titles and availability, and, in the case of magazines, printing the literary contributions of subscribers. The *Gentleman's Magazine,* which became the model for subsequent magazines after its foundation in 1731 by Edward Cave, included lists of books recently published as one of its services to its readers.[21] The appearance of the critical reviews specifically dedicated to the review of new publications, beginning with the *Monthly Review* in 1749 and followed by Smolett's *Critical Review* in 1756, focused exclusively on the book market, both demonstrating the existence of an established reading public and helping to stimulate the further growth of that public.[22] The *Monthly Review* grew from a print run of 1000 at its initial publication to runs of 2250 copies in 1756, 3000 in 1768, and about 5000 in 1797, by which time there were four major reviews printing an estimated total of 13,500 copies per issue all together.[23] The following decades witnessed a proliferation in the number of reviews, including the appearance of the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (1798), the *Edinburgh Review* (1802), the *Examiner* (1808), and the *Quarterly Review* (1809), a list which continued to expand in the 1810s and 1820s.[24] All told, James Basker estimates that there were an average of 5 periodicals in print in a given year between 1661 and 1678; 25 in 1700; 90 in 1750; and 264 in 1800, demonstrating the escalation of the periodical industry.[25] Even apart from their direct and indirect promotion of books of all kinds, these periodicals created an audience and stimulated a taste for reading that led, in a self-reinforcing feedback loop, to an ever-increasing self-proliferation of print. This proliferation of print also played a central role in a new array of other social institutions, including the coffee-house, the commercial and later public lending library, non-conformist and

parish libraries, book clubs and private subscription societies, professional and philosophical societies, and the various other forms of social organization that Habermas has characterized as the emerging "public sphere" of civil society.[26]

The commercial lending libraries were an especially important institution for the development of literature and its public.[27] The price of books remained quite high relative to income for most people during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, so that only the wealthiest could afford to own substantial numbers of them. An average octavo still cost ten to fourteen shillings in 1780, despite the boom in cheap reprints after the opening up of copyright in 1774, and booksellers kept prices for polite literature high until well into the 1820s. Kathryn Sutherland estimates that only the wealthiest ten percent of the population during the period could afford to buy books.[28] The rapid growth of the commercial lending libraries beginning in the 1740s, however, allowed most middle class (and even some lower class) readers to afford regular access to books of all kinds. These libraries offered a sometime bewildering assortment of memberships and services at various price levels: standard yearly subscriptions of around 15 s to 1 guinea in London during much of the eighteenth century; higher fees in fashionable spa towns, for shorter membership terms, or for special membership privileges and services, such as shipping books to readers in remote locations; and nightly loans of as low as a penny per book for the poorest readers.[29] At first seen as competitors or parasites of the booksellers, libraries became crucial to the publishing industry, especially for novels. The writer Elizabeth Griffin estimated in 1757 that circulating libraries would buy as many of four hundred copies out of a print run of one thousand for a popular novel. In 1821 the *Monthly Magazine* estimated that fifteen thousand libraries loaned fiction (and other books) regularly to one hundred thousand customers, and occasionally to another one hundred thousand.[30] Large booksellers often owned their own libraries and even sold or rented "start-up" libraries to other small proprietors, including small collections to supplement the existing business of retailers such as grocers, tobacconists, and haberdashers. William Lane, the founder of Minerva Press, offered rental libraries from one hundred to ten thousand volumes at yearly prices ranging from £5 to £1000.[31] The spread of commercial lending libraries not only provided a significant market for publishers, it also helped spread the habit of reading widely: a development which often generated anxiety about the spread of indiscriminate or irresponsible reading, especially among women and lower class readers.[32]

Despite a great deal of historical research, the actual size and extent of the reading public remains tantalizingly difficult to establish. Scholars agree that literacy rates in Britain generally continued to increase during the eighteenth

century and beyond, with the foundation of charity schools and Sunday schools and the increasing universality of education, but that the main increases in literacy occurred long before the eighteenth century, as early as Elizabethan times. Literacy rates may in fact even have decreased from the Restoration until relatively late in the eighteenth century.[33] Literacy rates and the actual reading public, however, are two very different matters, and though increases in the former are debatable, rapid increases in the latter during the early eighteenth century are indisputable. Despite the famous claim of the eighteenth-century discount bookseller James Lackington in 1791, that "all ranks and degrees now READ," reading polite literature during most of the century seems to have remained primarily an activity of the upper and middle classes—though some social groups in the lower classes, such as urban artisans and domestic servants, did read widely.[34] Nevertheless, within the upper and middle classes at least, evidence points to the rapidly growing spread and importance of reading, especially with the growth of the novel and emergence of commercial lending libraries in the 1740s and the boom in journalism and political polemics in the 1790s. Based on the variety of institutions and organizations he surveys, Paul Kaufman estimates that by 1790 such institutions catered to "perhaps 50,000 readers" out of a population nearing ten million; yet Paine's *Rights of Man* sold fifty thousand copies within a few weeks in 1791 and may have circulated as many as two hundred thousand copies or more.[35] Edmund Burke estimated a reading public of eighty thousand in 1790 and Francis Jeffrey estimated a public of twenty thousand elite and two hundred thousand middle class readers in 1812 in the *Edinburgh Review*, though there is no way of knowing how either writer came to that figure, and Burke's is almost certainly too low.[36] At a less elevated level, the *Penny Magazine* estimated its public of possible readers in 1832 at one million, out of a total population of 13.9 million.[37] Such figures remain crude approximations of the size of the effective reading public, which can never be precisely determined (what, after all, would constitute a true estimate for a "reading public" even in our own time?). What seems clear from the statistics, however, is that the audience for print was growing rapidly throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century and into the following century, with reading during the period more constrained by the price of publications than by literacy.[38]

Production and sales figures can also give some sense of the effective reading public for different forms of print. James Raven documents significant growth in the output of published titles in the late 1690s and into the early eighteenth century, then renewed increases from the 1740s throughout the remainder of the century, escalating dramatically in the late 1780s.[39] Despite a few significant cases, such as the sale of sixty thousand copies of

Richard Price's *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* in 1776 and fifty thousand copies of Paine's *Rights of Man* in 1791—spectacular figures responding to spectacular events—book sales and periodical circulations throughout the eighteenth century tended to remain fairly consistent and modest by modern standards. Addison and Steele's *Spectator* had a typical circulation of about three thousand to four thousand copies per day in 1711–12; by the middle of the century the *Gentleman's Review* circulated only about this same number of copies; and in the first decades of the nineteenth century the typical journal or review had a circulation between five thousand and fifteen thousand, among a population of England, Scotland and Wales of over ten million. Similarly, during the eighteenth century only the most popular novels sold over nine thousand copies per year, and even Walter Scott's immensely popular Waverly novels in the 1810s and 1820s do not substantially improve on that number, though the most popular ones typically sold as many as forty thousand and fifty thousand copies over a twenty-year period.[40] These figures do not take into account the total number of readers, since one copy could pass through many hands or be read by many people in coffee shops or borrowed from lending libraries, but they do give some general sense of the extent of the public. Sales figures for specific works can also show differences in audience sizes for various kinds of writing. The typical volume of poetry cost 5 s. and had a first edition print run of five hundred.[41] Sir Walter Scott's poem *Marmion* sold two thousand copies in a month at the high price of 31 s 6 d when it appeared in 1808 and eleven thousand within the year, while *The Lady of the Lake*, one of the best selling poetry books of its era, sold thirty thousand copies in a year after its 1810 publication. For books of any sort, these figures are spectacular. William Cobbet's two-penny *Political Register*, by contrast, aimed at the lower demography of readers, circulated at least forty to fifty thousand copies per week, and perhaps as many as 150,000 to 200,000 in its first two-penny editions in 1816.[42] Even these figures are dwarfed, however, by the estimated five hundred thousand almanacs printed every year as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century for a truly mass reading public—the same public to which over two million copies of Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts* were distributed or sold in the 1790s at between 1/2 and 1 1/2 d. apiece. More's *Tracts* competed with a flourishing market of ballads, broadsheets, chapbooks, dying confessions, true crime narratives, pamphlets, jest books, religious tracts, and other genres of popular literature, all circulating in impressive numbers among a public which remained relatively untouched by more "polite" forms of poetry.[43]

Supported by publishing superstars such as Byron and Sir Walter Scott, poetry remained a competitive genre until near the end of the Romantic

period, when it became unfashionable in the mid 1820s and began to be far outstripped by the sale of cheaply reprinted novels.[44] Byron's *Corsair* (1814) sold ten thousand copies upon publication and twenty five thousand in just over a month, and the various Cantos of *Don Juan* (1819–24) sold a million copies all together. Robert Bloomfield's *Farmer's Boy* (1820) sold twenty-six thousand copies in seven editions over three years, and even Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* (1814) reached a print run of four thousand within a year of its first appearance.[45] Lee Erickson in *The Economy of Literary Form* has speculated that the boom for poetry during the early nineteenth century may have been related to the expensiveness of paper during the period, which favored the relative conciseness and labor-intensiveness of verse over the profuseness of prose. This fashion for poetry peaked in the year 1820, in which over three hundred editions total and two hundred first editions of poetry were published. An average of 255 editions and 155 first editions appeared per year between 1815 and 1819, and 205 editions and 145 first editions per year between 1821 and 1825, after which the major decline in poetry publication began.[46] Around the end of that time, as Lee Erickson has documented, the main commercial market for poetry shifted to the fashionable yearly "annuals," such as the *Forget Me Not, The Literary Souvenir*, and *The Keepsake*, which sold in the range of ten thousand copies apiece at 12 s apiece by the late 1820s.[47]

These sales figures may not seem particularly massive by today's mass market standards (though they would be impressive still for a book of poetry). For contemporaries, however, they represented a veritable explosion in the size of the reading public, often connected to the events of the French Revolution and the spectacular journalism of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. These events added to already widespread anxiety about the spread of reading, especially the growth of reading among the lower classes: an anxiety which persisted throughout the nineteenth century.[48] Cheap publications were often associated with radicalism and even criminality as an explicit appeal to this lower class public, as in the 3 s. price for Part I and 6 d. for Part II of Paine's *Rights of Man*.[49] Anxieties over the spread of reading also generated a heightened sense of differences between various reading publics, as Jon Klancher argues in his groundbreaking study of audience formation, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, 1790–1832. The fragmentation of publics, including a working class radical public, a middle class public, and a "mass audience," was highlighted in the aftermath of the Revolution and then again in the tumultuous post-war years leading up to the Peterloo Massacre, as different publications self-consciously addressed and constituted their own particular audiences.[50]

It was not until the late 1820s and 1830s, after the vogue for poetry had passed, that mass-produced cheap editions of books became widespread, owing in part to the introduction of a machine-powered press in 1814 and the later fall in the price of paper.[51] There was also a relaxation of government vigilance around this time, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the chaotic Peterloo era which followed, leading in the late 1830s to substantial reductions in the government taxes on paper, advertisements, and newspapers.[52] With these stimuli, the daily circulation of the dominant London daily, *The Times*, rose from eleven thousand in 1837 to nearly sixty thousand by 1855, and the total circulation of Sunday papers rose at mid-century to around 275,000. With the final repeal of the stamp tax in 1856 the press would undergo a further spectacular expansion.[53] At the same time, as a whole new market for cheap literature and reprints appeared, the price of books began to fall dramatically and the most popular novels began to sell as many as a hundred thousand copies or more.[54] The so-called "penny weeklies" began to appear in large numbers, as with the founding of *The Penny Magazine*, *Saturday Magazine*, and *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* in 1832, circulating at up to ten times or more the typical three thousand to nine thousand copy runs of the quarterly periodicals at that time. The *Penny Magazine* alone circulated at over one hundred thousand copies per week and needed to sell 112,000 copies just to break even, demonstrating the impressive scale of such publishing; and the 1840s brought a new boom in serialized novel production for the penny market.[55] The 1840s and 1850s, with further innovation in paper and printing technology and dramatic reductions in the price of paper, represent a breakthrough to a new scale of print production, leading to the emergence of a truly mass market over the course of the century, with increasingly cheap books sold in vastly larger numbers with small profit margins to readers of all social classes.[56] By Alexis Weedon's estimate, the book market quadrupled between 1832 and 1900, growing faster than the population as a whole during the latter part of the century, while the price of books halved between 1846 and 1916 and cheap publications began to crowd out the commercial lending libraries beginning in the 1860s.[57] While the early nineteenth century shows substantial increases in book production figures, it is not until the mid nineteenth century that the number of new titles printed per year begins to rise spectacularly, as in many cases does the number of books printed per edition.[58] The "mass" in "mass market" is a relative term, so debate over when a "mass market" begins is of little use. The dramatic expansion of the print market and its public throughout the period of this study, however, is incontestable, and seems to escalate in stages, with sharp increases in the late 1690s and early decades of the eighteenth century, leveling off somewhat

until a further increase in the late 1740s, then rising steadily with major escalations in the 1790s and 1830s.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the structures of the print industry also began to change markedly to reflect large-scale commercial capitalist conditions. Throughout the eighteenth century there had been a separation between printers, responsible for the actual mechanical process of printing, and booksellers, responsible for obtaining manuscripts from authors, advertising, distributing, and actually selling the various forms of print. As a rule, the functions of "publisher" and "bookseller" were combined, as even the large London firms, with a substantial interest in acquiring and supervising the production and distribution of manuscripts, also sold retail. In some cases—especially in the newspaper industry—the two roles of printing and publishing/bookselling were combined, but generally they tended to remain separate.[59] During much of the eighteenth century, printing was still governed by the guild regulations of the Stationers' Company and involved close kinship networks and a close working relationship between master printer, apprentices, and journeymen, structured by a series of elaborate social codes and customs which amounted to an almost special print house form of culture. It was not until the 1840s, after the general spread of mechanized printing and the breakdown of the apprentice system, that modern factory conditions began to prevail.[60] The bookselling side of the trade began to undergo a major transition somewhat earlier, around the end of the eighteenth century, when it transformed from a close-knit, co-operative community centered in London, to a competitive, capitalist industry of separate, completely independent firms. Before that time, an association of booksellers had controlled the market through a collective wholesaling "congers" (an organization of booksellers for the common warehousing and distribution of books), copyright sharing, and exclusive copyright auctions that kept such copyright within the hands of fellow congers members. Associations of booksellers also sponsored publications by mutual subscription, as in Johnson's *Dictionary* and the poetry series for which he wrote the *Lives of the Poets*. By removing the Stationers' common law monopoly over copyrights, the 1774 *Donaldson v. Becket* decision created a newly competitive environment, in which it was easier for new publishers to enter the market and challenge established practices through cheap reprints of previously copyrighted materials. The unprecedented book sales that followed this release of copyrighted material increased potential profits, but also increased the risks and number of bankruptcies in the bookselling business. The 1790s brought the end of exclusive copyright auctions, and around the same time the old booksellers' associations dissolved into large, often corporate enterprises which operated completely independently of one another. A publishing industry that had been defined by

co-operation became, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, defined primarily by competition.[61] Even before that time, greater capitalization and increasingly sophisticated mechanisms of credit had been developing over the course of the eighteenth century. Such developments gradually transformed the book trade into a more intensive modern capitalist industry, even though printing technology before the introduction of the 1814 mechanized press remained very close to what it had been since Gutenberg.[62]

The increased competitiveness between booksellers led also to greater competition to attract and retain authors, in order to create a fresh supply of copyrighted material, together with an increased emphasis on the marketing and appearance of books. In *Judging New Wealth*, James Raven documents booksellers' attempts to make book-buying more fashionable throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, including experiments with new and more attractive layout formats beginning in the 1760s, more aggressive advertisement campaigns, and an increasing responsiveness to changing public tastes as the century progressed.[63] As the public grew, booksellers also began to publish more octavo and duodecimo sizes at cheaper prices to appeal to a wider audience.[64] As prices fell and the potential audience widened, poetry became another fashionable consumer commodity. As Barbara Benedict writes, poetry during the course of the century "became a fashionable, topical item produced quickly for consumption by a wide, anonymous audience [. . .] No longer the pleasure only of the elite, it transformed into a consumer item, part of a commercialized leisure culture that sold entertainment to a mass audience of newly literate people."[65] This development is indicated already by mid century in the impressive success of Robert Dodsley's multi-volume poetic miscellany, the *Collection* (1748–58), and the imitators it spawned: part of a thriving market for poetic miscellanies throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.[66] Such fashionable poetry was far beyond the purchasing power of working class readers, but it catered to an increasing middle class demand, as readers sought access to the elite cultural capital that poetry provided.[67]

Beginning in the 1770s and 1780s, the availability of previously copyrighted material and the newly competitive marketplace led increasing numbers of booksellers to produce poetry series in matching volumes, appealing to a wide commercial audience. John Bell's 109 volume *Poets of Great Britain* (1777–83) sold five different versions to appeal to different classes of readers, with the standard format at 6 s. per volume. A consortium of thirty-six booksellers rivaled Bell by sponsoring *The Works of the English Poets* (1779–81) in sixty eight volumes, including Samuel Johnson's famous *Lives of the Poet*; and other booksellers produced other series. These series became an increasingly

popular way to market books, promoting the idea of a national poetic canon in a commercial format accessible to a wider array of readers, thus reinforcing the notion of a modern "classic" and helping to expand the audience for polite forms of poetry.[68]

At this point the general trends of the print industry over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries should be clear: a major proliferation of print from the late 1690s; the growing importance of various forms of periodical literature and journalism, which both expanded the reading public and stimulated the sales of other forms of print; steady growth in the number of books published beginning in the late 1740s, with a dramatic acceleration in the late 1780s and late 1820s; a slow increase in literacy together with a more rapid increase in the middle class public for polite literature, with further expansion and a sense of fragmentation of reading audiences in the aftermath of the French Revolution; and the transformation of the book trade into a large-scale capitalist industry beginning around the end of the eighteenth century and accelerating in the 1830s and 1840s with new mechanized technologies. With these trends in mind, we can now move to assess the construction of authorship within the social and economic contexts of this developing print culture.

COPYRIGHT AND THE RISE OF THE AUTHOR

As David Saunders and Ian Hunter argue in "Lessons from the 'Literatory': How to Historicize Authorship," it is important not to assume that authorship represents a single homogenous discourse. Saunders and Hunter make a convincing case, further developed in Saunders' study of *Authorship and Copyright*, that authorship consists of multiple strands, including the aesthetic, the ethical, the psychological, the political, and the legal, and that such strands do not necessarily develop consistently or reflect the presence of a single underlying subject—an idea which is itself a contingent historical development.[69]

With this caveat in mind, it remains true that modern ideas of authorship are inextricably bound up with the development of copyright. Copyright in England, however, initially emerged not for the protection of authors' rights and property, but for the protection of booksellers. With the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, printers and booksellers were freed from pre-publication censorship and legal restriction on the number of presses, but at the same time the print industry was dangerously opened up to free competition. Prior to that time the entry of new books in the Stationers' Register had been compulsory before printing, giving the Stationers, who enjoyed a crown-granted monopoly on printing together with special powers of search and

seizure for illegal publications, control to enforce their guild rules and monopoly. Under this system, the monarchy and the Stationers had worked together during the Restoration to impose the old, pre-Revolutionary regulation of the press, beneficial to both parties because it simultaneously policed against seditious printing and allowed the Stationers to define and protect their property—the traditional, exclusive right to print the books, or "copies," entered under a publisher's name in the Stationers' Register. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Stationers had come to consider entry in the Register as a claim to property in perpetuity under common law.[70]

With the lapse of the Licensing Act, however, the Stationers' monopoly on the regulation of printing expired and their exclusive property rights over these "copies" were brought into question. Since this right in copies had become an increasingly valuable form of property, sold for high sums and passed down from generation to generation, the opening up of printing to others outside the Stationers' Company posed a considerable threat. One way of safeguarding this property, which I have already mentioned, was the formation of a bookselling "congers," including the most powerful men in the industry, which wholesaled books together and provided special discounts to congers members. This arrangement created a combined front which both increased profits and deterred piracy—although the sale of "pirated" editions printed in Scotland and overseas continued to be rampant in the provinces.[71] Another method of control which emerged out of the "congers" system, first documented in 1718 and persisting for much of the century, was the restriction of "copy" sales to exclusive auctions to which only members of the trade were invited, thus insuring that the trade retained its monopoly over these "copies."[72] Since not only entire "copies" but also shares in "copies" could be traded, at 1/2 or 1/4 or even 1/64 of a "copy," this practice resulted in collective ownership of many of the most valuable print properties. The most valuable property of all, the "English Stock," had long been owned in common, evolving from the crown's sixteenth-century patents for exclusive printing of such perennially valuable works as Bibles, prayer books, law books, school primers, and almanacs, and was by the eighteenth century an extremely valuable monopoly.[73] With the opening up of printing in 1695 to those outside the Stationers' Company, however, these properties would lose their value unless they could be established by law. Hence the 1710 Statute of Anne or Copyright Act, the first explicit establishment of a legal "copyright," came into being as a direct result of these booksellers' lobbying efforts, which began soon after the lapse of the Licensing Act and included ten unsuccessful attempts at legislation between 1695 and 1707.[74] As John Feather writes, the 1710 Statute of Anne "was, in effect, a law designed by its promoters to

defend a group of property rights vested in a small number of owners and shareholders [. . .,] an essentially conservative measure, promoted by men who interests were in preserving the *status quo*."[75]

Although authors were mentioned in the 1710 Statute, their rights were not strongly emphasized or clearly established, but merely listed together with other possible proprietors. As if to emphasize this bookselling interest, the language of earlier drafts of the Statute was amended in ways which decreased the significance of the author and removed a clear statement of authors' rights.[76] Though in some sense these changes reflect the Bill's focus in protecting the interest of the booksellers, they may also reflect, as Mark Rose argues, the fact that authorial property had not been a subject of extensive consideration or concern up to that time, and so remained a largely unformulated idea.[77] In the end, the 1710 Statute did not clearly establish anything, failing to define the key terms of "copies" and "rights" and failing to establish whether it superseded or merely supplemented the common law.[78] The Statute set the term of copyright at twenty-one years for existing "copies" and fourteen years, with a further renewable term of another fourteen years, for newly entered "copies," but it did not stipulate whether these periods established the total duration of such rights or merely supplemented a perpetual right to "copies" already existing under common law, as booksellers claimed.

A long series of legal battles over the course of the century would finally establish this position, first by affirming perpetual ownership of "copies" under common law in a series of court cases, and then, in the landmark 1774 reversal of *Donaldson v. Becket*, overturning these earlier decisions to establish the fourteen or twenty-one year terms of the Statute of Anne as the limits of copyright, thus opening a "public domain" of works whose copyright term had lapsed.[79] During this half century of litigation the rights of authors received increasingly more attention, becoming the focus of a debate over the exact nature of the property vested by copyrights—a debate which has continued to our present day. It is important to realize, however, that although the 1710 Statute had made it possible for authors to go to court to protect their rights to their own "copies," and though some authors, notably Alexander Pope, did in fact go to court, the debate over copyright and the definition of the rights of the author emerged essentially out of a commercial struggle between rival booksellers. While the London Stationers' Company wanted to affirm its perpetual rights over what it considered its property, other booksellers, especially Scotsmen such as James Donaldson, challenged these rights in the name of free trade and public interest in order to publish their own legal editions. The author, around whose rights this legal debate increasingly centered, was in effect only a pawn of these more powerful interests, and it was not until the

nineteenth century that authors began to represent their own interests and lobby parliament themselves, as when Wordsworth, Carlyle, Southey, and Dickens, among others, actively campaigned to support the extension of copyright in the late 1830s and early 1840s.[80] The legal struggle did not include the interests of authors in the eighteenth century, largely because the "author" had not yet emerged as a well-defined category of identity or social power. As legal debate between rival booksellers centered more and more around the author's exact rights to "property," however, this debate helped stimulate the gradual development of ideas of authorship and authorial "genius" during the eighteenth century, on the basis of which authorial property rights eventually emerged.[81]

The fundamental concept supporting the idea of literary property in the copyright debates came from John Locke and his theory of property in the *Two Treatises on Government*, in which labor expended on the unclaimed resources of nature establishes individual property over the products of that labor.[82] Based on this position, some booksellers argued that the author's property rights over his or her work were established by intellectual labor, transforming the raw material of language and ideas into a particular literary product which was subsequently transferable by gift or sale to the bookseller. It was important, in this regard, to distinguish the author's intellectual labor from the related legal definition of the inventor's patent, which existed only for a limited term.[83] Although the author could be seen as analogous to the inventor in creating ideas, the public would clearly not tolerate a perpetual copyright over ideas. Advocates of perpetual copyright thus argued that the author's special rights inhered not in the ideas but the expression or form of those ideas: the unique and inimitable personal "style" of the literary work.

Through this train of logic, the debate over copyright merged with the discourse of authorial "genius," which had been growing in importance from the middle of the eighteenth century. Both ideas can be seen as emerging out of the new commercial environment of eighteenth-century print culture. As Martha Woodmansee has argued, the idea of original genius rises into prominence in part as a response to the proliferation of print and increasing ascendancy of the market.[84] The "genius" was defined in opposition to the "hack" or commercial drudge, allowing for the affirmation of dignified authorial identity in the face of a potentially degrading marketplace dependence. The "hack" in this model was portrayed as a mere mechanical drudge of the booksellers, mass-producing print for the commercial market without originality in what was essentially intellectual factory labor: in the words of some eighteenth-century writers, a "mere Mechanick" (Fielding, *Convent-Garden Journal*), engaged in "a sort of Manufacture" by creating from "pre-existent

materials not [his] own" (Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*), and "a thing little superior to the fellow who works at the press" (Goldsmith, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*).[85] The "genius," in contrast, was represented as a dignified and autonomous intellectual creator, producing original works out of his own personal imagination. This opposition provided a way for authors to affirm their independence and dignity by distinguishing themselves from the mass of mere "scribblers" flooding the commercial literary marketplace. Although Samuel Johnson famously asserted that none but a blockhead would write except for money, the idea of the "genius" made the author in theory completely independent from the marketplace and its financial considerations. Inconsistently, the idea of genius supported authors' claims to literary property while at the same time allowing them to claim separation from the literary marketplace. In mystifying the independent author's ultimate dependence on print culture, however, such ideas performed an important enabling function, helping to establish authorship as a dignified, independent profession in its own right.[86] From the long-standing ideas of the writer as a craftsman of words or a vehicle of divine inspiration, the idea of the "author" now emerged in the modern sense, as an individual producing his or her writing as an expression of unique, individual personality from an internal rather than external source of inspiration, and therefore possessing a unique claim of ownership over that writing.[87] The legal discourses of copyright are not equivalent to the aesthetic discourses of individual expressivism, as Saunders and Hunter point out, but their interdependent origination seems clear, as part of a larger complex of responses to the changed social and economic conditions of writing.

This construction of "genius" as independent from the marketplace allowed poets to distance themselves from the continuing stigma of commercial self-interest. Print had carried a social stigma during the Renaissance, negatively associated with commercialism, lack of gentility, and self-promotion. Even professional writers, who relied on print and opposed the claims of more elite manuscript coteries, had to deny economic self-interest as a primary incentive in order to gain social respectability.[88] For those of high social status, merely going to the print shop or interacting with booksellers could represent a lowering of dignity, in which the genteel author subjected him or herself to commercial tradespeople. Adrian Johns in *The Nature of the Book* discusses the significance of the term "propriety," used to designate ownership in the Stationers' Register: a term which connected print ownership with issues of decorum. Johns argues that a publisher's or printer's reputation reflected directly on the social reputation of the author during the early modern period. Piracy, in this sense, was as much a breach of social decorum as of

property.[89] Since authors had no recognized right over the formatting of their works, and since early modern texts were often unattributed or misattributed, entering print meant that the author subjected him or herself to the possibility of public indecorum.[90] Furthermore, though copyright was generally respected for works of individual authors, it was often disregarded in miscellanies and did not apply to newspapers, magazines, and other forms of periodical publication. In the fluid environment of early modern print culture, poems were often pirated or freely reproduced in such forms without the author's consent, threatening to multiply breaches of propriety.[91] In the same spirit, printing was seen as a public act (as in "publishing"), and printing solely for one's personal or commercial self-interest was often regarded as an act of egotism or a violation of social norms.

This potential stigma of print persisted throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth for genteel writers.[92] Linda Zionkowski argues in *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784* that participation in the marketplace began to be associated with a new model of bourgeois, market man, as opposed to the effeminacy of female and aristocratic coteries writing, a position she associates especially with Samuel Johnson.[93] Johnson was a seminal figure for this ideal of the dignified professional author, earning his own independent living in the marketplace. For many genteel writers, however, commercial involvement continued to carry a stigma: especially in poetry, with its elite cultural status. Even Zionkowski concedes that professional writers could not define themselves primarily as commodity producers without losing their respectability, as they found themselves caught in a contradiction between the idea of writing as a gentlemanly liberal art and a new bourgeois model of productivity.[94] Paul Keen in *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s* explores a similar tension, arguing that both radical and conservative writers in the 1790s authorized themselves by claiming a position of disinterestedness and public service, in the tradition of Augustan civic republicanism. Such writers disclaimed commercial motives, but at the same time they also claimed literary property, moral responsibility, and professional independence in an emerging liberal democratic tradition. These conflicting imperatives, according to Keen, created a fundamental tension in the idea of literature, apparent in many of the writers in this study.[95] The stigma of commercialism continued throughout the Romantic period, as poetic value became associated with transcending the marketplace and appealing to posterity, and arguably continues up to the current day in the idea that the true artist does not "sell out" and opposes the vulgar commercialism of society.[96] Though many authors would combine this anti-commercialism with strenuous commercial involvement, as the following chapters

will explore, this stigma would continue to structure the terms in which poets represented themselves.

Associated both with literary property and with anti-commercialism, the idea of "genius" could be invoked to support both sides of the copyright debate. When Lord Camden argued *against* perpetual copyright in 1774 in the House of Lords, taking Donaldson's position in *Donaldson v. Becket*, he offered the by-then familiar distinction between the "genius" and the "hack"—"those favoured Mortals, those sublime Spirits, who share the Ray of Divinity which we call Genius," as opposed to the "Scribblers for bread, who teize [sic] the press with their wretched Productions"—in order to argue that true genius works for fame and the public good and cares nothing for money. Because of its disinterestedness, Camden argues, genius does not need to be protected in the marketplace; whereas the work of hacks is not original enough to deserve legal protection. Supporters of perpetual copyright, in opposition, argued that copyright inheres in the very idea of genius: the ability to imprint one's own unique style and identity on a literary work. Despite these differences of application, as Mark Rose points out, both sides of the debate focused attention on the author's unique relation to his or her own work, reinforcing the idea of the author as central to literature and tending to abstract the author out of other social and material contexts[97]

In an ultimate sense, the development of copyright and its contribution to aesthetic theories of genius depended on the burgeoning print market, which made literary property so valuable. This expanding market increasingly allowed authors to support themselves through the sale of their writing, gradually breaking down old structures of patronage and forcing authors to define their own identities apart from the social structure. As Martha Woodmansee argues in her essay on "The Genius and the Copyright," modern ideas of the author, including the idea of authorial genius, emerged specifically as "the product of the rise in the eighteenth century of a new group of individuals: writers who sought to earn their livelihoods from the sale of their writing to a new and rapidly expanding reading public."[98]

By the time Lord Camden pleaded the disinterestedness of genius before the House of Lords in 1774, authorship had already become established, albeit somewhat tenuously, as a potentially dignified profession and category of identity in its own right.[99] In the first decades of the 1700s, the author's identity was still not defined primarily by authorship, per se, but by the writer's general social position—both because the idea of the "author" had not yet fully emerged and because it was all but impossible to earn a living entirely through sales of one's own writing. It is significant to note that in France, where authorial property remained undefined during the eighteenth century

and authors' earning potentials were significantly lower, the professional identity of the "author" did not become established until after the French Revolution, as writers until then continued to be defined primarily by other categories of identity and social status.[100] In England, in contrast, it had become increasingly possible by the middle of the eighteenth century to earn a living through one's writing for the print market public. The significance of periodical publications, including newspapers, essay-periodicals, magazines, and reviews, cannot be underestimated as a support for independent writers, and provided another major difference between England and France, where journalism did not flourish to any comparable extent until the time of the Revolution. As Pat Rogers points out, almost all prominent British writers in the eighteenth century were engaged in some form of periodical writing during their careers, not to mention the much vaster number of writers whose names and histories do not generally come to our attention but who were also supported by such publications.[101] Although the prices paid to authors for their copyrights rose substantially over the course of the eighteenth century, and at times (and in comparison with France) could earn authors almost fabulous sums, it was still very unusual to make a living solely by writing books, especially books of poetry or imaginative literature.[102] The author of an eighteenth-century periodical essay, however, could make between £1 and £6 per essay. In the 1780s, the *Monthly Review* typically paid four guineas and the *Critical Review* two guineas per sheet, while some reviewers could earn up to six guineas. The *Edinburgh Review* in 1810 paid an even more generous ten guineas per sheet, doubling the standard rate. When that rate was matched by the *Quarterly Review* and other competitors, the *Edinburgh* raised its reimbursement to a minimum of sixteen guineas per sheet by the late 1810s, with an average of as much as twenty to twenty-five guineas (according to its editor Francis Jeffrey). By the 1830s, Lee Erickson estimates, a hard-working periodical writer could make a respectable £300 per year from such writing alone; and the growing number of periodicals also supported writers in editor and regular staff positions, often with substantial salaries.[103] As journalistic opportunities continued to proliferate, so too did the number of writers supported by such writing, until in the nineteenth century, in the words of John Feather, "the vast increase in the output of the press created an army of writers and journalists who, unlike so many of their predecessors, could live by their pens," and the overall growth of the reading public began to make other forms of writing more remunerative as well.[104]

The 1774 decision against perpetual copyright also improved the situation of authors, in that it forced booksellers to publish more new literature and cultivate more living writers. Prior to that time the most valuable literary

copyrights had been in long-established works, many by authors long dead, whose popularity promised perpetual sales and a steady return year after year. Such a system led to a very conservative publishing industry.[105] With the 1774 decision, however, many such titles entered the public domain, and limited terms of copyright meant that booksellers were continually forced to cultivate new authors and new titles. The result was not only a surge of both cheap reprints and new titles marketed to the reading public, but also improved financial leverage for authors, whose properties were now sought after by booksellers in an increasingly competitive market.

Authors' earning potentials also increased substantially towards the end of the eighteenth century through changes in the method of payment. Generally authors were paid in the eighteenth century, if at all, with lump sums for copyright, relinquishing their financial rights to the bookseller once and for all from the outset. Arrangements more favorable to authors, such as stipulations for subsequent editions, profit-sharing, and royalties, became more common only towards the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, allowing the most popular authors such as Scott and Dickens to profit enormously from spectacular sales. By the middle of the nineteenth century, in John Feather's words, "a successful author could expect rewards that put him among the best-paid in the land." Few authors before the nineteenth century had the leverage to negotiate profit-sharing deals, however, and until then it was the bookseller and not the author who stood to make a fortune through the sales of an unexpected "best-seller." Profit-sharing arrangements did not become common until the middle of the nineteenth century, so that up to that point the new payment practices benefited primarily only the most successful authors.[106]

The relatively low payments for book copyrights reflected the tight margins of the bookselling business, in which booksellers often published by speculation in the hopes of producing a popular and widely selling work. Market uncertainties kept print runs small for most books until well into the nineteenth century: a typical edition ran to about 750 copies, and poetry editions of five hundred were common. Lee Erickson writers that an average edition of poetry, printing five hundred volumes for a sales price of 5 s., might sell three hundred copies as a generous estimate.[107] Although copyright for established volumes of poetry could be quite valuable during the poetry boom of the 1810s and early 1820s, most copyrights were worth little, and most publications lost money. After poetry sales declined in the 1820s, the only publisher who continued to specialize in it, Edward Moxon, routinely asked poets to share the costs of publication, taking equal shares of the profits and losses. An edition would need to sell seventy to eighty percent of copies for him to break even.[108]

As a result of these tight margins, most authors were not paid very much for their work, and supporting oneself through book sales remained a tenuous possibility. Charlotte Smith turned to novel-writing in the late 1780s and 1790s because it earned more than poetry, but she still only earned about £50 for the first edition of one of her novels and £10 for each subsequent edition. When she attempted to negotiate with her publisher in 1805 for £300 for a new third volume of the *Elegiac Sonnets*—one of the most steadily selling poetry works of the era—she was turned down.[109] Joseph Cottle paid Wordsworth and Coleridge thirty guineas for the anonymous first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798; while Longman agreed to pay £80 for the second edition, and, on the basis of its modest but respectable success, one hundred guineas for the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*, for which he doubled his usual print run to one thousand.[110] In contrast, Sir Walter Scott, at the height of his poetic fame, received £4000 for *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810 and £2000 for *Rokeby* in 1812; Thomas Moore got £3000 for *Lalla Rookh* in 1817; and Byron received £2000 for Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1816. Earlier in the century, Pope received £15 apiece for both the *Essay on Criticism* and *The Rape of the Lock*; James Thomson received £105 for his *Works* (including the *Seasons*) in 1738; and William Collins held out for ten guineas for his *Odes* in 1747.[111] An average novel late in the eighteenth century did not earn much more: typically between five and sixty guineas, with £150 to £200 or more for the top names.[112]

Authors stood to make larger sums from subscription publishing, which emerged as an increasingly popular form of publishing early in the eighteenth century. Subscription publication also maintained a closer sense of audience, allowing authors to know the names of the subscribers who sponsored (and presumably read) their book. Subscriptions also insured booksellers' profits, by establishing a market for the book in advance. The practice declined towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, and became increasingly associated with female writers, who used it to avoid exposing themselves to the commercial marketplace; and working class writers, for whom it provided an explicit form of patronage. Despite the security that if offered, subscription publication did not produce large enough profits or allow booksellers to respond quickly enough to marketplace demands to make it viable as a long-term publishing strategy. For authors, it came to seem like an evasion of the marketplace and the primary reading public.[113]

It was not until early Victorian times, with the shift in authors' publishing contracts and dramatic expansion of literary sales, that writers began to have a reasonable chance of making consistently large sums of money and that authorship really expanded as a profession and distinguishing category of

identity in its own right. Even as late as 1830, only four hundred people responded to the census by declaring their identity as authors. By the end of the century, some thirteen thousand would do so.[114] Similarly, it was not until 1814, with the extension of the copyright term to twenty-eight years or the life of the author, whichever was longer, that authors' rights of copy were specifically recognized in law for the first time. In 1842 the copyright term was further extended to seven years after the death of the author or forty-two years, whichever was longer. The establishment of authorship as a profession is indicated by the fact that this time it was authors rather than booksellers who lobbied for perpetual copyright, and booksellers who opposed such an extension.[115] Whereas at the start of the eighteenth century the author had been of virtually no account in the book trade, by the middle of the nineteenth century the author had become a powerful figure and authorship was established as a relatively independent and dignified category of identity.

Traditionally, this rise of the author has been coupled with a narrative of the decline of patronage, as if the two were balanced on opposite ends of a seesaw and as the one went up the other must needs have gone down. While generally accurate in its directions, the relationship between the rise of authorship and the decline of patronage is considerably more nuanced than such a model would suggest. Dustin Griffin argues for instance, in *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800*, that patronage in various forms continued to be an important source of support for virtually all writers through the end of the eighteenth century, and that the commercial economy of literature co-existed with a continuing economy of patronage throughout the century and beyond.[116] It is salutary, in this regard, to remember that during the first quarter of the nineteenth century Coleridge and Wordsworth depended on patronage in various forms in order to pursue their own supposedly "independent" literary careers, and that they were by no means the only writers to do so.[117] For those who wished to pursue a literary career but lacked independent social status and means of support, patronage in some form remained almost essential until the end of the eighteenth century and beyond.

It is useful, therefore, to think not in terms of the decline of patronage but its gradual transformation into new forms. Patronage during the eighteenth century included not only outright gifts and support but various positions procured by influence, including church livings, political office, and government sinecures. Patrons could assist by financing the publication of books, by lifting authors into social familiarity with elites and so increasing their social status and recognition, or by lending the patron's name to subscription campaigns as a way to help attract new subscribers. During the first half of the eighteenth century subscription publication offered an important

new form of "democratized" patronage, lessening the writer's sense of dependence and easing the transition from direct patronage to a new kind of dependency on the market. All told, as Dustin Griffin writes, "it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that it was widely assumed that writers could—and should—support themselves by their own literary labors."[118]

Very few poets ever supported themselves through publication of their poetry. Yet despite this fact, which is important to bear in mind when considering Romantic theories of "genius," the figure of the independent author became ideologically central during the first half of the nineteenth century. This definition of the author as such participated in what Clifford Siskin describes as the general rise of the professions during the long eighteenth century, including the tendency to establish identity through one's professional work rather than through birth and inherited status.[119] The expansion of the print market and its audience, the evolving definition of copyright laws, the increasing competitiveness of the book trade, and the emergence of a discourse of authorial genius all played significant roles in this emergence of the author in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as an increasingly autonomous figure. After this discussion of the "rise of the author," I will turn now to survey some of the ways in which this emerging author figure changed ideas of literature and literary hermeneutics, gradually placing the subjective lyric and poetic self-representation at the center of a new poetics.

TASTE, HERMENEUTICS, AND THE "ROMANTIC IDEOLOGY" OF AUTHORSHIP

The idea of the author developed together during the eighteenth century with the idea of the reader. More specifically, the growing emphasis on the individual autonomy of the author was matched by a corresponding emphasis on the individual reader and the process of reception as an essentially private author-to-reader communication. This new model of reception, which I will call "Romantic hermeneutics," became increasingly central to lyric poetry in particular, accompanying new justifications of poetry and new roles for the poet in relation to the public. The turn to poetic self-representation, I will argue, was inseparable from the development of these new poetic models of reception.

I want to begin this section with a caveat. Up to now, this chapter has been very much grounded in the material conditions of print culture. Models of reception, however, do not always have obvious material correlates. Reading is notoriously hard to study, in part because readers leave relatively few records and in part because it is so hard to specify exactly how one reads—even today, when we have become used to the idea of reader response as an

activity worthy of intense introspective attention. It is hard enough to trace literacy and the distribution of books, and all but impossible to determine the various subjective experiences of readers. In studying the way poets represented themselves in relation to audience, in any case, it matters less how people actually read than how poets imagined their readers. In the pages that follow, I will thus pay less attention to the history of reading, per se, than to how the relationship between reader and author was theorized during the period of this study.[120]

The shift to a poetics of individual reception in England first becomes significant in the eighteenth century with the increasing importance of the idea of "taste." The metaphor of "taste" defined literary value in relation to reception or consumption, focusing on the perspective of the reader or viewer and the workings of the individual mind rather than the perspective of the maker or the artwork's rhetorical or instrumental effect, as had been typical of most earlier criticism.[121] M.H. Abrams describes this shift—which accompanied a new focus on the formal structures of the autonomous artwork or "heterocosm" as a disinterested object of aesthetic attention—as a major change in over two thousand years of aesthetic theory, and argues that it emerged out of the new conditions of commercial print culture. The commercial marketplace generated an unprecedented number of artworks and separated those works from immediate social context, creating the idea of a separate aesthetic sphere and the scenario of "a lone receiver confront[ing] an isolated work" as a new paradigm for defining and interpreting literature.[122]

Early in the eighteenth century, standards of taste were believed to be universal in all normal, educated, and civilized human beings (which in practice restricted taste to a relatively small segment of a mostly male, European intelligentsia). Such standards were debated almost from the inception of the idea, however, and towards the middle of the century, as audiences expanded and the relatively small classically-educated circles that had adjudicated in the arts began to widen and fragment, the consensus of taste began to fragment also. E.N. Hooker argues that during the period from 1750 to 1770 the nature of "taste" became an overwhelming critical concern, drawing critics as diverse as Burke, Hume, Hogarth, Reynolds, Kames and Gerard.[123] Yet despite this universal concern to define the exact nature of "taste," and despite the shared conviction that universal standards of taste could be discovered in accordance with the psychological principles of the human mind, such critics often diametrically disagreed with one another in their definitions of the faculty, and the exact nature of taste began to seem more and more elusive and subjective. A 1767 review from the *Gentleman's Review*, reviewing (appropriately) *Tristram Shandy*, declares, in this spirit, that in matters of taste "every

one must decide for himself; and what is humour is as much a question of taste, as what is beauty."[124]

Thus although taste originally offered a model for social consensus in a society of free individuals, towards the end of the century such consensus had come to seem threatened. The desire for consensus remained, but its reality seemed increasingly elusive. It was towards the end of the century, as Jon Klancher writes in *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, that the sense of a single, homogeneous audience, corresponding to the single homogeneous "public sphere," also began to break down into fragmented and sometimes opposed readerships.[125] The profusion of periodicals and reviews with their different standards of judgment and the different audiences they gathered around themselves made it more and more difficult to conceive of a single, unified public or a single shared standard of literary value. Klancher writes:

> As the journals multiplied, they registered the increasingly heterogeneous play of sociolects—the discourses of emerging professions, conflicting social spheres, men and women, the cultivated middle-class audience, and less sophisticated readerships. This contradictory role—cementing the small audience while subdividing the larger public—made the periodical a singular but socially unstable institution for defining, individualizing, and expanding the audiences who inhabited the greater cultural landscape.[126]

The heated debates on taste from around the middle of the eighteenth century indicate that the public was starting to fragment even then, as the commercialization of literature and the arts expanded to include more and more diverse social groups with different values and expectations. The events of the French Revolution and its aftermath arguably provided the hammer that fractured this already cracking social block. The goal of a universal standard of taste would linger indefinitely, but after Peterloo it would linger only as a lost, fugitive ideal.

In association with the discourse of taste, writers in the eighteenth century shifted emphasis onto the mental activity of the individual reader, which became increasingly important for literary criticism. Samuel Johnson's invocation of the "common reader" in his "Life of Gray" as the touchstone and ultimate court of appeal for all literature presents perhaps the most famous statement of this development, but it participates in a general trend.[127] Trevor Ross writes that around the time when Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* appeared in 1759, "pamphlets and monographs on the art of reading begin to appear for the first time, and reading for comprehension and appreciation becomes a subject of pedagogical concern," indicating

the growing importance of the reader as a focus of literary value.[128] The figure of the "common reader," Ross argues, first appeared in tracts opposing the creation of a perpetual copyright, thus demonstrating how the focus on the reader, as well as the author, was stimulated by such debates as part of the overall redefinition of print culture.

The emergence of this reader-based criticism reflects a corresponding privatization of reading as a solitary individual act. Reading remained implicated in the public sphere institutions of the coffee house, the club, and the debating society (among others), but the growth of commercial lending libraries from the 1740s and lower prices for literature from the late 1770s also brought such reading increasingly into the privacy of the home.[129] Rare in the seventeenth century, by the middle of the eighteenth century private libraries had become a standard fixture in the houses of the aristocracy and upper gentry, and middle class houses increasingly installed shelves and nooks for reading. James Raven points out that these libraries were often sites of shared reading, reading aloud, or other communal and performative acts, but they nevertheless helped to shift the focus of reading out of the public and into the private sphere.[130] Private studies or "closets" for reading also become more prevalent around this time, and feature significantly in works such as *Pamela*, in which privacy and writing are strongly equated.[131] As Patricia Meyer Spacks argues in her recent book on privacy during the eighteenth century, private reading was often viewed with anxiety and suspicion; but at the same time, this sudden proliferation of anxiety indicates that it was an increasingly common practice. As Spacks points out, such anxieties did little to halt the development of private reading, which nineteenth-century writers often took for granted as a pleasure.[132] As a result of such developments, the literary text was increasingly theorized from the perspective of the individual, solitary reader, making sense out of that text in isolation from any immediate shared social context.[133]

At the same time that the reader was becoming increasingly individuated and privatized, the author was undergoing a similar privatization. John Sitter has argued in *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* that the 1740s witness the beginning of the idea that poetry should be about the solitary poet in nature, writing without an explicit sense of audience or social engagement.[134] Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, one of the most popular poems throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, is an outstanding example of this trend, reflecting the increasing sense of the author as an isolated and even asocial being. This development could be both enabling and paralyzing, since the author's growing sense of independence was matched by a disconcerting sense of

alienation and even solipsism.[135] As the public grew and the perceived distance between authors and readers widened, the author was increasingly forced back upon him or herself, and writing began to be theorized as the private act of an autonomous self.

This individuation and privatization of authorship occurred gradually over time, in many different overlapping discourses, and did not become a commonplace of aesthetic theory until as late as the 1820s and 1830s. Arthur Hallam Halley's 1831 essay "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry," for instance, takes the central place of the author for granted, while John Stuart Mill's 1833 essay, "What is Poetry," claims that "all poetry is of the nature of soliloquy."[136] Although poetry even for the later Romantics never lost its social and political significance, it would be increasingly conceptualized as written by isolated individual authors to isolated individual readers. As Marilyn Butler writes,

> Around 1820 the Enlightenment attempt to reach Everyman (that is, every reader) through universally accessible modes dwindled into the private, introverted communications of the autobiographers and essayists, for whom the arts were not so much the objective mirroring of man and his culture as the subjective expression of men in private rooms.[137]

The private reader and the private author emerged in this sense as mutually constitutive.

As the public both expanded and diversified, early-nineteenth-century writers became arguably the first generation to address an audience composed primarily of strangers.[138] Jon Klancher, for instance, writes that

> The phenomenon of the *un*sought mass audience also first appeared in the early nineteenth century: Lord Byron and Walter Scott awakened to something barely imaginable to the writers who thought and wrote in terms of a deliberately formed compact between writer and audience [. . .] This vast, unsolicited audience asked of the writer that he perform, construct myths of "the author," become a public event in his own right; toward it, Byron adopted a stance of personal revelation and offered intimacies to a faceless public he professed to disdain.[139]

Although in one sense this separation of the writer from his or her audience and its social contexts generated a wished-for independence, it also introduced a whole new set of anxieties and dependencies: what Annette Wheeler Cafarelli has called "the uneasy alliance between the common reader and the uncommon poet in Romantic poetics."[140] The emergence of the Romantic

figure of the artist in the 1810s and 1820s, which Marilyn Butler describes as "lonely, introverted, unhappy, but marked out from the commonalty by his genius," reflects the growth of the public from "an educated class sufficiently small and homogenous to mingle in gathering-places with more or less easy access," such as Bath, the London theaters, or the gardens at Vauxhall, to a heterogeneous public of all classes which could not be addressed with any kind of assurance of how they would respond, or if they would respond at all.[142] Writers such as Wordsworth could gauge their public only from the sale of their books, and to a lesser extent from the response of reviews and the appearance of unsolicited visitors and letters.[143] With this isolation of the author from an immediate public and shared social context, together with the increasing contestation over standards of literary propriety and taste generated by the ideological contestation of the reviews, individual writers were increasingly forced to construct this audience and their own literary standards themselves in their texts. It is in this spirit that Wordsworth argues, in his 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," that "every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed" (emphases his).[143] Hence also the growing tendency to figure readers and writers within the text itself, which Charles Rzepka describes as an attempt to construct a sympathetic "greeting of the spirit" from imagined individual readers that compensated for a lost sense of connection to the actual public.[144]

Wordsworth's 1815 "Essay" also provides a significant early example of what would develop into a Romantic hermeneutics, focusing on the relationship between individual author and individual reader. According to this model, the reader must actively sympathize with the author in order to receive the value of the literary work. Such a reader must be active, but at the same time must ultimately defer to the guidance and authority of the poet. As the reader is "invigorated and inspirited by his leader [i.e. the poet]," according to Wordsworth, he "exerts, within his own mind, a corresponding energy," thus in effect reproducing the same mental state as the poet within his [or her] own mind. As Coleridge puts it more baldly in one of his lectures, the "consciousness of the Poet's Mind must be diffused over that of the Reader or Spectator."[145] In order for this model to work, both reader and author must be isolated outside of social contexts as autonomous individuals, defined in primary relation with one another. This Romantic hermeneutics also depends on the idea of the artwork as a unique expression of the individual author or "genius," infused with that author's style, personality, and ultimately, consciousness—the same model of literary style which supported claims of authorial copyright.[146]

The German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher gave this hermeneutics its first full conceptual formulation in his 1819 *Compendium*, but it can be seen as implicit in much of what we now categorize as "Romantic" writing.[147] Meaning, in such a model, does not inhere in the text itself, but in the act of reading, which reproduces the state of consciousness and intentions of its original author. The act of reading is thus figured as a direct communication between individual author and individual reader, mediated by the written text. The meaning of the text is grounded both on the assumed unity of the author's consciousness (or intention) and on the unity of the reader's consciousness which reproduces it. Tilottama Rajan describes this hermeneutics as a "displacement of meaning from language to consciousness," which makes individual consciousness the defining site of literary meaning and value.[148] Such a development arguably reflects and compensates for the author's sense of isolation and individuation in relation to an increasingly unknown print market audience. As it became increasingly difficult to imagine and write to a unified public, authors instead wrote to imaginary individual readers. The Romantic hermeneutics emerged out of this situation, taking author, reader, and artwork alike out of their immediate social context. Ultimately, the individuation and autonomy of the author depended on imagining the corresponding individuation of the reader, who was defined in the Romantic hermeneutics solely in relation to the author.

Such developments also allowed poets to justify self-representation by providing a new function for poetry in relation to the individual reader. The old decorum against representing the self was a function of poetry's place in the contexts of both social relations and genre. Within such contexts, the identity of the poet and the role of poetry was already established. As the crisis of poetic identity and role grew over the course of the eighteenth century in relation to the new commercial culture, the individual author emerged as a central focus of attention in his or her own right. This authorial identity did not at first serve any obvious self-justifying function in relation to audience and tended to be celebrated in poetry in displaced or glorified forms, such as bard and minstrel figures or great poetic precursors like Milton, Shakespeare, and Spenser. Without social justification, eighteenth-century poets could not break decorum by making themselves the explicit subject of their own poetry. Romantic hermeneutics provided such a justification, allowing authors to claim that by representing their own identity, consciousness, and feeling they also communicated that consciousness and feeling to the individual reader, in the process educating and expanding the faculties of that reader. In the idea of sympathy, central to Romantic hermeneutics and the social theories of thinkers as various as David Hume, Adam Smith, William Godwin, and

Edmund Burke, writing and reading enabled the circulation of sympathy throughout society and so generated social cohesion, while at the same time cultivating the moral and imaginative capacities of readers. The related discourse of sensibility, which developed out of earlier discourses of taste, justified self-representation in similar ways.[149] In constructing their own identities through these faculties, poets could provide a model for readers to construct their identities according to similar patterns, thus establishing the poet's social service in relation to a public of individual readers.

In defining some aspects of this "Romantic hermeneutics" and suggesting how it was related to the growth of the print market, I do not mean to suggest that it was a monolithic or coherent discourse at any time during the period of this study, or that it provided the sole possible justification for poetic self-representation. I do mean to point out, however, that poets could only represent their personal selves in their writing if they could find some convincing social justification for doing so which allowed them to answer charges of egotism and violation of decorum—the very charges Wordsworth faced early in his career. The chapters that follow will show different poets struggling with this issue in different ways, as they attempted to construct their own identities in the face of an increasingly large and unknown audience without violating poetic decorum.

CONCLUSION: THE AUTHOR, THE MARKET, AND THE SELF

This chapter has covered a lot of ground, so it makes sense to sum up and establish a general framework before moving on to individual poets and close readings of particular poems. The chapter began by tracing a variety of developments in the institutions of print culture: the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 and the burgeoning of various forms of periodical literature, stimulating an overall proliferation of print and providing financial support for writers; the institution of the commercial lending library and its role in developing reading; the growth and eventual fragmentation of the reading public, together with the anxieties that it generated; trends in production figures; increasing competitiveness in the publishing industry towards the end of the eighteenth century; the growing mass-production of literature in the late 1820s and 1830s, as poetry was displaced by the novel as a dominant genre after a boom period in poetic sales; and the eventual emergence of a "mass" public during the nineteenth century. The overall book market grew steadily from the late 1740s but surged around the late 1780s at a time of increasingly active marketing by booksellers, with more attention to smaller and cheaper editions for larger audiences. Around that same time, the end of perpetual copyright in common law increased the active marketing of booksellers, and

ultimately the earning potential of poets, allowing the professional model of dignified independent authorial identity to gain ground. During the 1810s and early 1820s the public for poetry grew dramatically, while at the same time the French Revolution and political crisis after Waterloo generated an overall sense of expanding and fragmenting audiences.

The following section focused on the development of copyright and corresponding developments in the discourses of genius and independent authorship. These discourses helped call attention to the identity of the author, while at the same time increasing authors' earning potential and claims to literary property. The profit margins for publishing were always tight, and most authors did not make much money, even for bestsellers, until the development of royalty profit-sharing as a more common arrangement during the nineteenth century. The large sales and substantial earnings of poets such as Byron and Scott, however, reinforced the position of independent authorial identity and so played a part in the development of self-representation. At the same time, such large sales reinforced the author's sense isolation from a largely unknown public, leading some poets to compensate by constructing their own identities in relation to imagined individual readers. Although the growth of the marketplace was not straightforwardly matched by a decline of patronage, which continued to be important for poets well into the nineteenth century, the idea of authorial independence, enabled by the development of copyright law, become increasingly central to authorial self-definition.

The final section of the chapter traced corresponding shifts in theories of reception and the idea of the reader, increasingly individuated in relation to the individual author. As a more autonomous idea of authorship emerged, bolstered by the discourse of genius, and as the perceived fragmentation of audiences threatened the idea of a universal standard of "taste," the relationship between individual author and individual reader became increasingly important to the overall conceptualization of poetry. The section concluded by tracing the emergence of a "Romantic hermeneutics" in relation to these print market conditions, focusing the meaning and value of the literary work on the central figure of the author. This hermeneutic model provided a new justification for poetry, and specifically for poetic self-representation, on the basis of the individual author-to-reader relationship, through the author's claim to provide a model and educate the faculties of individual readers.

Through all these developments, the figure of the individual author emerged as increasingly central to literature and to lyric poetry in particular. Poetic self-representation, this book argues, emerged out of these complex conjunctions between the material bases of print culture and the discourses of

authorship and authorial identity that developed as part of that cultural milieu. It is perhaps not accidental that the authorial self emerged as a central and explicit subject in poetry around the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the time when the idea of a single homogeneous reading public came to seem finally untenable. Similarly, it was only in the late 1820s and 1830s, at the time of the Reform Bill and the emergence of a vastly larger market for literature, that Wordsworth's poetry of subjectivity and authorial self-representation began to seem increasingly significant, and Wordsworth began to rise to his current heights in the literary canon. Around this same time, the isolated author became central to a new hermeneutic model of literature. This figure of the author only took center stage in the nineteenth century, but the authorial self had been emerging throughout the century before, in response to the overall emergence of print culture as the dominant context for literature.

Chapter Two

"Books and the Man": Alexander Pope, Print Culture, and Authorial Self-Making

Alexander Pope's career in many ways marks the transition from a literary economy of patronage to one of the marketplace. Born in 1688, seven years before the expiration of the Licensing Act led to the flourishing of the British commercial press, Pope reached the age of twenty-one and published his first work in 1709, one year before the Statute of Anne (or Copyright Act) established literary property in terms in copyright; then went on to become the first author to make a fortune from the sale of his imaginative writing and the first to defend his rights to his own literary property consistently in court.[1] Although one must be wary of turning writers into symbolic figures, Pope's career more than any other embodies the transition to a new literary economics of the marketplace, as he became the first major poet to support himself primarily through the sale of his writing to a commercial print public. At the same time, Pope became the first to define his own authorial identity in relation to this print market public, making his identity central to much of his later poetry.[2] Pope's turn to explicit self-representation and the identity he constructed for himself, I will argue, must be understood in terms of his changing relationship to this dynamically emerging commercial print culture.

Pope's poetic career can be divided generally into three phases, defined by his changing relationships to the literary marketplace as laid out in David Foxon's *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*.[3] In the initial period leading up to the 1717 *Works*, Pope stood in basically the traditional dependence of the author on patrons and publishers, surrounded by a circle of older, upper-class friends who promoted and encouraged his writing. During the middle of his career Pope made a fortune and established his poetic pre-eminence through a combination of subscription patronage and shrewd market manipulation in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations. Then on

the basis of that fortune and reputation, in the final phase of his career Pope increasingly controlled the production and marketing of his own works, in effect setting up his own personal printer and publisher as he skillfully manipulated the commercial market to promote himself as an author. In the process, he distinguished himself as not only the dominant poet of his era, but perhaps also the shrewdest businessman of all major British poets.[4] As James McLaverty explores in *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, Pope was involved during this phase in every aspect of print publication except working the actual presses, including "advertisement, distribution, and price-fixing."[5]

Not surprisingly, these shifts in publishing practices and socio-economic relations accompany major shifts in the content, form, and self-representation of Pope's poetry. As Ripley Hotch argues, Pope is always in some form present in his works from the beginning: projecting a stylized self-portrait into *Windsor Forest*; setting himself up as the hero-narrator of *The Temple of Fame*; bizarrely interpolating himself into the final lines of "Eloise to Abelard"; situating himself in a comic mediating role in *The Rape of the Lock*; and even in the seemingly objective *Essay on Criticism* writing not so much to establish the rules of criticism as to announce himself as a poet, the rightful heir to Dryden's poetic kingdom.[6] As he shifted from writing the pastorals, georgics, epistles and mock heroics of his early career to the satires of his later years, however, the individual self of the poet emerges as increasingly personal and increasingly central to Pope's poetry. This authorial presence comes to the surface especially in the Imitations of Horace during the 1730s, as Pope more than any major English poet before him began to fill his poetry with the details of his own personal life and identity.[7] Pope never abandoned his sense of himself as Dryden's heir in representing a traditional social and cultural elite, but he responded to the emergence of commercial print culture by constructing his own independent identity as a poet in ways for which this traditional order had no precedent. The figure of Pope as independent author thus emerges out of the new literary marketplace, even as he claims to defend a traditional elite and its aesthetic order against that same print market culture.

Recent critics have emphasized many of the tensions and contradictions in Pope's position, questioning his definition of the "dunces" and demonstrating his dependence on them and on print culture in order to construct his own poetic roles and identity. Hence Brean Hammond describes Pope as "a consummate professional writer whose major poems stand as an attack on professional and commercial writing," and Catherine Ingrassia argues that "Pope straddled the world of the elite and the popular, claiming the former as the rightful domain of the Virgilian model of his career, yet simultaneously exploiting the energy and opportunity of the latter."[8] Ingrassia and Claudia

Thomas, in their introduction to *More Solid Learning: New Perspectives on Alexander Pope's Dunciad*, claim that Pope's identity was inextricably connected to the "dunces," creating a "duncean 'other' that resembles another version of the poet himself, a resemblance the poem simultaneously embraces and effaces."[9] In another essay, Thomas asserts that Pope creates an exaggerated distance between himself and the "dunces" in order to define his own identity as apart from the commercial marketplace, even as he depended upon and profited from that marketplace in unprecedented ways.[10] As James McLaverty puts it succinctly in *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, Pope both hated and loved print at the same time. Either way, his poetic career and identity was defined by print culture. As Pope grew more and more antagonistic both to the aristocratic culture of the court and to the London book trade, McLaverty argues, he "found print an essential form of self-expression but one involving a necessary deformation."[11]

Building from such readings, I will argue that Pope fashioned his identity in response to a fundamental contradiction: the tension between the traditional literary economy of patronage, through which he established his authority, and the new literary marketplace, through which he asserted his authorial independence. Pope's construction of his identity in his later poetry incorporates both these economies while attempting to deny his dependence on either, fashioning a stance of authorial independence out of this dual resistance. Claiming to represent a traditional order, Pope's *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* naturalizes his identity as an author as if it were a part of that order, while in so doing revealing his dependence on the same commercial print culture he rhetorically attempts to exclude. In the *Dunciad*, this same tension becomes self-consuming, as he fashions his identity out of the materials of print culture while at the same time pretending not to be implicated in it, only to be subsumed at the end into its "uncreating word." In both poems, Pope constructs himself as central to print culture even as he claims to place himself outside and in opposition to it, and in the process fashions a new model of independent authorial identity which he cannot fully own. Before turning to a close reading of Pope's self-construction in these poems, I will first briefly review the changing literary economics of Pope's authorship, in order to show how he developed his independent identity as a poet in conjunction with his increasing involvement in an emerging print market culture.

POPE, PATRONAGE, AND THE PRINT MARKET

There is a sense in which Pope always thought of himself as an author. During his youth he kept pictures of Dryden, Milton, Shakespeare and other great poets in his room as models for emulation, and he claims to have aspired from

a very early age to the identity of poet.[12] Pope was fortunate in this aspiration, not only in his poetic talent, but in finding himself as an adolescent already within a circle of powerful older men who served as patrons, encouraging his writing and sponsoring him in the literary world. By the age of eighteen Pope's circle already included the former secretary of state and Oxford don Sir William Trumbull, the famous playwrights William Wycherley and William Congreve, the critic and M.P. William Walsh, the eminent politician Lord George Granville, the physician and writer Samuel Garth, and the famous actor Thomas Betterton, to name a few of the most prominent.[13] The range and intimacy of Pope's acquaintance with these older men at such a young age is astonishing, especially for a hunchbacked Catholic without high birth, and must have given Pope a sense from youth of possessing the sanction of the English cultural elite. Many of these men, moreover, also had close ties to Dryden, as Pope never tired of claiming later in life, and so by their patronage seemed to establish Pope as Dryden's heir to the poetic tradition.[14]

Through these patrons and the wide circulation of his manuscripts, Pope began to establish a reputation as a poet even before his writing saw print. Jacob Tonson had been Dryden's publisher for twenty years and was a dominant figure in the publishing world of the time. When Tonson approached Pope at the age of eighteen to ask to be his publisher, then featured Pope's Pastorals prominently in his sixth *Poetical Miscellanies,* Pope must have felt himself confirmed in his sense of poetic inheritance.[15] Significantly, Dryden himself had been the editor of Tonson's first four *Miscellanies*, each of which had opened with a major selection of Dryden's poetry.[16] With his wide circle of influential patrons and his featured place (together with Ambrose Philips) in the *Miscellany*, Pope must have felt a sense of cultural sanction as Dryden's successor and the next great English poet to be.

Although there is no indication that Pope received direct financial support from any of these friends—which as the son of a wealthy retired merchant he would not in any case have needed—his early career and rise to reputation takes place overwhelmingly within the traditional model of patronage culture.[17] Though willing and able to assert his own authority at times, Pope consistently deferred to the authority of this social elite. The Preface to the 1717 *Works*, in this respect, offers a characteristic blend of self-assertion and humility. Also typical of patronage culture, Pope's early work circulated widely in manuscript before it was published, as for instance his Pastorals and the *Rape of the Lock*, and he gained much of his early reputation through this manuscript circulation. Presaging his later efforts at subscription publication, Pope even wrote down the names of prominent readers on the manuscript copy of the Pastorals which had passed through their hands.[18]

Pope, moreover, allowed these patrons to direct his poetic endeavors. It was at William Trumbull's suggestion, for instance, that he embarked on his topographical and scenic description of Windsor Forest, and more significantly on his translation of Homer. Even towards the end of his career, when his reputation was already well-established, Pope claims he began his *Imitations of Horace* after the suggestion of Lord Bolingbroke.[19] Despite his proud claims of independence and equal friendship with these influential men later in life, Pope would retain also a sense of deference to their cultural authority, maintaining his link to traditional patronage practices. Though never averse to print, Pope's early career is strongly embedded in relations of patronage and the practices of coteries manuscript circulation.[20]

In his publications up to the 1717 *Works*, Pope followed the traditional publishing arrangements of the time, receiving a lump sum in exchange for transferring the copyright exclusively to the publisher, who was responsible for marketing and distribution and who made the bulk of the profit on sales. Though the sums Pope received were quite generous by industry standards—13 guineas for his contribution to Tonson's *Miscellanies* and £15 each from his new publisher Lintot for both the *Essay on Criticism* and *The Rape of the Lock*—the amount still represented only a modest part of the profit the publisher stood to gain and put Pope as author in the customary place of dependence on the publisher.[21]

Even in this dependent role, however, Pope's publication of the 1717 *Works* presented his strong sense of authorial identity and desire to exert control over the publishing process. Pope was only twenty-nine years old in 1717, an extraordinarily young age for a poet to be coming out with a collected "Works" and so proclaiming himself a classic—especially since it was not customary at the time for authors to publish their *Works* during their own lifetimes.[22] As with most of his publications, Pope paid close attention to the organization and typography of the *Works*, which he used to try to define his own canon, excluding youthful occasional pieces and appealing to the reader to take this volume as his complete authorized oeuvre. In so doing, James McLaverty argues, Pope claimed authorial control and responsibility over the volume, an increasingly prevalent trend at the time on which Pope capitalized fully. "In this one volume," McLaverty writes, "Pope was able to define a canon, publish an image of himself as man and writer, shape his relations with his reader, and guide the interpretation of individual poems through illustration and annotation," making his first comprehensive attempt to control the presentation and reception of his writing by a general public. In the process, McLaverty claims, Pope centered the *Works* around his own authorial identity.[23]

With the publication of his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the decade from 1715–1726, Pope's relation to the publishing world changed dramatically, as he gained a much greater share of authorial control and profits. His arrangements with Lintot for the publication of these translations offered a unique amalgam of patronage and market economics, combining pre-publication subscriptions for Pope's benefit—an increasingly common practice of "democratized" patronage during the early eighteenth century—with detailed publishing stipulations and a lump-sum copyright payment from Lintot, who sold copies of the translation on the open commercial market.[24] The contracts between Pope and Lintot for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations are roughly similar, although the exact terms differ and proved to be much more lopsidedly favorable for Pope in the former case than in the latter. Lintot paid Pope a lump sum for the copyright—two hundred guineas per volume for the six-volume *Iliad* and 350 guineas for all five books of the *Odyssey*—but more importantly provided him with over seven hundred copies of each work on highest quality paper with special illustrations and imprints to distribute to his subscribers. These subscribers, representing a wide cross-section of the cultural elite of the time, paid Pope a guinea per volume for the books which Lintot supplied, thus representing a clear profit for the author.[25] It is from these subscribers that Pope made the bulk of his money on the venture, which David Foxon estimates at roughly £5000 for each of the two translations: an astounding fortune at the time, far exceeding his publisher Lintot's immediate profits. Just how astounding is indicated by Thomas De Quincey's 1842 estimate, that Pope's translation remained the most profitable literary labor by any author up to that time (taking into account the changing value of money).[26] The independence that Pope was later able to claim for himself at his Twickenham estate depended mainly on the fortune he accrued through these translations: a sum which tripled the inheritance of £3000–4000 he likely received upon his father's death in 1717.[27]

Though Pope in his writing characteristically claimed disregard and even distaste for commercial transactions, as if his fame and wealth had come to him naturally as part of the inherent order of things, his success with the Homer translations actually depended on his skillful and active marketing. Not only did Pope show his commercial acumen in negotiating his contract with Lintot—causing Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to remark that he "outwitted Lintot in his very trade"—but he launched a full-scale campaign to garner subscriptions by private circulation of proposals and public advertisements in newspapers, including lists of current subscribers in order to establish the social prestige of the translations and attract more subscribers. At the same time, Pope delegated his friends as agents to solicit subscriptions, store

and send out books, and even collect money for him.[28] In the process, Pope did not merely take his place in the traditional patronage system that subscription had come to supplement, he actively refashioned patronage to his own purposes, employing his aristocratic and influential friends, as Ian Watt remarks, less as patrons than as "publishers."[29] This skillful subscription campaign not only earned Pope a fortune, it also installed him at the center of literary culture as the most famous and successful poet of his time, a position he would continue to capitalize on in later years and which became central to his construction of his identity. Pope later represented his literary pre-eminence as a kind of natural poetic inheritance from Dryden, sanctioned by the cultural and critical elite, but this sense of elite approval owed much to his adroit self-marketing, as he actively played patronage and print market culture off against one another.

"With Pope's return to original composition with the *Dunciad* of 1728," writes David Foxon, "we find a completely new relationship with the book trade, one in which the author takes charge, choosing his own printer and publisher and directing operations himself."[30] From 1728 until his death in 1744, Pope asserted a new and unprecedented independence as an author, both through his control of the publication process and through his self-representation within the works which he published, including his carefully self-edited *Letters* in 1737. At the same time, he continued to add to both his fortune and reputation by marketing these works to an expanding commercial public. Pope was by now an established commercial success with an independent fortune of his own, and so in a position to dictate much of the terms of his publication in ways that continued to maximize his earning capacity in the marketplace. His 1732 agreement with the publisher Lawton Gilliver, whom he had helped to set up in the publishing business, stipulated that Pope would receive £50 for each poem or verse epistle he wrote in exchange for allowing Gilliver one year's control of copyright: a considerable sum, given that Gilliver could make only a £3 profit on an edition of two thousand copies.[31] After a year, the copyright would revert back to Pope. This agreement expired after 1735, when Pope switched to Robert Dodsley as his new publisher: a man he also helped to set up in the publishing business. Pope continued to make large sums of money in partnership with Dodsley, both through the publication of his poems and through the various editions of his letters and prose writings which began to appear at the time.[32] Throughout this final period of his career Pope also contracted directly with what became almost his own personal printer, John Wright, who seems to have printed almost nothing but the works of Pope and his friends from 1728 onwards and who allowed Pope almost complete control over the physical layout of his volumes.[33]

By these later stages of his career, Pope was actively marketing his writings to the same commercial public which he satirized, while at the same time ironically claiming to represent an embattled elite cultural tradition against that public. In order to cultivate this commercial audience, he began to publish in cheaper octavo editions from which he realized more substantial profits, continuing to publish more expensive but ultimately less profitable quarto and folio editions largely as a kind of concession to his elite audience, to match their sets of earlier volumes.[34] By contracting directly with his printer and sending his own books to the booksellers, Pope eliminated the middlemen and greatly increased the profits he stood to make through the sales of his writing—all at a time when his independent fortune was already massively established. At the same time, Pope became the first author to make regular use of the 1710 Statute of Anne to defend his copyrights in court, suing his arch-enemy Edmund Curll over the piracy of his letters in the 1741 case, *Pope v. Curll*, as the most famous of several occasions in which he asserted his legal rights over his own literary property.[35] Pope's retention of his own copyrights, defense of his literary property in court, and ability to control the publishing process made him a seminal figure in establishing the rights and identity of the independent author in the literary marketplace. Even as he wrote against the corrupting influences of the new commercial print culture, Pope actively marketed himself to establish his pre-eminence within it, ironically helping to expand the same commercial reading public that he satirized. At the same time, he shrewdly marketed his visual image on frontispieces and in widely reproduced commercial forms such as prints, engravings, portraits, sculptures, and medallions, becoming perhaps the most frequently represented man of his generation.[36] As Harold Weber argues in "The 'Garbage Heap' of Memory," Pope had a "shrewd and cynical understanding of the relationship among modern poetry, financial profit, and enduring fame."[37] He skillfully presented himself as an outsider to print culture while in fact working behind the scenes as the consummate insider, utilizing every available resource for self-promotion and financial gain. Ironically, his self-presentation of virtuous Horatian retirement and aloofness in his poetry of the 1730s coincided with his most aggressive ventures into self-publication and commercial marketing, which he continued until his death. Through all of this activity, as Helen Deutsch argues, "Pope's life work was to create the definitive image of himself," while at the same time accruing the financial and cultural power to support this position of authorial independence.[38]

The overall trajectory of Pope's poetic career thus represents a transition from the literary economy of patronage, in which he deferred to a small elite circle of patrons and stood in the traditional dependence of the author on his

publisher, to authorial independence in a literary economy of the marketplace, in which Pope skillfully marketed his own works to an increasingly large and heterogeneous commercial public, establishing himself as arguably the first modern professional author. Pope continued his claims to represent a traditional cultural elite until the end, but as his fame and sense of political isolation increased and as he addressed himself more directly to the commercial marketplace, he asserted his poetic identity as more and more independent. Pope did not embrace the print market directly, however. Instead, he constructed his authorial identity out of the tension between the two literary economies of patronage and the marketplace, playing them off skillfully against one another in order to claim a mystified independence from both. It is out of this tension, I will argue, that Pope's authorial identity emerged as central to his poetic project.

"WAS I BORN FOR NOTHING BUT TO WRITE?": POPE'S NATURALIZATION OF POETIC IDENTITY

The *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and the *Dunciad* are very different poems in theme, style, and voice. While the former constructs a first-person self-justification of Pope's identity and satirical role, the latter assembles its mock-heroic satire out of the disparate materials of print culture itself without any obvious unifying voice or perspective. To use Bahktin's terms, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* is fundamentally monoglossic, attempting to assimilate its materials into the single unified voice of the poet himself, whereas the *Dunciad* is fundamentally heteroglossic, collecting the only partially assimilated discourses of print culture into an over-brimming farrago of competing styles and voices.[39] Yet despite these obvious differences of form and perspective, I will argue that both poems are structured in remarkably similar ways by Pope's own authorial identity, which provides a central focus for the print culture he represents as swirling anarchically around him. Pope presents his identity in both poems as separate from print culture, but in the process the two become mutually defining, revealing his ambivalent but inseparable implication in the commercial marketplace.

Print culture is central to both *The Dunciad* and *The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, providing the main milieu of the former and the central background against which Pope defines his identity in the latter. The *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, in this respect, constructs Pope's identity in relation to the swarms of authors with "Papers in each hand" who besiege him at his Twickenham estate, and against whom he "shut[s] the door" in the poem's opening line (1, 5).[40] The form of the poem, as an "Epistle" addressed to Pope's friend Arbuthnot, hearkens back to earlier forms of elite manuscript exchange,

though the poem is primarily written for a print audience.[41] It uses the epistolary form, however, to juxtapose the sense of an intimate, witty, and learned coteries community against what it represents as the violating omnipresence of print culture, depicted in the poem as an overwhelming circulation of both print and authors: "Fire in each eye, and Papers in each hand,/ They rave, recite, and madden round the land./ What Walls can guard me, or what Shades can hide?/ They pierce my Thickets, thro' my Grot they glide" (5–8).[42] Pope's own identity in the poem is defined in opposition to this print culture swirling everywhere around him, as the slamming door emphatically defines his independence at Twickenham against the print culture that he shuts outside.

The Dunciad, in contrast, situates itself within rather than in opposition to this sphere of commercial print culture, self-consciously foregrounding its own complicity in that culture. As Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia Thomas argue in *More Solid Learning*, "The original *Dunciad* was very much a part of the Grub Street milieu it depicted, from its plain blue cover to its abundant scatology."[43] The 1729 *Variorum* begins with an "Advertisement" addressing the general "reader" in its opening sentence, and its repeated address to this "reader," multiplication of editorial voices and textual apparatuses, and self-conscious presentation of errata, index, and other publishing practices all actively foreground the text's implication in print culture.[44] Yet Pope's identity asserts itself as central to the *Dunciad* as well, as Pope the author presents himself as a kind of "shadow-hero," in Dustin Griffin's phrase, against which the poem and its representation of print culture take shape.[45] Although he appears only very briefly in the poetic text itself, as the "I" invoking the Muse at the beginning of book I and at the beginning and end of book IV in the 1743 *New Dunciad*, Pope's authorial presence dominates the notes and textual apparatuses that make up the bulk of the poem. Already from the opening "Advertisement" of the *Dunciad Variorum*, written in an unattributed first person, the absent figure of the "Author" or "Poet" manifests itself as central. In the 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books* "the Author" also appears in a central role in the initial advertisement, attributed to Pope's self-chosen editor William Warburton, who describes himself as having just spent several months with the author in "the Country" (251)—a physical distance from London which represents Pope's symbolic self-distancing from commercial print culture and its public. Though pointedly absent from the poetic text, Pope's identity is thus quite literally omnipresent in the margins, as note after note refers to "Mr. Pope" and his relationship to the poem's satiric targets. Although not claiming to speak with his own voice and represented in the notes only through the voices and printed materials of others, this figure of Pope as author dominates the poem and holds together its disparate materials. In the

process, the *Dunciad* establishes Pope's authorial identity as the central backdrop against which the chaotic world of the "dunces" takes shape, providing as it were the white or empty background that gives form to the black markings printed across the page. The two constructions—Pope's authorial identity and print culture—are in this way mutually dependent and inseparable from one another.

In the process, *The Dunciad* represents commercial print culture as lacking a unity or center of its own, depending on Pope's all-pervading authorial presence to provide that center. The so-called "dunces," the poem claims, are not united among themselves, as revealed in the poem by their incessant squabbling among one another, but only become a coherent category in relation to Pope and their common attacks on his pre-eminence.[46] By positioning himself in this way as a kind of absent center of print culture, Pope brilliantly constructs his identity in relation to print culture while at the same time claiming not to be implicated in it. In a neo-Platonic model, Dulness' anti-order is made to arise from and depend upon the absent, proper order which Pope represents. Just as in Neo-Platonism matter depends upon spirit, which gives it form but remains unpolluted by it, so in the *Dunciad* the obscene materiality of commercial print culture is given form by the implied creative power of Pope's genius, which remains itself untainted.[47] Pope dominates the poem with his authorial presence without ever actually appearing within its text, as a kind of invisible poetic spirit informing but not contained within the poem's material body of print. In taking this position, *The Dunciad* constructs Pope's identity through his centrality to print culture but at the same time rhetorically disguises his implication in and dependence on that culture.

We must remember in this respect that Pope did not just represent an existing print culture; he helped to define the terms through which a newly emerging print culture would come to be represented. Pope's construction of print culture, in this sense, was inseparable from his construction of his own poetic identity: an interdependence revealed by his construction of the so-called "dunces." Though for many years the "dunces" were accepted by scholars as an established category of identity and value, recent scholarship has suggested Pope's active role in creating this category, which no longer appears either natural or inevitable.[48] Pope lumped together party writers, hacks, and his personal literary enemies under the general rubric of "dunces," in order to pursue his own personal agendas and construct his own authorial identity. Pope's identity is thus inseparable from his active construction of the "dunces'" identity, just as it is inseparable from his active construction of print culture.

Much like *The Dunciad*, the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* constructs Pope's identity as separate from print culture while at the same time establishing him as central to it. Drawn to this irresistible center, the maddened authors at the beginning of the poem "pierce" his "thickets" and invade his "grot" (9), constantly bombarding him with requests and attention. In representing himself in this way, Pope attempts to naturalize his identity as a poet as if it were part of a traditional cultural and social order. His claim that he wants to "Maintain a Poet's Dignity and Ease" (263) is indicative of this position, naturalizing "dignity" and "ease" as inherent to the life of a "Poet": as if "Poet" were an established social position and "dignity" and "ease" were its traditional prerogatives. Pope similarly represents himself in the poem as one who "lisp'd in Numbers" (128), as if poetry were his natal speech and therefore established his natural place in the social order. Pope was famous for his painstaking dedication to the process of writing and revising his poems, but these claims to "lisp in Numbers" and live with "Dignity and Ease" elide his active labor, as if he were simply born into his poetic pre-eminence.[49] Unlike the parson, poetess, peer, and clerk he satirizes in the poem's opening verse paragraphs, Pope's dedication to poetry thus does not seem to represent a neglect or transgression of his social place and duties: "I left no Calling for this idle trade,/ No Duty broke, no Father dis-obeyed" (129–30). Eliding his active self-promotion, Pope tries to establish himself in the poem as a born aristocrat of poetry, enjoying his centrality and fame as a kind of traditionally recognized prerogative.

As the inverse of this construction, Pope consistently equates the poverty of the "dunces" with their attempt to rise out of their proper place, naturalizing poverty as the metaphysical corollary of "dulness" or bad writing. In the *Dunciad*, he justifies his satire on the "dunces'" poverty with the argument that they are poor because they "neglect [their] lawful calling," and wishes the poverty "were removed by any honest livelihood. [. . .] It is not charity to encourage them in the way they follow, but to get 'em out of it: For men are not bunglers because they are poor, but they are poor because they are bunglers" (15). Pope here comically offers to save the "dunces" from their poverty by dissuading them from the improper calling of authorship. In contrast to the poverty of the so-called "dunces," Pope cites his own wealth and reputation, together with the general support he claims from the cultural elite, as proof that by writing he merely fulfills his proper place in the social order. Just as poverty is the inevitable corollary of "dulness," wealth and fame become the equally inevitable corollaries of genius. By suggesting this (obviously suspect) equation, Pope can assert his fortune as just as natural and inevitable as his poetic pre-eminence—or at least direct attention away from the sources of his fortune and the publishing schemes on which it depended.

In so doing, he mystifies the true sources of his poetic independence, redefining the professional struggle between himself and his fellow writers as a natural social hierarchy which the "dunces" obstinately fail to accept.

In this sprit, the "dunces" become connected with the general breakdown of social distinctions and hierarchies in both poems, as the print culture they represent becomes an active, infectious principle that threatens to contaminate all of British society. Pope in the *Dunciad* satirizes print culture's new commercial public in this respect as jumbling together social roles and identities: "This Mess, toss'd up of Hockley-hole and White's:/ Where Dukes and Butchers join to wreath my [Cibber's] crown,/ At once the Bear and Fiddle of the town" (i. 222–24). This commercial public also finds representation in the chaotic crowds which swirl through *The Dunciad's* central city of "Lud" (ii. 359), an undifferentiated mob which dominates the mock-heroic games of book two:

> an endless band
> Pours forth, and leaves unpeopled half the land.
> A motley mixture! in long wigs, and bags,
> In silks, in crapes, in Garters, and in rags,
> From drawing rooms, from colleges, from garrets,
> On horse, on foot, in hacks, and gilded chariots (ii. 19–24).

This same jumbled public appears again in procession around the Goddess of Dulness in book four of the *New Dunciad*: as

> buzzing Bees around their dusky Queen.
> The gath'ring number, as it moves along,
> Involves a vast involuntary throng,
> Who gently drawn, and struggling less and less,
> Roll in her Vortex, and her pow'r confess. (iv. 80–84)

The ceaseless circulation of print transforms here into the ceaseless circulation of the public itself, threatening to break down the possibility of social as well as aesthetic order. Elsewhere *The Dunciad* makes this connection between the violation of social and aesthetic orders explicit:

> Here one poor word an hundred clenches [puns] makes,
> And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley Images her fancy strike,
> Figures ill pair'd, and Similies [sic] unlike.
> She sees a Mob of Metaphors advance,
> Pleas'd with the madness of the mazy dance:

How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;
How Time himself stands still at her command,
Realms shift their place, and Ocean turns to land. (i. 63–72)

The "Mob of Metaphors" can easily metamorphize into a mob of people, much like the London mobs which swept through the city in periodic outbursts of violence and anarchy throughout the eighteenth century, and the "jumbled race" of Farce and Epic matches a jumbled public of "Dukes and Butchers" (i. 223). The breakdown of proper distinctions spreads easily from aesthetics to politics and across all social and discursive boundaries, as aesthetic confusion and the corruption of the arts becomes by the end of the *New Dunciad* a general dissolution of all civilized order. It is in this same sense that the *Dunciad* is full of tropes of infection, fire, madness, and mobs: all dangerous signifiers of spreading disturbance and social confusion.[50]

In the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, this restless circulation proves equally subversive to the proper social order, as in the poem's opening passages:

The Dog-star rages! nay 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and Papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What Walls can guard me, or what Shades can hide?
They pierce my Thickets, thro' my Grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the Chariot, and they board the Barge.
No place is sacred, not the Church is free;
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
Then from the *Mint* walks forth the Man of Rhyme,
Happy! to catch me just at Dinner-time.
Is there a Parson, much be-mus'd in beer,
A maudlin Poetess, a ryming Peer,
A Clerk, foredoom'd his Father's soul to cross
Who pens a Stanza when he should *engross?*
Is there, who lock'd from Ink and Paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
All fly to *Twit'nam,* and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur, whose giddy Son neglects the Laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
Poor *Cornus* sees his frantic Wife elope,
And curses Wit, and Poetry, and Pope. (4–26)

The circulation of print is equated here with the circulation of authors and readers, as if print circulation caused people themselves to come free of their proper places in the social order. As in the carnivalesque confusion of social roles towards the end of the *New Dunciad* (iv. 584–604), the disruption of the social order here is at once both comic and potentially tragic: the ridiculousness of the "ryming peer" and the clerk writing stanzas instead of copying, balanced against the dark threat of madmen scrawling with "desp'rate charcoal" around "darken'd walls." Similarly, the ridiculousness of blaming Pope (like Socrates) for a child's corruption and a wife's elopement is balanced against the more realistic suggestion of social breakdown darkly hinted in these events. Pope habitually equates "Bedlam" and the "dunces," or madness and commercial writing, because for him the unchecked proliferation and circulation of writing also breaks down the boundaries of social order, and thus ultimately of all sense and meaning.[51]

Pope's position suggests an insistence on stable boundaries, decorum, and a poetics of restraint. Yet as a number of critics in recent years have remarked, Pope seems to participate with gusto in the dunces' transgressive energy, as he exuberantly describes their games and their creation of topsy-turvy imaginative "new worlds."[52] Such critics point out that Pope often seems more fascinated than repulsed by these energies, including the grossly material and even scatological descriptions in which he relishes throughout the poem. Catherine Ingrassia has argued that this sense of blurred hierarchies, boundary transgressions, and the unleashing of exhilarating but potentially chaotic energies was characteristic of eighteenth-century print culture generally. Eighteenth-century literature, she claims, was characterized more by transgression than by stable boundaries, emerging out of "all writers' dependence on the new financial mechanism that inform the production and consumption of literary commodities."[53]Taking his place in this chaotic new commercial environment, Pope also participates in, uses, and even celebrates these transgressive energies of print culture, while at the same time representing them as potentially tragic. By the gusto with which he attacks his satirical targets, Pope demonstrates that he too is of the dunces' party without knowing it, or at least without acknowledging it, generating his poetic energies from the same print culture he attacks.

Even as he reveals his dependence on these restless energies of print culture, however, Pope tries to represent his own identity as stable and fixed. Juxtaposed against the ceaseless circulation of both people and writings, Pope's represents himself in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* as firmly located: "All fly to [and around] *Twit'nam*" (22), while Pope alone remains in his fixed, and by implication proper, place. By grounding his identity in this way, Pope signals

his allegiance to the "country" or "Patriot" stance of Bolingbroke and his circle, in opposition to the Walpole administration and its promotion of new financial structures, based on paper money and the value of endless circulation.[54] Within the terms of this "country" ideology, the circulation of print becomes analogous to the circulation of paper credit, threatening to undermine the traditional hierarchies and real property on which the social order ultimately depends. Pope not only grounds his identity in his landed estate in *The Epistle to Arbuthnot*, he also presents that identity as imposing some sense of order on the otherwise anarchic print culture that circulates all around him.

Yet even as he represents himself as violated by the forces of print culture, Pope continued to depend on that culture for both his identity and his social position. Pope represents himself as if he were part of a traditional landed order, but his own position was dependent on money earned through commercial activity, not land, and his rented house at Twickenham was more like the rented country house of a prosperous merchants than an aristocratic estate.[55] Pope's representation of himself as a hapless victim of print culture is thus a deep if enabling mystification, since he depended on his involvement with that culture in order to establish his poetic centrality in the first place. His independence, which he characteristically represents in his poetry as a stance of virtuous Horatian self-possession, in fact depended on the fortune he had earned—and continued to earn—through active marketing of his writing, as he asserted his legal and commercial rights as author within the expanding marketplace. In asserting his independence both from commercial culture and from patronage, Pope enacts what Brean Hammond describes as a kind of ideological "levitation trick," presenting himself as "an independent poet without visible means of support," as if he lived by collecting rents from the inherited poetic "estate" of his genius.[56]

As in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, Pope's identity in *The Dunciad* also provides the sole fixed point against which the swirling circulations of print culture take on coherent form. In *The Dunciad*, however, Pope's identity is located outside of, rather than inside, the poem, asserting his stance of separation from print culture. Pope does not claim to speak in his own voice in the poem, instead projecting authorship of the notes onto Martin Scriblerus and a variety of comic mock-editors. Yet like a virtuoso puppet master or ventriloquist, the figure of Pope the author asserts itself as the absent presence manipulating all these voices into a single poetic structure, projecting the voices of the editorial personae and even quoting the works of the so-called "dunces" to make them ironically pronounce Pope's own verdict against themselves.[57] As Pat Rogers puts it, Pope becomes the omnipresent "producer, director, scriptwriter [...], stage-manager, lighting engineer and master of ceremonies" for the

dunces' performance, manipulating their voices as thoroughly and as effectively as he manipulated commercial print culture.[58] By directing the textual productions and voices of others, Pope is thus able to construct his own identity in the *Dunciad* out of the materials of commercial print culture while at the same time claiming to remain outside of that culture, positioning himself as central without ever seeming to enter the medium of print to advance such a claim himself. This centrality is ironically confirmed within the poem by the "dunces'" supposedly irresistible urge to attack him.[59]

Pope naturalized his poetic identity in this way by constructing a line of poetic inheritance and a version of aristocratic culture to support him. In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* he invokes this model of a past cultural elite by calling upon a social circle of Granville, Walsh, Garth, Congreve, Swift, Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, Rochester and St. John, "great *Dryden's* friends before," who in the poem "with open arms receiv'd one Poet more" (135–42). This circle, represented in the poem as if physically gathered together into a coteries audience, affirms Pope in his pre-eminence as Dryden's successor and a kind of unofficial laureate. Significantly, these men are identified as Dryden's "friends," not patrons, and thus by implication friends and not patrons to Pope; and Rochester's "nod" seems to recognize Pope's rightful place as an equal rather than the condescension of a patron. Similarly, a lengthy "Parallel of the Characters of Mr. Dryden and Mr. Pope, as Drawn by Certain of Their Contemporaries" in the *Dunciad* affirms Pope as the natural successor of Dryden, comically assembling attacks on Dryden by the "dunces" of his era as exactly parallel to recent attacks upon Pope. Dryden of course was subject, during his own stormy career, both to relations of patronage and to the commercial imperatives of publishing, but Pope represents himself inheriting Dryden's place as if he inherits a naturally established poetic estate. In so doing, he naturalizes his poetic identity as a traditional role into which he has been born rather than a profession he must actively pursue, as if the position of independent poet had existed from time immemorial and carried inherent authority and social obligations, analogous to the position of other aristocrats.

To establish himself in an equal relationship of friendship with these other cultural elites, Pope must deny his dependence on patronage as strenuously as he denies his implication in commercial print culture. In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* he calls himself "above a patron," and in a bristling footnote to line 375 refutes "Welsted's Lye," that he had libeled the Duke of Chandos (in the *Epistle to Burlington*) after receiving a present of £500 from him: "Mr. P. never receiv'd any Present farther than the Subscription for *Homer*, from him [Chandos], or from Any Great Man whatsoever."[60] Similarly the "Letter to the Publisher" in the *Dunciad*, attributed to Pope's well-to-do friend William

Cleland, opines that Pope "has not been a follower of fortune or success: He has liv'd with the Great without Flattery, been a friend to Men in power without Pensions, from whom as he ask'd, so he receiv'd no favour but what was done Him in his friends" (18). This portrait is followed by the "Testimonies of Authors," which flatly states that "this our Poet never had any Place, Pension, or Gratuity, in any shape, from the said glorious Queen, or any of her Ministers. All he owed, in the whole course of his life, to any court, was a subscription, for his Homer, of 200 *l.* from King George I, and 100 *l.* from the prince and princess" (45). Pope thus vehemently distinguishes himself from all forms of patronage, including that of the notoriously corrupt Walpole regime.

Instead, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* ironically represents Pope as trying to fulfill the traditional role of patron himself, opposing both the corruption and degradation of patronage and the incursions of a promiscuous print culture. Pope represents himself at the beginning of the poem sitting with "sad Civility" and "honest anguish" in his attempt to fulfill this office, much like a poetic aristocrat besieged with suits and appeals (37–38). As opposed to the corrupt patrons such as "Bufo" satirized in the poem, whose patronage has degenerated into a pursuit of mutual self-interest, Pope represents himself attempting to fulfill his public responsibilities of patronage within a "traditional" social order. This role proves impossible, however, in a society corrupted by improper patronage and print culture, as "Dunce by Dunce [is] whistled off my hands" and Pope's "saving counsel" is rejected by those who appeal to his authority but refuse to abide by his verdict (254, 40). After a long comic passage in which he represents himself besieged by increasingly outrageous requests, Pope ends by symbolically slamming the door on all involvement with print culture (67). Pope represents this isolation as a stance of opposition against a society which will not allow him to fulfill his "traditional" role as a kind of poetic lord, but of course that role never existed in the first place. In a rhetorical masterstroke, this position naturalizes Pope's identity as an "independent" poet, while simultaneously disguising his implication in print culture, justifying his isolation, and satirizing the commercial public. It allows him to construct his own poetic identity as if he is merely attempting to defend his rightful place in the social and cosmic order.

Pope tends to construct his identity in his later poems in similar terms as a self-sufficient man of virtue, independent both from the commercial market and from patronage. Defining himself by his disinterested friendship with "the Greatest and Best of all Parties" (*Dunciad,* 19), he represents himself as conversely unknown to, because socially above, the "hacks" and "dunces" he satirizes. Thus the "Testimonies of Authors Concerning our Poet and his

Works" prefacing the *Dunciad* not only quotes the so-called "dunces" to distinguish Pope from them, but also assembles quotations from recognized authorities such as Addison, Garth, and Prior, who praise Pope's writings, followed by a long string of personal testimonials to his virtue and character led off by the Duke of Buckingham. In citing the approval of such elite figures specifically as "friends," Pope carefully establishes his authority in terms of a cultural elite while at the same time insisting on his disinterestedness and independence from traditional relations of patronage.[61]

Questioning such self-definitions, recent critics have argued that Pope's social position was in many ways much like the "dunces" and other targets of his satire. The very stridency with which he attempts to separate himself from these others, according to such readings, conceals his implication in similar practices. Claudia Thomas, for instance, has argued in her essay on "Pope and His *Dunciad* Adversaries: Skirmishes on the Border of Gentility" that Pope's attacks in *The Dunciad* represent a kind of professional skirmish, through which, for his own political and personal reasons, he tried to affirm "the ideal professional writer as a conservative gentleman."[62] Authorship was at the time a precarious occupation, of ambiguous social status. Yet as Thomas and others point out, most of the so-called "dunces" were of middle class background, and many of them had a university education superior to that of the self-educated Pope.[63] Colley Cibber, whom Pope associates in the *New Dunciad* with dunce-like poverty, was in fact quite successful, both socially and financially, and for Pope to portray him as starving in a garret was an outrageous insult.[64] Pope lumped together all his opponents in the single indiscriminate category of "dunces" or "hacks," connecting them with poverty, lower class pursuits, prostitution, filth, and a host of other negative and ungenteel associations.[65] Yet, as many of the "dunces" pointed out in their counterattacks, Pope could be seen as essentially one of them, motivated by the same commercial considerations and lacking the genteel status and scholarly training he affected.[66] For Pope to attack other writers for their commercial involvement and self-interest, these others claimed, was an unprovoked act of hypocrisy.

Because the line between Pope and the "dunces" was uncomfortably thin, Pope tended to emphasize the distinction by projecting onto his satiric targets exaggerated versions of qualities which could just as easily be associated with himself: a rhetorical strategy of the "anti-portrait" that Dustin Griffin identifies throughout Pope's satirical writing.[67] Critics have argued that Pope's projection of his own sexual insecurities onto Lord Hervey as "Sporus" represents one such anti-portrait.[68] Pope's attack on Cibber represents a similar attempt to distance himself from the self-promotion and commercial involvements that Cibber represented. Cibber was installed as the

new comic anti-hero of the 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books* both because he was the actual court laureate, and hence associated with Walpole's ministry and the charge of political corruption, and because of his commercial background with the playhouses and blatant self-promotion. Cibber's autobiographical *Apology* engaged in conspicuous self-display and identified him for Pope as a social upstart, eager to associate himself with those of higher social status.[69] Pope, however, could be perceived as just as much of a social upstart as Cibber, whose rise in status as a self-promoting literary and cultural entrepreneur uncomfortably resembled Pope's own. Pope's attacks on Addison in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* represents another anti-portrait that came even closer to home. Both Pope and Addison could be seen as setting themselves up through self-interested commercial activity as a kind of arbitrary ruler over the literary world. In fact, as Brean Hammond points out, just twenty lines after he satirizes Addison as a jealous "Turk" who will allow "no brother near the throne" of literature, Pope calls himself an "*Asian* monarch" who keeps from others' sight, characterizing himself and Addison with the same metaphor (198, 220).[70] Pope's charge against Addison, that he "hate[s] for Arts that caus'd himself to rise" (200), was the very charge used against Pope after his publication of the *Dunciad*. Seen in this light, Pope's attack on Cibber and the other "dunces" reveals itself not primarily as a conflict between an old elite literary culture and a new culture of the marketplace, but a battle of professional authority within that emerging marketplace. The more Pope resembles the "dunces," the more vehemently he must assert his distinction from them.

In so doing, Claudia Thomas argues, Pope attempted to distinguish his professional status from that of other writers, creating an exaggerated and misleading distinction between "the writer removed from considerations of the marketplace, and the writer as Bartholomew Fair huckster."[71] Such a false distinction allowed Pope to create a hack/ genius dualism that disguised his own involvements in commercial print culture, which were distinguished from those of other writers primarily by his greater financial success. This same hack/ genius distinction would be inherited and used by later writers in much the same way, to mystify their authorial independence by distancing themselves from the commercialism of the marketplace, even as they continued to depend upon that marketplace.

It is significant, in this respect, that Pope tends to characterize his identity by negation and denial, rather than in positive terms.[72] The entire *Dunciad*, I have argued, follows this pattern, constructing Pope's identity in opposition to print culture and the "dunces." The *Epistle to Arbuthnot* shows this same tendency to construct Pope's identity indirectly, in opposition to those he satirizes, as do his *Imitations of Horace* in general. Even when he does

directly characterize his identity in *Arbuthnot,* Pope almost always defines himself specifically by what he is not. "*Not* Fortune's Worshiper, *nor* Fashion's Fool,/ *Not* Lucre's Madman, *nor* Ambition's Tool,/ *Not* proud, *nor* servile," he writes in his most extended self-portrait towards the end of the poem (334–36, emphases mine). This negative self-definition continues for over twenty lines before ending in vague positive assertions, which embrace a rather abstract and rhetorical "Virtue": "Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:/ For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the *last*!" (58–59). Earlier in the poem Pope claims in similar fashion that he "sought no homage from the Race that write" (219) and "To *Bufo* left the whole *Castalian* State" of "Fops, and Poetry, and Prate" (229–30), defining himself by the roles he does not occupy and what he does not do. In the few places where Pope does assert his identity in positive terms, the terms are vague and all but empty of content:

> Oh let me live my own! and die so too!
> ("To live and die is all I have to do:")
> Maintain a Poet's Dignity and Ease,
> And see what friends, and read what books I please.
> Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
> Sometimes to call a Minister my Friend:
> I was not born for Courts or great Affairs,
> I pay my Debts, believe, and say my Pray'rs,
> Can sleep without a Poem in my head,
> Nor know, if Dennis be alive or dead. (261–70)

Even this passage, Pope's most concentrated positive assertion of identity in the poem, remains extremely vague—what exactly is "a Poet's Dignity and Ease" anyhow?—and characteristically lapses again at the end into negations, defining Pope by what he is not born for and what he does not know and do. Significantly, after an extended list of attacks to which he did not reply, the poem ends not with a final assertion of Pope's own independent identity, but by appealing to the virtue of his parents and dedicating himself to the domestic care of his dying mother. This shift is a rhetorical gesture to give Pope the moral high ground, but it also indicates his inability throughout the poem to assert his identity in positive terms. Yet as George Justice points out, Pope's self-definition through his father's model of virtue is deeply misleading, for Pope has done almost everything he claims his father has not: he has attacked his "neighbors" as "fools," gone to court, sworn oaths, studied, failed to exercise, and been sick throughout his life (382–405).[73]

It is of course always easier and to a certain extent necessary to define oneself in opposition to an "other," but Pope's repeated use of vague or negative

rather than substantive positive terms of self-identification points to irresolvable tensions within his identity. Pope claims to construct his identity as an independent poet, free from implication in patronage—"above a patron" (265)—yet at the same time outside the sphere of print culture. In fact, as I have argued, he depended on both literary economies. Pope could not define his poetic identity through patronage, because he wanted to claim independence and high social status; but he could also not define himself by embracing the commercial marketplace and its public, which would have lowered his social position in the eyes of contemporaries and focused attention on his commercial self-promotion. Instead, Pope mystified his identity by constructing it through a series of oppositions, denials, and negations. The main positive category of identity he does use in his later poetry—Horace's model of virtuous self-possession—is a literary trope rather than a social position, mystifying the sources of wealth and status that enabled Pope's authorial independence.

In part as a result of these tensions, Pope tended to oscillate back and forth throughout his career between poetic self-assertion and self-deprecation. Hence in the Preface to the 1717 *Works* Pope characterizes his literary activities as a kind of aristocratic *spezzatura*: "I writ because it amused me; I corrected because it was as pleasant for me to correct as to write; and I published because I was told I might please such as it was a credit to please"; and in his letters he frequently compares poetry to the mere jingling of bells on a horse.[74] Yet at the same time he wrote to Henry Cromwell in 1710 that "no man can be a true Poet, who writes for diversion only" and to Charles Jervas in 1714 that "To follow Poetry as one ought, one must forget father and mother, and cleave to it alone" (*Cor.* i. 110, 243). Much of this ambivalence, of course, can be attributed to Pope's customary rhetorical vacillation, his frequent shifts of self-presentation in his writings depending on the context and the addressee, often even within the same poem. Pope's ambivalence about defining his identity through poetry, however, goes deeper than just rhetoric. It expresses a central contradiction in his self-construction: between his desire to assert himself as a kind of poetic aristocrat, on the one hand, and his need to construct his own professional identity and authority through his active self-promotion in the marketplace, on the other. As a hunchbacked Catholic in a country that excluded Catholics from university education, public office, and property ownership, with an ambiguous social status and no clear place in society, Pope's sense of dignity and social importance depended on his ability to construct this mystified position of poetic independence.

Throughout the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, Pope cannot decide whether he wants to embrace his identity and fame as an author or disclaim it, as he fluctuates between these positions. At one point he calls writing an "idle trade"

(129), ironically identifying it both with commercial activity ("trade") and with aristocratic leisure (idleness). This oxymoron reveals the seam in Pope's self-construction: his attempt to meld together these two different models of literary production without identifying fully with either. Pope's construction of poetic identity emerged out of this position of double resistance, setting a precedent for the poets who followed him.

AUTHORIAL PROPERTY, PROFESSIONALIZATION, AND IDENTITY

Even as he resisted commercial print culture in some ways, Pope also structured his identity through the commercial practices and discourses emerging from that culture. More often than not, the vehemence of his resistance reveals his implication in what he claims to resist. The opening section of the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,* for instance, culminates when Pope slams his door on a writer who comes to him in hopes of using Pope's influence with the commercial theater or the publisher Lintot, offering to "go snacks" on the piece (i.e. equally divide the profits) if Pope will "revise it and retouch" (64). In the poem the writer approaches Pope, but we know that Pope himself approached Elijah Fenton and William Broome to help him translate the *Odyssey* and did in fact go "snacks" with them—or rather, more than "snacks," taking to himself the lion's share both of the profits and the fame.[75] In the same vein, the poem complains "This prints my Letters, that expects a Bribe,/ And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe!'" (113–14), as if these activities take place outside of or against Pope's will. Yet we know that Pope himself induced Edmund Curll to print his letters through a devious series of anonymous notes and disclosures, so that Pope could then come out with his own authorized version of them.[76] Pope constructed an image of himself in those letters as high-minded, self-possessed, and aloof from faction and commercial concerns, but he circulated this self-image by ironically outwitting Curll, the most notorious and shady figure of Grub Street culture, at his own game.[77] In the process, as Pat Rogers points out, Pope effectively pirated his own work.[78] Though Pope dissociates himself in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* from the hawkers' calls to "subscribe, subscribe," we also know he actively coordinated the subscription campaigns that made him both wealthy and famous, giving meticulous directions for newspaper advertisements and delegating prominent friends to solicit subscriptions for him.[79]

As a culminating irony, Pope's process of increasing his fortune and reputation through the active marketing of his writing continued through the very poems in which he represents his distance from commercial forces. As stipulated in his carefully negotiated contract, Pope earned his usual £50 from

Gilliver in exchange for one year's copyright to the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, after which it reverted back to Pope's property for future editions. Pope also included the poem in three 1735 versions of his *Works*, including an octavo versions marketed specifically to a wider book-buying public that could not afford the folio or quarto edition.[80] The violence with which Pope slams the door on the suggestion of financial profits in the poem thus reveals the presence of the rhetorically repressed—not repressed in the sense that he was trying to fool readers, but because it had to be excluded from the careful construction of Pope's Horatian identity in the poem. Yet commercial print culture cannot be shut outside the closing doors of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* or any of Pope's later writing because it is already inside, in the terms of his own self-constructed identity.

Pope also reveals his implication in commercial print culture through his tendency to construct his identity in terms of authorial property. The *Dunciad Variorum* ends with "A List of All Our Author's Genuine Works," establishing Pope's legitimate authorial oeuvre as a way of establishing his identity, then "By the Author a Declaration," which in mock-heroic legalese asserts Pope's control over the textual authenticity of the printed edition, authorized by Pope himself down to the last "word, figure, point and comma" (238). This "Declaration," with its ridiculously exact stipulation of literary property—designating the poem as "beginning with the word *Books*, and ending with the words *buries all*, containing the exact sum of *one thousand and twelve lines*"—is of course self-consciously comic and ironic, like so much else in the poem, but nevertheless deadly serious in its assertion of Pope's ownership as "Author" or "Poet" over the poem. In the same spirit, the "letter to the Publisher" attributed to Cleland begins by expressing pleasure that the publisher has "procured a *correct Edition* of the DUNCIAD," similarly but without irony stressing the crucial importance of textual authenticity and ownership (11, emphasis mine).

Conversely, both the *Dunciad* and the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* stridently resist the misattribution of others' authorial property to Pope. In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* he satirizes those who misattribute to him "the first Lampoon Sir *Will* or *Bubo* makes./ Poor guiltless I! and can I chuse but smile,/ When ev'ry Coxcomb knows me by my *Style*?" (280–82); then later in the poem he complains more vehemently of "th' imputed trash, and dullness not his own" of misattributed writings (351). Pope's repeated satire against forgers, libelers, and counterfeiters throughout his later poetry shows this same concern with the correct assignation of literary property, as when he satirizes Budgell for forging wills while connecting him to "Grub Street" and "Curll" (who was notorious for stealing authors' writings). Thus Pope claims that he

> Let *Budgel* charge low Grubstreet on his quill,
> And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his *Will*;
> Let the *Two Curls* of Town and Court, abuse
> His Father, Mother, Body, Soul, and Muse. (378–81)

In the Preface to his 1727 *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*, Pope makes this connection between authorial property and forgery even more explicit:

> For a *Forgery*, in setting a false Name to a Writing, which may prejudice another's Fortune, the Law punishes the Offender with the Loss of his *Ears*; but has inflicted no adequate Penalty for such as prejudice another's Reputation, in doing the same Thing in Print; though all and every individual Book so sold under a false Name, are manifestly so many several forgeries.[81]

He makes a similar conflation in the *Dunciad*, when he writes that poverty "fills the streets and high-ways with Robbers, and the garrets with Clippers, Coiners, and Weekly Journalists" (15). Pope's comic proclamation of absolute authorial ownership in "By the Author a Declaration" is then embedded in an attack on critics as a species of forgers and counterfeiters, who

> have taken upon them to adulterate the common and current sense of our *Glorious Ancestors, Poets of this Realm*, by clipping, coining, defacing the images, mixing their own base allay [sic], or otherwise falsifying the same; which they publish, utter, and vend as genuine; The said haberdashers having no right thereto, as neither heirs, executors, administrators, assigns, or *in any sort related* to such Poets, to all or any of them: Now We, having carefully revised this our *Dunciad*, beginning with the word Books, and ending with the words *buries all*, containing the entire sum of *one thousand and twelve Lines*, do declare every word, figure, point, and comma of this impression to be authentic: And do therefore strictly enjoin and forbid any person or persons whatsoever, to erase, reverse, put between *hooks*, or by any other means directly or indirectly change or mangle any of them. (237–38)

The scholar Richard Bentley had put passages of Milton's *Paradise Lost* between hooks in his 1732 edition, to indicate his doubt of their authenticity. Pope, in opposition to such claims, comically asserts full ownership over his own literary text against future critics. The comedy of this passage, however, must be understood in relation to the very uncomical "List of All our Author's Genuine Works" which comes directly before it, a combination which reveals a deeper anxiety. In fact, Pope took literary piracy deadly seriously. Significantly, the

Dunciad was the first poem for which Pope kept his own copyright, the first for which he commissioned his own printer and publisher, and the first literary property that he defended in court against pirates.[82] As Pope wrote in a note on a 1739 letter, "I never alienated, intentionally, any copy for ever, without expressly giving a deed in forms, to witness & that the copy right was to subsist after the Expiration of the 14 years in Queen Anne's Act, which then was understood generally to be the case, unless covenanted to the contrary."[83] By asserting self-possession of his own literary text against future appropriations, Pope grounded his authorial identity in his claims of literary property. Perhaps the "List of All Our Author's Genuine Works" was removed after the 1729 edition precisely because it was too serious: because it uncomically reveals Pope's construction of his own authorial identity as a function of his print market oeuvre and property.

Though these texts reveal Pope's deep concern with literary property, his poetry tends to disclaim all association with the commercial practices of the marketplace. Hence he writes in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*:

> What tho' my Name stood rubric on the walls?
> Or plaister'd posts, with Claps in capitals?
> Or smoaking forth, a hundred Hawkers' load,
> On Wings of Winds came flying all abroad?
> I sought no homage from the Race that write;
> I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight:
> Poems I heeded (now be-rym'd so long)
> No more than Thou, great GEORGE! a Birth-day Song.
> I ne'er with Wits or Witlings past my days,
> To spread about the Itch of Verse and Praise;
> Nor like a Puppy daggled thro' the Town,
> To fetch and carry Sing-song up and down;
> Nor at Rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cry'd,
> With Handkerchief and Orange at my side [. . .]. (215–28)

Pope here denies his implication in the commercial marketing of his works. Yet we know that Pope actively supervised the formats of his editions and set up contracts with printers and publishers in order to achieve the greatest possible margin of profit. If Pope's name stood "rubric on the walls" in bold format for advertising, there is a good chance he had some hand in it himself.[84]

Pope also participated in what was essentially a strategy of self-canonization, closely supervising the formatting and presentation of his writing in order to claim the status of a modern "classic." Scholars have recently argued that the English literary canon was promoted by booksellers during the eighteenth

century as a way to create a perpetual demand for their most valuable literary products, authorize series of reprints, and advertise the importance and distinction of living authors.[85] As part of an emerging critical idiom of "genius," the idea of the "classic" was extended during this period from Classical to modern authors, helping to draw the distinction between anonymous hacks and literary geniuses and in the process separating popular culture and its flood of ephemeral writings from a newly defined high-brow "literature."[86] Until recently these categories of "popular" and "classic" have tended to be accepted as self-evident, but recent scholarship has indicated that Pope (and the *Dunciad* in particular) was central to the process of their construction, defining his own writing against that of the "dunces" in ways which have since become critical commonplaces.[87]

The point of revisiting these distinctions is not to challenge Pope's skill as a writer—he would not have been so successful in establishing these categories if he had not been so rhetorically brilliant—but to point out that he established these distinctions by working within, rather than outside of, print culture, in what was ironically a meta version of self-marketing. By swaddling the *Dunciad* in a heavy critical apparatus of editorial notes and appendices, Pope affirmed it as a "classic" or canonical text from the beginning, imitating critics who were beginning to apply the apparatuses of Classical scholarship to vernacular writers and construct an English canon around authorial figures such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden.[88] In the *Dunciad*, Pope comically projects this editorial labor onto the "dunces": not only actual scholars and editors such as Dennis and Theobald, but also his own comic persona of Scriblerus, together with the other editorial voices he ventriloquizes throughout the poem. Yet we know that Pope himself contributed to this process of canonization by editing and annotating Shakespeare's *Works* in 1725, and he actively put himself into this new category of "classic" by publishing his own *Works* in 1717 at the unprecedentedly early age of 29 and by publishing his poems beginning in the 1735 *Works* with textual notes.[89] As usual, Pope's comic satire attempts to have things both ways. Yet another of the *Dunciad*'s great ironies, as Frederick Keener points out, is that it survives wrapped in the textual apparatuses of the same print culture that it satirizes—an irony which is intrinsic to the form of the poem and the version of authorial identity that Pope constructs within it.[90]

The Dunciad's fundamentally ironic relation to print culture takes other forms as well. The *Dunciad* satirizes commercialism, yet Pope brought edition after edition of the poem into the market, forcing readers to buy new editions of the same poem in order to keep up to date while he ironically swelled the bulk and therefore price of the poem. Much of this swelling text consisted of

passages assembled from the writings of those he satirized and quoted in the notes and addenda. In perhaps the ultimate comic revenge, Pope in the *Dunciad* thus literally made money from the writings of the "dunces" even as he attacked them for their commercialism.[91] The form and publication history of the poem clearly directed it to the commercial marketplace. Pope claimed copyright over the poem in 1743, after the end of the initial fourteen-year term stipulated by the Statute of Anne, and he was careful to time his revision of the poem to coincide with this claim, thus allowing him to reap the full financial rewards of the poem's publication.[92] In the process, Pope was adding to his fortune by actively marketing his poem to the same commercial audience he satirized within it. As Carole Fabricant sums up, "In *The Dunciad* [Pope] masterfully exploits the very medium that he damns and produces a popular bestseller that attack the very conditions that make such a phenomenon possible."[93]

By establishing authorship in terms of literary property, Pope not only constructed his own authorial identity, he also attempted to impose determinate identity and order on print culture in general. The "author function" as defined by Foucault had a disciplinary as well as a capitalist function in early modern Europe, as proper attribution of authorship allowed regulation of the otherwise anarchic and socially transgressive circulation of print.[94] Pope's definition of authorship in *The Dunciad* attempts to impose this same policing function. In *The Dunciad*, texts and identities constantly shift and dissolve into one another in a process of endless recirculation, plagiarism, and reprints, as "poetic souls"

> Demand new bodies, and in Calf's array,
> Rush to the world, impatient for the day.
> Millions and millions on these banks he views,
> Thick as the stars of night, or morning dews,
> As thick as bees o'er vernal blossoms fly,
> As thick as eggs at Ward in Pillory. (iii. 24, 29–34)[95]

In these twilit indifferentiation of print culture, nameless authors spawn and dissolve in endless generations of ephemeral writings.[96] Pope tends to depict this proliferation of print in terms that evoke the spawning of insects out of rankness and decay:

> the Chaos dark and deep,
> Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
> 'Till genial Jacob [Tonson, the publisher], or a warm Third day,
> Call forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:

> How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
> How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
> Maggots half-formed in rhyme exactly meet,
> And learn to crawl upon poetic feet. (i. 55–62)

The gross materiality of these images signifies the materiality of print culture, in which books become despiritualized as objects in the commercial marketplace and the structures of individual identity and social order decompose into a single festering contagion. Pope's tendency to represent the "dunces" as unreal ghosts or ciphers represents a related position: as matter without form or spirit, they have no essential substance.[97] Pope fears the uncontrolled circulation of writing much as Bolingbroke and the Tory political opposition feared the circulation of paper money, as the circulation of signifiers detached from the fixed and stable order necessary to provide the foundations of identity, meaning, and value.[98]

Establishing authorship, by singling out and therefore fixing individual identities in stable relation to writing, imposes order on this insubstantial mass. In attempting to impose this order, the poem seeks to identify each specific author with his or her proper works, a process of "pinning down" which is specified quite literally: "If a word or two more are added upon the chief Offenders [i.e. in the notes and textual apparatuses]; 'tis only as a paper pin-n'd upon the breast, to mark the Enormities [of the offenses] for which they suffer'd [i.e. were satirized by the poem]" (9). By naming each author together with his or her works, Pope claims to establish each in his or her proper "niche" in the poem's "temple of infamy"—not only the poem's main anti-heroes, first Theobald and then Cibber, but the whole pantheon of "dunces" whose works are mentioned or alluded to in text and notes.[99] At one point the poem describes the "deluge of authors [that] cover'd the land" after the introduction of cheap printing and paper (49). By attributing authorship, Pope attempts to transforms this chaotic "deluge" into an ordered "temple," if only a "temple of infamy," and so preserve proper boundaries and the possibility of hierarchy. Naming author after author, many of them obscure even at the time of the poem's first publication, it is as if Pope in the *Dunciad* attempts to label and fix in place all of commercial print culture through a single encyclopedic act of representation.[100]

In order to give form to print culture, Pope in *The Dunciad* must first represent it in some determinate shape and order. His authorial identity provides the central focus for this order, the supposedly fixed principle around which the "dunces" are made to arrange themselves. In the process, Pope in effect internalizes all of print culture within his own identity. The poem itself

comically assigns this role to Pope at the end of the "Testimonies of Authors," where a list of all the writings which have been misattributed to him leads to the comic conclusion "That his Capacity was boundless, as well as his Imagination; that he was a perfect master of all Styles, and all Arguments; and that there was in those times no other Writer, in any kind, of any degree of excellence, save he himself" (47). The double irony, however, is that this is exactly the role which Pope attempts to fulfill in the *Dunciad*: speaking as if through all voices at once in his attempt to impose order and unity on the whole.

As the organizing central figure around which the commercial print world of the *Dunciad* is made to construct itself, Pope occupies the heroic role of giving form to its formlessness, generating the anti-order of dullness as an inverted mirror-image of the proper order he himself claims to represent. Thus in the 1743 *New Dunciad* Colley Cibber becomes the laureate of Dulness (as he was also, of course, the actual laureate of the court), the heir of Settle and a long line of Dulness before him, mirroring Pope's self-construction as the proper heir of Dryden and an analogously long line of English poetic genius. Pope extends this parallel between himself and his poem's central hero to construct an entire anti-hierarchy in the court gathered around the Queen of Dulness. In a note, Pope comically describes the three classes or estates of Dulness' social order—"In this new world of Dulness each of these three classes hath its appointed station, as best suits its nature, and concurs to the harmony of the System"—then goes on to describe this order of Dulness at length (n. iv. 76–101). Near the end of the fourth book, the Queen of Dulness herself ratifies this anti-order by giving each class in the social order a topsy-turvy new role, concluding by delegating ultimate power to Cibber himself as the "Tyrant supreme! [who] shall three Estates command,/ And MAKE ONE MIGHTY DUNCIAD OF THE LAND!" (iv. 603–4). Just as Dulness creates new worlds as inversions of the actual one, where "other planets circle other suns./ The forests dance, the rivers upwards rise,/ Whales sport in woods, and dolphins in the skies" (iii. 244–46), so too She creates an inverted social and aesthetic order, defined as directly opposite Pope's construction of his own "legitimate" authorial identity.[101] In the process, Pope's self-construction of his own identity establishes a professional hierarchy for the classification of all authors.

Through Pope's central identity, individual authorship and authorial property thus assert themselves as central to the structure of *The Dunciad* and the order it attempts to impose on print culture. The self-consuming irony of the poem, however, comes from the fact that this category of authorship, through which Pope attempts to oppose print culture, was itself an emerging

development of that same print culture, which *The Dunciad* actively helped to promote. Pope's supposed opposition to print culture was in fact the medium and even vanguard of its further expansion.

"BUT WHY THEN WRITE?": AUDIENCE AND SELF

In the end, if commercial print culture is really as degraded as he charges, Pope leaves himself facing the unanswerable question which he himself poses in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*: "But why then publish?" (135). As Ian Donaldson rightly points out, if both court and public are "asses" (as in the Midas metaphor, lines 76–82), and if no uncorrupted public remains, for whom does the poet pretend to write?[102] Within the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, Pope seems to solve this dilemma by addressing himself to a final remnant of an old elite public, Arbuthnot, while at the same time inviting the reader behind closed doors to overhear and thus take part in the conversation. Within the rhetorical structure of the poem, Pope, Arbuthnot, and the reader represent all that is left of a traditional public: the only ones who continue to recognize their "rightful" places. This position reveals itself as ironic, however, in that Pope's poem invites each and every reader in turn behind the closed door, thus finally inviting the whole mass audience inside—on the rhetorical condition that they join his position and recognize his proper authority, as imposed by the terms of the poem. Though in one sense this public is positioned only to "overhear," in another sense Pope self-consciously writes to these eavesdroppers rather than to his putative addressee, Arbuthnot. This sense of addressing a general public through the rhetorical figure of Arbuthnot becomes especially obtrusive when, towards the end, the poem suddenly calls out "Hear this! and spare his Family, *James More*" (385)—abandoning the rhetorical frame of the epistle to reveal Pope's true primary audience, of which James Moore becomes one possible reader. Pope addresses his self-portrait to Arbuthnot not because he really wants to write to his friend in this form, but because Arbuthnot as addressee best serves his rhetorical purposes in addressing the larger public. In one sense the poem represents the new public as the source of social disorder and madness; but in another sense, by setting up this rhetorical structure, Pope brings this public into the very center of his identity. The commercial public of print culture is already inside the sanctuary of Twickenham, just as the terms of print culture are already inside the defining categories of Pope's authorial identity.

Pope's construction of poetic identity is directly related to his construction of this imagined commercial public. In his earlier poems, such as *An Essay on Criticism* and *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope constructs his authority as if he represents a unified cultural elite, whose aesthetic standards are

also the general standards of "good sense." Pope's authorial self appears in these poems, but only briefly and marginally, and his claims to authority depend on his sense of expressing the collective standards of this elite. These earlier poems, such as *The Rape of the Lock*, give the impression of being situated within a relatively small, knowable culture of elites, even if they were in fact also marketed to a wider public.[103] Pope's later poems, however, after his decade-long translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, lose this intimate coteries tone and give the sense of an increasingly vast and heterogeneous print market public always hovering in the background: the indefinite and chaotic space into which "a hundred Hawkers" go "smoaking forth" in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, and before whom his "Name [stands] rubric on the walls" or "plaister'd posts" of booksellers' shops (215, 217). Whereas Pope's earlier epistles, such as the "Epistle to Miss Blount," "Epistle to Mr. Jervas," "To Mr. Addison," "Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford" and "To Mrs. M. B. on her Birth-day," had communicated a sense of really being addressed to their recipients and of being intended for a small, mostly familiar circle of readers, Pope's later epistles open rhetorically to address this larger, impersonal public—a move characteristic of many published epistles at the time.[104] David Fairer argues in his recent survey of eighteenth-century poetry that the epistle combined the public and the private, manuscript and print culture, allowing poets to use a private voice in a public address and so opening up potential for poetic flexibility and irony.[105] Pope uses the form in this way to address a larger public, while still maintaining a stance of virtuous self-possession and his claim to belong to an elite literary culture.

Even as he continued to construct his identity in terms of an elite cultural model, however, Pope represented this model as increasingly obsolete and his own identity as increasingly individuated and embattled. As "Dunce by Dunce [is] whistled off [his] hands" (254) by corrupt politicians and patrons, leaving only the "neglected Genius" of Gay (257), Pope represents himself as besieged by a new mass public of all social classes and isolated as a solitary individual. By the time he wrote the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* Pope was in fact socially and culturally isolated in many ways. With the breakdown of the Scriblerus Club and the further dissolution of Bolingbroke's circle—Gay's death in 1732, Swift's distance in Ireland and growing dementia, Bolingbroke's flight to France in 1735 before his permanent exile in 1738—Pope had lost much of his intimate circle, and though he retained his pre-eminence in the literary world, his cultural politics increasingly failed to represent any coherent group or interest other than his own. As John Richardson points out in his essay "Defending the Self," Pope's appeal to the elite circle he names

in *The Epistle to Arbuthnot* represents "a rather desperate attempt to define his own centre now he was excluded from the real one": desperate because at the time of publication seven of the ten figures he names were dead and the other three out of power.[106] In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot,* Pope represents himself as the final embattled representative of the old elite culture, the last person to maintain his proper place and duties in a world where the universal spread of print culture has made the fulfillment of those duties impossible. It is this same pose, as the last virtuous man in a venal society gone mad, that culminates the *Imitations of Horace* in the two *Epilogues to the Satires,* in which Pope renounces his satiric project as no longer tenable. In a note appended to the end of the second *Epilogue,* Pope proclaims that

> This was the last poem of the kind printed by our author, with a resolution to publish no more; but to enter thus, in the most plain and solemn manner he could, a sort of PROTEST against the insuperable corruption and depravity of manners, which he had been so unhappy as to live to see. Could he have hoped to have amended any, he had continued those attacks; but bad men were grown so shameless and so powerful, that Ridicule was become as unsafe as it was ineffectual.[107]

The closed doors of his Twickenham estate present this same irreversible isolation, as Pope's individual identity emerges as a last island in the rising deluge of print culture.

Such, anyhow, is Pope's rhetorical self-presentation. Yet we know that Pope actively cultivated a mass commercial public, marketing his books more cheaply to appeal to a wider audience towards the end of his life. In this sense, Pope's isolation and individuation as an author can be understood not just as a result of his political and social position, but also as a necessary product of the scale of print culture and the audience he cultivated. Although he represents himself as being forced into a more and more embattled isolation, Pope in his later poetry actively exploits this position in constructing his own independent identity as a poet. Pope's individuation is in this sense as much a product of print culture as a last stand against it.

It is important to stress, however, that Pope's tone of embattled stridency was not mere hypocrisy. The breakdown of a sense of shared social and aesthetic values that Pope proclaims in his later poetry felt quite real to many at the time, as numerous other writers attested.[108] This perceived breakdown threatened the terms of Pope's identity, which depended on the existence of a shared social order and some form of hierarchy. Despite the tendency towards individuation in his later poetry, Pope's model of identity did not allow him to construct his authorial self as truly autonomous or self-supporting. For Pope,

writing in terms of a traditional model of identity, virtue depended primarily on fulfilling one's proper place in an established social order rather than expressing a unique, private authenticity. In this model, the self is not uniquely personal but constructed in terms of traditional social roles. Both the title and form of the *Imitation of Horace* express this model of self, allowing Pope to ground his identity on Horace's precedent as a kind of traditional poetic role onto which he could graft his own contexts and purposes.[109] The fact that these poems of self-representation "imitate" Horace is thus for Pope not a sign of weakness or inauthenticity but a source of authority, and to that extent of virtue and sense, as opposed to the inevitable vice and madness of self-interest detached from traditional roles and hierarchies. From this position, Pope could stand in opposition to a corrupt society, but he could not construct his self as autonomous or detach that self entirely from society, even when he portrayed society as sinking into corruption and madness. When the sense of an underlying order breaks down, so too does the self which depends on such an order. Hence the suddenly tragic tone at the end of the *Dunciad*'s fourth book, as Pope stages not only the demise of a social and aesthetic order, but also the demise of his own self-constructed identity which depends on that order, or at least on the possibility of an order.

It would be equally wrong, however, to argue that Pope's sense of identity was statically traditional. Even as he followed the model of Horace, Pope actively refashioned that model to his own social and poetic purposes. As Helen Deutsch points out in *Resemblance & Disgrace*, at times Pope's "attempt to define himself in Horace's name turns into a rejection of Horace and an advertisement for himself" as Horace's "public privacy" turns into Pope's "unabashed performance."[110] Pope's Horatian identity, in short, is a Horace reconstructed for print culture, to appeal performatively to a commercial print audience.

In similar ways, Pope's attacks on self-interest ironically enabled his own individual self-construction. In one sense, self-interest is the defining quality of Dulness and duncehood.[111] The Queen of Dulness views her empire, like Atticus in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, with "self-applause" (i. 82); her anti-philosophers threaten to destroy all order as they "Find Virtue local, all relation scorn,/ See all in *Self*, and but for self [are] born" (iv. 481–82); and her definitive final charge to the dunces is "My Sons! be proud, be selfish, and be dull" (iv. 582). Yet this self-interest that characterizes the "dunces" paradoxically does not distinguish them as individuals, but only blurs them together into a single indiscriminate mass.[112] Pope, on the other hand, ironically creates his individual authorial self, set apart from all other writers, through the very act of claiming to oppose others' self-interest. On one hand, Pope feared

the democratizing effects of print culture and its tendency to break down social hierarchies, because he depended on the existence of an order to construct his identity. Yet on the other hand, Pope's construction of his own poetic independence only became possible through print culture, with its increasing tendency to individuate the author apart from an existing social order. To construct his independent identity as a poet, Pope needed to oppose and exploit the emerging commercial print culture at the same time. This tension is fundamental to Pope's later poetry.

I have argued that *The Dunciad* attempted to resolve this dilemma by reconstructing all of print culture within a single hierarchy, in which Pope simultaneously occupies all the positions. At the limits of his opposition in his later poetry, Pope's act of self-representation thus paradoxically becomes an expression of an entire social and aesthetic order: in the *Dunciad*, his authorial self literally *is* print culture. Pope's authorial "self" is in this sense not the private, autonomous self of the Romantics, but a self which attempts to internalize an entire social hierarchy in order to establish the grounds for its own foundation.

This position would be tortuous enough at any time, but Pope could only maintain it as long as it remained possible to represent print culture as a whole, in terms of a single determinate order. Thus the *Dunciad* names individual author after author, cramming both its poetic text and textual apparatuses with a manic overaccumulation of information in an attempt to represent the entire sphere of print culture, to keep all its players in view in a fixed and "proper" order. Yet even between the publication of the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* and the 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books*, print culture continued its rapid expansion. In the late 1720s it may still have seemed possible to contain the forces of commercial print culture within a single poem; but by the publication of the fourth book in the 1740s, the decade in which the novel rises to prominence, together with the burgeoning of the magazine and the founding of the first critical review, commercial print culture and its public had exceeded such capacity for a single determinate representation.[113] Similarly, by the 1740s it was increasingly difficult to claim any coherent literary position outside of print culture. Perhaps for this reason, book four of the *New Dunciad* expands the scope of the satire beyond the narrowly defined sphere of print culture to include the entire social order.[114]

By the time he wrote the *New Dunciad*, it was also harder for Pope to claim (or even imagine) a position for himself outside of print culture. By the 1740s Pope himself had become much more implicated in emerging commercial practices, as he registered copyrights under his own name as author in the Stationers' Register, consistently defended his literary property in

court, and marketed himself masterfully in complicity with the same print market culture that he satirized.[115] The energies unleashed in *The Dunciad* are the energies of commercial print culture itself, which Pope had to tap in order to construct his own identity and impose order on that culture. It is out of this internal tension in his ideological position and his own identity that Pope's later writing generates its tremendous vitality and force, not only in his construction of an entire imaginative world in the *Dunciad* but in his tireless shifting of rhetorical positions in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and throughout the *Imitations of Horace*—as if he is playing tennis simultaneously on both sides of the net, while the net itself keeps moving.

The conclusion of *The Dunciad* in Book IV marks the limits of this position, as Pope's position becomes finally and ironically self-consuming. When he invokes the Muse at the start of Book IV, Pope now does so from inside, rather than outside of, print culture:

> Yet, yet a moment, one dim Ray of Light
> Indulge, dread Chaos, and eternal Night!
> Of darkness visible so much be lent,
> As half to shew, half veil the deep Intent,
> Ye Pow'rs! whose Mysteries restor'd I sing,
> To whom Time bears me on his rapid wing,
> Suspend a while your Force inertly strong,
> Then take at once the Poet and the Song. (iv. 1–8)

As David Keener argues in his *Essay on Pope*, Pope now writes as the "one dim Ray of Light" generated by the darkness of print culture, and Dulness herself has become his Muse.[116] Unable to claim a separate ground, he must now generate his inspiration by addressing his main satirical target as his own Muse. Towards the end of Book IV, faced by the Queen of Dulness' uncreating yawn, Pope makes a last desperate gesture of opposition, again invoking an outside Muse in order to maintain his own voice and identity and begin a new round of poetic creation:

> O Muse! relate (for you can tell alone,
> Wits have short Memories, and Dunces none)
> Relate, who first, who last resign'd to rest;
> Whose Heads she partly, whose completely blest;
> What Charms could Faction, what Ambition lull,
> The Venal quiet, and intrance [sic] the Dull;
> 'Till drown'd was Sense, and Shame, and Right, and Wrong,—
> O sing, and hush the Nations with thy Song! (619–26)

Yet here his creative energies abruptly fail, and after a break set off by a line of asterisks the poem resumes: "In vain, in vain,—the all-composing Hour/ Resistless falls: The Muse obeys the Pow'r" (627–28). The empire of chaos is restored by the "uncreating word," and "Universal Darkness buries all" (654, 656).

By the time he published Book IV of the *Dunciad* in 1742, Pope's attempt to set himself up as the spokesperson of a unified cultural elite seemed increasingly passé, and in another sense obviously contradicted by his own active self-promotion through print culture. Claiming to construct his individual identity as an author only to defend a traditional aesthetic, moral, and social order, by the end of the *Imitations of Horace* Pope no longer represented much of anyone except himself. When he could no longer claim to represent an oppositional elite culture, and when print culture itself had become too expansive and heterogeneous to internalize in any single determinate order, Pope could sustain neither his poetic voice nor identity. When he attempts to invoke his own "Muse" at the end of Book IV to "sing, and hush the Nations with thy Song," that Muse is no longer collective but personal. Pope had no model that would allow him to maintain his authorial identity as autonomous in this way, and his oppositional voice abruptly and immediately falls silent. The poem's Muse "obeys the Pow'r" (628) of Dulness or print culture in the end because it has depended upon this power to generate its poetic energy, voice, and identity from the beginning.

THE EMERGING AUTHORIAL SELF

Just as he stands at a transitional moment in the emergence of commercial print culture, so too Pope stands at a transitional moment in the emergence of authorial identity and self-representation in English poetry. Pope's self-portrait at Twickenham is one of virtuous rural retirement in the Horatian model, but by invoking a mass public and opposing himself against society in a way Horace never did, it is also the first Romantic self-portrait of the isolated individual artist.[117] It would be a stretch to call Pope an alienated artist in the full modern sense, because he does not construct his individuality as separate from the society he opposes, but his stance of authorial isolation reflects the separation of the author from an increasingly unknown and (for Pope) degraded commercial public which would become central to the stance of artistic alienation. In effect, Pope in his *Imitations* fashions a new model of independent authorial identity, but he can only do so under the cover of Horace's precedent and by claiming to represent a traditional social elite. In the process, Pope creates a model for an autonomous authorial self which he himself cannot fully claim as autonomous.

Pope could only construct this model of identity at an unstable, transitional moment, when print culture had emerged to allow for the expression of independent authorial identity but had not yet grown to the size and heterogeneity which made the idea of a single encompassing order impossible. In the same sense, Pope's authorial identity could emerge only at a time when it was possible to play patronage and commercial culture off against one another, as viable poetic alternatives. Pope constructs his model of poetic independence out of the tension between these two literary economies, through a series of negations and constructive frictions rather than positive assertions: defining himself in *Arbuthnot* primarily in terms of what he is not and in the *Dunciad* through the materials of commercial print culture in which he claims not to be implicated. When the ascendant print culture could no longer be contained or played off against the possibility of an outside order, the unstable identity that Pope constructed could only dissolve, along with the oppositional poetic voice which gave it expression. It is hard to imagine the poetry that Pope would have written, had he lived longer; perhaps he would have continued to repackage, expand, and re-edit his earlier works.

Pope's *Dunciad* is in a sense the last expression of an old aesthetic position that could no longer be maintained, in which the poet claims to speak for all society with a public, representative voice. Pope's sense of cultural authority, claiming to represent consensual standards of taste, was no longer available to his poetic successors, who faced an increasingly large and heterogeneous public with a corresponding uncertainty of poetic voice and role. Such writers were uncertain not only what to write about and how to write, in their search for new poetic themes and forms adequate to their cultural moment, but also what audience to address and on what claims to base their poetic identity and authority. These mid-eighteenth-century poets, lacking Pope's Olympian reputation and strength in the commercial marketplace, could not construct their identities according to the same model. Pope was a towering poetic influence, but he provided no clear model of cultural authority, and his version of poetic identity could not independently authorize itself. Nor could these later writers play patronage or coteries culture off against the marketplace in the same way, because the marketplace had become the clearly dominant force in literary production. The frequent sense of belatedness and uncertainty in late-eighteenth-century poetry can be understood as in part anxiety also over this altered socio-economic context of authorship: an uncertainty how to construct new models of poetic identity, form, and voice to correspond to poets' new relationship to a commercial print audience.[118]

Although Pope's model of poetic identity was not immediately available to the poets who followed him, his later poetry did provide a crucial

precedent by focusing attention on the individual authorial self. In the *Dunciad* and *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, among other poems, Pope helped fashion a model of independent and disinterested "genius," opposed to the mere party writer or commercial "hack," which together with the distinction between "popular" and "classic" writing would develop throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century and play a central role in Romantic constructions of authorship. Pope's construction of authorial identity in opposition both to aristocratic patronage and to the commercial market would set the precedent for Romantic declarations of authorial independence and transcendence. Thus even as Pope defined his identity in opposition to print culture, he ironically helped to create a new model of individual authorial identity within that culture. In a similar process, even as they defined themselves in opposition to Pope's poetics and politics, subsequent poets would inherit the towering figure of "Pope" himself as a model of poetic self-representation and independence.

Chapter Three

"Approach and Read": Gray's *Elegy*, Print Culture, and Authorial Identity

Despite the smooth, monumental surface of its verse, Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* presents an oddly fractured jumble of poetic forms, voices, and positions. The poem oscillates throughout between the first person and general reflection; an idealized communal portrait of the "Forefathers" and a lament over their lost individuality; and celebration or restraint of individual ambition generally. Most strangely of all, the poetic form abruptly fractures in the "for thee" of line 93, as the poem turns back upon itself to address its own initial narrator as the object of its concluding third-person epitaph. This tension of different poetic voices and positions in the text has been read by critics in a number of ways: as demonstrating Gray's inability to "speak out"; as representing the contrasting "public" and "private" voices in Gray's poetry generally; as an expression of his feelings of isolation after the death of his closest friend and confidant, Richard West, in 1742; and as an expression of his repressed sexual feelings for other men.[1] In this chapter, I will read the *Elegy's* formal and thematic disjunctions as a reflection of Gray's ambivalent authorial identity and relationship to commercial print culture.[2]

Although Gray does not specifically associate himself with the narrator of the *Elegy*, the poem dramatizes the construction of authorial identity in ways that fit Gray's own identity and relation to print culture. Directed to "approach and read" the concluding "epitaph" by the "swain," the poem's imagined "kindred Spirit" stands in for the unknown print market reader, confronting what is specifically described as a "grav'd" or written text, set off by its separate title and italics from the rest of the poem.[3] This "epitaph," apparently written by the poem's initial narrator, offers a displaced version of poetic self-representation. Through its concluding scenario of solitary reading, the *Elegy* thus dramatizes the emergence of poetic identity in relation to the imagined print market

reader—a displaced self-representation which I will argue represents Gray's own ambivalent identity as a poet, as he attempted to negotiate a position between what were for him the Scylla and Charbydis of an old patronage culture and the new literary culture of the marketplace. Unable to establish his authority in terms of a cultural elite and unwilling to appeal to the general public, Gray found himself in a cultural and literary no-man's-land, writing without a clear sense of audience, public role, or poetic identity. Poetic identity in the *Elegy* is for this reason simultaneously both expressed and withheld, as the poem turns to focus on the individual identity of its narrator only by withdrawing him behind a third-person epitaph and the ineluctable decorum of death. This construction of displaced authorial identity, I will conclude, is typical of mid to late eighteenth-century poetry generally, which attempts to maintain allegiance to poetic tradition while at the same time focusing growing attention on the role and identity of the poet within the increasingly dominant contexts of print market culture.

AMBITION, PRINT CULTURE, AND AUTHORIAL IDENTITY

Read in relation to the surviving Eton draft, the *Elegy* reveals itself as a meditation on ambition, and specifically the ambition of individual authorship.[4] This question of ambition is expressed in the poem mainly in terms of writing and audience: the narrator's ability to write his own epitaph in relation to the unknown individual reader and so differentiate himself from the "Forefathers" indistinguishably buried in the churchyard.

In the Eton draft, the poem initially ends not with the death and epitaphic self-representation of its narrator, but with three stanzas in which the narrator reflects upon the theme of ambition and accepts his obscurity with a Christian and at the same time Stoic resignation:

> And thou, who mindful of the unhonour'd Dead
> Dost in these Notes their artless Tale relate
> By Night & lonely Contemplation led
> To linger in the gloomy Walks of Fate
>
> Hark how the sacred Calm, that broods around
> Bids ev'ry fierce tumultuous Passion cease
> In still small accents whisp'ring from the Ground
> A grateful Earnest of eternal Peace
>
> No more with Reason & thyself at Strife
> Give anxious Cares & endless Wishes room

> But thro' the cool sequester'd Vale of Life
> Pursue the silent Tenour of thy Doom.[5]

As in the final version, these concluding stanzas turn back upon the initial speaking voice as a "thou," but they do so in a way which remains straightforwardly the voice of the opening narrator, as the poem offers an extended internal debate leading to the narrator's resolution to accept his lot of obscurity and ultimately an obscure grave among the others buried in the churchyard. This draft of the poem ends by explicitly turning away from the individuality that the beginning of the poem seemed to offer. The narrator does not stop and meditate upon any grave in particular, and the individual identities of the forefathers blend together and are lost in a single composite description (stanzas 5 through 7). Significantly, the line that eventually became "Dost in these Notes *their* artless tale relate" (94) initially read "*thy* artless tale" (Eton, 78; emphases mine), showing that the narrator of the Eton draft explicitly identifies himself with the villagers as a fellow commoner whose unique identity will not be singled out by the poem.

In revision, however, Gray specifically rejected this obscurity, replacing the ending with four stanzas meditating on the universal need for memorialization and remembrance (77–92); then turning the poem back upon itself in the concluding section to focus on the individual identity of the narrator. This narrator provides the focus of the swain's oral description, and his grave is now set apart from the others in the individuality of the concluding "Epitaph." Whereas the narrator does not reflect on or describe any particular grave, the reader is directed specifically to his grave, where his individualized epitaph replaces the conventional and anonymous "holy texts" of the other graves. This epitaph then distinguishes the narrator's own unique personal history, character, and identity for the first time in the poem: "A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown" (118), etc. Through the imagined "kindred Spirit," the entire second half of the poem thus turns to focus on the individual identity of its own initial narrator.

There are strong suggestions, moreover, that this concluding epitaph is self-written, and so offers a somewhat ambiguous version of authorial self-representation. As an imagined future within a poem that begins in the first person, the scenario of the epitaph and its "kindred Spirit" seems to represent the proleptic vision of the narrator. In addition, the "For thee" which shifts the poem into the future tense is a rhetorical expansion of the "for thou" with which the narrator addresses himself in the Eton manuscript. The swain's description of the narrator as solitary and unknown also suggests that only the narrator himself could have written such a personally intimate epitaph. Such

a reading is strengthened by the fact that the poem offers no obvious alternative, despite Frank Ellis' "stonecutter" argument, that the "for thee" introduces an otherwise unidentified village stonecutter who has carved the existing tombstones—an argument which critics have generally rejected as over-ingenious.[6]

Understood as a self-written epitaph, with its textuality deliberately foregrounded by the separate title and italics, these concluding stanzas construct the narrator's identity specifically as an author. It is only through his learning, as the epitaph reveals, and above all through his ability to write, that the narrator can distinguish himself from the "forefathers" and construct his own individual identity in the first place. The poem thus reveals that the narrator's meditation on ambition has also been a meditation on authorship: on whether or not to construct his identity through writing in relation to the unknown public, imagined through the figure of the "kindred Spirit." Significantly, the narrator has no direct relationship or prior contact with this imagined reader. The "voice of Nature" crying from the "tomb" (91) becomes the voice of the author speaking from his text; and the projected "kindred Spirit" becomes the fiction of the sympathetic print market reader, in relation to whom the narrator can construct his own identity despite his isolation and alienation from the local community represented by the "swain."

In constructing this fiction of the unknown sympathetic reader, Gray's *Elegy* offers an early example of what would become a significant Romantic formal device, in which poets wrote the process of reception into their own texts. Representing the act of reading in this way allowed poets both to imagine their audience and to take symbolic control over the contexts of their reception, compensating for their anxieties in the face of an increasingly large and heterogeneous print market public.[7] Interestingly, as Joshua Scodel writes in *The English Poetic Epitaph*, towards the middle of the eighteenth century actual epitaphs also began to address themselves to this figure of the unknown reader, characteristically addressed as a "stranger" or "friend" in an appeal to the reader's sympathetic response. During the same period, epitaphic styles shifted from public panegyric to personal sensibility, defining the identity of the deceased primarily in terms of intensely private feeling instead of a public context. Such rhetorical developments, Scodel argues, responded to the expansion of the reading public and the new sense of addressing and appealing to unknown readers through print.[8] The appeal to the otherwise unidentified "friend" that the narrator will "gain from Heaven" (124) in the *Elegy*'s "Epitaph" situates the poem in these terms, with the suggestion that the "kindred Spirit" fulfills this role of "friend." Already in line 89, "on some fond breast the parting soul relies," the poem declares the individual's dependence

on another's sympathy. In the poem's conclusion, the reader him or herself provides this sympathetic individual other: the singular "some fond breast" in relation to whom the narrator can construct his own self-representation. In short, the projection of the unknown print market reader, imagined specifically as an individual, becomes the necessary fiction that allows the author to construct his own identity—an identity apparently independent of social contexts but covertly dependent on the contexts of print culture itself.

The *Elegy* dramatizes this emergence of authorial identity within the contexts of print culture by juxtaposing the communal orality and typed identity of the "swain" against the distinctively individual identity written into the "Epitaph." Through this contrast, the poem constructs the narrator's identity through two mediums in two markedly different versions. The "swain" in this regard functions as a contemporary representative of the "Forefathers" buried in the churchyard and, at the same time, as a kind of pastoral poet figure in his own right: a poetic precursor identified by the traditional poetic topoi and markedly poetic diction of his speech. The swain does not direct attention to his own individual identity, however, which is indicated as a general pastoral type and situated within the context of a traditional local community: the "we" into which his "I" merges easily in lines 98 and 114. The swain in turn characterizes the narrator in terms of another traditional pastoral type, in his stylized representation of the melancholy poet lying in noontide shadow beside the roots of an elm as a stream "babbles" past, or muttering "wayward fancies" to himself like one "craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love" (104, 106, 108). This portrait of the melancholy poet owes its most obvious debt to Milton's *Il Penseroso*, but refers beyond Milton to a long literary tradition including Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Shakespeare's "lover, [...] madman, and [...] poet" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In contrast to this model of typed pastoral identity, the "Epitaph" offers a portrait of the narrator as a unique individual, defined by his own personal sensibility and life history. The terms of this "Epitaph" remain purposefully vague and continue to invoke the traditional topos of melancholy, but they do so in a manner which distinguishes the narrator from all the other "Forefathers" buried in the churchyard, calling attention to his distinct individuality in a way which cannot be reduced to any one traditional type. What begins as a universalizing meditation and generalized elegy ends as a specific epitaph, constructing the individual authorial self.

Whereas the "swain" represents the traditional typed identity of the poet, embedded in immediate relationships and social structures, the narrator represents the emergence of a new model of independent authorial identity in relation to the unknown solitary reader, representative of print culture. The

shift from swain to "Epitaph" thus dramatizes the construction of authorial identity, subjectivity, and self-representation generally within the emerging sphere of commercial print culture, together with a new poetics of self-representation, formally and thematically centered upon the figure of the individual poet. Depending on one's perspective, this individualized authorship could seem either somewhat crazed and egotistical (as it does to the traditionally-minded swain), or exemplary of a new model of decorum and sensibility (as in the "Epitaph"). What to the swain seems like only "muttering" (106) to oneself turns out to be an address to the unknown print market reader.

This new model of authorship emerges in the poem together with a new model of selfhood in general, defined not by birth or a pre-existing social hierarchy but by unique individual qualifications and life history. The initial pastoral celebration of the "Forefathers" as commoners, without distinct individual identities of their own, is transformed in this spirit into a lament for their failure to distinguish themselves as individuals and develop their full individual potential:

> Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
> Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
> Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
> Or wak'd to extasy the living lyre.
>
> But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
> Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
> Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
> And froze the genial current of the soul. (45–52)

In this model, which emerged gradually within a British society marked by increasing social mobility, birth and social class were no longer a determining category of a person's identity but an accidental condition from which an essentially unique and personal individual identity could be abstracted.[9] In other poems composed during the 1740s, such "The Alliance of Education and Government" and "De Principiis Cogitandi" [On the Principles of Thinking], Gray develops these same Lockian ideas of the individual self shaped primarily by personal history and environment. The *Elegy*, however, expresses considerable ambivalence towards this potential individuality, noting that the villagers' poverty "circumscrib'd" not only their "virtues" but also their potential "crimes" (65–66), and producing Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell as exemplary figures of how this potential might have developed—all figures associated with the traumatic social upheaval of the English Revolution, as opposed to figures which might equally well have been chosen

from the Glorious Revolution of 1689 or other less politically overdetermined eras of British history.[10] Such examples suggest that the development of the villagers' latent individuality has the capacity to throw the social order into a similarly chaotic upheaval.

Within the *Elegy*, this ambivalent new model of individual identity is persistently linked to literacy and to writing. The "genial current" of the villagers' "souls" through which their individual talents might develop are, after all, "repressed" not only by poverty but also by their lack of "Knowledge," or education. This combination of poverty with ignorance is of course typical everywhere, but for England especially so during the eighteenth century, when, despite the emergence of a broad reading public and the beginnings of radical social transformation, the poor had probably even less access to education than in preceding centuries—in part because of the upper classes' fear that such education would lead to exactly the kind of ambition and social upheaval at which Gray hints.[11] It is learning, significantly, which distinguishes the narrator of the poem from the others in his rural community—"Fair Science *frown'd not* on his humble birth" (118, emphasis mine)—and which allows him to construct his own individual identity in the poem's concluding "Epitaph."

In these ways, the *Elegy* oscillates back and forth between the construction of unique individual identity and a more traditional model of characteristic identity types, just as it combines poetic innovation with more traditional modes. The poem's mourning of lost individual potential is balanced by its celebration of the forefathers' pastoral collectivity, just as its incipient subjectivity in the opening stanzas is balanced with a strong dose of general moral didacticism. The solitude and intense subjectivity of the opening stanzas, which Charles Rzepka has read as an unprecedented representation of consciousness, shifts into a more conventional poetic voice for the balance of the poem with its almost marmoreally chiseled stanzas and diction.[12] Though the authorial self emerges in the concluding epitaph, it does so within the traditional genre of the epitaph, never letting go of the ballast of tradition.

Within this oscillation, though, authorship does emerge as a new professional category of identity within the poem. In the list of potential careers, Cromwell and Hampden represent political and military leaders, traditional identity types and biographical subjects. Gray's choice of Milton as one of his exemplary figures, however—together with the suggestion that the villagers might have "wak'd to extasy the living lyre" (48)—also identifies authorship as a defining category of identity, at a time when the "Life of the Poet" was emerging as a major biographical form and when the dignified independent identity of the author as such began to be established as an (albeit still tenuous)

vocational possibility.[13] All three figures, of course, are also linked by their radical republican politics, and as such related to Gray's own ambivalent republicanism, but even in this capacity they are connected to the emergence of print culture and civil society out of the events of the English Civil War. The reference to individuals specifically "read[ing] their history in a nation's eyes" (64) also suggests that this authorial identity will be defined in relation to a "nation" of readers: a model of the nation as constituted by print culture and its public sphere which had begun to emerge during the eighteenth century.[14] Yet at the same time, this ambition for authorship as a source of individual identity and social mobility had been satirized by earlier writers such as the Scriblerians as creating a sphere of social upstarts, ridiculous "hacks" and "scribblers" associated with commercialism and the pursuit of a crass self-interest. Caught amidst these tensions, the *Elegy*'s ambivalence towards individual identity in general manifests itself also as an ambivalence towards authorial identity in particular: an identity which could not be separated from the contexts of commercial print culture and the general social change in which it participated.

THOMAS GRAY AND PRINT CULTURE

As a commoner himself, whose parents worked as a London scrivener and the owner of a millinery business, Thomas Gray had a similarly ambivalent relation to authorship. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, Gray's own identity was, like that of the *Elegy's* narrator, defined by his learning. Although he came to national attention as a poet, and above all as the author of the *Elegy*, Gray had an uneasy relationship to print culture, and he never conceived of himself as an "author" in the professional sense that had begun to emerge during the eighteenth century. As William Temple wrote in a letter to Boswell, Gray "could not bear to be considered himself merely as a man of letters; and though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement"; an assessment echoed by William Mason, who wrote that Gray's pride "led him of all other things, to despise the idea of being thought an author professed."[15]

Gray could remain ambivalent about this authorial identity in part because, unlike other mid-century authors such as Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith, he did not have to support himself or construct his identity through his writing. Instead, as a lifelong fellow and then professor at Cambridge, Gray pursued the life of a gentleman scholar, developing a reputation for immense learning and accumulating closely-written notebooks of private research in areas as disparate as the history of Anglo-Saxon poetry, medieval heraldry, English history, Classical civilization, and the anatomy of

insects. In constructing this identity as a gentleman scholar and sometimes poet, Gray attempted to distance himself from all forms of commercialized professionalism—disdaining not only professional authorship but also the practice of law, in which he was trained, and compiling his scholarship, which he never published, more for "his own personal happiness" than in any public or professional capacity.[16]

Gray's publication history bears out this anti-professionalism. Writing in a mode characteristic of an older literary tradition, Gray consistently preferred to circulate his poetry in manuscript, and he published almost exclusively at the urging of others, especially his friend Horace Walpole, and even then often anonymously. The *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* was first published anonymously by Robert Dodsley, at Walpole's urging, in 6d pamphlets in 1747; and the "Ode on Spring" and "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat" were first published anonymously in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* (an anthology of contemporary poets), probably at Walpole's request. Gray's 1753 *Designs by Mr R. Bentley for Six Poems by Mr T. Gray*—the first work which Gray allowed to be published under his own name—was also published at Walpole's urging, and the two rival editions of his 1768 collected *Poems* were published at the urging of others.[17]

When he did publish, Gray took almost no interest and in fact purposely disassociated himself from the financial rewards of his writing. This attitude is reflected in his 1755 comment to Thomas Wharton, in which he inveighs against publishing individual poems "in the shape of little six-penny flams [referring to the price of the Eton Ode], dropping one after another, till M^{r} dodsley thinks fit to collect them with M^{r} this's Song, and M^{r} t'other's epigram, into a pretty volume" (*Cor.* i 420). Gray declined Dodsley's offer of financial reimbursement for the 1753 *Six Poems*, took no interests in the profits of Dodsley's 1768 edition of his *Poems*, and asked for only a handful of copies from the finely printed 1768 Foulis edition to be distributed to himself and a few friends, subsequently also accepting the gift of a fine edition of Homer. Though the *Elegy* was phenomenally successful, going through five editions within a year of its publication, two more the following year, and fifteen individually printed editions in all by the time of Gray's death—in addition to large numbers of printings in other collections and anthologies—Gray apparently neither wanted nor received financial reward from its publication.[18]

Despite this consistent self-distancing from commercial print culture, however, Gray was not indifferent to the success of his poems and the growth of his reputation as a poet. In 1757, he actively promoted Dodsley's publication and distribution of a two thousand copy edition of his *Odes*, inquiring anxiously among his various correspondents about the poems' reception.[19]

Gray sent his friend and Cambridge fellow James Brown a "poetical cargo to distribute" to a hand-picked list of fifteen fellows and masters prior to the poem's official publication, together with anyone else who might occur to Brown as appropriate (*Cor.* ii 509–10). Just a fortnight later, Gray anxiously importuned Brown for news of the poems' reception: "I begin to wonder a little, that I have heard no news of you in such a long time. I conclude, you received Dodsley's packet at least a week ago, & made my presents. you will not wonder therefore at my curiosity, if I enquire of you, what you heard said?" (*Cor.* ii 516). Gray's concern with poetic reputation, however, extended beyond this hand-picked audience. Showing a specific concern over sales in a Sept. 7, 1757 letter to Mason, Gray inquires how many of Dodsley's two thousand copies remain unsold, adding that "he told me a fortnight ago that 12 or 1300 were gone" (*Cor.* ii 524). At the same time, Gray uncustomarily sold the copyright of the *Odes* to Dodsley, receiving £40 "for all my right & property in my two Odes the one intituled [sic] *The Powers of Poetry*, ye other *The Bard* only reserving to myself the right of reprinting them in any one Edition I may hereafter print of my Works" (*Cor.* ii 513 n1). This contractual note to Dodsley indicates Gray's familiarity with the forms of literary copyright and his willingness in this case to assert authorial ownership over his work—a willingness which throws his customary gentlemanly aloofness from such concerns into stronger contrast.

In owning the *Odes* as his authorial property, Gray seems to have thought of the poems as representing his proper albeit very slim public oeuvre, on the basis of which he hoped to establish his national reputation as a poet. For Gray, a proper taste in poetry demanded great learning: he thought even the printer who corrects the presses should "have some acquaintance with the Greek, Latin & Italian, as well as the English, tongues" (*Cor.* iii 1000). In publishing the difficult and allusive Odes, as Linda Zionkowski remarks, Gray may have been attempting to distance himself from the popular success of the *Elegy* and recreate the "small elite audiences of past ages" within the new publishing context of print culture.[20] Gray hoped that the difficulty of the poems, prefixed with a Greek epigraph which he later translated as "vocal to the intelligent alone" (*Cor.* ii 797), would separate the wheat from the chaff among his readers, establishing the status of an elite audience precisely through its ability to understand and appreciate his poetry. He remarked to Wharton, in this spirit, that understanding his Odes would demand "long acquaintance with the good writers ancient and modern [. . .] without which [readers] can only catch here & there a florid expression, or a musical rhyme, while the whole appears to them a wild obscure unedifying jumble" (*Cor.* ii 478). In effect, Gray attempted to use the *Odes* to construct

his own elite public. This appeal to an elite of the learned is highlighted by his deliberate refusal to publish the poems with explanatory notes—a decision he later relented, as he published the notes together with a witheringly condescending aside on the capacities of the general public.[21] "The Odes in question, as their motto shews," Gray later wrote in a letter to Thomas Brown, "were meant to be *vocal to the Intelligent alone.* how few *they* were in my own country, Mr Howe can testify; & yet my ambition was terminated by that small circle" (*Cor.* ii 797). Yet despite the high acclaim that the *Odes* received from many readers, Gray was stung by their mixed reception and by charges of obscurity, especially among the learned, a disappointment indicated by his remark to Wharton that "the [Intelligent—written in Greek] appear to be still fewer, than even I expected" (*Cor.* ii 518).[22]

Gray also in his letters expresses a nostalgia for an imagined pre-commercial literary culture, in which the aristocracy occupy a position as patrons on the basis of their superior learning as well as their superior social status. This model of a traditional learned aristocracy is clearly a fiction of Gray's own devising, rather than a historical actuality. Yet even as he chastised the elite for their failure to fulfill this social function he projected onto them, Gray also insisted upon the dignity and independence of the artist: paradoxically a product of the same commercial print culture from which he attempted to dissociate himself and on which he blamed the corruption of the aristocratic public. In a letter to his aristocratic Italian correspondent, Count Algarotti, whom he elsewhere identifies as one of "the few real Judges, that are so thinly scatter'd over the face of the earth" (*Cor.* ii 813), Gray writes:

> I see with great satisfaction your efforts to reunite the congenial arts of Poetry, Musick, & the Dance, wch with the assistance of Painting & Architecture, regulated by Taste, & supported by magnificence & power, might form the noblest scene, and bestow the sublimest pleasure, that the imagination can conceive. but who shall realize these delightful visions? [. . .]
>
> One cause that so long has hindered, & (I fear) will hinder that happy union, wch you propose, seems to me to be this: that Poetry (wch, as you allow, must lead the way, & direct the operations of the subordinate Arts) implies at least a liberal education, a degree of literature, & various knowledge, whereas the others (with a few exceptions) are in the hands of Slaves & Mercenaries, I mean, of People without education, who, tho neither destitute of Genius, nor insensible to fame, must yet make gain their principal end, & subject themselves to the prevailing taste of those, whose fortune only distinguishes them from the Multitude. (*Cor.* ii 810–11)

As a result of this failure of elite learning and patronage, artists, though not "destitute of Genius," are forced to "make gain their principle end" and subject themselves to the "prevailing taste" of the commercial public and the marketplace. In calling upon the aristocracy to support the arts with their "magnificence and power," however, Gray anachronistically invokes a model of court patronage in order to establish the independence of individual artists. Even his use of the word "Genius"—a term which had just begun to come into widespread critical use in relation to the discourse of copyright and independent authorial identity—indicates this concern with the artist's independence, a notion which had emerged only recently within the context of print culture.[23]

Throughout his letters Gray asserts his own independence in similar terms, resisting any implications of patronage or appropriation by the cultural elite as stridently as he resists appropriation by the commercial public of the marketplace. Gray declined the poet laureateship when it was offered to him in 1757, slightingly referring to it as a "*Sinecure* to the K[ing's] majesty"; and repeatedly declares in his letters that he "do[es] not love *panegyrick*" (*Cor.* iii 983). For the same reason, Gray exhibited extreme discomfort in writing his "Ode for Music" to celebrate the installation of his patron the Duke of Grafton, who as the new Chancellor of Cambridge University had obtained for him a much-sought appointment as the Regius Professor of Modern History.[24] Though Gray clearly received a crucial, indirect patronage through his association with upper class friends such as Horace Walpole—who introduced Gray to a social and cultural elite, circulated his manuscripts, and published his poetry on Walpole's own Strawberry Hill press—he consistently resisted any direct implication of financial or personal dependence.

In constructing its narrator's identity in terms similar to Gray's own, the *Elegy* shows this same tendency to reject both the traditional aristocratic culture of patronage and the emergent literary marketplace. Implied criticism of the "pealing anthems" which "swell the noise of praise" over the "Trophies" of "Grandeur" and the "Proud" (31–40), together with the "incense kindled at the Muse's flame," heaped at "the shrine of Luxury and Pride" (71–72), pointedly reject the "panegyric" of traditional patronage culture, in which the author's own identity disappears into the identities of his patrons as effectively as it disappears into the "short and simple annals of the poor" (32). But the *Elegy* also rejects popular ambition and association with "the madding crowd's ignoble strife" (73)—a phrase which can be read both as a general comment on capitalist culture and a specific comment on the author's relation to the commercial print market and its readers.

Associating himself with the elite classes through his friendship with Walpole and the circles to which Walpole introduced him, Gray attempted to

maintain the decorum of a gentleman, but he also retained a keen sense that he was, in fact, a "commoner." In "A Long Story," another poem written around the time of the *Elegy*'s publication, Gray jocosely describes himself as "a Commoner and Poet" (140) in relation to the aristocratic inhabitants of the Manor House at Stoke Poges.[25] In that poem—in which he also describes himself as "a wicked Imp they call a Poet" (44)—Gray imagines the aristocratic ghosts of the Manor House objecting to the familiarity with which its current occupants seek out his acquaintance and invite him into their company. In *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry*, Linda Zionkowski argues that Gray makes his identity subservient to the aristocrats in the poem, allowing his female visitors to draw him into a traditional patronage relation and deferring to their authority.[26] Though he circulated and later published the poem in part to amuse these high-ranking acquaintances, however, Gray did not depend in any significant way on their patronage, and the poem shows him initially avoiding, rather than acquiescing in, a patronage relationship. At the same time, the poem playfully portrays the "poet's" capacity to disrupt the traditional mores of the aristocratic social order. He comes, involuntarily, as a "culprit" (97) to their judgment, and even as he positions himself in this subservient role within the decorum of the traditional social order, Gray's poetic identity and presence there signals a threat to that order. The poet's capacity for creating social upheaval in "A Long Story" thus presents a comic version of the same themes of individualism and social disruption which underlie the construction of poetic identity in the *Elegy*. "A Long Story" deftly and comically handles these tensions, but in so doing also indicates an underlying aporia in Gray's sense of his own authorship and identity.

Gray's ambivalence towards publication and authorial identity also manifests itself in the publication history of the *Elegy*. Complaining about Horace Walpole's widespread circulation of the poem in manuscript, Gray remarked in a December 1750 letter to Thomas Wharton that the stanzas of the *Elegy* have

> had the misfortune by Mr W[alpole's] fault to be made still more publick [than "A Long Story," also circulated widely in manuscript], for which they certainly were never meant, but it is too late to complain. they have been so applauded, it is quite a Shame to repeat it. I mean not to be modest; but I mean, it is a Shame for those, who have said such superlative Things about them (Cor. i 335).

Gray complains here about Walpole's circulation of the poem, but beneath his customary self-deprecation and fastidiousness he is clearly pleased

by the *Elegy*'s wide circulation and general approbation. As a result of this wide manuscript circulation, however, the *Elegy* was eventually appropriated by the editors of the commercial *Magazine of Magazines*, who wrote to apprise Gray of its impending publication and (as Gray puts it) to "beg the ... Honor of His Correspondence" (*Cor.* i 341). This appropriation of the poem shows the permeable boundaries between manuscript and print culture at a time when authorial rights were poorly defined and copyright did not carry over to ephemeral publications, when sending a copy of a poem to a magazine for publication could even be considered a tactful compliment to its author. The *Magazine of Magazines*, in Roger Lonsdale's words, was "a recently established and undistinguished periodical" purporting to offer the best selection from all contemporary magazines as well as original pieces of its own, and as such provides almost a perfect symbol of the commercial print culture from which Gray sought to distance himself.[27] Nor did the poem's appropriation by commercial print culture end with the *Magazine of Magazines*, where it appeared shortly after Gray's hurriedly authorized edition. Within a few months, by the end of April, the *Elegy* had appeared in three additional magazines, the *True Briton*, the *Scots Magazine*, and the *London Magazine*, and by the end of May it had also appeared in the *Grand Magazine of Magazines*—a different publication whose name ironically increases the order of magnitude of the initial piracy.[28] By the end of 1751, the poem also began to appear in various miscellanies and anthologies, as it has done every since. It appeared that year in the Foulis brothers' *Poems on Moral and Divine Subjects, by several English poets...*; then in 1752 in the provocatively named *Miscellaneous Pieces, consisting of select poetry, and methods of improvement in husbandry, gardening, and various other subjects useful to families*—a miscellany also published by William Owen, the editor of the *Magazine of Magazines*.[29] A more middle-class and commercial title to symbolize the poem's appropriation by print culture—or one more likely to offend Gray's sense of decorum—can hardly be imagined.

As Adrian Johns argues in *The Nature of the Book*, allegations of "piracy" in early modern literature responded to perceived breaches of literary propriety, not just infringements of actual copyright law. In the potentially anarchic sphere of print culture, an author's works and even character could be judged on the basis of his printer and publisher. In Johns' words, "unauthorized printing threatened to 'unauthorize' authors themselves"—especially at a time when authors' unique and exclusive rights over their manuscripts were not yet universally recognized.[30] For a figure such as Gray, attempting to define himself as a "gentleman" but without a secure social and economic basis for such status, unauthorized commercial printing represented a particularly invasive and dangerous threat, both to his poetic and personal identity.

This potential affront was heightened by Gray's extreme personal fastidiousness, which may have been rooted in a sense of unstable class status and identity. Gray was extremely sensitive about his appearance, for which he was ridiculed by the students at Cambridge, and he was equally fastidious about his appearance in print.[31] After seeing his poems in Dodsley's 1748 *Collection*, for instance, he wrote that "I am ashamed to see myself; but the company keeps me in countenance"—followed by a detailed commentary on the merits and faults of the other poems (or "company") in the edition (*Cor.* i 295). Similarly, he expressed horror over the suggestion that his portrait be printed as the frontispiece to the 1753 volume, writing that "to appear in proper Person at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen Ballads in 30 pages, would be worse than the pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book with such a frontispiece without any warning, I believe, it would have given me a Palsy" (*Cor.* i 372). This sense of decorum is reflected by Gray's tendency to publish anonymously, or, when he did allow his poems to be published under his own name, by his tendency to send long lists of detailed instructions to the printer stipulating the exact format and arrangement of publication, as in the 1753 and two 1768 editions.[32] For similar reasons, Gray was extremely conscious of the physical appearance of the printing and quality of the paper on which his work appeared, complaining that Dodsley in his *Collection* might "have spared the Graces in his frontispiece, if he chose to be oeconomical [sic], and have dressed his authors in a little more decent raiment—not in whited-brown paper and distorted characters" (*Cor.* i 294–95). He also expressed his appreciation for the fine printing of the Foulis brother, and was always extremely sensitive about printing errors.[33] In print as in person, Gray wanted above all to preserve decorum—a concern which plays itself out in important ways in the poetic voice and narrative strategies of the *Elegy*. Paradoxically, this extreme concern with decorum translated into a very untraditional emphasis on authorial control, as Gray strongly asserted his authority to define his own poetic oeuvre and stipulate the print formatting of his works.

The possibility of unauthorized commercial piracy was especially disconcerting in 1751, when Gray had not yet attached his name to any of his publications, so that the *Magazine of Magazines* threatened to become his first defining appearance as an "author" in print. Gray reacted to this impending breach of propriety by rushing an authorized edition into print, produced on his friend Horace Walpole's own Strawberry Hill press and distributed through the well-respected publisher Robert Dodsley, thus associating Gray and his authorship with these socially reputable figures. Gray's anxious and urgent letter to Walpole also casts the poem's publication in class terms, and is worth printing in full:

> As you have brought me into a little Sort of Distress, you must assist me, I believe, in getting out of it, as well as I can. yesterday I had the Misfortune of receiving a letter from certain Gentlemen (as their Bookseller expresses it) who have taken the *Magazine of Magazines* into their Hands. they tell me, that an *ingenious* Poem, call'd, *Reflections* in a Country-Churchyard, has been communicated to them, wch they are printing forthwith: that they are informed, that the *excellent* Author of it is I by name, & that they beg not only his *Indulgence*, but the *Honor of his Correspondence*, &c: as I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire; I have but one bad Way left to escape the Honour they would inflict upon me. & therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (wch may be done in less than a Week's time) from your Copy, but without my Name, in what Form is most convenient for him, but in his best Paper & Character. he must correct the press himself, & print it without any interval between the Stanza's, because the Sense is in some Places continued beyond them; & the Title must be, Elegy, wrote in a Country Church-yard. if he would add a Line or two to say it came into his Hands by Accident, I should like it better [. . .]
>
> If you behold the Mag: of Mag:^s^ in the Light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this Trouble on my account, wch you have taken of your own Accord before now [i.e. in publishing Gray's other poems]. (*Cor.* i 341–42)

Gray here denies gentlemanly status to his correspondents, rejecting their overtures of civility as inappropriate and transgressive of his own identity, since their commercialism and association with "Booksellers" undermines their claim to be gentleman and practice such forms of polite discourse. His request that the poem by printed anonymously, and that the publisher add "a Line or two to say it came into his Hands by Accident" (*Cor.* i 342), attempts to preserve his decorum in print with the traditional disclaimers of the publishing gentleman—the irony being that whereas piracy provided the traditional excuse for such genteel publication, in this case Gray's poem really *was* being pirated.[34] Though the *Magazine of Magazines* made Gray's authorship of the poem common knowledge by printing his name with the poem, Dodsley continued to print the *Elegy* anonymously at Gray's stipulation until he finally allowed it to be published under his own name in the 1753 *Six Poems*, the first publication of any kind to which Gray attached his own name. Although circulation of the poem led to the widespread tendency to identify the narrator as a representation of Gray himself—"the affecting and pensive Mr. Gray"—the poet himself disclaimed any association with the narrator and

disparaged the poem's success, remarking acridly at one point that the *Elegy* "owed its popularity entirely to its subject, and that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose."[35] Yet despite this reluctance to own the *Elegy*, and despite his later disparagement of the poem's popular success, Gray was not entirely detached from the general acclamation of the public, as indicated by a marginal note in his Commonplace Book in which he proudly lists, beside a transcript of the *Elegy*, the many commercial editions through which the poem had passed.[36]

As this note indicates, Gray was deeply ambivalent about print culture, desiring the fame, recognition, and authorial independence that it made possible even as he sought to differentiate himself from its commercialism and indiscriminate public, including women and unlearned men. In one sense, as Linda Zionkowski has argued, Gray with his poetry attempted to construct a male coteries audience reminiscent of the manuscript circulation of aristocrats during the Restoration period.[37] His correspondence with the "Quadruple Alliance" of Eton friends, including Walpole, Richard West, and Thomas Ashton, constituted such a circle, at least until West's death removed his most important personal contact. In the same spirit, Gray wrote playfully to Mason after seeing a manuscript copy of his poem *Caractatus* in 1759, that "if your own approbation [. . .] & mine, have any weight with you, you will write an Ode or two every year, till you are turn'd of fifty, not for the World, but for us two only. we will now and then give a little glimpse of them, but no copies" (*Cor.* ii 609). This coteries ideal would confine poetry to the private sphere of personal correspondence. At the same time, though, Gray sought to make the figure of the poet central to what William Levine describes as his ideal of a "self-governing" national cultural elite, purified both from the commercialism of the marketplace and from the venality of patronage and party politics—an ideal which had no practical outlet or possibility for realization.[38] Caught among these contradictions, Gray's poetic identity could emerge only in liminal, fractured, displaced, or precarious forms, as it does in the *Elegy*.

THE CHURCHYARD AS A REPRESENTATION OF PRINT CULTURE

At this point, I want to step back a moment from the specifics of Gray's identity to consider the general symbolic implications of the churchyard as a representation of print culture. In the *Elegy*, the churchyard is specifically contrasted against the interior of the church, where the "boast of heraldry" and the "pomp of power" represent the tombs and identities of the "Proud" (33, 37). Traditionally, the interior of the church had been, like literary culture generally, the domain of the elite social classes, especially the aristocracy,

whose engraved tombs and plaques both proclaimed their social status and at the same time preserved a record of their distinct individual identities and accomplishments. The churchyard, by contrast, had been traditionally the burial site of the anonymous commoners, whose undistinguished histories were not rendered into verse and whose names were rapidly worn away from the stones. The *Elegy*'s deliberate shift of attention from the church to the churchyard can be read in these terms as a shift from the elite to the general public as the center of literary attention; and analogously, as a shift from a traditional elite literary culture to a new literary culture of the marketplace, which by mid century was emerging as dominant. The narrator and "kindred Spirit," significantly, both come to the churchyard rather than the church, where, as in commercial print culture, everyone can find representation regardless of social class or birth. As Samuel Johnson wrote in his 1740 "Essay on Epitaphs," the churchyard epitaph is a fundamentally democratic form, "since to afford a subject for heroick poems is the privilege of very few, but every man may expect to be recorded in an epitaph."[39] In the same way, the act of reading and writing in commercial print culture was potentially open to everyone—provided, of course, that they can read. It is in this sense that the poem stresses education so heavily and self-consciously foregrounds the importance of literacy, contrasting the literate kindred Spirit who "cans't read" (115) against the swain who by implication cannot, because literacy is the main requirement for access to the new public sphere of print culture. The churchyard becomes a representation of this public sphere, in which the various gravestones are available to the reader much like an assortment of separately printed texts.

In setting up this analogy, however, the *Elegy* inflects the contexts of print culture in ways which symbolically alter and attempt to control its commercial implications, with which Gray was uncomfortable. The *Elegy* represents the circulation of readers in place of the circulation of texts, as the reader imaginatively becomes the "kindred Spirit" in visiting the churchyard and viewing the inscribed text. In the *Elegy*'s dramatization of reading, the reader thus comes to the site of the author rather than vice versa, giving the author symbolic control over the contexts within which his writing is received and his identity produced. Engraved on a tombstone, the narrator's verses cannot be appropriated or carried away as a commodity. In a particularly disconcerting example of such commodification, Gray relates an anecdote of three Lords overheard by a friend at the York races, saying "that I was impenetrable and inexplicable, and they wish'd, I had told them in prose, what I meant in verse, & then they bought me (wch was what most displeased him) & put me in their pocket" (*Cor.* ii 532). In this anecdote, not only the poet's book but also

his identity becomes the property of the literary consumers, entirely subjecting Gray to his buyers' control as they put "me" into their pockets. In the *Elegy*, in contrast, the churchyard excludes such commodification and sheds an aura of sacred truth, permanence, and decorum over its authorial self-construction. "Far from the madding crowd" (73), in the sacred space of the rural churchyard, all suggestions of commercial transaction are elided into a pure and even pious gift exchange of sympathetic identification.[40]

By making the "kindred Spirit" specifically seek out the grave of the narrator, the *Elegy* also engages in an act of symbolic self-canonization. The "Epitaph" of the learned narrator, singling out his poetic text and individual authorial identity as an object of sustained readerly attention, is juxtaposed against the specifically "unletter'd muse" and "artless tale" of the others (81, 94), whose identities vanish into the anonymity of the churchyard monuments as effectively as the identities of "hack" authors vanish into the ephemerality of their publications. Against the background of these anonymous and generalizable texts, only the narrator's writing asserts itself as distinct, offering the framed text of the "Epitaph" with its lasting if enigmatic construction of his identity as the final object of the reader's pilgrimage. The *Elegy* thus canonizes its narrator and his "Epitaph" in relation to the "kindred Spirit" just as Gray hoped to canonize himself and his poetic identity through the publication of his *Odes*, in relation to a select, learned audience which he imagined specifically seeking out his poems. The author's identity emerges out of this self-canonization, with the resulting distinction between "high" and "low" cultural texts, just as it emerged out of the canonizing tendencies of eighteenth-century print culture generally.[41]

Although Gray appeals to an elite reader in the poem, this reader is elite in terms of intellectual and imaginative capacities rather than the traditional terms of social status and birth. In the "Epitaph," the narrator's identity is expressed primarily in terms of his sensibility or feeling: his "Melancholy," his "sincere" soul, and in what would become customary in the eighteenth-century tradition of sensibility, his oddly non-contextual and non-referential "tear" (120–23). Sensibility and sincerity are qualities available to all, regardless of birth, class, or even to some extent education, and so allow each and every reader to construct his or her own identity in these same terms through sympathetic response to the narrator—provided only that one is able to read the poem. The exact social status of the "kindred Spirit" is also never identified, allowing all readers to identify with this figure regardless of their social status. It is in this same sense, and in service of this same social and cultural position, that Samuel Johnson made the *Elegy* a central touchstone of his famous defence of the "common reader [. . .] uncorrupted with literary prejudices," remarking that

the *Elegy* "abounds with images that find a mirrour in every bosom, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo."[42] Within the churchyard's representation of print culture, the old distinction between the elite and the commons is replaced by the new and potentially more open distinction between the literate and the illiterate, offering new possibilities for the construction of individual identity by members of all social classes. The authorial self-representation of the narrator thus emerges together with a new social order of individual readers, symbolically represented in the print market "public sphere" of the churchyard.

GRAY'S AMBIVALENT AUTHORIAL SELF

Given the narrator's obvious similarities to Gray—also unknown to fortune and to fame at the time of the poem's first publication, and also marked by melancholy and favored by "Fair Science"— the *Elegy*'s invitation to readers to identify specifically with Gray as the poem's author was overwhelmingly attractive: especially since the poem represents its narrator as both highly learned and at the same time sentimental, and since it seems to make a thinly-disguised plea to the reader's sympathy. Earlier in an unfinished poem, "Stanzas to Mr. Bentley," Gray had similarly and more directly invited the "secret sympathy" of "some feeling breast" (compare to "some fond breast" in the *Elegy*):

> Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
> My lines a secret sympathy [ ]
> And as their pleasing influence [ ]
> A sigh of soft reflection [ ]. (25–29)

The endings of these lines are torn away in Gray's manuscript, but their sense is clear, in Gray's desire that his "secret sympathy" will be answered by the reader's "feeling breast," just as the narrator's sensibility calls out to be answered by that of the "kindred Spirit." Far from embracing this identification with the narrator of the *Elegy*, however, Gray attempted to distance himself as much as possible from the poem and its popularity. The problem from Gray's perspective, as Roger Lonsdale points out, "was that there were suddenly too many 'feeling breasts' and 'kindred spirits,' all eager to respond to the *Elegy*."[43] The difficulty of the 1757 *Odes*, which certainly did not invite identification with their author, may be interpreted in part as Gray's conscious attempt to distance himself from this identification. After the *Elegy*, Gray never again published a poem with a first-person narrator.

Yet in dissociating himself from this commercial reading public, Gray left himself in effect with no sense of relationship to audience and no coherent

authorial role at all—especially when the elite scholarly public to which he addressed his *Odes* failed to manifest itself. Other poems reflect this sense of authorial isolation in more personal terms. After the death in 1742 of Richard West, who served the role of a "kindred Spirit" in Gray's life, Gray's unpublished "Sonnet to West" represents the poet as totally trapped within his own grief, without any outlet or audience to whom he can address himself. Gray breaks off the second book of the uncompleted *De Principiis Cogitandi* with a similar expression of isolation and bafflement, concluding with an elegy for West in the thinly disguised persona of "Favonius"—the lost audience without which the poet is literally unable to continue writing.[44] As Dustin Griffin points out in his essay on "Gray's Audiences," the Eton draft version of the *Elegy* also offers no audience or outlet for its narrator: part of the reason, together with its general elegiac tone, that it has often been read as responding to West's death as well.[45] Less poignantly but just as effectively, Gray represents this sense of poetic isolation in the protagonist of "The Bard," who laments his separation both from the dead bards of tradition and from the uncomprehending Englishmen, to whom he addresses himself in defiance from his high rock before plunging headlong into the silence of death and its "endless night" (144).[46]

This sense of poetic isolation and belatedness reflects Gray's personal situation, but it also reflects the situation of the mid-century poet generally, addressing a print culture that could seem as foreign and as threatening to traditional poetic identity as Edward I's advancing army to the Welsh bard. In the *Elegy* as in "The Bard" and "The Descent of Odin"—another poem in which the poet figure is represented speaking from the grave to the individual auditor (Odin) who seeks her out—the trope of death expresses this situation of the poet facing an increasingly large and unknown print market audience with whom he could have no direct personal contact. Even in constructing the terms of the narrator's identity, the *Elegy's* concluding "Epitaph" simultaneously withholds that identity, commanding the reader in the final stanza to "No farther seek" (125) and withdrawing the narrator into "the bosom of his Father and his God" (128). This conclusion offers, as Anne Williams puts it, a "carefully individualized (but also universalized) lyric speaker" whose "individuality takes the peculiar form of self-effacement": a "disappearing 'I'" defined more by negation and withdrawal than by assertion.[47] The poem's formal disjunction, turning back to objectify its own initial first-person voice in the third-person fiction of the "Epitaph," can be read in this respect as expressing the disjunction in Gray's own poetic identity: his ambition to distinguish himself as a poet, yet at the same time his need to preserve decorum by avoiding direct personal expression and his inability to find any coherent basis for the

identity he wished to construct.[48] Authorial self-representation can take place for Gray within these contexts only as a kind of death, so that poetic identity is literally born only in the final alienation of the grave. Although this kind of argument has long been a staple of deconstructive criticism, here it is not the nature of writing or representation in general but Gray's specifically self-conflicted identity as an author, within his particular historical situation, which leads to this self-consuming construction of identity.

This same deconstructive fissure played itself out in the history of the *Elegy*'s reception. Gray wrote in a 1748 letter to Horace Walpole that "The still small voice of Poetry is not meant to be heard in a crowd" (*Cor.* i 296), just as the Eton manuscript version of the poem ends by accepting the obscurity of "still small Accents whisp'ring from the Ground" (Eton, 83). Yet in the end Gray canceled these stanzas and this ending in order to draw attention to the identity of the narrator in relation to an unknown imagined reader, and the poem's "still small voice" was broadcast in print to the commercial reading public. In the aftermath, Gray was forced to "read [his] hist'ry," and an unwanted version of his own identity, in a "nation's eyes" (64). Gray rejected the consequences of this particular form of ambition, attempting to dissociate himself from the poem and its narrator, but by that time the *Elegy* had already installed him in a central place in the canon of the new print culture, and it is the *Elegy* rather than the *Odes* which has continued to define Gray's poetic identity and achievement to the current day. The *Elegy*'s publication and reception history thus ironically recapitulates its content, establishing Gray's poetic identity and fame in relation to a nation of unknown sympathetic readers while at the same time causing him to withdraw into a stance of deliberate unknowability. Gray's poetic identity emerged before the public only in the process of this alienation. Disappointed by the subsequent mixed reception of the *Odes*, Gray in a Sept. 1757 letter to William Mason wrote that "nobody understands me, & I am perfectly satisfied [. . .] 'tis very well: the next thing I print shall be in Welch. that's all" (*Cor.* ii 522, 524).

For both specifically personal and general historical reasons, Gray's *Elegy* thus expresses a liminal and displaced version of authorial self-representation: an independent authorial identity beginning to emerge within the contexts of print culture but not yet claimed by the author directly for himself. Preserving allegiance to the traditional decorum and elite status of poetry yet insisting upon his own personal independence from patronage, dependent upon commercial print culture yet at the same time resisting association with it, Gray's authorial identity could find only covert, liminal, and ultimately self-consuming expression. This indirect and liminal assertion of authorial identity also occurs at the end of Gray's "Progress of Poesy," when

after his unrestrained choral celebration of his great poetic precursors he represents himself in mid poetic flight: "Yet shall he mount and keep his distant way/ Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,/ Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great" (121–23). Here as in the *Elegy*, the poet's identity is expressed in the indirect, third-person "he," gesturing towards Gray but never fully owning this gesture in the first person. In these concluding lines, Gray rejects association both with the "vulgar fate" of print market authorship and with the patronage culture of the worldly "Great," above whom he makes his "distant way." As in the *Elegy*, the poet is represented as unreachable, this time through height or difficulty of understanding. Yet at the same time that it expresses a qualified transcendence, this image of the "distant way" also expresses a sense of authorial disconnection, defining the poet as nobly independent but with no distinct sense of relationship to a public and no ultimate poetic role, purpose, or destination.[49]

One might speculate that the *Elegy*, like the "Sonnet to West," could very well have remained private and unpublished if not for its piracy by the *Magazine of Magazines*. Yet at the same time, as I have argued, the question of individual authorial identity, publication, and ambition lies at the heart of the poem, written into the *Elegy* through the addition of the "kindred Spirit" and the dramatized scenario of private reading. Even later in life Gray did not completely dissociate himself from the ambition of print culture. Gray not only authorized the printing of the *Elegy* in the two editions of his 1768 *Poems*, he specifically instructed that it be placed out of chronological sequence in a more prominent place as the final poem, thus concluding the entire volume with the "Epitaph" as if offering a final statement of its author's own ambivalent identity.[50]

Like other mid to late eighteenth-century poets who turned to the figure of the bard, such as Collins and Beattie, Gray's concern with authorial identity in the *Elegy* thus reveals itself as part of a more general concern: the attempt to reconstruct the poet's identity, social role, and purpose within the new context of print market culture without compromising poetic decorum or claiming bardic identity directly for the poet himself. This claim to bardic identity would later support Wordsworth and the Romantics' turn to direct personal self-representation, together with a new print market poetics of individual identity, consciousness, and sympathetic relationship. For eighteenth-century poets such as Gray, however, the identity of the poet, like the identity of the *Elegy*'s narrator, emerges as a central theme without a coherent sense of the poet's role or relationship to audience, and therefore only in displaced, self-consuming, or otherwise dissociated form. The *Elegy* experiments with poetic subjectivity, but only under the cover of a universalizing didacticism, just as it

experiments with authorial identity only under the cover of an imagined death. Even as it constructs authorial identity in relation to the unknown print market reader, Gray's *Elegy* swerves away from fully accepting the contexts of print culture within which the identity of the "Poet" had begun to appear.

Gray could solve his dilemma of poetic identity simply by ceasing to write—as he did, for all extents and purposes, after the *Odes*. When he did write, as in the *Odes* and the Welsh and Norse translations, he could base his poetry on his antiquarian scholarship rather than on his own personal identity or contemporary poetic role. Despite Gray's ambivalence, however, the *Elegy* remained an immensely popular and influential poem, establishing new possibilities of poetic subjectivity together with a new model of authorial identity and individual identity in general. By establishing authorial identity in relation to the unknown but imagined reader, and by offering a glimpse, however brief and uncertain, of the author's inner life, Gray offered possibilities that would be developed by poets who followed into more explicit forms of poetic self-representation.

Chapter Four

James Beattie's *Minstrel* and the Progress of the Poet

When the first Book of James Beattie's *Minstrel* appeared in 1771, it was greeted with immediate and almost universal acclamation. Published simultaneously in Edinburgh and London, the first edition of five hundred copies sold out so rapidly that a second edition of seven hundred had to be published two months later, and five months later a third edition of yet 750 more copies appeared and continued to sell out rapidly.[1] When the poem's second Book appeared in 1774, it too ran through three editions within the year; and the poem continued to be republished, going through almost thirty reprintings by the time of Beattie's death in 1803 and at least fifty-one by the end of the 1820s, making it one of the best-selling poems of its era.[2] As Lady Elizabeth Montagu exclaims in a March 1771 letter before she had met Beattie, summing up the enthusiasm of London's literary circles: "I assure you, every one is charmed with The Minstrel."[3]

Lady Montagu's letter also indicates some of the reason for this overwhelming success. She writes:

> I admire all the poet tells us of the infancy of the bard; but I should not have been so well satisfied, if he had not intended to give us a history of his life. General reflections, natural sentiments, representations of the passions, are things addressed to the understanding. A poet should aim at the heart. Strong sympathies are to be excited, and deep impressions only to be made, by interesting us for an individual.

Beattie's poem provides the childhood history of Edwin, the "Minstrel," as the main object of this sympathy. For most readers at the time, though, it also unprecedentedly uses its main poetic character to provide the life history of the author, Beattie himself. Unlike the association between Gray and the

narrator of his *Elegy*, this identification did not happen against Beattie's intention or will, as Beattie's response to an inquiry from Lady Forbes makes clear: "I find you are willing to suppose that, in Edwin, I have given only a picture of myself, as I was in my younger days. I confess this supposition is not groundless" (198). Behind Edwin, the minstrel whose development gives the poem its central theme and name, stands the autobiographical character of the author himself.

By calling attention to the central figure of the "minstrel," Beattie's poem did not break new ground, but continued the recent celebration of heroicized poet figures in works such as Gray's "The Bard" and "The Progress of Poetry" and Collins' "Ode on the Poetical Character." Although *The Minstrel* expresses a number of themes which would subsequently emerge as "Romantic"—childhood, solitude, nature, the sublime, Romance quest, imagination, individual consciousness and development, to name a few—it also appealed to readers as a continuation of the existing poetic traditions and established themes of the day. In the words of Everard King, for these readers "the poem's main appeal lay in its blending of sentimentalism, melancholy, didacticism, Medievalism, and primitivism with echoes of the Bible, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Ossian, Gray, Blackwell's *Homer*, the Classics, and many other sources."[4] Although, as Elizabeth Montagu points out, the poem aims at the "heart" and seeks to excite the sympathies of its readers for its main character, it is also full of "general reflections, natural sentiments, [and] representations of the passions"—in short, the familiar eighteenth-century didacticism which aims very much at the "understanding."[5] Nor, though it invites the reader to identify Beattie with his main character, does the poem actually break decorum by focusing on the author's own life or identity directly, though it does make a number of specific author-related asides in passing.

Although very much a continuation of poetic traditions of the time, Beattie's *Minstrel* is unprecedented in focusing attention not only on the heroic figure of the poet, but on a single poet's individual imaginative development and consciousness, thus offering a model for subsequent poets in their own lives and poetic self-representations. The poet Samuel Rogers identified himself in his youth with Edwin, as did the political activist and writer John Thelwall, and William Wordsworth eagerly read and reread the poem and may have used Edwin as a model for his own life and poetic career. As Kenneth Johnston writes in a recent biography, Wordsworth and the other "Hawkshead boys [where he went to school] aped the mannerisms of Beattie's poem with a devotion akin to that of late twentieth-century teenagers adopting the dress, style, speech, and mannerisms of contemporary rock stars."[6] Everard King in his book *James Beattie's The Minstrel and the Origins of*

Romantic Autobiography has extensively documented the poem's influence on Romantic self-representation, arguing that it served as a primary model not only for Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, but also for poems of Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, and Scott, among others.[7] The poem's subtitle, "The Progress of Genius," indicates Beattie's crucial innovation: he did not just celebrate the poet's sublime heroic genius, as did so many other late eighteenth-century depictions of the bard, but offered an account of the individual "Progress" of the poet's imaginative development, thus making his Minstrel a recognizable object of identification and emulation for other poets and readers. In short, Beattie takes the familiar eighteenth-century genre of the "Progress" poem and transforms it from the progress of poetry generally (as in Gray's poem of that name) to the life progress of the individual poet. In Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Beattie's subtitle "Progress of Genius" changes in one short step into "a Poem [. . .] on my earlier life or the growth of my own mind," or, in the eventual subtitle, "the Growth of a Poet's Mind."[8]

Though Everard King has made a strong case for Beattie's influence on Romantic self-representation, he has not explored the link between Beattie's model of poetic development, Beattie's own authorial situation, and his relationship to print culture; nor has King explored the ways in which *The Minstrel* represents the situation of late-eighteenth-century poets. Unlike Thomas Gray and other mid-century poets, who sought to distance themselves from both patronage and the print market, Beattie was deeply involved in both literary economies, yet defined by neither. Instead, Beattie defined his identity primarily as a university professor of moral philosophy and an eighteenth-century man of letters, and by the time he wrote the second Book of the *Minstrel*, he was firmly connected with the social and political elite of his day. As a result, Beattie could explore the identity of the poet with less anxiety than Gray. At the same time, because he was so well connected in networks of patronage and power and did not need to construct a vocational identity as a poet, Beattie did not need to justify or authorize his own authorial identity through his writing. Perhaps as a result, *The Minstrel* does not offer a strong version of poetic identity or an autonomous self, and provides no new social function to justify a poetic profession. In fact, as I will argue, the ending of the poem brings poetic vocation and independent authorial identity into question by contrasting individual autonomy against the higher goal of sociability and implying poetry's comparative social uselessness. *The Minstrel* breaks off abruptly at the end of its second Book before its main character has been confirmed in his poetic vocation and expresses deep ambivalence about poetic identity, an identity Beattie never claimed directly for himself. Beattie's *Minstrel* thus offers a kind of midpoint between Gray's displaced bard and Wordsworth's explicit self-representation: a

figure of authorial identity meant to be associated with the poem's actual author, but only partially constructing that author's identity.

BEATTIE'S AUTHORSHIP, CAREER, AND IDENTITY

Although Beattie composed *The Minstrel* to trace its hero's development into the vocation of minstrel or poet, he never established his own identity primarily as a poet. Beattie published his first, slim volume of verse in 1760 while teaching in an Aberdeen grammar school, but from the time he assumed the chair of Moral Philosophy at Marischal College in 1760 until the end of his life, his main vocation would be defined as a professor. His publication history shows this vocational background, as almost all of his subsequent writing emerged from his professorship—either directly in books based on his lectures, such as the 1783 *Dissertations Moral and Critical* and the 1790–93 *Elements of Moral Science*, or only somewhat less directly in publications stemming from his participation in the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, including other Aberdeen professors such as Thomas Reid, Alexander Gerard, George Campbell, and John Gregory, for whom Beattie delivered preliminary versions of his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*.[9]

It is this latter publication, even more than *The Minstrel*, that brought Beattie his extremely high reputation as an author during his lifetime. The *Essay on Truth*, as it is known in short, brought him fame for its vehement refutation of the skepticism of David Hume and his followers and its spirited philosophical defense of Christianity against atheism. The *Essay* ran through five editions in three years after its 1771 publication and sixteen before Beattie's death in 1803, establishing him as one of the best-known and most popular thinkers in Britain and even reaching Immanuel Kant, who was first exposed through Beattie to Hume's philosophy and so led into the line of thought which would ultimately lead to his three *Critiques*.[10] In the *Essay*, Beattie refutes Hume's arguments and claims to "prove" such positions as the reality of the physical world, the continuity and immutability of the individual soul as a principle of identity, and the truths of Christian morality, arguing in the tradition of Thomas Reid's common sense philosophy. Although Kant rejected Beattie's line of argument as "nothing better than an appeal to the verdict of the multitude," it was an immensely compelling and influential appeal for readers at the time, and Beattie was heralded by figures as prominent as Samuel Johnson and William Cowper as a heroic defender of Christian morality and ideas.[11]

The nearly simultaneous appearance of *The Essay on Truth* and *The Minstrel* in 1771 placed the previously obscure Beattie abruptly at the center of the British republic of letters. During his 1773 trip to London, Beattie was

incessantly lionized by English society for a period of four months, as his *London Diary* records somewhat self-indulgently.[12] His celebrity lasted for the remainder of his life, as he continued to publish influential works of moral philosophy, Christian apology, and aesthetics: including the 1776 *Essays: On Poetry and Music*, the 1783 *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, the 1786 *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, and the two volumes of *Elements of Moral Science* published in 1790 and 1793.[13]

Like Thomas Gray, with whom he formed a close literary friendship after their August 1765 meeting, Beattie's identity was defined primarily within the confines of academia; but unlike Gray, he never evinced distaste towards publishing or the commercial rewards of the print market. As early as 1756, Beattie began to submit poems for publication in the *Scots Magazine*. He published a first volume of poetry in 1760 and a new and expanded edition in 1766, then actively attempted to redefine his poetic oeuvre after the success of the *Minstrel* by republishing only six of his previously published minor poems in the 1776 and 1777 volumes of his *Poems*, part of Creech and Dilly's edition of the British Poets.[14] Beattie generally earned twelve or fifteen guineas per edition of each separate Book of the *Minstrel*; and after he had established his reputation and a history of steady sales, he earned £200 for the *Dissertations* and sixty guineas for the copyright to his *Evidences of Christianity*.[15] With the funds he collected as a university professor, Beattie did not depend on his literary earnings, especially after he began to receive a yearly royal pension of £200 in 1773, but his commercial earnings reveal his sense of comfort with the marketplace, which provided him with an important supplement to other forms of income.

Beattie was as comfortable with relations of patronage as he was with commercial publishing. The royal pension is only part of Beattie's general embeddedness in networks of patronage and influence, dating from the beginning of his career. While still a schoolmaster at the rural Scottish village of Fordoun, Beattie's poetry brought him to the attention of Francis Garden (later Lord Gardenstown), who introduced him into polite society and served as a kind of initial patron. Beattie then secured his Aberdeen professorship through the influence of his friend Mr. Arbuthnot (not to be confused with Pope's Dr. Arbuthnot), who promoted Beattie's candidacy through his connections with the powerful Lord Erroll and, through Erroll, with the even more powerful Duke of Argyle, the main dispenser of patronage in Scotland at the time. Nor was Beattie ever shy about acknowledging his obligations for the benefits conferred by others: the notice of his appointment as professor, for instance, plainly informs him that "You owe this entirely to the Duke of Argyle, and Lord Erroll, who interested himself very warmly for you," leaving little room

for ambiguity or scruples.[16] Beattie even named both his sons after patrons: his first son "James Hay" after Lord Erroll, and his second son "Montagu" after Lady Elizabeth Montagu, who became his son's godmother.[17] He similarly dedicated *The Minstrel* to Montagu, ending Book One with the hope that "on this verse if Montagu should smile/ New strains ere long shall animate thy frame./ And her applause to me is more than fame" (I, 534–36).[18]

With the success of *The Essay on Truth* and *The Minstrel*, Beattie's circle of acquaintance widened considerably, expanding to encompass significant numbers of aristocrats, high-ranking clergy, and prominent literary figures of the time—including, in addition to Lady Elizabeth Montagu, Lord Lyttleton, the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, the Duchess of Portland, the Archbishop of York, Dr. Porteus (Chaplain to the King and later bishop of Chester and London), Samuel Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and David Garrick, to name only some of the most prominent. Beattie's time in London even included a reception and hour-long private audience with the king and queen in their library, after he had been granted the £200/ yr. royal pension. In response, he had three copies of the newly-published fifth edition of the *Essay on Truth* specially printed on the finest paper, bound, and delivered to the royal couple to show his gratitude.[19] In addition to this pension, Beattie was showered with other offers of patronage, which he turned down: including private offers of gifts from the Duchess of Portland and the Queen, and a series of proffered livings in the Church of England.[20] Beattie did, however, accede to the urgings of Lady Montagu to publish a subscription volume of *The Essay on Truth* in 1776, together with a companion volume of other essays on poetry and music. This subscription was not promoted commercially, so as not to expose Beattie to charges of commercial self-interest, but through Beattie's insistence it was published in an especially fine edition, included a printed list of subscribers, and ultimately earned him about four hundred guineas profit from eight hundred subscribed copies.[21] Embedded within these networks of elite society and patronage, Beattie was far from isolated as an author and thus far from autonomous, and he did not attempt to claim vocational independence. Throughout his life, in fact, he tended to justify major decisions by appealing to the opinions of patrons, as in a series of letters asking advice on whether to accept the Anglican Church livings and another series on his decision to turn down the 1773 offer of the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh.[22]

Through these and other professional networks, Beattie defined his identity primarily as an Enlightenment man of letters. His diverse and influential writings on a wide variety of subjects made him a central figure in the Scottish Renaissance and established him as one of the most prominent writers and thinkers in Britain, with an international reputation. Beattie was known not

only as a prominent poet, but also as the outstanding philosopher and Christian apologist of his time, as well as an outstanding literary critic, educational theorist, and original thinker on topics as diverse as music, language, and even economics and politics. Equally at home in networks of patronage and in the commercial print market, with a lifelong position as a professor in Aberdeen, Beattie was a man of letters writing within the contexts of a larger community of letters.

Beattie's career as a poet and displaced authorial self-representation in the *Minstrel* must be understood within these larger contexts of his life and identity. Although he continued to enjoy high recognition as a poet and took an active interest in his poetic oeuvre, Beattie's production of poetry ceased almost entirely after his publication of the second Book of the *Minstrel* in 1774. Even the *Minstrel*, according to Beattie, was undertaken primarily as a diversion from the strenuous labors of writing the *Essay on Truth*, which he began around the same time in 1766. Thus Beattie wrote to the Scottish poet Dr. Blacklock:

> I am so far from intending this performance for the press, that I am morally certain it will never be finished. I shall add a stanza now and then, when I am at leisure, and when I have no humour for any other amusement; but I am resolved to write no more poetry with a view to publication, till I see some dawnings of a poetical taste among the generality of readers, of which, however, there is not at present anything like an appearance.
>
> My employment, and indeed my inclination, leads me rather to prose composition, and in this way I have much to do.[23]

Beattie of course changed his mind and went on to publish the poem, but the letter shows the general tenor of his involvement in poetry, as a side activity and "amusement" from more strenuous public intellectual tasks. Beattie repeats this claim in the poem itself, apostrophizing his "gothic lyre" in the final stanza of the first Book, that "the leisure hour is all that thou canst claim" (I, 532–33)—a line which specifically associates poetry with leisure rather than vocation, even as Beattie sets out to define Edwin's development of vocational poetic identity. As Beattie continued to make progress in composing the poem, he began to invest more importance in it, but in so doing he tended to represent the poem as the termination rather than beginning of his poetic career. Thus he wrote in November 1769 to the Earl of Buchan that the *Minstrel* "promises to be by much the best, and will probably be the last, of my poetical attempts," and in the same month he wrote to Thomas Gray

that "as this will probably be the last of my poetical compositions I propose to finish it at great leisure. It is indeed the only one of them for which I have any esteem, which perhaps is owing to its being the latest."[24] In fact, Beattie at one point wanted the *Minstrel* to represent his entire poetic oeuvre, initially asking that the poem stand alone in Creech's 1776 edition of his *Poems*, though at Creech's urging he relented and allowed a few other poems to be published as well.[25]

Beattie's representation of Edwin's development as a poet in the *Minstrel*, based loosely on his own life history and experience, must be understood within these contexts. When he wrote the bulk of the poem's first Book, Beattie was an obscure professor in the north of Scotland; but by the time the second Book appeared in 1774, he had established himself as a leading man of letters, widely loved and celebrated, patronized by the great, and lionized by his peers. This general acclaim is summed up in Samuel Johnson's 1771 remark after the first meeting between the two: "We all love Beattie."[26] Beattie never depended on his writing to support himself and never defined his identity primarily as a poet, but by 1774 his relationship to the world of publication and patronage had changed completely. Edwin's isolation and relative autonomy as the hero of the *Minstrel*, together with the isolation and autonomy of the Hermit in the poem, no longer represented Beattie's own situation as an author. Perhaps for that reason, Beattie abandoned the poem after the second Book without ever bringing Edwin to maturity in his vocation of poet or minstrel.

BARDS AND MINSTRELS: SELF-REPRESENTATION AND POETIC IDENTITY

Earlier I quoted Beattie's admission that "in Edwin, I have given only a picture of myself, as I was in my younger days." The remainder of the passage, written in a letter to Elizabeth Montagu in response to her specific inquiry, sheds light on Beattie's autobiographical relation to the main character of *The Minstrel*:

> I have made him take pleasure in the scenes in which I took pleasure, and entertain sentiments similar to those of which, even in my early youth, I had repeated experience. The scenery of a mountainous country, the ocean, the sky, thoughtfulness and retirement, and sometimes melancholy objects and ideas, had charms in my eyes, even when I was a schoolboy; and at a time when I was so far from being able to express, that I did not understand my own feelings, or perceive the tendency of such pursuits and amusements; and as to poetry and music, before I was ten years old I could play a little on the violin, and was as much master

> of Homer and Virgil as Pope's and Dryden's translations could make me. But I am ashamed to write so much on a subject so trifling as myself, and my own works. Believe me, madam, nothing but your ladyship's commands could have induced me to do so.[27]

This passage reveals the extent to which the *Minstrel* attempts to portray Beattie's own youthful experience through Edwin, in terms which might equally have come straight out of Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Beattie ends his letter with a very un-Wordsworthian note of humility and deference, however, fearing that he has breached decorum by writing about himself, even in a private letter, and justifying himself that he does so only out of obedience to "your ladyship's commands." Although straightforwardly acknowledging the autobiographical urge which informs the poem, Beattie's sense of decorum demands that the personal nature of this autobiography remain concealed, thinly but effectively, in the character of Edwin.

Beattie's displaced self-representation through Edwin thus situates him in a tradition of mid to late eighteenth-century poets, including Gray and Collins, who projected aspects of their own authorial position onto poet figures in their writing. By designating Edwin specifically as a "Minstrel," Beattie also adopts the late eighteenth-century tendency to represent the minstrel or bard as a traditional figure for authorial identity.[28] In addition to its title, *The Minstrel's* opening "Preface" specifically invokes this association, describing the poem's design "to trace the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a MINSTREL, that is as an itinerant poet and musician:—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred."[29]

In describing the Minstrel figure in these terms, Beattie alludes directly to Thomas Percy's "Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England" at the start of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, which had appeared six years earlier in 1765. Beattie confirms this allusion in a letter to Thomas Gray, in which he writes that "The title of this piece is *The Minstrel.* The first hint of it was suggested by Mr Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels."[30] Percy's essay sparked a literary controversy by investing the figure of the minstrel, often associated at the time with tawdry street performers and tavern singers, with an ancient pedigree and dignity that had dwindled only as late as Elizabethan times.[31] Percy's figure of the minstrel, descended from the even more ancient and imposing figure of the prophetic bard or scald who circulated among Britain's Anglo-Saxon ancestors, offered an attractive northern lineage for a British poetic tradition, in contrast with other theories that explained British poetry

as an importation from France and Normandy via the troubadours. At the same time, as Susan Stewart argues in "The Scandals of the Ballad," this myth of the medieval bard provided a reassuring naturalization of eighteenth-century authorship, in terms which affirmed the dignity, independence, and social importance of the individual poet. As Kathryn Sutherland remarks in her essay on "The Native Poet," "with great daring, Percy had taken the vagrant street-singer of his own time, transformed him into an authoritative story-teller and handed him back to the contemporary poet as his model."[32]

The figure of the bard or minstrel represented the situation of late eighteenth-century poets in multiple ways, registering some of the anxieties of these poets while at the same time providing a kind of imaginative wish fulfillment of idealized poetic identity. The ancient bards or scalds, according to Percy, were "considered as something divine; their persons were deemed sacred; their attendance was solicited by kings: and they were every where loaded with honours and rewards."[33] The authority of such figures, like the authority of Gray's "Bard," was supposedly independent of social connections. Though honored and even to an extent given patronage by society, the bard's authority is divine and therefore autonomous. The figure of the bard thus offered a dignified precedent for the increasingly independent print market poet, forced to rely on his or her own personal inspiration for authority within a rapidly transforming print culture.

Like the bard, the figure of the minstrel also combined the best aspects of print culture and patronage, symbolically affirming the independence of the poet while at the same time claiming a secure role within the contexts of an organic society. Medieval minstrels, according to Percy, performed primarily at courts and the "houses of the great" (10), where the minstrels' situation was "both honourable and lucrative" (23); but he also describes them as playing at public fairs and festivities, freely crossing class boundaries and maintaining some of the ancient bard's independence and dignity. Through the figure of the minstrel, as Susan Stewart writes, "the feudal world is imagined as one where the author's position is a natural one in which the organic validity of the minstrel and his discourse arises from his position within a social matrix."[34] Although, as David Fairer points out, the bard expressed communal rather than private values and ideals, as "a celebrator, a means of linking communities, preserving cultural memory, recording events, and embodying continuities between past and future," bards and minstrels also represented a self-authorizing professionalism.[35] Percy even describes minstrelsy as a "profession" in its own right: "We are not to wonder then that this profession should be followed by men of the first quality, particularly the younger sons and brothers of great houses" (32).[36] The professional status of

the late eighteenth-century poet is thus naturalized and legitimated by imagining a tradition that leads back to these predecessors.

The figure of bard or minstrel also combined the best aspects of print and oral culture into a single idealized poetics. The endless circulation of the minstrel could represent aspects of the general circulation of print, while at the same time preserving the dignity of oral presence in a way that Wordsworth, for instance, would later claim for himself in his own poetry. The minstrel's wandering thus presents a kind of idealized version of print circulation in which the author circulates personally in lieu of his writing, retaining a sense of authorial dignity and immediate connection with audience. Moving ceaselessly among all social classes, the minstrel fulfilled the same function that eighteenth-century writers identified for print culture: holding together a far-flung society of geographically and socially diverse readers.[37] Laura Bandiera in her essay on the minstrel tradition argues in this sense that minstrels' ballads were understood as appealing to all audiences, regardless of social class or education, in a way that a more learned and allusive neo-Classical poetics could not.[38] By symbolically uniting the nation through their circulation, minstrels could claim to fulfill a vital social role, and could even claim at times to speak as the voice of the nation. Such associations gave poets a clear sense of authority and social importance.

Even as it expressed this idealized poetic identity, the figure of the minstrel could also represent potential insecurities of the print market poet, including the anxiety of being connected with a potentially degrading print culture.[39] Percy's "Preface" led to a rebuttal and then prolonged critical controversy with Joseph Ritson, who continued to associate Minstrels with vulgar street culture and deny their poetic dignity and superiority. This quarrel made minstrels' status ambiguous, associating them both with commercialism and with independence. As Maureen McLane puts it, "From Percy onward, minstrels are by definition ambiguous figures, caught between their noble predecessors the bards and their entrepreneurial successors in print culture, Elizabethan ballad-mongers and ultimately modern poets."[40] Percy attempted to dissociate minstrels from commercialism by constructing a dualistic opposition between the true minstrel and the degraded ballad writer, the latter of whom he linked to the commercially printed ballads still widely circulated during the eighteenth century:

> For it is to be observed, that so long as the Minstrels subsisted, they seem never to have designed their rhymes for literary publication, and probably never committed them to writing themselves [. . .] But as the old Minstrels gradually wore out, a new race of ballad-writers succeeded, an inferior sort of minor poets, who wrote narrative songs merely for the press. (26)

This designation of the "inferior sort of minor poets" who write "merely for press," as opposed to the more dignified and independent minstrels, presents the familiar dichotomy of the literary hack versus the genius, the former defined by engagement with commercial print and the marketplace, the latter by autonomy and lack of commercial interest. While the dignified minstrel composes out of his own personal inspiration, the hack ballad-writer composes only "for the press." Similarly, Percy connects printed ballads and the decline of minstrelsy with the decline of original composition: "though, as their art declined, many of them only recited the compositions of others, some of them still composed songs themselves, and all of them could probably invent a few stanzas on occasion" (10). In this passage, what Percy elsewhere specifically refers to as "poetical genius" (14) is associated with the minstrel and clearly differentiated from the mere street performer or hack, who in eighteenth-century representations commonly "steals" his writings from others. Thus even in registering the anxieties of print culture, Percy's figure of the minstrel helped to enshrine the Augustan distinction between the legitimate poet and the mere hack. In the imaginative model of the minstrel, the commercial relation of author and readers in print market culture is refigured as a kind of gift economy, as the minstrel circulates freely among his public, defining his identity and earning a dignified subsistence through his poetry while in the process performing a vital social function.

Percy's representation of the minstrel, together with his recovery of the ballad form as respectable for literature, also provided a justification for a new kind of poetry directed primarily towards the sensibility or "heart" of its readers rather than their judgment or understanding. Percy describes the ballad as having "a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics have been thought to compensate for the want of higher beauties, and, if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart" (4). In his comparison between the minstrels and the more learned poets of the Medieval Romances, who wrote more polished and more allusive verse, Percy judges that "perhaps the palm will be frequently due to the old strolling minstrels" (4). Thus the figure of the minstrel became not only a way to dignify the position of the independent author, but also to justify an emerging poetics of simplicity and sensibility, naturalizing modern poetical experiments and innovations in terms of an imagined tradition.

In these ways, the figure of the minstrel provided a heroic version of the eighteenth-century poet's identity and social function, allowing authors to represent their own identities in a displaced, idealized version. Drawing increasing attention to the identity of the poet as a worthy theme in its own right, the bard or minstrel figure gradually stimulated more direct forms of

poetic self-representation, as poets such as Wordsworth and Burns claimed this function and dignity directly for themselves. The figure of the minstrel provided the poet with a model of professional dignity, authority, and identity, in terms which combined both the social integration of patronage and the independence of the print market while eliding the unfavorable aspects of both conditions. In this way, the identity of the minstrel was closely connected to the emerging identity of the independent or professional poet.

Beattie's minstrel carries many of these associations, though the poem's account of Edwin's development stops short of his actually beginning the profession of minstrelsy. Even in the opening Book, however, Edwin has most of the characteristics of the minstrel: he is a solitary and basically autonomous individual, wandering widely, who though born of lowly shepherds is distinguished by a fundamental dignity. From the beginning Edwin is represented as contemplative and introspective, as this inherent dignity and love of solitude set him apart from others:

> And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;
> Deep thought oft seemed to fix his infant eye.
> Dainties he heeded not, nor gaud, nor toy,
> Save one short pipe or rudest minstrelsy:
> Silent when glad; affectionate, though shy;
> And now his look was most demurely sad;
> And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
> The neighbors star'd and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad:
> Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad.
> (I, 136–44)

Though born of shepherd parents, Edwin is "no vulgar boy," and he shows his propensity for the vocation of poetry from the start through his fixation on "one short pipe" to the neglect of all other toys. The following stanzas develop this portrait by depicting Edward's solitary wanderings away from communal mirth into nature and solitude, including his experiences of natural sublimity and beauty: "Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene" (I, 191). In nature he exercises a heightened individual sensibility—"And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,/ And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,/ A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control" (I, 196–98)—as the vivid imagination of the "visionary boy" (I, 263) finds a romantic significance in the wild landscapes around him. These same heightened powers of imagination and sensibility, together with a similar solitude and sense of connection to nature, would become fundamental to Wordsworth's construction of his own identity and poetic authority in the *Prelude*.

Like the autonomous wanderings of the bard or minstrel, Edwin's isolation and separation from audience suggests the situation of the print market poet. This separation also becomes a sign of his poetic "genius." Edwin flees from "concourse, and noise, and toil," and does not care "to mingle in the clamorous fray/ Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped" (I, 145–47). The "squabbling imps" who play directly to the dancers at the communal festival, in contrast, may represent a less dignified form of poetic involvement in society, more directly dependent on audience. Though "responsive to the lively pipe when all/ In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd," Edwin lies apart from the others and listens at a distance, "held in thrall" but "from the rude gambol far remote reclin'd" (I, 487–90). Genius requires distance from immediate social demand and occasions. Yet together with this portrait of the poet's habitual isolation, the poem also contains an idealized vision of the poet as an integral part of society, projected onto Edwin's romantic vision of "fays" or elves:

> forth a host of little warriors march,
> Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
> Their look was gentle, their demeanor bold,
> And green their helms, and green their silk attire,
> And here and there, right venerably old,
> The long-robed minstrels wake the warbling wire,
> And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire. (I, 300–6).

As the scene continues, a "troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance," leading to a spirited dance among the "many-coloured rays/ Of tapers, gems, and gold" which illuminate the forest, until the romantic dream dissolves into the clarion-call of the rooster and the reality of day (I, 308, 314–15). Even within the Medieval setting of the poem, the model for poetic identity must be cast back still further, in this vision of Merlinesque "long-robed minstrels." Poetic identity is rooted in this idealized social context, but one which can only be located in imagination and the romantic past.

In depicting Edwin as a minstrel, Beattie distinguishes him (and the "Muse" in general) from all tinges of financial or other ambition. From the beginning, even before introducing Edwin, the poem distinguishes poetry from these various forms of ambition, apostrophizing an imagined upper class reader as an adversarial foil:

> Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
> That a poor villager inspires my strain;
> With thee let Pagantry [sic] and Power abide:
> The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign;

> Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
> Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms;
> They hate the sensual and scorn the vain,
> The parasite their influence never warms,
> Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms. (I, 28–36)

Rejecting ambition and financial gain, Beattie instructs the true poet to "Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre/ [. . .] Ambition's grovelling crew for ever left behind" (I, 59, 63)—a position that distances the poet both from dependence on patronage and from dependence on the commercial marketplace. The remainder of the poem repeatedly differentiates true poetry and morality from "luxury" and "love of wealth" and attacks the excesses of "courtly life" (I, 66, 84; II, 244), rejecting both aristocratic lifestyles and market goals. Instead, *The Minstrel* leaves the poet to stand alone like the idealized ancient bard, to "sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where [he] will" (I, 45). Such distancing makes the poet autonomous and self-sufficient, but leaves aside the question of how he is to support himself and whom his audience will be. In rejecting both commerce and patronage, the poem offers an entirely idealized, but for that reason impossible, model of poetic identity, following the familiar pattern of other eighteenth-century poets.

In an epistolary poem to his friend and fellow poet Dr. Thomas Blacklock, Beattie in this same spirit rejects "th' applause of multitudes, or smiles of kings" (210)—both the "gallant and the gay" who make up the public of polite society, including "the parrot-courtier" and the "monkey-beau," and the "plodding rabble" which constitute the alternative print market audience (118, 129, 134).[41] The "Epistle" satirizes poets who "pant to shine the favourites of a throng" (106), or who appeal to the "plodding rabble" that "gaze not on the skies,/ Far humbler regions bound their grovelling view,/ And humbler tracts their minion must pursue" (134–36).[42] In his 1765 satire on Charles Churchill in "On the Report of a Monument to be Erected in Westminster Abbey," Beattie even more vituperatively rejects "Fame, dirty idol of the brainless crowd" (3), with its public of "bawling blackguards" who made Churchill the "minion of renown" (15, 17). Yet Edwin's low social birth and independence is also a direct challenge to the aristocratic model of poetry, for Edwin is dignified, like the professional author, entirely through his own talents and imagination, rather than through his birth or social connections. In this spirit, the opening of *The Minstrel* confronts potentially disapproving aristocratic readers who might object to his choice of a low, rustic hero: "Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,/ That a poor villager inspires my strain" (I, 28–29). This

rebuff to imagined aristocratic pride presents a direct challenge to the cultural capital of the elite. Yet unlike Wordsworth, who makes a similar direct challenge in his "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, Beattie's *Minstrel* just as explicitly rejects the general public, as Edwin (much like Thomas Gray) "Would shrink to hear th' obsteperous trump of Fame" (I, 15).

Beattie's *Minstrel* in fact borrows self-consciously from Gray in constructing this poetic position, and the parallels between Edwin and the narrator of Gray's *Elegy* are more than accidental. Beattie met Gray in 1765 and quickly formed a close literary friendship, sending Gray all his poems for advice until Gray's death in 1771 and arranging and supervising the publication of the finely printed Glasgow edition of Gray's *Poems* in 1768.[43] In fact, Beattie's handwritten transcription of Gray's poems for this edition, in February of 1768, directly preceded the burst of creativity in which he composed most of Book One of *The Minstrel*.[44] It is no surprise, given this influence, that Edwin's self-sufficient pursuit of poetry regardless of audience matches the advice Beattie received from Gray in a 1765 letter:

> It is a pleasure to me to find, that you are not offended with the liberties I took, when you were at Glames. you took me too literally, if you thought I meant in the least to discourage you in your pursuit of Poetry. all I intended to say was, that if either Vanity (that is, a general & undistinguishing desire of applause) or Interest, or Ambition has any place in the breast of a poet, he stands a great chance in these our days of being severely disappointed: and yet after all these passions are suppress'd, there may remain in the mind of one, *ingento perculsus amore* (and such a one I take you to be), incitements of a better sort strong enough to make him write verse all his life both for his own pleasure, & that of all posterity.[45]

Gray himself was much more fastidious in distancing himself from publication and financial gain than Beattie, and his advice stems from his own attitudes, but Beattie creates his portrait of the minstrel according to this same model, insulating Edwin from both financial and literary ambition. One can hear echoes of Gray's fastidiousness also in Beattie's Sept. 1766 letter to Dr. Blacklock, in which he resolves "to write no more poetry with a view to publication, till I see some dawnings of a poetical taste among the generality of readers, of which, however, there is not at present anything like an appearance."[46] Beattie, however, made no substantial effort to distance himself either from patronage or from the commercial marketplace, so his construction of poetic identity in these ways seems more a gesture of deference to his friend's advice or a nod to prevailing poetic fashions than a direct representation of his own authorial anxieties.

Beattie's representation of Edwin as a minstrel also contains several explicit references to Gray's *Elegy*, a poem then at the height of its fame, which would have been prominent in the mind of Beattie and his readers. In its evocation of the would-be poet's possible repression through obscurity and poverty, Beattie's poem alludes to the *Elegy* in its opening lines:

> AH! Who can tell how hard it is to climb
> The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?
> Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
> Has felt the influence of malignant star,
> And waged with Fortune an eternal war;
> Check'd by the scoff of Pride, and Envy's frown,
> And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
> In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
> Then dropp'd into the grave, unpitied and unknown! (I, 1–9)

These lines call to mind the "sequester'd vale of life" of Gray's *Elegy*, along with the "mute inglorious Miltons," the "Chill Penury" which freezes "the genial current of the soul," and the *Elegy*'s whole invocation of the obscurity of the buried villagers and of its own narrator.[47] The second stanza of Beattie's poem then goes on, still following the lead of the *Elegy*, to juxtapose this struggle against poverty and obscurity with a portrait of those who "deaf to mad Ambition's call" are "supremely blest" in "health, competence, and peace" (I, 14, 16–17), invoking the ideal of virtuous rural retirement in opposition to the ambition for power and fame. In juxtaposing the "sylvan reign" of the "Muses" against the corrupting lure of "Pagantry and Power" (I, 30–31), *The Minstrel* continues to evoke the *Elegy's* contrast between the humble churchyard and the "long-drawn isle and fretted vault" which hold the "trophies" of the "Proud" (*Elegy*, 37–39). When Edwin makes his appearance, marked by melancholy like the subject of Gray's "Epitaph" and similarly unknown to fame and fortune, his resemblance to the narrator of the *Elegy* is unmistakable. Edwin too is distinguished by his sensibility and his learning, although this learning does not develop fully until he comes under the tutelage of the Hermit in the Book Two. Also like the villagers of Gray's *Elegy*, Edwin has been "long by penury controll'd/ And solitude" (I, 521–22), until the natural ardor of his soul and his inherent poetic genius awake through reading and contact with the Hermit. Beattie thus represents the Minstrel as developing exactly that individual identity and capacity which remained ambivalently suppressed in the forefather of Gray's *Elegy*.

Beattie probably also identified with the narrator of Gray's *Elegy* himself, at least early in his career. The sense of isolation, poverty, and obscurity which infuses the narrator of the *Elegy* makes him an appropriate model for

the youthful Beattie, who faced similar obscurity and (relative) poverty as a schoolmaster in the rural Scottish village of Fordoun. There, like the narrator of Gray's *Elegy*, he often rambled alone during the evenings and at night, and doubtless followed the poetic fashion by meditating alone in the village churchyard.[48] The narrator of the *Elegy*'s sense of being set off from other villagers by his learning, though little greater than them in fortune, together with the conflict between poetic ambition and acceptance of his secluded lot, must have resonated almost exactly with Beattie's situation. Beattie began writing poetry seriously before he received his professorship in Aberdeen, and for Beattie as for Gray and the narrator of the *Elegy*, poetry offered a possibility for recognition and escape from obscurity.

Revealingly, Beattie also composed a poem entitled "Epitaph, Intended for Himself," whose final stanza, together with its title, obviously echoes the "Epitaph" that concludes Gray's poem:

> Forget my frailties, thou art also frail;
> Forgive my lapses, for thyself may'st fall;
> Nor read, unmov'd, my artless tender tale,
> I was a friend, O man! to thee, to all.

This final stanza clearly alludes to the end of Gray's *Elegy*, echoing the "soul sincere," the wish to gain "a friend," and the diversion of the reader away from the author's "frailties" in that poem's concluding "Epitaph." The "artless tender tale" of Beattie's poem also echoes the *Elegy*'s "artless tale" (94). Beattie's "Epitaph" appeals to the sensibility of the reader in the same way as the *Elegy*, as the author figure imagines his death in order to offer himself as the proper object of the reader's sympathy. Beattie in this poem picks up Gray's strategy of using the epitaph for displaced self-representation, though he diverges from Gray in explicitly identifying the epitaph with himself. Thus both *The Minstrel* and the "Epitaph, Intended for Himself" reveal how Beattie used Gray's poetic strategies to move towards a more explicit and more directly personal poetry of self-representation, while still maintaining poetic decorum. Through such traces of influence, the gradual evolution of poetic self-representation during the eighteenth century becomes apparent.

THE HERMIT AND HIS PRINT MARKET HERMENEUTICS

Edwin does not provide the only figure of displaced poetic self-representation in *The Minstrel*. Though Edwin represents Beattie's youth, the poem also represents elements of his adult identity through the figure of the Hermit, as well as through the poem's first-person narrator. The Hermit is presented as a kind

of bardic figure, but in a manner which suggests Beattie's role as a professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen more than that of a prophetic oracle or bard. In fact, the Hermit and the narrator fulfill similar roles. In the poem's first Book, the narrator provides the reader with frequent moral instruction in his asides. The Hermit assumes this role of moral instructor in the second Book, as the narrator disappears entirely from the time of the Hermit's introduction at the beginning of the Book until the concluding stanzas.[49]

The use of the poetic narrator as a separate character is in itself significant, especially since it is formally unnecessary to the poem, which could just as easily be told in the objective third person. An unnecessary intrusion from a formal standpoint, the poem's narrator gives the poem its most directly autobiographical voice. Towards the end of the first Book and at the beginning of the second, as Edwin begins to reach maturity, this narrating "I" offers several long passages with an explicit autobiographical content (I, 354–60, 373–8, 532–40; II, 14–24), identifiable both with Beattie's childhood and with his later involvement in the metaphysical controversies of the *Essay on Truth* (I, 356–75). The poem denounces the "wrangling crew,/ From Pyrrho's maze and Epicurus' sty" (I, 356–57): Hume and his associates, whom Beattie mistook as atheists, and against whose philosophical skepticism he addressed his *Essay on Truth*. In this way, Beattie's present situation spills over into the poem in a thinly veiled autobiographical allusion. A similar first-person intrusion occurs at the beginning of the second Book, where Beattie writes of leaving behind the flowery themes of his own youth in a way that explicitly points to his identification with Edwin:

> So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
> Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
> And smite the gothic lyre with harsher hand;
> Now when I leave that flowery path, for aye,
> Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
> Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
> Where every face was innocent and gay,
> Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
> Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song. (II, 19–27)

This passage identifies the narrator both with Edwin and with Beattie himself, creating a sense of the actual, individual author communicating through the poem to his readers.

Within the second Book, this authorial first person is replaced by the figure of the Hermit, who offers yet another autobiographical representation of Beattie. In one sense, the Hermit is a bardic figure, singing his song in a wild and isolated valley. In this role, he also represents the situation of the

independent print market author, addressing his unknown print market readers. The Hermit has specifically renounced the court and its social ties and ambitions, and he satirizes the "tools and toys of tyranny [. . .] Scorned by the wise, and hated by the good," who

> only can engage the servile brood
> Of Levity and Lust, who all their days,
> Ashamed of truth and liberty, have wooed
> And hugged the chain that, glittering on their gaze,
> Seems to outshine the pomp of Heaven's empyreal blaze. (II, 111–17)

These "tools and toys" invoke the polemical court or party writers so savagely attacked by Pope in the *Dunciad* and his other satires, and dissociate the Hermit from social ambition and patronage. Renouncing his own quest for "Ambition" (II, 118), the Hermit has retired from such connections into the autonomy of a wild and unpeopled valley, where he can sing entirely for himself, independent of public expectations. He thus presents a figure of the dignified independent poet, withdrawn from corrupt networks of patronage and influence into virtuous rural retirement.

The Hermit's relation to Edwin in the valley also suggests the relation between the print market poet and his unknown reader(s). The Hermit first appears in the poem as a disembodied voice, suddenly heard rising out of the valley and continuing for over a hundred line of lyric verse while its author remains unseen (II, 82–189). Like Shelley's poet—"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"—the Hermit sings his soliloquy without any immediate awareness of audience.[50] As an unseen and unseeing auditor, Edwin is placed in the same rhetorical position as the poem's actual reader. He turns away deeply moved but without establishing any immediate contact or recognition with the Hermit. The Hermit's presence in the "deep retired abode" (II, 54), isolated from the surrounding social world, in this way figures the imagined "presence" of the author within his text. The Hermit remains in his valley for Edwin to revisit, just as the author remains figuratively present in his text for each and every reader, every time the book is opened.

When Edwin, in this role as "reader," later returns to seek out the Hermit for direct communication, the poem further dramatizes the individual author-to-reader relationship that would become central to Romantic hermeneutics. The Hermit hails him specifically as a "stranger" (II, 230), like an author hailing his unknown reader.[51] Both in his initial sympathetic response and identification with the Hermit and in his return for further

instruction, Edwin demonstrates what would become the Romantic ideal of the engaged sympathetic reader. He comes to the Hermit deferential and ready to be instructed, his eye "depressed" with "modest awe" that "feared to give offense" (II, 228–29). The Hermit as author then justifies his role in relation to this individual "reader," claiming that "If I one soul improve, I have not lived in vain" and inviting Edwin to visit him often in his bower (II, 288).

Beattie himself in his critical writing would later theorize this idea of poetry as a communication between individual author and reader, in what has been interpreted as an early expression of the Romantic hermeneutics I describe at the end of chapter one.[52] According to this theory, the reader accesses the meaning in the poem by reconstituting the author's feelings, intentions, and consciousness. In his theoretical writings, Beattie pays much attention to this idea of "sympathy, or sensibility of heart" as crucial both to the act of writing and the act of reading, through what he describes as the author's power "to enter with ardent emotions into every part of his subject, so as to transfuse into his works a pathos and energy sufficient to raise corresponding emotions in the reader." Such poetry, Beattie argues, must "touch the heart" in order to evoke an answering sympathy, to "raise corresponding emotions in the reader."[53] Beattie's *Minstrel* attempts to accomplish this same goal by appealing to the reader's sympathetic identification with himself as author, even as he dramatizes a model of author-reader relationship in the encounter between Edwin and the Hermit. Like many Romantic poems, *The Minstrel* thus symbolically dramatizes the process of its own reception.

This call to individual identification with the author was crucial to *The Minstrel's* success. William Cowper, for instance, wrote that Beattie's "own character appears in every page, and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer but the man," adding in later letters that "Beattie is become my favorite Author of all the moderns. He is so amiable I long to know him," and "Nobody, I believe, has ever read Beattie without a wish to know him."[54] Much like Gray's *Elegy*, Beattie's *Minstrel* was so popular because it combined standard neo-classical elements with a hero who seemed to speak directly to individual readers, inviting their sympathetic identification with the poem's actual author. In Elizabeth Montagu's words, it spoke to the "heart" and so excited "strong sympathies," both for the character Edwin and for the author whose presence Edwin seemed to represent. Although Beattie does not appeal directly to the print market audience, his appeal to the individual "gentle mind,/ Whom Nature's charms inspire," linked with his aspiration to "love humankind," actively invited this identification by individual readers from all social classes (I, 539–40). Through Edwin, the poem thus introduces the authorial self as an object for the reader's identification, and the figure of the

poet emerges as central to the poem without directly challenging the reader's aesthetic expectations or breaking poetic decorum. As a result, a poem renouncing financial and poetic ambition ironically became a bestseller, earning Beattie and his publisher substantial sums of money.

In his role as a poetic figure, the Hermit also engages in direct self-representation, as his song shifts from general didactic moralizing on the human condition to a brief narrative of his own life:

> Like them, abandoned to Ambition's sway,
> I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
> And fawn'd and smil'd, to plunder and betray,
> Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while;
> So gnawed the viper the corroding file;
> But now with pangs of keen remorse, I rue
> Those years of trouble and debasement vile. (II, 118–24)

The Hermit's self-representation does not break poetic decorum either, however, because he sings entirely for himself, without awareness of any audience. This lack of awareness that he has auditors also guarantees the Hermit's sincerity in his song, since as Edwin remarks "none speaks false, where there is none to hear" (II, 212).

Though it would go too far to identify the Hermit's stylized lament straightforwardly with Beattie, he does express significant aspects of Beattie's identity, especially in his role of educator at the end of the poem. When Edwin approaches him for further instruction, the Hermit assumes Beattie's role as a professor of moral philosophy by instructing Edwin in a broad range of moral and physical sciences, including history, political science, physics, the applied sciences, medicine, and moral philosophy.[55] In so doing, the Hermit condenses an entire college curriculum into the final 300 lines of the poem's second Book. Although when Edwin meets the Hermit he is an "ancient" man with his harp beside him (I, 216–17), signifying his bardic identity, the Hermit's primary function in the poem is not as a bard but as an educator—a function for which his lyric song serves only as a prelude, much as Beattie himself used aesthetics in his course on moral philosophy.[56] For the Hermit as for Beattie, poetry serves only as a kind of prefatory incitement to more serious and more strenuous intellectual labors. Since *The Minstrel* was Beattie's last poem, followed by a series of theoretical essays prepared from his university lectures, it is tempting to see the Hermit's shift from poetry to instructing Edwin in these other branches of learning as predicting Beattie's own development as a writer. The Hermit seems to associate poetry only with leisure, as does Beattie himself in the poem.

POETIC IDENTITY IN *THE MINSTREL*

The Hermit's final course of instruction seems to contradict the central-premise of the poem, by negating the whole purpose of Edwin's development into the vocation of Minstrel. As such, it represents a fundamental ambivalence in Beattie's relationship to poetry, present since the conception of the poem. In a Nov. 1769 letter to Thomas Gray, after he composed the first Book but before composing the second, Beattie describes his plan:

> I suppose my Hero born in a solitary and mountainous country; by trade a shepherd. His imagination is wild and romantick; but in the first part of his life he has hardly any opportunity of acquiring knowledge, except from that part of the book of nature which is open before him. The first Canto is a kind of poetical or sentimental history of this period. In the second he meets with a Hermit, who in his youth had been a man of the world, and who instructs Edwin (the young Minstrel) in history, philosophy, musick, etc. The young man, agreeably to that character which he bears from the beginning, shows a strong attachment to poetry, which the old hermit endeavors by all possible means to discourage. Edwin seems disposed to follow his advice, and abandons the muse; when an irruption of Danes or robbers (I have not as yet determined which) strips him of his little all, and obliges him through necessity to take his harp on his shoulder, and go abroad into the world in the character of a Minstrel. And here the poem is to end.[57]

Just as in the published poem, the Hermit in this prospectus attempts to discourage Edwin from a life of poetry. Edwin's vocation as minstrel is then determined not by his own choice but by financial necessity, after he is stripped of his other possessions and forced to abandon his hereditary "trade" as a shepherd.

It is a strange prospectus for a poem which begins by invoking the "Progress of Genius" and by celebrating the character of the minstrel in the Preface as "not only respectable, but sacred." Edwin will become a poet in fulfillment of his natural bent, but only after he has already been persuaded against this vocational choice by the Hermit, after the violent accident of robbery and ensuing financial necessity. In another, even earlier prospectus of the poem, Beattie offers an almost identical design in a May 1767 letter to Thomas Blacklock, explaining that the Hermit will dissuade Edwin from minstrelsy "by representing the happiness of obscurity and solitude, and the bad reception which poetry has met with in almost every age."[58]

This statement of poetry's "bad reception [. . .] in almost every age," strangely incongruous with Beattie's opening invocation of Percy's minstrel

figure, makes more sense in the contexts of Beattie's life and eighteenth-century authorship. In one sense it echoes Thomas Gray's advice, quoted earlier, not to become a poet out of worldly ambition, since such hopes will inevitably be disappointed. In another sense, it reflects the general conditions of print market authorship at the time, in which it was simply not possible to earn a living by writing poetry without supplementing it with journalism or other more profitable commercial forms of writing. "Hail, Poverty," Edwin appropriately proclaims, after he first hears of the corruptions of courts and public life, because poverty is exactly what an independent poet at the time could expect (II, 196). Before publishing the *Minstrel*, Beattie himself had published two volumes of poetry, in 1760 and 1766, and had achieved neither wealth nor much fame from them. Beattie himself thus did not, for good reason, choose the difficult life of authorship as a vocation, despite his youthful bent in that direction; and by the time he composed the *Minstrel* he had left his poetic ambition largely behind, defining his identity primarily as the author of the *Essay on Truth* and through his related duties as a professor. In autobiographical terms, the catastrophe which he concocts to steer Edwin back to a career of poetry can be seen as a kind of symbolic wish-fulfillment, allowing Edwin to escape the more sober academic duties and responsibilities enjoined by Beattie and his more mature, publicly responsible alter ego, the Hermit. Edwin's development into a poet thus provides a kind of impractical vocational wish-fulfillment. Far from a teleological development into genius and poetic identity—the narrative Wordsworth constructs for himself in the *Prelude*—Beattie's minstrel will arrive at his profession only through a dramatic and unexpected catastrophe, which serves as a kind of poetic *deus ex machina* and allows him to become a minstrel despite his own (and Beattie's) better judgment.

It is also significant that the Hermit criticizes the extravagant Gothic imagination in which Edwin indulges early in the poem, a style associated with the bard or minstrel figure at the time (II, 352–60). As his education proceeds, even Edwin rejects "Fancy," which "enervates, while it soothes the heart" and "wantons on fickle pinion through the skies" (II, 361, 500–1), pursuing instead the "beams of truth" and the "path of Science" (II, 497–98). Yet to fulfill the aim of the poem, Beattie still inconsistently and without explanation makes "The Muse, and her celestial art [. . .] the enthusiast's fond and first regard" (II, 516–17). Poetry remains Edwin's first and greatest love, but can offer no convincing vocational role or justification. The final stanzas rapture over Virgil and Homer and yearn to tell the story of Edwin's vocational development as a minstrel:

> how [Edwin's] lyre, though rude her first essays,
> Now skill'd to soothe, to triumph, to complain,

> Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
> Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
> I fain would sing. (II, 541–45)

Yet this point the poem breaks off in mid-line, abruptly shifting to an elegy for the death of Beattie's friend, Dr. Gregory, and bidding "Adieu, ye lays that Fancy's flowers adorn,/ The soft amusement of the vacant mind" (II, 550–51). Although this private grief provides a decorous conclusion through the accepted genre of elegy, it provides no formal or thematic resolution to the poem, only a thin justification of the poem's abrupt ending. As Roger Robinson argues, Beattie wrote 80 more lines of the poem after he composed this ending on Gregory's death, so without doubting the sincerity of his grief, it did not in fact bring his writing to an abrupt end.[59] Instead, this private appeal allows Beattie to evade the difficulty of bringing the poem to conclusion, including the difficulty of reconciling his celebration of poetic vocation with the overwhelming sense that life holds loftier and more important duties.

Thomas Gray, in a letter to Beattie, draws attention to this problem of incommensurability between the poem's celebration of Edwin's childhood love of poetry and the lack of a worthy social office for him to perform as an adult:

> The design is simple, and pregnant with poetical ideas of various kinds, yet seems somehow imperfect at the end. Why may not young Edwin, when necessity has driven him to take up the harp, and assume the profession of a Minstrel, do some great and singular service to his country? (what service I must leave to your invention) such as no General, no Statesman, no Moralist could do without the aid of music, inspiration, and poetry. This will not appear an improbability in those early times, and in a character then held sacred, and respected by all nations. Besides, it will be a full answer to all the Hermit has said, when he dissuaded him from cultivating these pleasing arts; it will shew their use, and make the best panegyric of our favourite and celestial science.[60]

Recognizing the power of the Hermit's objections against poetry, which were also being posed by mid to late eighteenth-century critics, Gray wants Beattie to counter by proclaiming the poet's indispensable social service, a "great and singular service to his country" which "no General, no Statesman, no Moralist" can perform. It is indicative, however, that Gray must leave the exact nature of this service to Beattie's imagination, since Gray himself cannot imagine it. Poetry for him is the poet's "favorite and celestial science," the arcane enthusiasm of the learned few, and performs no vital public duty to recommend it as a vocation. If it does, it can do so only in the fiction of "those early times" in which *The Minstrel* is set, not in the Enlightenment era of the

late eighteenth century. For the same reason, Beattie's poem offers no convincing justification for the poet's vocation, social role, or identity.

This impasse was also a reflection of Beattie's own personal situation. As I have argued earlier, Beattie at the time saw poetry as primarily an amusement and recreation from the more strenuous intellectual labor of composing the *Essay on Truth*, which he found exhausting but through which he hoped to perform an important public duty in refuting atheism and skepticism.[61] Poetry for Beattie in the 1770s was clearly an avocation rather than a vocation, and so provides neither a model nor an impetus to construct Edwin's vocational identity as a minstrel. Though Edwin begins as an autobiographical figure, Beattie could not model Edwin's future development into a minstrel after his own life, nor could he reconcile a celebration of minstrelsy with his own current sense of moral and social duty. If the Hermit, as a figure of Beattie's current self, was to ecucate Edwin, a figure of his younger self, he would have to turn him from a minstrel into an academician. At one point the Hermit even directly advises Edwin to "Flee to the shade of Academus' grove" (II, 474), as if advising him to follow Beattie's own career choice. Poetry and philosophy were for Beattie mutually incompatible roles, as he wrote in a 1766 letter: "Do not you think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question whether any one person was ever eminent for both."[62] By the time he composed *The Minstrel*, he had dedicated himself decisively to philosophy, and his poetic career was about to end.

Together with this vocational conflict, *The Minstrel* also expresses a fundamental conflict between its celebration of visionary solitude and its ideal of moral sociability. The poem distinguishes Edwin through his love of solitude and his visionary imagination, yet when he at last reaches the Hermit, at the furthest and most isolated extent of his wanderings, he is educated primarily in social responsibility. In Book One, the poem specifically celebrates the "mystic transports [. . .] Of solitude and melancholy" as necessary both for poetry and for a moral life in general (I, 496–504). In contrast, the Hermit advocates an Enlightenment plan of comprehensive education and social service for the general improvement of the human situation: cultivating wilderness, increasing agricultural production, curing disease, alleviating poverty, building public works such as moles to contain the ocean, remodeling political constitutions (II, 451–95). After the Hermit's instruction, Edwin turns to science not inspired by "love of novelty," but "mindful of the aids that life requires/ And of the services man owes to man" (II, 505, 507–8). Beattie himself felt these same conflicting imperatives. In a 1773 letter to Elizabeth Montagu, he wrote that

> In my younger days I was much addicted to solitude [. . .] I wrote Odes to Retirement; and wished to be conducted to its deepest groves, remote from every rude sound, and from every vagrant foot. In a word, I thought the most profound solitude the best; but I have now changed my mind. Those solemn and incessant energies of imagination, which naturally take place in such a state, are fatal to the health and spirits, and tend to make us more and more unfit for the business of life.[63]

Though *The Minstrel* expresses a poetic ideal of solitude and individual imagination, this ideal pales before the greater ones of social service and sociability. Like many other mid to late eighteenth-century poets, Beattie cannot finally offer any convincing social justification for poetry's social role, and a poet setting out to celebrate poetic vocation and identity ends by implying its social and moral dubiousness. Only the final stanzas' invocation of "never-dying fame" (II, 522) provides any significant justification for pursuing a poetic vocation.

It is curious that Beattie would offer this message of social responsibility through a Hermit, who is by definition asocial, but this role makes sense it we understand the Hermit not as a religious recluse but a figure of print authorship, addressing an unknown audience. In any case, the Hermit is hardly misanthropic, showing little relish for solitude and enthusiastically inviting Edwin to return often to pursue his moral education (II, 282–86). The eagerness with which the Hermit establishes this sense of connection belies the poem's celebration of poetic solitude, justifying even the Hermit's marginal existence in terms of his social utility. In addition, although the poem invokes the autonomy of the minstrel, Edwin's development is not autonomous at all, depending instead on his instruction by the Hermit. The Hermit even refines his poetics into a more modern style, as Edwin learns to "[clear] th' ambiguous phrase, and [lop] th' unwieldy line" with a neo-Classical rather than Gothic "simplicity," which "tempers his [poetic] rage" (II, 528–30). Edwin at this point is not being educated as a solitary minstrel or bard, but as a sociable and refined eighteenth-century poet.

By the time he published the *Minstrel*'s second Book in 1774, Beattie's position and identity had changed radically, and Edwin's projected role as minstrel had diverged even further his own situation. As the now-celebrated author of the *Essay on Truth* and Book One of the *Minstrel*, Beattie found himself at the center of the British republic of letters, embedded in multiple overlapping networks of patronage and literary friendship. Amidst these connections, Beattie would be hard pressed to imagine his identity or authorship in terms of individual solitude and autonomy. By 1774, moreover, Beattie was no longer writing

primarily for an unknown print audience but for a known literary and social elite: the same elite which had begun to shower him with offers of pensions and positions and which subscribed for his benefit to a special 1776 edition of the *Essay on Truth*. Significantly, Beattie himself was an accomplished musician, and by the time of the *Minstrel*'s publication he was already himself "a well-known minstrel in that he often played his violincello and sang at public gatherings and private homes in Aberdeen, as well as at Slains and Gordon Castles," as Everard King writes. Most of his own poems "from which I have received the highest entertainment," Beattie wrote in a 1766 letter, "are such as are altogether improper for publication; being written in a sort of burlesque humour, for the amusement of some particular friend, or for some select company. Of these I have a pretty large collection."[64] In short, Beattie was a social minstrel, not a solitary one, and he describes himself writing primarily unpublishable occasional poetry for his circles of friends. Despite a desire to celebrate Edwin's solitude, poetry for Beattie had become a social art, making it increasingly difficult to portray the Minstrel's autonomy and self-sufficiency. *The Minstrel* is dedicated to friendship as much as it is to poetic vision.

Because the poem was written as a form of leisure rather than a professional activity, Beattie could present these contradictions without any direct threat to his own identity, for he did not have to construct a coherent model or justification of poetic identity. Maintaining decorum, he experiments in self-representation and a new poetics of individual sympathy while at the same time affirming the Enlightenment ideals of education, improvement, and sociability. The poem does not so much explore the tensions and contradictions between these positions, as it does experiment and dabble with different possibilities.

Although Beattie did not define his own identity as a poet, *The Minstrel's* immense success helped to establish the poet's character and imaginative development as a suitable subject for poetry, providing a model for later poets to construct their own authorial identity more explicitly. Beattie's poem experiments in most of the devices Wordsworth would use to construct a full vocational model of poetic identity, including a new hermeneutic model of individual author-to-reader relationship. Beattie does not combine the experiments into a coherent position, but the various elements of *The Minstrel*, redefined in a Wordsworthian poetics, would develop into the direct expression of the Romantic poetic self.

Chapter Five

William Cowper: The Accidental Poet and the Emerging Self

It can be difficult today to understand William Cowper's phenomenal success and reputation as a poet at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Reviews of Cowper's first major publication, the 1782 *Poems*, were mixed, but the critical acclaim for the *Task* when it appeared in 1785 was immediate and overwhelming, matched by an even more overwhelming success in sales which continued long past Cowper's death. As a result of *The Task*, Cowper became the most famous and celebrated living poet in England until his death in 1800.[1] He retained this high reputation well past the middle of the next century, especially among the middle-class book-buying public which continued to purchase his works en masse even after his reputation began to decline among critics. The large Evangelical audience bought him for his religion. Some readers, such as the Brontë sisters, felt an irresistible impulse to identify with Cowper the man, especially after his mental sufferings became public knowledge. Others, such as Jane Austen, Hannah More, and George Eliot, admired his solid, gentlemanly morality; and still others found in him an expression of quintessential middle-class Englishness.[2] Cowper never defined his authorship in terms of the print market, but his success owed more to the book-buying commercial public than to the acclaim of the literary elite.

Much of Cowper's success can be attributed to his combination of the familiar literary *topoi* of eighteenth-century poetry with his congenial middle-class domesticity and morals, what contemporaries found to be his delightful conversational style, and the sense his poetry conveyed of a unique individual author addressing the reader directly out of his own experience. Much as in Gray's *Elegy*, readers felt themselves called upon to identify with the attractive sensibility of this author/ narrator, and through him to identify themselves

with a national society of other readers. Presenting readers with a perfect blend of innovation and tradition, Cowper's poetry creates a personal subjectivity without breaking poetic or social decorum; mounts a high-minded moral satire without calling for social or political revolution; satirizes aristocratic luxury while celebrating the virtues of middle-class consumer comforts; and invites the reader to participate in national life through the act of reading without leaving the privacy of his or her own domestic hearth. With its celebration of domesticity, sensibility, consumerism, religious virtue, Whig politics, and gentlemanly retreat, Cowper's poetry appealed overwhelmingly to the middle-class public, placing this public and its values at the center of the national character he constructed.

In so doing, Cowper's *Task* also produces an unprecedented authorial subjectivity, inviting the reader to share Cowper's personal perspective and follow the free association of his thoughts. This emergence of individual authorial subjectivity is both a function of Cowper's situation as a poet and of his own personal temperament. Though he wrote poetry from his early days at Westminster School and as a lawyer-in-training in the Middle and Inner Temples, Cowper's serious poetic endeavors came late in life, only after a mental breakdown and a series of debilitating depressions left him isolated in rural Olney and then Weston Underwood. In this retirement, he wrote primarily to distract himself from his mental sufferings. Other issues of personal temperament also influenced his authorship: his essential conservatism, which impeded any outright breach of poetic decorum or any attempt to recast his poetics of the self in revolutionary ways; his mortification at public appearance, which translated into discomfort with assuming a public voice or authority in his poetry; and fear of exposing himself in general.[3] Cowper came to authorship, as Vincent Newey writes, by accident rather than by vocation, and his writing remained always fundamentally "accidental" and topical, responding to the personal and public events of his days and the suggestions of others rather than claiming initiative or vocational authority himself.[4] Cowper wrote his poetry not primarily to construct his identity as a "poet," but for his own private health and sanity. His sudden, immense fame was an unexpected side effect of this writing, which he neither embraced nor rejected.

The other major biographical factor which should be noted is Cowper's religious sensibility, which added to his sense of personal isolation and uniqueness. Cowper recovered from his first bout of insanity through a revelatory experience of God's grace in 1763, as he details at length in his personal memoir, *Adelphi*. For the remainder of his life, he continued to believe that he had a unique individual relationship with God, whom he saw as singling him

out, mostly for chastisement. Although he remained religious till the end in his overwhelming preoccupation with God's grace and wrath, Cowper experienced a devastating vision of being cast out from God's grace during another 1773 mental breakdown: a vision from which he never recovered.[5] God, however, remained central to his outlook, and even his secular poetry continued to justify his identity and authorship in relation to God, as the *Task*'s conclusion makes abundantly clear. In book five of the *Task*, Cowper calls God

> the source and centre of all minds,
> Their only point of rest, eternal word!
> From thee departing, they are lost and rove
> At random, without honor, hope or peace. (V, 896–99)

The tragedy for Cowper the man is that even as he attempted to ground himself on God's presence, he felt this "source and centre" ineluctably withdrawn and denied him.

This sense of personal uniqueness recurs at many points in Cowper's correspondence, providing a crucial difference from Alexander Pope's (and even Thomas Gray's) role-based model of identity, and contributes to the emergence of a personal authorial voice in the *Task*. Cowper wrote to his spiritual advisor, the Rev. John Newton, in 1787 about his mental sufferings, distinguishing himself from others by "such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind" (3:11). Similarly, he wrote years earlier in 1763 to his cousin Lady Hesketh that "I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men I have ever conversed with" (1:93); and again to Newton, in response to the *Monthly Review*'s 1782 praise that he is a poet "sui *generis*" who writes in a style "peculiar to himself," with the hope that "having imitated no man," he will continue to retain his "singularity" (2:308). Cowper stressed this singularity also in a letter to his friend William Unwin about the *Task*:

> My descriptions are all from Nature. Not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience. Not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree, conjectural. In my numbers [. . .] I have imitated nobody, though sometimes perhaps there may be an apparent resemblance; because at the same time that I would not imitate, I have not affectedly differ'd. (2:285)

In one sense Cowper's emphasis on this singularity may be a product of his Evangelicalism, which, despite its standard "type" of the conversion narrative, stresses the individual relationship to God and the personal history of

conversion.[6] As his above-quoted claims indicate, however, Cowper extended this sense of personal singularity before God to a related sense of personal and stylistic singularity as an author. Authorship also would allow him to distinguish himself from others, as he wrote to Lady Hesketh:

> I am not ashamed to confess that having commenced an Author, I am most ardently desirous to succeed as such. *I have, what perhaps you little suspect me of, in my nature an infinite share of ambition*. But with it, I have at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing that till lately I stole through life without undertaking any thing, yet always wishing to distinguish myself. At last I ventured, ventured too in the only path that at so late a period was yet open to me, and am determined, if God have not determined otherwise, to work my way through the obscurity that has been so long my portion, into notice. (2:543, emphasis his)

This combination of ambition and diffidence, with the desire to escape obscurity and distinguish the self through the sole viable means of authorship, sounds almost exactly like the narrator of Gray's *Elegy*, except that it is far more direct and unconflicted in its aim than the *Elegy*.

Yet although Cowper accepted commercial print culture as a medium for distinguishing himself, he never fully constructed his identity in terms of his authorship. Instead, he continued to think of himself primarily as a retired gentleman. At the same time, Cowper never established a coherent sense of authority or social role as a poet in relation to his public. The authorial self emerges in Cowper's poetry and in the *Task* in particular out of his sense of isolation and personal uniqueness, but because he did not need or wish to define his identity through his writing, and because his relationship to his audience remains peripheral rather than central to his poetry, this authorial voice does not construct a strong version of authorial identity or an autonomous self.

THE ACCIDENTAL POET: WILLIAM COWPER AND PRINT CULTURE

William Cowper's poetry is fundamentally accidental and occasional. Though he dabbled in poetry in his youth, during his time at Westminster School and afterwards as a fashionable resident of the Middle and Inner Temples, as part of the self-designated "Nonsense Club" of fellow schoolmate poets, and though he produced a copious assortment of hymns in the early 1770s for John Newton's frequently reprinted evangelical collection, the *Olney Hymns*, Cowper did not begin to think of himself as a poet or to write self-consciously as such until the early 1780s, when he was almost fifty.[7] Even then, however,

almost all of Cowper's poetry retains an incidental quality. His first major publication of the period, the *Antithelypthora*, was written as a topical response to his first cousin the Rev. Martin Madan's book, *Thelypthora*, which outrageously advanced polygamy as a solution to the problem of prostitution.[8] Cowper's mock-heroic response was topical in theme and was only written, then anonymously published, at the urging of Cowper's evangelical mentor, John Newton. Broadening his satire on Madan to larger and more serious concerns, Cowper then set out to write what became the long didactic series of "Moral Satires" which made up the bulk of his 1782 volume, the first of his publications attributed to him as an author: *Poems by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq.* [Esquire]. Cowper's most successful and still most famous poem, *The Task*, subsequently came into being from the suggestion of his friend Lady Austen that he compose a poem in blank verse on a sofa—a suggestion he extended into a poem of six books and over five thousand lines, full of topical political and social commentary.[9] When he began his translation of Homer in late 1785—again apparently at Lady Austen's suggestion[10]—Cowper launched into a project which would dominate his life until the volume's publication six years later, and which he continued to revise until his death. But the minor poems he continued to produce, both before and after the beginning of this Homer project, remained overwhelmingly occasional: poems sent to friends thanking them for their gifts; poems on the mundane events of his daily life; poems celebrating the king's health; poems commissioned by abolitionists against the slave trade; and so on. Cowper's original poetry came as an immediate response to the day-to-day events of his life and of British society, as he followed the course of current events through his daily habit of newspaper reading. Cowper wrote when prompted by the suggestion of others or by circumstance, but apart from the Homer translation and its subscription campaign, he never took it upon himself to pursue his own poetic plan or vocation.

With the Homer project, Cowper's sense of poetic vocation did to a certain extent change. As his recent biographer James King writes, "up to the publication of *The Task* in 1785, Cowper had been a gentleman who wrote verses, but with Homer he frequently saw himself as a professional writer dedicated to fame and royalties."[11] That Cowper ever conceived of his identity as a "professional writer dedicated to fame and royalties" remains open to doubt. I believe that King overstates the case, failing to produce sufficient evidence that Cowper saw his writing as a vocation.[12] In measuring himself against Homer's most famous previous translator, Pope, Cowper did actively throw himself into the subscription campaign for the volume. He also anxiously awaited the volumes' commercial success, after he negotiated with his publisher Joseph

Johnson over copyright, and hoped to gain handsomely from the venture, the first time he earned any money from the sales of his poetry.[13] But even as he claimed literary property for the first time with these translations, Cowper continued to speak of his writing primarily as an "amusement" and diversion from his otherwise insupportable mental anguish, rather than as a vocation or primary basis of identity.

This description of poetry as an "amusement" recurs throughout Cowper's letters, conveying a sense both of its role as a "distraction from the miserable contemplation of his religious terrors," and as "the proper pastime of a gentleman living in retirement."[14] Before the Homer translation, when Cowper mentions himself as a poet he is characteristically self-deprecating, and he places poetry on a level equal to the other rural activities in which he engaged, such as carpentry and gardening, to keep himself occupied and distract him from his overwhelming depression. Hence even in *The Task* Cowper lists poetry as only one activity among others, writing of the various "employments" which occupy him, including "friends, books, a garden, and perhaps a pen" (III, 352, 355), and of the evenings in which he turns "To books, to music, or the poet's toil,/ To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit/ Or twining silken threads round iv'ry reels/ When they command whom man was born to please [i.e. when women command]" (IV, 262–65), as if all these activities were equally important and fulfilled the same basic function. Poetic labors for Cowper are

> occupations of the poet's mind
> So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
> With such address, from themes of sad import,
> That lost in his own musings, happy man!
> He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
> Their wonted entertainment, all retire. (II, 298–303).

Poetry in this sense is not merely diversion, but an active self-cultivation of the mind. As such, however, it is only one form of virtue-producing labor among many, a more or less equally significant "task" and not an activity of unique vocational significance. As Cowper put it, "The morning finds the self-sequester'd man/ Fresh for his *task*, intend what *task* he may" (III, 386–87, emphases mine). Writing is only one of many possible "tasks."

Cowper's attitude towards poetry as a form of polite recreation are well expressed in a March 1781 letter to John Newton, as is his indifferent acceptance of commercial involvement:

> If a Board of Enquiry were to be establish'd, at which Poets were to undergo an Examination respecting the Motives that induced them to

> publish, and I were to be summon'd to attend that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few Poets could—that though I have no Objection to lucrative consequences if any such should follow, they are not my Aim; much less is it my Ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a Genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your Motive? I answer with a bow—Amusement—there is nothing but this, no Occupation within the compass of my small Sphere, Poetry excepted, that can do much towards diverting that train of Melancholy thoughts, which when I am not thus employ'd, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own Success to make an Amusement of it. (1:459)

This justification for publishing, which Cowper would repeat years later in a 1786 letter to a would-be poet who had appealed to him for advice (2:617), represents a relaxed and uninsistent attitude towards commercial publication which is born out by Cowper's publication history. Cowper identifies himself here as a "Poet," but "Poet" in the sense of one who writes poetry rather than the sense of one who's identity is defined by that writing. He is a gentleman poet (albeit a psychically tormented one) who writes for his own amusement or diversion, and who feels an easy indifference to the sphere of commercial print culture: neither exploiting it to create his own identity, as did Pope, nor fastidiously avoiding and eliding his involvement in it, as did Gray. The print market and its audience are for Cowper merely an established fact and a natural correlate of his desire to write.

Of course, Cowper's position in the above-quoted letter could be ascribed to genteel evasion or an attempt to conceal his literary ambitions from his spiritual mentor, Newton. The general tone of his correspondence, his poetry, and his publishing career, however, consistently bear out this relaxed acceptance of print culture. In August 1780 Cowper wrote to William Unwin that he was "making a Collection [of some recently written poems], not for the Public, but for Myself" (1:375), and presumably for manuscript circulation among friends, but as his poetic efforts expanded he gradually began to write with the print market and its larger public specifically in mind.[15] After the modest success of *Antithelypthora*, Cowper allowed himself to be persuaded to publish what eventually became the 1782 volume, overcoming his initial reluctance and allowing his name to be placed prominently on the title page as author. In publishing *The Task* Cowper was more proactive, short-circuiting Newton altogether and manifesting considerably more worldly ambition, as he wrote to his friend William Unwin to request that he approach Cowper's previous publisher, Joseph Johnson, to interest him in the

publication of a new volume; and if Johnson would not publish it, to approach Thomas Longman or John Nichols, also the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as possible alternatives (2:276, 286–87). In this letter, as in an earlier letter to Unwin, Cowper provides a clear sense of understanding and accepting the economics of the transaction. Neither embracing nor shrinking from the commercial implications of the market, he writes that he approaches a publisher for the very practical reason that he lacks sufficient money to publish the work himself. In the letter written to Unwin after the publication of his 1782 *Poems*, Cowper writes:

> You tell me you have been asked if I am intent upon another volume. I reply—not at present; not being convinced that I have met with sufficient encouragement. I account myself happy in having pleased a *few*, but am not rich enough to despise the *Many*. I do not know what sort of a Market my commodity has found, but if a slack one, I must beware how I make a second attempt. My Bookseller will not be willing to incur a certain loss, and I can as little afford it. (2:77)

When Johnson later offers to publish the *Task*, Cowper speculates that his first volume must have sold adequately (2:292), and he soberly but non-committedly advises the inclusion of the previously anonymous (and hugely successfully) poem *John Gilpin*, on the argument that it may increase sales (2:368). Clearly Cowper has made no great effort to follow up on the sales history of his initial volume, but just as clearly he does not shrink from recognizing the status of his poetry as a commodity in the print marketplace. He is a gentleman poet, but unlike Gray, a gentleman poet apparently comfortable with his relationship to the commercial economics of print.

Cowper's publication of a number of his poems in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and in various newspapers in the years after the *Task*, confirm this sense of comfort with commercial print culture. From 1783 to the end of 1793, thirteen of Cowper's poems were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, more than half of which he submitted himself, together with an assortment of mainly topical and polemic poems sent to newspapers such as *The Times*, the *Whitehall Evening-Post*, and the *Northampton Mercury*.[16] Many of Cowper's poems were reprinted and/or sent in for publication by friends without his explicit permission, as was customary at the time, but he seems genuinely unconcerned about such practices. A letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, sums up these attitudes with droll but unsqueamish consideration of whether he should send his poem "On Mrs. Montagu's Feather-Hanging"—a panegyric which Lady Hesketh had asked him to write in hopes it would gain her admittance into Montagu's salon-like "Academy"—either to

a newspaper or to the *Gentleman's Magazine*.[17] The passage is worth quoting in full for what it reveals about Cowper's relationship to print culture:

> A Newspaper perhaps has more Readers than Mr. Urban [the fictional editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*]. Yet Mr. Urban has many, and a majority of them are Literary men. No single Newspaper possibly is read by so many of the Literati as the publications of Mr. Urban; not to mention that he is perused by multitudes of Blockheads beside. Again—A Newspaper dies with the day, and its contents in general die with it. Not so the Gentleman's Magazine [. . .] For these reasons therefore I deem a Compliment paid in a Magazine, twice as good as the same compliment paid in a Newspaper. Especially considering that there is at least a Chance that some Daily paper may enrich itself with a Copy of said Compliment, stealing it from the Magazine. A practice not infrequent. (3:161–62).

Despite the obviously jocular tone of these remarks, Cowper shows a clear sense of the audience and market demographics of print culture and a straightforward willingness to work for his purposes within them. He draws the distinction between "Literary men" and the "Blockheads" of the common newspaper-buying audience, but this distinction is primarily utilitarian here, and he does not shrink from having his poems appear before either public. When he did send the poem to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, he sent it, and it was printed, as "by the author of the Task," identifying himself not by name but by his author function within that same commercial print culture.[18]

Cowper's comfortable participation in print culture spanned his entire life. Cowper claimed to have published a number of ballads on topical political issues anonymously for the popular ballad market even before his mental breakdown in 1763; and after his return to secular poetry in the late 1770s he continued to publish miscellaneous topical poems, such as his frequently reprinted abolitionist ballads *The Negro's Complaint* and *The Morning Dream*; the six ballad-style poems he composed between 1787 and 1793 at a parish clerk's request to be printed with the yearly Northampton "Bill of Mortality"; and his 1789 poems celebrating King George's recovery from madness.[19] All these poems were undertaken at the urging of others and all appeared in widely circulated, popular forms of print, identifying Cowper as author. Yet Cowper neither received financial compensation nor claimed literary copyright over any of them, and though he collected his poems with a thought to a possible third volume of original verse after the *Task*, he never undertook such a publication.[20] After his 1782 *Poems*, Cowper came to identify himself as a poet and felt little compunction about publishing his name as author, but

he did not establish authorship as his defining vocation nor, apart from the Homer translation, attempt to assert literary copyright over his writings.[21] He felt thoroughly comfortable in commercial print culture, but did not define his identity primarily in its terms.

Educated in the prosperous middle-class profession of the law, Cowper's identity did not depend on separating himself from print culture, and he was an avid consumer of print throughout his lifetime. Cowper was an especially frequent and unapologetic reader of newspapers and magazines, as Julie Ellison details in her essay on "News, Blues, and Cowper's Busy World."[22] Newspapers helped Cowper stay connected to the public world after his mental breakdown, while at the same time retaining a convenient distance from that public. Through his assiduous newspaper reading, he participated in the provincial network of print culture that grew out from the metropolis during the eighteenth century.[23] Book IV of *The Task* demonstrates that Cowper read the advertisements with as much interest and pleasure as the news (IV, 76–87). Ellison calls attention to Cowper's seeming "pleasure in the exhibitionism of the market" in this passage, and points out that poetry for Cowper seemed to fulfill a function similar to other luxury items advertised in the papers, which also frequently advertised books.[24] Print culture was thus a kind of habitual medium for Cowper, and publishing his poems in newspapers, magazines, and books established him in a relationship with the larger, public world similar to the relationship he established in his reading. In the role of author as well as reader, Cowper could connect with the public through print culture without physically needing to come out into public, suiting his personal temperament and post-breakdown situation perfectly.

Cowper's relationship to poetry did change significantly when he began his Homer translation in 1787. In the tradition of the gentleman poet, Cowper had given the copyrights for his earlier two volumes to his publisher Joseph Johnson gratis, without further considerations, and he received no financial rewards (though he also took no risks) from their prodigious sales, apart from Johnson's generous and apparently spontaneous decision to assign all profits from the fifth edition of the collected *Poems* to Cowper in 1793.[25] In embarking on the Homer translation, however, Cowper changed his approach, seeking not only critical acclaim but also financial remuneration.[26] Although Cowper had a general arrangement with Johnson when he undertook the translation, by which he initially hoped to net around £1000 (2:434, 437), it is clear that, unlike Pope, he made no specific contract, for a squabble broke forth about the exact terms of the agreement when it came time to print in 1791. Rejecting Johnson's first offer of a clean £1000 for copyright at that time, Cowper insisted on keeping copyright for subsequent editions, at

which point Johnson, no doubt recognizing how much he had already gained as Cowper's publisher, quickly and generously gave in.[27]

Cowper's squabbling with Johnson, in the attempt to maximize his financial gains from the volume, may also represent another aspect of his attempt to imitate and rival Pope, who by this time had become Cowper's general literary rival and with whom Cowper specifically and sometimes obsessively vied in undertaking the Homer translation.[28] Cowper's pursuit of the somewhat obsolete form of subscription publishing, urged over Johnson's initial misgivings, consciously rivaled Pope; and like Pope, he pressed his subscription campaign vigorously through his various friends, as his letters indicates. In his zeal, Cowper even wrote to his Evangelical preceptor Newton, urging him to recollect whether "among your numerous connexions it is possible that you may know some who would sufficiently interest themselves in such a work to be not unwilling to subscribe to it," and if so discreetly asking him to urge the suit (2:411–12). Cowper's friends worked for him in various circles; proposals and lists of subscribers were printed; and in the end, following the suggestion of his second cousin John Johnson, he even went to the extent of having an advertising board set up in the window of "Meryl's the bookseller" in Cambridge, which he writes proved "in the event, much to my emolument" (3:473). All told Cowper's efforts netted 597 copies from 498 subscribers, 175 of which were printed on fine paper: a number of subscribers almost equaling Pope's, as he proudly wrote to Samuel Rose (3:487–48).[29]

A comparison with Pope's Homer subscriptions, however, reveals both the different social and economic conditions in which Cowper operated as a poet and his different attitudes and relationship to poetry. Pope had achieved 575 subscribers for the *Iliad* and 610 for the *Odyssey*, representing a broad and inclusive cross-section of the English cultural elite, including an impressive array of aristocrats and members of the House of Commons. His subscribers' copies were printed on fine-paper quarto editions with special designs for a guinea per volume, for each of the six volumes of the *Iliad* and five volumes of the *Odyssey*, while his publisher Lintot sold the translations on the market in folio with normal paper and without the designs for the same price. On the basis of his subscription list and his shrewdly negotiated contracts with Lintot, Pope netted around £5,000 per translation, dwarfing the profits realized by his publisher and achieving not only a social and poetic but also a financial triumph.[30]

Cowper on the other hand asked only two guineas from his subscribers for plain paper editions of the entire translation (three guineas for fine paper), printed in two large quarto volumes.[31] The lower price and smaller format, together with the lower number of subscribers and their lesser prestige, indicates

Cowper's lesser status within British culture. No poet since Pope had come anywhere near matching either Pope's elite connections or his overall poetic reputation. Both Cowper's lower subscription price and his willingness to set up an advertising board in a bookseller's window, moreover, indicate that Cowper was operating in a very different literary economy, aiming his subscription not so much towards the Renaissance tradition of elite patronage, but towards the large middle-class public which now made up the bulk of the print-buying audience and whose response played an increasingly important role in establishing literary reputation. Cowper did attempt to canvas an elite audience as well through his influential Westminster friends and old Temple connections, with many of whom he now attempted to renew old ties, but the simple reality was that such an audience had been superseded by the general print-buying public as the final arbiter of literary reputation. By Cowper's time, the response of the literary reviewers mattered more than the names on the subscription list.[32] Poetry remained a relatively elite genre in terms of price, audience, and decorum, but the critical authority and cultural power of the elite had waned, and by the 1780s the balance of literary power had shifted decisively. Johnson's 1779–81 *Lives of the Poets*, sponsored by a powerful consortium of booksellers, had been directed towards the general book-buying public, and Cowper's belated use of the subscription list in rivalry with Pope had to be directed primarily towards that same public. Cowper's conscious attempt to rival Pope in his subscription campaign thus reveals the historical gap between them, in the changed socioeconomic situation which Cowper confronted as an author.

A March 1791 letter to Samuel Rose also reveals this historical divide from another perspective. In it Cowper writes, after urging his rivalry with Pope in the number of subscriptions collected, that he has estimated "that my two volumes, at the price of three guineas [for fine paper editions], will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them that have cost me the labour of hours, and none that have not cost me some labour" (3:488). Even in relation to his subscribers, Cowper still thinks in terms of "labour" and price per line, as if he is producing a commodity for sale. Despite his skillful manipulation of the market, such a calculation would have been anathema to Pope, who continued to mystify his labor, not to mention that of his unacknowledged co-translators, Fenton and Broome, by naturalizing his role as a poet as part of a fixed social and cosmic hierarchy. It was the poet's duty in this hierarchy to write and the patron's to patronize, but such patronage could not be reduced, even conceptually, to an economic transaction of price per line. Cowper did not explicitly embrace poetry as a profession, but even when he wrote for subscription patronage he could think of his writing in terms of wage labor and commodity prices, as he

imagines himself writing not to an intimate circle of friends, patrons, and elites, but to an unknown "purchaser."

Cowper's correspondence and publication history thus shows him writing comfortably within the contexts of commercial print culture, with an increasing interest in copyright and literary profits, but without ever defining his identity primarily as a poet in a professional sense. This relationship to poetry as a gentlemanly avocation is in part a function of Cowper's personal situation. Materially comfortable, mainly through the generosity of family and friends, Cowper did not need to earn money or support himself through his writing, as did other contemporary writers such as Johnson and Goldsmith.[33] He could play the role of country "gentleman," and so did not need to define his identity through his writing. Beginning in 1781 Cowper consciously wrote to an unknown print market public, but he never established his own identity in relationship to that public. Cowper's self-representation and the model of self in his poetry emerge out of this situation.

THE POET IN *THE TASK*

James King calls the *Task*, Cowper's defining long poem, the "first significant autobiographical poem in the English language"—that is, the first long poem to make its own author and his or her personal experience its central subject and organizing formal principle.[34] In their introduction to volume two of *Cowper's Poetry*, John Baird and Charles Ryskamp give a more precise account of this significance:

> Whereas many earlier poets had written about themselves in such a way that the speaker of the poem overlaps in some degree with the historical personality of the author, Cowper was the first to write a long poem which depends entirely upon the mental experience of the speaker, while asserting that the speaker is wholly one with the historical personality of the author.[35]

Cowper's narrative voice, as many critics have remarked, creates this effect by seeming to speak to the reader intimately out of the immediate experience of the poet, by taking as its subject Cowper's own rural surroundings and occupations, and by depicting the landscape from the perspective of the individual speaker as he moves through it. Even Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and other *Imitations of Horace*, although they focus on the author's identity and abound in the day-to-day details of the author's life, fail to provide this sense of the poet speaking directly out of his own consciousness and experience. Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot* is organized in terms of rhetorical self-presentation; but Cowper's *Task*, moving from subject to subject with the mental logic of

free association and inviting the reader to share the individual perspective of the poet as he moves through his walks, depends on the poet's self not only as its theme, but also as its formal organizing principle. The poet's personal experience, not just the terms of his identity, has become fundamentally central to the poem.

In making the author central in this way, the *Task* offers an uprecedented sense of an actual person "behind" the verse, to whom the reader's attention is directed as if through a semi-transparent medium. This formal invitation to the reader to identify with the "real" William Cowper, together with the sensational nature of Cowper's psychic struggles with depression and repeated bouts of mental illness, have led to a tradition of interpreting Cowper's poetry biographically, perhaps more so than any other English poet of comparable stature.[36] Thus Morris Golden writes that "William Cowper is one of those poets who force biographical examination upon the reader," a claim which Norman Nicholson advances in the stronger version that "we never read [Cowper's poetry] just for what it has to say or even just for what it *is*: we read it always with at least part of our attention on the poet rather than on the poem."[37] Indeed, critical commentary on Cowper tends to take the form of biographies: no less than 30 biographies appeared during the nineteenth century, a list to which the twentieth century continues to add, disproportionately dominating the field of Cowper studies.[38]

Despite the unprecedentedly personal nature of the *Task*, however, the poem is not "confessional" in the modern sense, in that it does not invite us into the inner world of the poet's psyche or his mental struggles. Instead, it only glances at his depression obliquely at various points, most famously and extensively in the "Stricken Deer" passage (III, 108–23).[39] Even in this passage, however, the exact nature of Cowper's affliction (the "arrows") is not specified. The *Task* invites us to experience the landscape from the perspective of Cowper's individual consciousness, but it does not direct us inside that consciousness, nor does it break decorum by offering the poet's private sufferings to public view. Similarly, although the poem invites the reader to share in Cowper's daily routines and ruminations, it does not, despite occasional oblique references, offer any concerted account of the poet's personal history.

In fact, the *Task* offers no concerted account of anything. Cowper himself writes of his "wandering muse" (III, 693) and consistently represents the poem with the metaphor of the walk in which he has "rambled wide" (III, 1–20), returning to this metaphor to conclude at the end of book six:

> It shall not grieve me, then, that once when called
> To dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse,

> I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair
> With that light task, but soon to please her more
> Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little please,
> Let fall th' unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit.
> Roved far and gather'd much. (VI, 1006–12)

In this passage Cowper alludes to the opening "task" from which the poem sprang, Lady Austen's suggestion that he write a poem in blank verse on the subject of the sofa. The narrative of this poetic genesis is worth quoting in full from the opening "Advertisement," both because it sheds important light on the relationship between the poem and the authorial self and because it self-consciously comments on the digressive nature of the poem:

> The history of the following production is briefly this. A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.[40]

Already the Advertisement makes clear that the poem will not be organized in terms of subject matter or by a central thread of narrative, but by the associations of the poet's own mind, invoking the Lockian association of ideas which had become such a celebrated psychological principle over the course of the eighteenth century. The very fact that Cowper sees fit to offer a "history of the following production," calling attention to himself as he pursues the "train of thought" to which his "situation" and unique individual "turn of mind" have led him, foregrounds the author's own personal consciousness as central to the poem's production, poetic form, and significance. As "*The Task*," the poem is even named by the poet's act of producing it—a name which Cowper justifies at length in a Dec. 1784 letter to Newton (2:309). In this sense, even though Cowper writes on a succession of various topics, the poem's central theme is the author himself and his act of poetic production.

It is interesting to compare this autobiographical "Advertisement" with the basically impersonal "Arguments" which precede each of the poem's six books. A brief quotation from the first of these Arguments indicates the rambling logic of free association that holds the poem's diverse excursions together:

> Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa.—a School-boy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The scene described.—Rural sounds

> as well as sights delightful.—Another walk.—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude, corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove and the view from it [. . .].[41]

The rhetorical form of this "Argument" is revealing, especially in comparison with the arguments which appear as a standard feature of other lengthy eighteenth-century poems, such as those of Alexander Pope. Whereas Pope's "Arguments" in the *Essay on Man*, the *Moral Essays*, and the *Dunciad* read like outlines of a logical presentation, often citing verses parenthetically to give the impression that the poems themselves are structured by this underlying logic, Cowper's "Arguments" ramble from subject to subject with often only the vaguest thread of connection, a thread whose binding principle does not remain constant but changes with each successive transition. The textual units of these "Arguments," each punctuated by a distinct period, are both connected to and divided from the others by intervening dashes, indicating that each one can stand alone independent of the overall structure of the book and the poem: almost like a table of contents of the various articles in a magazine. The only thing that holds them all together is the restless thread of the poet's own mind.

Yet even as they reveal the loose, free-associational connections of the poem, Cowper's "Arguments" also reveal his concern to retain a neo-Classical "objectivity" which balances the first-person subjectivity throughout the poem. Though the first-person pronoun appears often in the text of the poem, the "Arguments" are written almost entirely in the objective third person. This avoidance of full subjectivity manifests itself also in the above-quoted initial "Advertisement," which though it gives a narrative of the poem's production by its author, does so in the third-person "he" rather than the first-person "I" which Romantics such as Wordsworth would generally adopt in their prose. The poem itself, like the Moral Satires of Cowper's 1782 *Poems*, engages in this same practice by displacing extended narratives of personal life history onto a third-person "he," rather than representing the author directly in the first person.[42] In this way, as in his frequent recurrence throughout *The Task* to the standard Horatian rhetoric of the *beatus vir* ("Blessed he" or "happy the man"), Cowper tempers his unprecedented authorial subjectivity with more traditional neo-Classical modes of poetic voice and decorum.

This loose combination of first- and third-person voices, together with the poem's rambling through a variety of topics and poetic genres—from the georgic and loco-descriptive to the mock-heroic and satiric—creates a sense of disunity which critics have continually pointed out since the poem's initial

appearance in 1785.[43] True to its opening Advertisement, the poem seems not to be organized by any specific purpose or unifying thematic or formal structure, and there is no obvious reason why the number of books should not be halved, or doubled. Instead, the *Task* allows for a rambling topical commentary on whatever comes to the author's attention, following the logic of mental free association or conversation rather than that of any specified genre or literary form. Like *Tristram Shandy*, the poem is structured in terms of individual mental processes in a way which is both open-ended and accretive. The self in *The Task* is similarly open and porous, without a clear sense of autonomy or boundary: like the poem itself, it exists without clear direction, as the endlessly proliferating play of consciousness.[44]

It is useful to compare the *Task* in this regard with another more famous personal narrative for which it provided a precedent, Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[45] Wordsworth's autobiographical narrative is directed throughout by a teleological sense of the poet's progress, from his birth as a "favored child" of nature to his full maturity as a poet, culminating in the self-validation of his imaginative powers in his vision upon Mt. Snowdon. In short, *The Prelude* is a narrative not only of the poet's life, but of his teleological maturation into his vocation as "Poet," which provides its primary organizing theme. Cowper's *Task*, in contrast, directs itself towards no specific goal, personal or otherwise, and stakes out no broad social purpose for either itself or its author. The poem is autobiographical in the sense that it is written out of the poet's own experience, but it does not narrate the poet's life history and does not progress towards any particular end or telos which would provide an underlying sense of structure or identity. The poem has a distinct starting point, in the assignment of the originating "task" and the opening eulogy of the sofa, but it has no specific narrative destination or purpose to give it unity and could just as easily go on forever with continued walks, commentary, and reflection. In short, the *Prelude* centers on the construction of its author's own identity, which provides a formal principle of unity, and the autonomous self in the *Prelude* emerges specifically as an authorial self. *The Task*, on the other hand, does not construct Cowper's identity specifically as an author, or in any other particular form. The telos of Wordsworth's poem is self, defined through authorship, but for Cowper the self is only an endlessly proliferating occasion.[46]

These different models of self in the poems are also a function of the poets' different senses of poetic vocation and social role. Whereas Wordsworth constructed his identity in prophetic terms, Cowper's sense of himself as a poet remained essentially accidental and occasional, taking poetry as one form of leisure activity among others rather than as centrally constitutive of his identity, and he does not identify any clear social role for himself as a poet. By

Cowper's time many of the traditional genres of poetry had been outmoded. Pastoral, for instance, seemed increasingly a flowery evasion, and at several times in *The Task* he comments on the ineffectiveness of satire (see for instance II, 311–27 and III, 21–26). Cowper's self fills this vacuum by giving him an ongoing occasion, but unlike Wordsworth's self in *The Prelude* and other poems, it does not become the primary subject matter of the poem.

In keeping with this lack of vocational commitment to poetry, Cowper was customarily self-deprecating about his own role and identity as a poet. He wrote in 1779 to William Unwin, as he began to compose verse other than hymns again after a long hiatus, that "I have no more Right to the Name of a Poet, than a Maker of Mousetraps has to That of an Engineer" (1:290). Two years later, he wrote to Joseph Hill that "When I can find no other Occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in Rhime" (1:470). By the time he composed *The Task*, Cowper had definitely come to think of himself as a poet, but even in *The Task* he still write self-deprecatingly "when a poet, or when one like me" (VI, 751), as if he is not truly a poet. Indeed, this self-deprecation in the *Task* and throughout his poetry seems to be part of a deliberate strategy by Cowper, to keep his claims from obtruding on the reader or calling too much attention to himself, and is linked to his general fear of exposure. As Bill Hutchings writes, "the man we meet in *The Task* is not a poet in any Romantic, bardic or even mildly assertive sense," and Cowper does not write to "come across as self-evidently, still less self-importantly, a poet."[47] Instead, he uses such means as self-contradiction, repetition, mock-heroic deflation, and apology for his poem's digressiveness in order to emphasize the conversational tone of the poem and undercut his own poetic authority. The author of the *Task* writes as a poet, but not in a vocational or professional sense as one uniquely qualified to do so, and not to instruct the reader from a position of superior taste or imagination—a role Wordsworth would later claim. As David Paxman argues, Cowper's authority comes from his "imperfection, sympathy, and fellowship," and his "self-avowed failure" became paradoxically his strongest claim to authority.[48]

Instead of exhorting his reader(s) from a position of poetic authority, Cowper assumes a conversational role and relationship. The poem does not explicitly address the reader, but it does so implicitly throughout, offering a kind of long intimate monologue as if the reader has been invited to accompany Cowper on one of his rural rambles or pull up a chair in the intimacy of his domestic parlor circle.[49] Defined by this intimate conversational tone, the self of the poet remains open to and dependent upon the reader as interlocutor in a way Wordsworth's prophetic and autonomous self of the *Prelude* does not. Also unlike Wordsworth, Cowper is never entirely alone in his poetry.

Even in his walks, he is generally accompanied by another person: not only the reader but also the unnamed Mrs. Unwin, "whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive/ Fast lock'd in mine" (I, 145–46). Even the act of reading is represented as social rather than private, the "book/ Well chosen, and not sullenly perused/ In selfish silence, but imparted oft" (III, 392–94). Unlike Wordsworth, Cowper constructs no specific relationship with his reader. He does not single out the reader for intense one-to-one communication or set himself apart as a poetic "genius," but includes the reader unobtrusively within his already existing domestic circle. For Cowper, as Martin Priestman puts it, this implied presence of the reader acts "as a sympathetic and yet crucial sounding-board for the author's performance, creating a closed circle of special freedom, liberating the author from the conventional demands of public address."[50] Instead of constructing a public role in relation to the reader, in other words, Cowper positions the reader within a conversational intimacy that elides questions of public role and authority altogether.

Within *The Task* itself, Cowper also disclaims authority by repeatedly questioning the effectiveness of satire in particular and poetry in general to effect social change and by delegating such authority instead to others, such as the preacher:

> Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
> It may correct a foible, may chastise
> The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
> Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
> But where are its sublimer trophies found?
> What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd
> By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
> Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.
> Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,
> Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
> That fear no discipline of human hands.
> The pulpit therefore (and I name it, fill'd
> With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
> With what intent I touch the holy thing)
> The pulpit (when the sat'rist has at last,
> Strutting and vap'ring in an empty school,
> Spent all his force and made no proselyte)
> I say the pulpit (in the sober use
> Of its legitimate peculiar pow'rs)
> Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
> The most important and effectual guard,
> Support and ornament of virtue's cause.

> There stands the messenger of the skies. His theme divine,
> His office sacred, his credentials clear. (II, 315–339)

Cowper's emphasis on the preacher's "sacred office" and "clear credentials" here also emphasizes his sense that he lacks such established office and credibility. His renunciation of satire is significant, since it was specifically as a satirist that Pope justified his authority and turn to self-representation in his later poetry. Cowper does engage in a great deal of satire in the poem—this particular passage, for instance, ironically renounces satire only in order to launch into a long satirical denunciation against the corruption of the clergy. He even rises thunderously to the heights of prophecy at times. Cowper never maintains this satirical or prophetic position consistently, however, in part because he establishes no coherent basis for his own poetic authority. David Paxman argues that Cowper "preempts some powers of the pulpit," using his own sense of unworthiness to justify himself as God's medium.[51] Though Cowper does seem to assume this role at times, he is also careful to undercut his own claims. The poet, as opposed to the preacher, has no "clear credentials" and no "sacred office." Even as he prepares to thunder against others, Cowper is careful to erase his own tracks.

In fact, the *Task* works to defuse any claim to authority beginning with its opening "Advertisement," which identifies the poem as started at the "demand" of an unnamed lady and thus allows Cowper to avoid the necessity of claiming specific poetic authority, purpose, or responsibility himself. The poem is described as becoming "a serious affair—a Volume" only by accident, as if without the poet's active agency or intention, so that he need not claim any coherent animating purpose. By placing himself chivalrically under the recognized "authority" of the unnamed lady, Cowper both abrogates his own authority and at the same time maintains independence from more potentially threatening sources of authority, such as his mentor, Newton. The whimsical, mock-heroic tone that persists throughout the poem, punctuated by occasional rises to the heights of satire or prophecy, maintains this same position, consistently and self-consciously undercutting its own seriousness. Cowper's general practice of composing "occasional" poetry, either at the suggestion of others or in response to daily news and events, also allowed him to evade the whole issue of poetic authority, as did the whimsical or mock-heroic mode of much of his verse. In the *Task* Cowper is nostalgic for the lost satirical authority of Pope and his circle, as David Boyd points out, while at the same time deliberately renouncing any claims to such authority.[52]

It is significant in this regard that when Cowper at last undertook a poetic task which would define his identity and reputation as a man of letters,

he did so in a translation rather than an original work, shadowing himself under the authority of Homer. Cowper based his claims to achievement in the Homer translation not on his own personal merit as a poet, but on his ability to translate accurately both the sense and spirit of the original. He expresses his oft-mentioned rivalry with Pope almost exclusively in these terms: not by advancing himself as a greater poet on his own merit, but by claiming to be a better translator, with a tone closer to that of the original. Letter after letter of Cowper's correspondence claims his superiority to Pope in this regard, of which a few here will suffice as examples. Cowper writes for instance to Walter Bagot: "You may say perhaps [. . .] it is well—but do you place yourself on a level with Pope? I answer, or rather *should* answer—By no means. Not as a poet. But as a Translator of Homer if I did not expect and believe that I should even surpass him, why have I meddled with this matter at all" (2:453). Cowper writes more pointedly to John Newton, that "although Pope has given us two pretty poems under Homer's titles, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner" (2:411). Finally, more pointedly still and at much greater length, he writes to Lady Hesketh, justifying his whole poetics in terms of Homer's precedent and authority:

> Now for Pope himself:—I will allow his whole merit. He has written a great deal of very musical and sweet verse in his translation of Homer, but his verse is not universally such; on the contrary, it is often lame, feeble, flat. He has, besides, occasionally a felicity of expression peculiar to himself; but it is a felicity purely modern, and has nothing to do with Homer. Except for the Bible, there never was in the world a book so remarkable for that species of the sublime that owes its very existence to simplicity, as the works of Homer. He is always nervous, natural, plain [. . .] Homer is, on occasions that call for such a style, the easiest and most familiar of all writers: a circumstance that escaped Pope entirely, who takes most religious care that he shall every where strut in buckram [. . .] In short, my dear, there is hardly any thing in the world so unlike another, as Pope's version of Homer to the original [. . .] Pope never entered into the spirit of Homer, [. . .] he never translated him, I had almost said, did not understand him [. . .] Therefore, my beloved cousin [. . .] I have a fair opportunity to acquire honour. (2:424–25)

As all three passages make clear, Cowper shelters himself from direct comparison with Pope by rivaling him primarily in his fidelity as a translator. By affirming Homer's style as "nervous, plain, natural" and calling him "the easiest and most familiar of all writers," however, Cowper also quietly claims Homer's style as similar to his own.

In a 1787 letter to Newton, Cowper describes his inability to write original verse despite all his best efforts to do so:

> I have many kind friends who, like yourself, wish that instead of turning my endeavors to a Translation of Homer, I had proceeded in the way of Original poetry. But I can truly say that it was order'd otherwise; not by me, but by the Providence that governs all my thoughts and directs my intentions as he pleases. It may seem strange but it is true, that after having written a volume, in general, with great ease to myself, I found it impossible to write another page. [. . .] A whole year I waited, and waited in circumstances of mind that made a state of non-employment peculiarly irksome. I long'd for the pen as the only remedy, but I could find no subject. Extreme distress of spirit at last drove me, as if I mistake not, I told you some time since, to lay Homer before me and to translate him for amusement. (3:10)

Homer here also provides him protection in a different sense, as a shield from his depression and mental illness when he is unable to write original verse. Cowper goes on:

> a thousand times it has served to divert my attention in some degree from such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind. Let my friends therefore who wish me some little measure of tranquillity in the performance of the most turbulent voyage that ever Christian mariner made, be contented that having Homer's mountains and forests to windward, I escape under their shelter from many a gust that would almost overset me. (3:11)

The translation of Homer shielded Cowper not only from the storms which threatened to overset his psyche, but also from his sense of lacking poetic authority and his inability to compose original verse—two closely related problems. As in Gray's Welsh and Norse translations and MacPherson's and Chatterton's purported "discoveries," Cowper's most extensive work is undertaken under the aegis of translating another poet, allowing him to speak and advance claims himself by ventriloquizing that poet's authority and voice.

THE POET AS PRODUCER AND CONSUMER

In lieu of creating a vocational identity for himself as a poet, Cowper represents himself in the *Task* as an independent rural gentleman; but unlike Pope and other poets who had retreated to the countryside before him, he constructs this identity in terms of middle-class individual production and consumption. Cowper in *The Task*, as in life, has no landed "estate," and he does

not seek to fulfill any of the traditional social roles of the landed gentry which even Pope, in his pose of independent rural retirement at Twickenham, still peripherally claimed. Instead, Cowper represents himself in *The Task* as securely ensconced in the middle-class world of the individual consumer. Correspondingly, his hospitality is not directed towards the surrounding rural populace, as it might be for the traditional gentry, but to the unknown reader, who is invited to share in his comfortable domestic circle.

One of the defining scenes of the poem comes at the beginning of book four, as the poet represents himself in "The Winter Evening" encircled in a domestic gathering in the parlor, sipping tea and reading the daily newspaper:

> Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
> And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
> Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
> That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
> So let us welcome peaceful evening in. (IV, 36–41)

The understated density of consumer commodities here—shutters, curtains, teapot, sofa—is characteristic of this fourth book particularly and the poem in general, which despite Cowper's repeated prophetic denunciations of "profusion" and "luxury" as the causes of social decline sets the poet comfortably and unapologetically in a middle-class consumer milieu and lifestyle. It is not accidental that the "sofa" reappears here, as it does at several times during the poem, and that this same sofa provides the initial subject of the *Task*: the sofa which in Cowper's mock-heroic historical narrative represents the refinements of civilized life and which here also functions as a fit emblem of middle-class consumer domesticity (I, 8–88). According to the poem, of course, these are sober and civilizing middle-class comforts, as opposed to the excesses of aristocratic culture signaled by "luxury," but the fact that the sofa serves both as an emblem of libertine excess and of Cowper's domestic retirement indicates the fine line between these positions.[53]

Cowper represents himself in this scene not only as a general consumer, but also specifically as a consumer of print, reading the newspaper whose various articles and advertisements provide him with the material for book four's opening expatiations. In 1783–84, while Cowper was writing the *Task*, he subscribed to the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, one of London's leading daily papers, which would have cost 3d. per copy, or about £3 18s by annual subscription—a significant if not prohibitive sum, especially since Cowper also subscribed to the thrice-weekly *General Evening Post*.[54] Cowper's account of the paper's advertisements, which customarily took up more than

1/3 of the single folio sheet on which such papers were printed, indicates the commercial orientation of the press in general and of the *Advertiser* in particular (as its name suggests):

> a wilderness of strange
> But gay confusion, roses for the cheeks
> And lilies for the brows of faded age,
> Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
> Heav'n, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
> Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
> Sermons and city feasts and fav'rite airs,
> Aetherial journies, submarine exploits,
> And Katterfelto with his hair on end
> At this own wonders, wond'ring for his bread. (IV, 78–87)

The obvious gusto with which Cowper catalogs these advertisements, many of them topical references to specific advertisements which the poet himself recently encountered in the newspapers, reveals his ambivalent fascination with this commercial world.[55] As opposed to Pope in the *Dunciad* and Wordsworth's representation of Bartholomew Fair in the *Prelude*, however, Cowper shows no fundamental discomfort with this consumer culture, as he happily surveys the commercial emporium from the convenience and safety of his domestic privacy.

A private poem which Cowper wrote to his cousin Lady Hesketh, thanking her for the many gifts with which she provided him during his years at Weston Underwood, expresses his involvement in the sphere of consumer culture even more directly. This poem, entitled "Benefactions," provides a catalog of sixty-four lines literally stuffed with consumer commodities: a ribbon-tasseled cap, chair, carpets, table, mirror, shelves, books, china, curtains, stoves, range, tub, bedding and beds. Within this catalog Cowper's own books of poetry appear as yet another commodity among others:

> Where flaming in Scarlet and Gold
> *My* poems enchanted I view,
> And hope in due time to behold,
> *My* Iliad and Odyssey too. (29–32, emphasis his).

In this openly self-satisfied celebration of consumerism—albeit a private expression of gratitude to the person who has provided these things as gifts—Cowper reveals just how comfortable he is at taking his place as a poet in a world of commodities. In the final stanza of a revised version of the poem, with the title changed to "Gratitude," he writes:

> Thus compass'd about with the Goods
> And Chattels of leisure and ease
> I indulge my poetical moods
> In many such fancies as these,
> And fancies I fear they will seem—
> Poets' goods are not often so fine,
> The Poets will swear that I dream
> When I sing of the splendor of mine. (49–56)

Nowhere in *The Task* does Cowper quite so openly (if playfully) celebrate his consumer comforts, but this sense of consumer complacency remains always in the background of the poem. Cowper distinguishes himself from other poets in this passage through the richness of his surroundings, while at the same time making it clear that he has no compunctions against seeing his own poetry as a commodity. Supported in his comfortable lifestyle by the gifts of Lady Hesketh and others, he also has none of the professional exigencies of other poets who must earn a living through sale of their writing, and hence can "indulge my poetical moods/ In many such fancies as these."

Cowper's celebration of consumerism in book four of *The Task* is presaged by his description of the "peasant's nest" in the opening book, an isolated rural dwelling which he discovers on one of his walks. This house, "perched upon the green-hill top" with a wide view of the surrounding countryside but "itself unseen" (I, 222, 224), shielded by profuse branches, becomes an emblem of solitary retirement where the poet, far from the sounds of commerce and social intercourse, can "possess/ The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge/ The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure" (I, 234–36). Ultimately, however, Cowper rejects this idealized solitude as too isolated from the comforts of society:

> So farewel [sic] envy of the *peasant's nest.*
> If solitude make scant the means of life,
> Society for me! thou seeming sweet,
> Be still a pleasing object in my view,
> My visit still, but never my abode. (I, 247–51)

Cowper is unwilling to embrace, even in imagination, the rugged individualism of the "bard." He remains a poet of society, seeking solitude in nature for an occasional imaginative vista, but setting his abode solidly among the consumer pleasures of social life.

In another sense, however, the situation of the "peasant's nest," seeing but unseen, is perfectly analogous to Cowper's situation as a consumer of

print culture. In the midst of his imaginative expatiations on reading the newspaper, he writes:

> 'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
> To peep at such a world. To see the stir
> Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd.
> To hear the roar she sends though all her gates
> At a safe distance, where the dying sound
> Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjured ear. (IV, 87–93)

As he depicts himself surveying great national events from the security of his domestic retirement, Cowper participates in that public world from the pleasurable distance of private reading, rather than the discomfort and potential danger of actual public spaces. He does not actually need to sit in the "crowded theatre" sweating and "squeezed/ And bored [as with a drill] with elbow-points through both his sides" (IV, 44–45); or in the gallery of the houses of parliament, like one who "patient stands 'till his feet throb/ And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath/ Of patriots bursting with heroic rage" (IV, 46–48). Instead, he can take part in these public events simply by reading, "while fancy, like the finger of a clock,/ Runs the great circuit, and is still at home" (IV, 118–19). As Patricia Meyer Spacks writes, print culture keeps the world "at exactly the proper distance," allowing Cowper a form of public participation while retaining all the convenience and moral virtue of solitude.[56]

This domestication of public life finds a symbolic corollary in Cowper's use of the eighteenth-century genres of georgic and the hilltop prospect poem. Both these forms, customarily coupled with one another, offer a vision of social unity from the all-inclusive perspective of the poet as he surveys the surrounding landscape, a position Cowper invokes at various times in the *Task*.[57] Thus in book one he presents two hilltop views of the surrounding countryside, offering the traditional vision of rural labor within the contexts of overall social unity (I, 154–76; I, 288–99). Yet as Tim Fulford points out, Cowper in *The Task* revises this tradition of viewing the landscape as representative of landed interests or national unity, seeing instead in that landscape primarily a representation of his own marginal social status or a site for his own imaginative exercise and production.[58]

Although Fulford is certainly right to see these rural landscapes in Cowper's verse as in part a representation of national "division and loss," in which the moral corruption and fragmentation of the cities has spread out to infect the country as well, such a position tells only half the story.[59] For when the prospect view occurs again in the *Task*, it has been shifted from an actual

view of the landscape to a metaphorical view of the social landscape, generated by Cowper's act of reading the newspaper:

> Thus sitting and surveying thus at ease
> The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
> To some secure and more than mortal height,
> That lib'rates and exempts me from them all. (IV, 94–97).

The unity of the nation and political sense of belonging has shifted here from the rural landscape to the sphere of commercial print culture: from the public act of surveying to the private act of reading. Through this act of reading Cowper establishes new models both of society and of individual social participation, reinterpreting the genre of loco-descriptive landscape poetry, which had functioned in the service of the landed interests, in terms of a middle-class print culture. With its reference to the text as "cataracts of declamation," "forests of no-meaning," and "fields of pleasantry," Cowper even describes the newspaper in metaphors of landscape (IV, 73, 74, 76). The social prospect is no longer in the landscape but in print, and the mind of the reader replaces the property of the landed gentry as the center of social production and moral value. In a similar sense, as Patricia Meyer Spacks puts it, Cowper's wanderings through the countryside become equivalent to his wanderings through the pages of the newspaper.[60]

Many critics have commented on Cowper's inability to establish a political ideal or even working model of politics in the *Task* and in his poetry generally, but it is more accurate to say that Cowper replaces a public politics with a political model based on private imaginative acts, especially the act of reading.[61] Thus he writes, after proclaiming his patriotic love of "my country," that

> To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
> Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
> Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
> But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
> Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
> As any thund'rer there. (II, 216–221)

This passage suggests that Cowper's patriotic sensibility, indulged in individual retirement, is legitimately equal (if not superior) to direct political action. For Cowper, the individual imaginative consumerism of reading and the analogous act of "private" writing not only supplements but replaces a life of more active social and political participation. As Spacks has argued in a recent essay on "The Poetry of Sensibility," this link between personal self-consciousness

and political consciousness, individual feeling and social concern, was characteristic of the poetry of sensibility generally during the period, and could be used to support poetic authority and even expressions of political outrage.[62] Cowper has a central place in this tradition, as *The Task* claims that the virtuous individual participates in society not through direct public activity, which inevitably leads to corruption, but through the private discursive acts of reading, writing, and sympathy.

With this shift, society is produced within the newspaper itself and its "folio of four pages [. . .] Which not ev'n Critics criticize" (IV, 50–51), where the entire panorama of national life comes alive through the private act of reading.[63] As he "burn[s] to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,/ And give them voice and utt'rance once again" (IV, 24–25), the mind of the reader actually produces the social order, while at the same time identifying himself with that order. The arrival of the anxiously awaited post at the beginning of book four takes on added significance in this sense, as the necessary medium for this socially constitutive act. Cowper in his letters similarly comments on participating in national political life by reading the paper: "Suppose not however that I am perfectly an unconcerned Spectator, or that I take no interest at all in the affairs of my country. Far from it—I read the News [. . .]" (2:12).[64] Reading, in this sense, becomes not only a private entertainment but a virtuous public service.

In contrast to this private act of reading, *The Task* identifies more immediate forms of public association as a threat to virtue:

> man associated and leagued with man
> By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
> For interest-sake, or swarming into clans
> Beneath one head for purposes of war,
> Like flow'rs selected from the rest, and bound
> And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
> Fades rapidly, and by compression marred
> Contracts defilement not to be endured.
> Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues,
> And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
> In all their private functions, once combined
> Become a loathsome body, only fit
> For dissolution, hurtful to the main. (IV, 663–675)

Taking a position opposite that of Augustan civic humanism, in which the individual can only practice virtue through direct public participation, Cowper claims that virtue can only be practiced in private life. The metaphor of the

uprooted flowers, which bound together become noisome as weeds, expresses this new political ideal in terms of a well-ordered domestic garden: a metaphor which Cowper develops more fully as a utopian vision in book three.[65] Cowper does not advocate radical individualism or autonomy, since he initiates his metaphor with the claim that "Man in society is like a flow'r/ Blown in his native bed" (IV, 659–60), but "society" here refers more to private and the domestic association than to more public and overtly political activity. The passage's sense is that each individual, like a flower, must grow in his or her own "proper" place, not gathered together in public leagues or cities, but healthily rooted in the private gardens of rural domesticity. In short, individuals in a virtuous society must remain physically separate from one another, connected only through print culture and the private acts of writing and reading.

This model of social participation through reading must have appealed particularly to middle-class readers, barred like Cowper from more direct forms of political franchise but making up the increasingly powerful locus of "public opinion." Cowper's invitation to participate virtuously in a national society through the act of private reading—and through reading this poem in particular—explains much of *The Task*'s overwhelming popularity among these middle-class readers. Readers of *The Task* must have felt themselves invited, much like readers of Gray's *Elegy*, to identify with the poem's appealing author, and at the same time allowed entry into a new, recognizably middle-class model of society through their act of reading. Looking out through the "loopholes of retreat" offered by print culture, the Englishman's home truly becomes his castle, yet at the same time the site of his participation in a national civil society.

Cowper represents himself in the *Task* not only as a consumer, however, but also as a producer, and specifically as a producer of poetry. The most developed account of the poet's labor comes in Cowper's description of rural gardening, especially his long set of georgic instructions for raising winter cucumbers. This act of cucumber-growing, written in a customary mock-heroic, self-deflating style, becomes emblematic of Cowper's labor of writing the poem itself.[66] In this way, it offers a metaphorical account of poetic production that allows Cowper to explore the whole issue of poetry's status as a consumer commodity.

One would not expect Cowper to describe growing cucumbers for leisure in his private garden in terms of the market or its consumers, but he begins his account of cucumber-raising by stressing such economic terms:

> To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd
> So grateful to the palate, and when rare

> So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
> Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
> That toiling ages have but just matured. (III, 446–50)

This account of progressive refinement in raising cucumbers, "an art/ That toiling ages have just matured," corresponds to standard eighteenth-century accounts of the progressive refinement of both poetry and civilization, spelled out more fully in the poem's opening mock-heroic account of the development of the sofa. More surprisingly, though, Cowper here identifies the private value of raising cucumbers specifically with scarcity and demand in the marketplace. Such an equation suggests an analogy between raising cucumbers and the equally private art of writing poetry, which the conclusion of the verse paragraph makes explicit, mock-heroically equating the "taste" or "critic appetite" of readers and reviewers with the physical appetite of those who consume Cowper's cucumbers:

> Pardon then
> Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!
> Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose pow'rs
> Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
> Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
> Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
> A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce. (III, 456–62)

Here again Cowper foregrounds issues of cost and scarcity borrowed from the discourse of the marketplace, implying that the value of poetry also depends on its "scarcity" or originality.

After an extended description of the art of producing winter cucumbers, Cowper again returns to issue of labor, price, and consumption at the end of the passage:

> Grudge not ye rich (since luxury must have
> His dainties, and the world's more num'rous half
> Lives by contriving delicates for you)
> Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
> The vigilance, the labor and the skill
> That day and night are exercised, and hang
> Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
> That ye may garnish your profuse regales
> With summer fruits brought forth by winter suns
> [. . .] It were long,
> Too long to tell th' expedients and the shifts

> Which he that fights a season so severe
> Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
> And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and the wise
> Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
> Cold as its theme, and like its theme, the fruit
> Of too much labor, worthless when produced. (III, 544–52, 558–65)

Repeating the terms of the opening lines, these lines again equate the winter cucumbers as luxury items with poetry, link value to economic cost and scarcity, and introduce the theme of criticism by invoking the judgement of "the learn'd and the wise." The imputation that consumers "little know the cares,/ The vigilance, the labor and the skill" of raising cucumbers, in this respect, echoes the poem's earlier description of the

> pleasure in poetic pains
> Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
> Th' expedients and inventions multiform
> To which the mind resorts, in chace [sic] of terms
> Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,
> T' arrest the fleeing images that fill
> The mirror and the mind, and hold them fast. (II, 285–91).

The poem's readers and critics cannot recognize the "labor and the skill it cost,/ And occupations of the poet's mind/ So pleasing" (III, 297–99). Instead,

> Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
> Aware of nothing arduous in a task
> They never undertook, they little note
> His dangers or escapes, and haply find
> There least amusement where he found the most. (III, 306–10).

This analogy between growing winter cucumbers and writing poetry is supported by the poem's setting the final three books in winter, the time when Cowper often described himself to friends as writing most.[67]

The strangely detailed account of raising winter cucumbers thus reveals itself as an indirect commentary on Cowper's own poetic composition, within the contexts of commercial print culture. Disguised in a heavy mock-heroic which has made critics go so far as to dismiss the passage as a "joke,"[68] Cowper can explore the relation of his poetic labor to the marketplace and audience here more explicitly than he does anywhere else in the poem. In his description of the art of growing winter cucumbers as producing a luxury for

the wealthy, valuable mainly for its rarity and expensiveness and otherwise "food for the vulgar merely," Cowper makes an indirect commentary on the social and commercial value of his own poetry. Unlike "the world's more num'rous half," Cowper does not earn a living by creating this luxury commodity for the rich, since he does not depend upon his poetry professionally, but he does measure its value here in explicitly commercial terms.

Even as it registers the commercial contexts of the print market, this mock-heroic equation between writing poetry and raising cucumbers allows Cowper to represent his poetic labor as an avocation rather than a vocation, in customarily self-deprecating terms. He is a humble poet, with a humble theme and no pretensions to strong poetic authority: "one meaner far," as he describes in the passage, than the "Mantuan bard" Virgil or the "Grecian" Homer, who respectively eulogized gnats and recorded the battle of the frogs and the mice, or even John "Phillips," who celebrated the "Splendid Shilling" (II, 452–58). By invoking Virgil and Homer, of course, Cowper makes it clear that his literary ambitions are in fact far from humble, but he manages to do so in a way that simultaneously both advances and deflates his own authority.

Although he frames the passage in terms of the commercial market, however, Cowper claims to write poetry for the same reason he grows winter cucumbers, primarily for his own individual exercise and benefit. Though both activities ultimately create a commodity for consumption, both are important to Cowper primarily because they allow him to exercise his own active virtue. The print market and its readers are acknowledged in the appeal to "critic appetite," but they are peripheral rather than central to Cowper's activity, just as they remain peripheral to his avocational sense of himself as a poet. Instead, it is primarily Cowper who benefits from the "vigilance, the labor, and the skill/ That day and night are exercised" (III, 548–49), and which consumers "little know" or recognize (III, 547). Cowper's poetic production is analogous in this respect to his vigorous walking, which he also represents in the poem as a form of labor, but whose primary purpose is to exercise and benefit the walker himself; and to his gardening, in which he engages not to raise food or make money, but for virtuous exercise of his own mind and body.

Turning inwards in this way, the poet's main concern and main justification for writing becomes self-cultivation. In a crucial passage worth quoting at length, Cowper expresses this ideal of self-cultivation in a series of terms invoking labor and productivity:

> How various his *employments*, whom the world
> Calls *idle*, and who justly in return

> Esteems that *busy* world an *idler* too!
> Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
> Delightful *industry* enjoyed at home,
> And nature in her cultivated trim
> Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad—
> Can he want *occupation* who has these?
> Will he be *idle* who has much t' enjoy?
> Me therefore, *studious* of *laborious* ease,
> Not *slothful*, happy to deceive the time
> Not *waste* it; and aware that human life
> Is but a *loan* to be *repaid* with use,
> When he shall call his *debtors* to account,
> From whom are all our blessings, *bus'ness* finds
> Ev'n here. While *sedulous* I seek *t'improve*,
> At least neglect not, or leave *unemploy'd*
> The mind he gave me; driving it, though *slack*
> Too oft, too much impeded in its *work*
> By causes not to be divulged in vain,
> To its just point the *service* of mankind.
> He that attends to his interior self,
> That has a heart and keeps it; has a mind
> That hungers and supplies it; and who seeks
> A social, not a dissipated life,
> Has *business*. Feels himself engaged t' atchieve [sic]
> No unimportant, though a silent *task*. (III, 352–78, emphases mine)

This passage is full of work- and vocation-related words, yet it makes a subtle pivot from work directed outwards, to the "service of mankind," to an inward-directed labor that cultivates primarily the "interior self" and a "business" that feeds primarily only the poet's own "hungry" mind. In this way Cowper casts Milton's parable of the poetic talents, and the Protestant work ethic in general, as the internalized labor of self-improvement. In presenting Cowper's writing in terms of labor, however, the passage equates it with the "laborious ease" of the gentleman rather than the more serious, identity-defining labor of the professional.

Cowper offers his long catalog of labor-related words in the above-quoted passage to distinguish himself from the "idle" and to characterize his poetic and other private "tasks" as productive. Yet in so doing, he merely evades the problem of poetry's social usefulness, opening a dangerous discrepancy between poetry's value to the writer and its potentially enervating effects on the reader or consumer. Poetic commodities in this sense not only have no direct utility, they can actually damage the reader's virtue as part of the gen-

eral corrupting "profusion" or luxury which Cowper satirizes throughout the poem. Cowper criticizes the "pamper'd appetite obscene" which produces the "gouty limb" (I, 104, 107), but because he represents poetry primarily as a luxury commodity for the commercial market, his own poetry lies potentially open to the same objection that he makes against other luxury commodities. Late eighteenth century poets' anxiety over the social usefulness of poetry takes the specific form here of anxiety over the possibly negative effects of the poetic commodity on its consumers.

Poetic decorum demands that if Cowper is to offer his writings to the public, he must serve some public purpose and not merely write about himself—as Cowper himself says in a letter to William Unwin, "I can write nothing without aiming at least at usefullness" (2:284)—but *The Task* does not establish any convincing account of such a purpose. Retiring both from public life and from an authoritative public voice, Cowper confines his satiric "remarks that gall so many, to the few/ My partners in retreat" (III, 37–38). The poem depends on the imagined presence of the reader within this domestic circle to sustain its conversational voice, but in so doing fails to establish any coherent justification of the author-to-reader relationship beyond that of good conversation and the reader's general "amusement" (II, 311). Just as he does not establish his own poetic identity, authority, or purpose, Cowper also does not establish an active or specific role for his readers. He is a fellow conversationalist, talking politics over a cup of tea in the parlor; and his satire, without assuming the burden of authority or public responsibility, remains the venting of a parlor prophet.

As a result, Cowper ends up justifying his public role not in positive but in negative terms: as the "author of no mischief and some good" who seeks "his proper happiness by means/ That may advance, and cannot hinder thine." He claims that he is no "incumbrance on the state,/ Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none," because of his private acts of charity, and because "he may boast what few that win it [public praise] can,/ That if his country stand not by his skill,/ At least his follies have not wrought her fall" (VI, 953–55, 958, 974–76). Cowper justifies his poetry by this same principle, that it does no mischief, interferes with no one, and may at least potentially result in good, though he remains skeptical of his ability to influence others to virtue. This stance of private virtue is clearly adversarial against the busy public world, but it offers only a very conditional self-justification and provides no coherent role for his readers or meaningful relationship between the poet and his public. Though Cowper advances the model of public participation through private reading and self-cultivation, *The Task* leaves it unclear how it will enable such participation. Ultimately, the largest social claim he

can make for the poem is that its satire is "wholesome, well-digested," and its religious effusions are "grateful [. . .]/ To palates that can taste immortal truth" (VI, 1014–15).

Cowper can evade these issues of social usefulness partly because he does not need to embrace poetry as a vocation, and so can write and maintain the poetic voice of a retired country gentleman. In this role as a gentleman, Cowper holds himself aloof from "popular applause" (II, 481–98). He satirizes the seductions of such acclaim both for the writer and for the statesman, whose chariot he describes as drawn by the novelty-drunk masses (VI, 694–715), while claiming in contrast that he will not address himself "to the pursuit/ Of honors or emolument or fame" (IV, 784–85). In distancing himself from the potential rewards of writing, Cowper also affirms his disinterested gentlemanly status. He distinguishes his skillful labor in pruning fruit trees and growing cucumbers from the "servile employ" of "lubbard labor" (III, 400, 406), just as he distinguishes his poetic production from the hacks who need to earn a living through their writing. Though in one sense Cowper had no anxiety about his poems appearing as commodities in the print market, in another sense he showed little interest until the Homer translation in the financial rewards of writing, as if to do so would indicate his vulgarity. At the same time, despite his inviting conversational tone, Cowper pays only peripheral attention to his relationship with his audience, partly because as a gentleman poet this relationship does not fundamentally define his identity.

Cowper accepts poetry as a commodity, but only as a kind of necessary side-effect of his private self-cultivation through writing. From this position, Cowper no longer operates within the traditional paradigm of social georgic or satire, in which the poet claims to speak in a public voice for all of society. Instead, he introduces the authorial self in *The Task* in a way that largely avoids those issues that had become so problematic for late-eighteenth-century poets: what the poet should write about, to whom, on what authority, and for what purpose. Though he makes himself formally and thematically central to *The Task*, Cowper's lack of social or poetic purpose cannot explicitly justify this self as the foundation of the poem—a dilemma he escapes in the end by addressing himself and his poem ultimately not to humans but to God:

> But all is in his hand whose praise I seek.
> In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
> If he regard not, though divine the theme.
> 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
> And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre
> To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart,

> Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
> Whose approbation—prosper even mine. (VI, 1017–24)

In this evangelical move, Cowper shifts the ultimate justification of his poetry away from the human public, introducing individual sincerity before God as the ultimate purpose and value of all poetry. Before this tribunal, all secular problems of authority and poetic identity conveniently disappear.

In evading issues of poetic identity, audience, and authority in this way, Cowper opens a productive space for poetic expatiation; yet as Patricia Meyer Spacks argues, in so doing he both reveals and conceals himself at the same time.[69] The narrative voice slides from passage to passage with the easy logic of free association, never theorizing its exact relation to the reader or turning back upon itself to define the author's own purpose or identity too closely.

COWPER AND THE EMERGING SELF

By making the authorial self and its act of poetic production central to the form of *The Task*, Cowper moves towards an author-centered poetics; yet he never defines his own identity in a vocational or professional sense as an author. Instead, the poet's self inhabits the poem as a kind of absent center: the formal principle holding the poem together, but without specific content or identity, amorphous and unboundaried. Cowper's poetic self, like so many other late-eighteenth-century selves, thus remains shifting and porous, never fully constructing its own identity. Wordsworth would compensate for the instability of poetic identity by making himself and his vocational self-authorization central to a new poetics. Cowper's authorial self emerges as an evasion of—rather than a solution to—these questions of audience and authority.

As Vincent Newey writes, Cowper's poetry expresses an "increase of authorial self-consciousness linked to consciousness of social and cultural dissolution"[70]—a recentering of form, meaning, and identity on the individual poet to compensate for the felt dissolution of poetry's old social contexts and genres. Like many other mid to late eighteenth-century poets, Cowper felt a sense of the old structures of poetic identity, authority, and relationship on the verge of collapsing, without a corresponding sense of new poetic structures emerging to take their place. In response to this feeling of impending dissolution, Newey argues, Cowper's poetry constructs a "deepening centrality of the consciousness and resources of the individual," but an individuality which is not yet able to provide him with a sense of grounds or foundation.[71] Facing both these general social and authorial pressures and a particular sense of being singled out as an individual by God, Cowper privatizes poetic form and meaning, centering it on his own personal experience,

but he does not establish the autonomous self or poetic identity as a ground on which this privatized voice can be based. In short, Cowper's poetic self has no coherent category of identity.

Reflecting this sense of groundlessness, it is appropriate that Cowper so often uses the sea in his poetry to express his feeling of being overwhelmed by personal despair, and that his now most famous poem, "The Castaway," centers upon this metaphor.[72] In another poem, "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture," Cowper writes of himself

> Always from port withheld, always distress'd,
> Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
> Sails ript, seams opening wide and compass lost,
> And day by day some current's thwarting force
> Sets me more distant from the pros'prous course. (100–5)

Here he is beset, like the Ancient Mariner, with storms that drive him from his intended course, disable his ship, and leave him a powerless drifter on an uncharted ocean; but unlike the Mariner, no grace of individual imagination intervenes to save him or allows him to construct a new identity for himself and return to society. He remains rudderless and alone, tossed upon the currents without hope of land.

In "The Castaway," Cowper intensifies this terrible sense of loneliness and powerlessness by identifying himself with a man washed overboard into the ocean itself. As the ship, patriotically associated with "Albion" (9) [England] and representing the collective ship of state, sails away out of necessity before the storm, the mariner is left in the ocean "self-upheld" (38), in a terrifying metaphor for the self's attempt to sustain its identity and psychic functioning without grounds or connection. The identification between poet and mariner has been suggested from the outset, but the final lines draw out its implications in all their experiential terror:

> No voice divine the storm allay'd,
> No light propitious shone,
> When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
> We perish'd, each, alone;
> But I, beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he. (61–66)

This metaphor is made all the more terrible by the poet's failed attempts at identification, both with the metaphorical "shipmates" who are leaving him behind and with the stranded mariner himself. Cowper as poet attempts to

identify himself with this mariner in horrified sympathy, just as the captain's narrative in the log book is "wet with Anson's tear" (52). But the sympathetic connection fails, does nothing to support either the literally drowning mariner or the psychically drowning poet. At the same time, by analogy, the poet cannot establish a significant connection with any individual reader, despite his desperate call and despite the reader's strong answering sympathies. The most he can do is to bring his plight to the reader's attention, as the captain's entry brings the stranded mariner's plight to him. Unlike Wordsworth's poetry, in which sympathy becomes the basis for a new model of poetic relationship and social connection, here sympathy serves no purpose, as mariner and poet alike, "we perish'd, each, alone" (64).

"The Castaway" expresses Cowper's personal mental illness, but at the same time perhaps no poem so well expresses the predicament of the late-eighteenth-century poet, feeling increasingly isolated from audience with no established ground for poetic authority, form, or identity. Wordsworth and other Romantic poets who came after Cowper responded to this sense of poetic isolation by constructing a strong version of the autonomous authorial self, which could provide its own meaning and value while at the same time establishing a center for a new social model. The professional or vocational identity of the poet, as such, became central to Wordsworth's poetics and the model of the autonomous self he produced, together with a new model of the individual author-to-reader relationship that compensated for this sense of isolation in the face of a growing public. Cowper, however, had no such vocational identity and no such poetics to alleviate his personal and poetic isolation. Just as Hume's self exists only as an unstable bundle of impressions or Tristram Shandy's self exists only through the endless proliferation of his own discourse, Cowper's self in the *Task* exists only through a kind of poetic filibuster—without a firm sense of its own ground or identity to support it and without a secure sense of an audience to connect to, "self-upheld" only by its own continued speaking.

Chapter Six

"My Office Upon Earth": William Wordsworth, Professionalism, and Poetic Identity

Unlike any of the previous poets in this study, William Wordsworth constructed his poetic identity through the model of vocation or profession. In the *Prelude*, he represents himself after his involvement with the French Revolution as rediscovering his "true self" specifically as "a Poet," finding "beneath that name/My office upon earth, and nowhere else" (10.915, 919–20).[1] Here as in other writings, Wordsworth presents the identity of "Poet" as if it is an established professional category. In fact, though, Wordsworth had to construct this category of the "Poet" himself, in what was fundamentally a project of professional self-authorization. As the 1790s progressed, Wordsworth faced the eighteenth-century isolation and alienation of the poet in a particularly aggravated form. Retiring first to southwest England and then to the Lake District, far from the centers of literary culture, he embarked on his poetic career without recognized cultural or political authority, in the wake of political disappointment and the dispersal and active oppression of the republican community with which he had identified himself. Wordsworth's intense turn to poetic self-representation, I will argue, responded directly to this situation, as he compensated for his isolation and lack of a recognized social position by attempting to construct his own vocational identity and authority as a poet in relation to an unknown print market public. In the process, I will argue, Wordsworth justified his authorship by constructing a specifically professional model of the poetic self.

In so doing, Wordsworth also constructed newly coherent models of poetic identity, function, and relationship to audience in order to fit his professional self-definition. Viewed in this way, Wordsworth's famous attack on

"poetic diction" and appeal to the "real language of men" reveals itself as in part a strategy to redefine the vocational role of the poet by redefining the poet's relationship to a general print market public. By the end of the eighteenth century, the commercial print market had clearly become the dominant context of literary production. Compared with newer forms of print culture such as the novel, the newspaper, and the magazine essay, poetry remained a relatively elite genre, governed by prevailing standards of poetic decorum and subject to the cultural policing of the reviews and the social hierarchies they supported. By rejecting "poetic diction," positing a common "real language of men" as the proper language of poetry, turning to lower class subjects, and appealing directly to readers in the "Preface," Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* rejected these mediating structures of authority in order to claim an independent professional authority in direct relationship with a general public. In the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*, the unpublished *Prelude* manuscript, and revisions of *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Pedlar*, Wordsworth focused increasingly on his own identity, further elaborating this professional model. His construction of a new model of the "deep" autonomous self during this period can be seen, in this respect, as largely a side effect of his need to construct his own autonomous poetic identity and authorize his self-chosen vocation as a poet. Although offered to readers as a general model, the self that emerges in Wordsworth's poetry is in this sense specifically an authorial self, established within the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century contexts of print market culture.

Wordsworth based his professional poetic identity on his claim to educate the imaginations of a general readership, opposing both what he depicts as the degrading effects of commercial print culture and the effete ornamentalism of aristocratic culture. Wordsworth in this professional capacity resisted the commercialization of literature, but like all professionals he also depended on that same commercial market in order to earn his living and fulfill his vocational purpose. This impasse between the need to address a general public created by commercial print culture and the need to resist the implications of commercialization shows up as a central tension in Wordsworth's writing and identity. In a similar way, I will argue, Wordsworth's construction of his vocational role often led him to imagine an immediate, oral, one-to-one relationship with readers, while at the same time depending on the existence of a general print culture.

This chapter will explore how Wordsworth constructed his identity according to a professional model and in the process reconstructed the poet's relationship to his audience, to poetic property, and to the commercial marketplace. The following chapter will then show how he constructed his identity in

his poetry according to this professional model. Experimenting first with a series of circulating figures representing aspects of authorial identity in displaced forms—including the Old Cumberland Beggar, the Pedlar, and the Leech Gatherer—Wordsworth gradually made his own identity a direct central subject of his poetry, culminating in the unpublished *Prelude* manuscript of 1805. After this intense period of vocational self-authorization and self-representation, the self again became secondary in Wordsworth's later poetry, as he used the identity he had constructed for himself in order to assume a more public poetic voice.[2] In following this trajectory, I will argue that Wordsworth's poetics of the self emerged directly out of his need to authorize his own vocational identity in relation to the general print market public.

Seen in this way, the development of poetic subjectivity and the corresponding models of self and imagination in Wordsworth's poetry cannot be understood as the teleological direction of late-eighteenth-century poetry, as in traditional understandings of "pre-romanticism." Instead, these developments reveal themselves as one poet's response to his particular situation and needs as an author—a response which happened to create new possibilities, and so eventually established new directions, for lyric poetry. Facing many of the same dilemmas as eighteenth-century poets before him, Wordsworth recycled their strategies and precedents: including Pope's position of authorial independence and his division between high and low culture; Gray and Beattie's model of bardic identity and displaced explorations of authorial identity; Cowper's subjective voice and intimate address to his reader(s). Wordsworth built on other precedents too, of course, outside the scope of this study: including Charlotte Smith's poetics of sensibility and William Burns' appeal to universal values and rustic themes and language. The difference between Wordsworth and most of these earlier poets, however, is that he embraced poetry as a profession in a way that did not hesitate to address a general print market public. Earlier poets had imagined the figure of the bardic poet in bygone eras, but Wordsworth claimed this role directly for himself, simultaneously attempting to reconstruct his public, his poetics, and his identity around his self-proclaimed vocational model.

THE PROFESSIONAL MODEL AND WORDSWORTH'S POETIC IDENTITY

A number of critics in recent years have connected Wordsworth's construction of poetic identity with the model of professionalism available to him at the time. Clifford Siskin in *The Work of Writing* identifies self-authorization as a professional ideal and connects it with Wordworth's poetic project, focusing on the professional practice of defining identity according to one's (pleasurable)

work. Wordsworth's construction of his poetic identity, according to Siskin, is an attempt to define the training and credentials necessary for the self-defined profession of "Poet" generally. *The Prelude*, according to this reading, becomes a self-authorizing statement of professional identity, or as Siskin puts it, the "most extraordinary resumé in English history," culminating with the climbing of Snowdon as the "concluding epiphany of professional purpose."[3] Thomas Pfau in *Wordsworth's Profession* also connects Wordsworth's poetics to professionalism and the construction of middle class cultural authority generally. He argues on a sometimes abstract level that "Romanticism's invention of 'literature' [was] the medium best suited for professionalizing and governing a largely uncolonized middle-class interiority," and that Wordsworth participated in this process by constructing his own professional identity as the unifying site for an imagined community or nation of readers. Pfau stresses Wordsworth's self-distancing from commercial implications and from the appearance of self-interest, arguing that he founded his professional identity on these mystifications through an appeal to an affect-based community of mostly middle class readers.[4] Mark Schoenfield in *The Professional Wordsworth* explores Wordsworth's professionalism mainly in relation to the period's legal profession and discourses, including extended attention to how he redefined his "contract" with his audience in relation to legal contracts.[5] Brian Goldberg and Richard Swartz have also published significant essays exploring Wordsworth's implication in emerging models of "occupational" professionalism, which defined professional status in terms of talent and meritocracy, in opposition to an earlier aristocratic "status" professionalism defined mostly through social connections.[6]

While these studies open significant avenues into understanding Wordsworth's construction of identity and poetics, they tend to be based on a narrow definition of "professionalism" and don't take into account the expanding array of recent sociological and historical research into the definition and status of the professions during the period. Pfau in particular writes a whole book on professionalism without ever investigating the historical basis of that category. By grounding my argument broadly in such sources, I will offer a much wider picture of how Wordsworth constructed his poetics and poetic identity on a professional model. Wordsworth's appeal to the general public; his self-distancing from commercialism; his claims of social service and disinterestedness; his self-definition through dignified intellectual work; his attempt to distinguish himself both from the vulgar trades and from aristocratic leisure; his corresponding attempt to define the training and unique qualifications of poets; and the individual one-to-one client relationships he imagined with readers, all reflect his attempt to construct his identity

as a poet on a professional model. Going beyond the positions of recent critics, I will argue that professionalism holds the key to understanding both Wordsworth's poetics and his self-representation, as he used a professional model to define his account of the poet's vocational function, his model of author-reader relationships, his attitudes towards literary property and the print market, his construction of the public, and the overall terms of his self-representation. In order to make these claims, I will begin with a survey of early modern and Romantic era professionalism, then show how the professional model applies to Wordsworth's poetics and identity.

Magali Larson's influential sociological study, *The Rise of Professionalism*, traces the emergence of modern professionalism in Britain and America and usefully defines professions as "occupations with special status and prestige," based on their claims to specialized knowledge, expertise, and training in order to fulfill important social functions.[7] According to Larson, modern professions are self-authorizing and self-regulating, in that they form standardized programs of training and licensing and claim a monopoly of expertise over their particular social services. Medicine, law, and the clergy were the traditional professions, providing a model for those which followed. Larson argues that these three professions shifted around the beginning of the nineteenth century from a reliance on aristocratic patronage and connection to a model of professional identity based on education and meritocracy. In so doing, she argues that the professions participated in the general transformation to a market-oriented society, with an increasingly broad-based middle class clientele. Although professions claimed their status and legitimacy through an ideal of disinterested public service, Larson argues that in actuality they used these claims to monopolize the market for their particular market services, in "a collective process of upward social mobility" and "special social status" in which "producers of special services sought to constitute *and control* a market for their expertise" (xvi, emphasis hers). In the process, professions needed to claim special esoteric knowledge, since "where everyone can claim to be an expert, there is no expertise" (31), establishing their own internal hierarchies through academic training, other forms of credentialing, and professionally recognized standards of achievement.

Recent historians of the professions have disagreed with some of Larson's claims, such as her neat division between early modern "status" professionalism, defined by inheritance and aristocratic connections, and modern "occupational" professionalism, defined by education, training, and meritocracy in relation to a general public. In his introduction to *The Professions in Early Modern England*, William Prest argues that the professions were more organized than Larson credits before the nineteenth century, less

dependent on aristocratic patronage, and more conducive to social mobility.[8] Despite this disagreement about the exact history of the professions' development, however, historians are in broad agreement on the association between the professions and dignified intellectual labor, including the vocational ideal of disinterested service to the public. This ideal emerged, as Rosemarie O'Day argues in *The Professions in Early Modern England*, from the general ideal of Renaissance civic humanism. Professions distinguished themselves in this way from other socially prestigious trades, such as goldsmiths, bankers, and merchants, by claiming not to pursue commercial rewards as a primary incentive and by embracing a specific professional code of ethics.[9] As O'Day writes, membership in a profession "entailed responsibility and obligations as well as power and privilege; it did not command wages but rather an honorarium freely given; it was ennobling" (266)—an ideal of public service which continues to define the professions' self-understanding even today.[10] Dignified by this ideal, professionals during the Romantic era defined their identity specifically through their work, rather than through other forms of social status. Because they worked primarily with their minds rather than with their hands, professionals in the period could claim "gentlemanly" status. Emphasizing this intellectual and socially productive labor, the professions defined themselves against the amateurism and idleness of the aristocracy, the more menial labor of the lower classes, and the more directly commercial focus of other middle class occupations such as merchants, financiers, and shopkeepers, thus establishing the professions as a specific kind of middle class identity and authority, grounded in claims of superior disinterestedness.

Early modern professions were generally split into hierarchical distinctions, such as the distinction between barristers, attorneys and solicitors in law; or physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries in medicine. The higher professional status levels were usually associated with liberal arts university training, the lower with apprenticeship.[11] Though claims for professional status involved complex combinations of factors and professions had always offered some possibility of social advancement for able and ambitious outsiders, during the nineteenth century the professions became increasingly identified with meritocracy: both in the selection of students for special training and in the subsequent demonstration of professional abilities.[12] Though a professional's status and earning potential was distinguished by his place in such hierarchies, professional work at all levels was seen as conferring special status and dignity, including personal autonomy at work within the general guidelines of the profession.[13] Within their respective fields of expertise, professions claimed to be self-defining and self-regulating, with their own standards for training, credentialing, and professional discipline—a claim later given

institutional structure by modern professional associations.[14] Before the nineteenth century, however, most professions did not have standard training or certification procedures and lacked formal institutional structure.[15] Contests of authority within the professions during the early modern period, for this reason, did not have a clearly defined standard against which to appeal, and internal rivalry within professions was common.[16] Professions depended on their claim to specific expertise, and the more difficult it was to claim this expertise and gain entry into a profession, the more social prestige (and greater earning potential) that profession was likely to carry.[17]

Beyond the defining models of law, medicine, and the clergy, the boundaries of what counted as a "profession" at the end of the eighteenth century were not strictly defined, and the expansion of the market for specialized goods and services led also to an expansion of social groups claiming professional status and respectability.[18] Geoffrey Holmes has surveyed some of these emerging and liminal professions in his book on *Augustan England: Professions, Status and Society*, including such occupations as engineers, architects, landscapers, army and navy officers, estate stewards, and teachers.[19] These emerging professions tended to be less organized, with even less stable definitions of formal training and expertise than the three established professions, and as a result tended to generate more internal rivalry and a more marginal and unstable claim to social status. Musicians, actors, artists, and writers fit into this looser category of emerging professions, their numbers swelled by the expanding eighteenth-century market for culture.[20] Such occupations could claim to be intellectual, rather than menial, and could claim to serve the public good according to the professional model by developing national culture. Though accepting commercial rewards, such artists could define themselves as professional through this cultural service.

Authorship emerged in this way as a particularly unstable and contested professional category. Though some authors could lay claim to specific training and expertise, such as Classical learning and University education, there was no clearly defined standard for such training and no regulating professional organization, often leading to heated internal rivalries between writers who challenged one other's credential and talents. Furthermore, though writing could be associated with dignified public service, it could just as easily be associated with the blatant commercialism of the emerging literary marketplace or the materiality of the commodified text. Authors could claim to be disinterested gentlemen, but they could with equal logic be stigmatized as commercial hacks. Because of these conflicting associations, and because anyone with access to pen and paper could set up as an author, the internal social and professional combat for status among writers tended to be particularly

intense. Claudia Thomas argues in this respect in her essay on "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries: Skirmishes on the Borders of Gentility" that Pope's dispute with the so-called "dunces" was in fact a professional quarrel, as he attempted to define his own gentlemanly poetic identity by denigrating the status of others, creating an exaggerated hierarchical split within the "profession."[21] The genius/ hack distinction that emerged during the eighteenth century can be seen, in this sense, as a form of professional hierarchy analogous to the other professions—or alternatively, an attempt to project the commercial aspects of writing exclusively onto a sub-professional category of menial writers. The problem, however, was that everyone wanted to be a genius and no one wanted to be a hack, leading to a general cultural combat over the application of these categories. Such squabbles were further intensified by acrimonious political, religious, and social differences, and by the breakdown of implied aesthetic consensus during the eighteenth century, as writing became an increasingly polemicized arena for social contestation. By the first decade of the 1800s, critical reviews such as the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* were aligning themselves in openly political and polemical camps.

Beginning his career as a writer about a half century after Pope's death, Wordsworth entered this contested sphere in his attempt to define his own dignified identity and vocation as a Poet. Unlike Pope, who constructed his poetic identity by appealing to traditional social hierarchies, Wordsworth defined his identity almost entirely in professional terms. It is significant, in this regard, that Wordsworth earned a liberal arts degree from Cambridge University, following the general educational trajectory of professional elites. Wordsworth's career path initially destined him for the clergy, until he rejected his guardians' plans and the social connections of his prominent uncles, who would have found him a substantial church living after graduation.[22] Instead of following an established professional route in the clergy—a position which supported many authors—Wordsworth defied family authority and chose to define his identity through the largely undefined, socially marginal identity of "Poet." In so doing, he attempted to construct his own version of professional identity, following the patterns already established by other professions and claiming to fulfill many of the same roles as a clergyman within the secular context of literature.

The marginal and undefined nature of authorship as a profession left Wordsworth in a tenuous position, but it also left him with the latitude to define his own professional standards. As Lucy Newlyn stresses in *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, Wordsworth "had no overarching system of authority on which to rely," and so was forced to rely instead on the "continuity and coherence of poetic self" to compensate for his dependence on and

vulnerability to his public.[23] On the flip side, this undefined status freed him to define the poet's professional qualifications around his own personal situation. Both to compensate for his anxieties and to claim the full measure of this prospective freedom, Wordsworth constructed a strong version of autonomous authorial identity. In so doing, he asserted the professional Poet's superiority within the sphere of literature over all other existing forms of cultural and literary authority, constructing an author-centered hierarchy in place of existing hierarchies of taste, decorum, genre, and elite culture authority. In the process, Wordsworth both redefined poetry in relation to a more egalitarian public and asserted his own professional authority over that public. In the remainder of this chapter, I will attempt to show how Wordsworth constructed his authorship, his public, and ultimately his identity in relation to this self-defined professional model.

HUMBLING AND HUMANIZING THE PUBLIC, PURIFYING AND EXALTING THE POET: VOCATION, AUDIENCE, AND AUTHORITY

Wordsworth's professional project, as Clifford Siskin argues, was fundamentally a project of self-authorization.[24] In this sense, Wordsworth's construction of professional authorial identity is inseparable from his attempt to redefine the structures of literary authority and the print market public. A number of recent critics have commented on this attempt to reconstruct his own version of the public, purified of commercialism and defined by literature's high social purposes. Marilyn Butler in *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* connects Wordsworth's ideals of simplicity, universality, and an essentializable human nature with the Enlightenment and its ideal of a general public, pointing out the neo-Classical elements in Wordsworth's poetic theory. Paul Keen in *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s* also argues that Wordsworth emphasizes universality, but specifically a subjective universality, reinterpreting the Enlightenment ideal in terms of private individual readers and writers. Most influentially of all, Jon Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences* focuses specifically on audience construction, arguing that Wordsworth attempted to unite the increasingly fissured audiences of his time through an appeal to the redemptive power of reading. Klancher connects Wordsworth's attempt to reconstruct his audience with his attempt to create a new poetic language by purifying the language of rustics: "leveling the peasant culture 'upward' or the haughty middle-class urban culture 'down'" in order to "make an audience somewhere beyond the determination of class."[25] In so doing, Klancher argues, Wordsworth hoped to restore the reading habit to something approximating a "purely symbolic exchange," thus transforming

"consumption" into "reception" and opposing the general urbanization and commercialization of reading (143). Paul Keen makes a similar argument, that Wordsworth attempted to cleanse his poetry of both the artificiality and arbitrariness of poetic diction and "the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life" (1:137), creating instead an idealized general language (244). Wordsworth's writing failed to summon such a purified, general audience into existence, however, and so he turned his attention in his 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" from the construction of an actual audience to the imagination of idealized and future publics. "Wordsworth's effort to remake the existing audience of 1800 ends, in 1815," Klancher argues, "by inventing an audience in imagination he was unable to form in the world," creating "a now familiar notion of an audience, one utterly detached from social space" (143).

Building on these readings, I want to emphasize the intimate connection between Wordsworth's appeal to a natural or universal language and his attempt to construct a public centered primarily on his own professional authorial identity. By using this model of the general public to break down hierarchies and distinctions between classes, Wordsworth attempted to remove the existing social and cultural hierarchies that could restrain or negate his definition of his own autonomous vocational authority. Rejecting the authority of patrons, reviewers, and the commercial market in turn, Wordsworth in effect refused all existing structures of literary authority, attempting instead to reconstruct the language, content, and public of his poetry entirely around his own self-proclaimed poetic "genius." Yet at the same time, I will argue, he could construct this professional model of identity for himself only within the commercial contexts of print market culture, thus leading to a persistent internal tension in his writing between his vocational ideal and his necessary commercial involvements and dependencies. Wordsworth's relationship with market culture was thus very much like that of other professionals: he claimed disinterestedness and public service, even as he relied on the market and attempted to monopolize it through his own self-proclaimed professional expertise.

The original 1798 "Advertisement" to *Lyrical Ballads* expresses Wordsworth's project explicitly in class terms, claiming that the poems are "experiments [. . .] written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure" (1:116).[26] In the 1800 and subsequent versions of the "Preface," these class terms are replaced by the more general "real language of men"—a phrase Wordsworth emphasizes by repeating it several times within the essay.[27] Although the revised version removes the specific

class designations, Wordsworth's emphasis on the language of rustics and assault on "poetic diction" still clearly targets the traditional elite authority over poetry—the "fickle tastes, and fickle appetites" to which he claims poets have grown accustomed to address themselves (1:125). By writing in a different poetic language, on "trivial" subjects that serious poets had not written about in such ways, Wordsworth attempts to construct a new poetic sphere for himself outside the jurisdiction of existing structures of literary authority. In so doing, he attempts to establish his own authority as Poet in relation to a newly defined general public of all social classes, all speaking his common "real language of men."

Significantly, Wordsworth goes on to describe the language of poetry and the language of prose metaphorically as humans of varying classes, which beneath the outer trappings of dress and manners share the same essential humanity: "They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree [. . .] the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both" (1:135). In his 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," Wordsworth argues similarly that the labor of the "truly original poet" consists in "breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement [. . ., and] in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same" (3:80). Wordsworth's 1802 letter to John Wilson makes the class politics of this attempt to redefine his audience even more explicit:

> Whom do we generally associate with? Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies persons who can afford to buy or can easily procure books a half guinea price, hot-pressed, and printed upon superfine paper. These persons are, it is true, a part of human nature, but we err lamentably if we suppose them to be fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence. And yet few ever consider books but with reference to their power of pleasing these persons and men of a higher rank few descend lower among cottages and fields and among children. (EY: 355)[28]

Wordsworth's opposition to upper class reading practices, however, is balanced by an equal opposition to the reading practices of mass print culture: the "frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse" that he condemns in his "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1:128).

In place of both these print cultures, Wordsworth projects his own, in which (as he writes in an 1808 letter to Francis Wrangham) he hopes that his own writings might replace the "half-penny Ballads, and penny and two-penny histories" that have long circulated throughout the English countryside"—a vulgar print culture which his poems might supplant as "flowers and useful herbs to take [the] place of weeds" (*MY1*: 248). Wordsworth later remarked in this same spirit to Isabella Fenwick on his "Labourers Noon-day Hymn":

> Often one has occasion to observe Cottage children carrying in their baskets dinner to their Fathers engaged with their daily labours in the fields & woods. How gratifying would it be to me could I be assured that any portion of these Stanzas had been sung by such a domestic concert under such circumstance.[29]

This projection of a refined folk print culture, combining the general circulation of print with the orality of folk tradition, offered Wordsworth an idealized reading public—a public which did not and could not exist, but which Wordsworth needed to imagine in order to construct his own authorial identity and ambition.

Citing some of these same passages, Klancher in *The Making of English Reading Audiences* has argued that it was Wordsworth's "secret ambition" in his rustic poetry to "represent the rural poor to themselves."[30] In contrast, I want to argue that Wordsworth's writing on lower class subjects represented his attempt to construct his own version of national folk culture for a print audience of all social classes, in order to authorize his self-appointed authorial identity. Seen in this way, his construction of a generalized and idealized "Public," stripped of all mediating structures of authority except the relationship between author and reader(s), was not merely a frustrated reaction to neglect, but a central part of his literary project from as early as the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Appealing to the lives and language of rustics gave Wordsworth a new basis for his vocational authority, independent from all existing structures of authority. Yet even as he appealed to this folk culture, the model in which he imagined it was distinctively middle class and depended upon the existence of a general print market audience.

Wordsworth's construction of a "real language of men" is in this sense linked to his overall construction of vocational poetic identity. Kenneth Johnston in particular argues, in his biography of Wordsworth's early years, that the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, with its extensive answer to the question "What is a Poet?" in the 1802 revision, developed into a professional self-definition of the poet's role in a manner characteristic of the self-authorization of other professions.[31] In order to fulfill this role, however, the Poet must address

a general audience, for the Poet claims professional expertise over human nature in general.[32] "Poetry is the image of man and nature," Wordsworth writes, and "Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge." The Poet thus does not address specific classes or subsections of the public, but a general public: he addresses his reader "not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man" (1:139, 141). All readers in this model, regardless of class, share the same essential human nature and faculties, which it is the Poet's self-appointed professional function to educate. It is in this sense that Wordsworth ends this section of the "Preface" by claiming that "Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men" (1:143).

In this process of defining a general "human nature" and "real language of men" over which the professional Poet presides, Wordsworth created a model of an essentially homogenous public, now distinguished by "degree" (of imaginative power) rather than by "kind" (social class)—terms Wordsworth uses in the "Preface" to characterize the Poet's relationship to his readers, but which can equally characterize the relationships between readers (1:142). The poet addresses this public as individuals, but in so doing also unites them, incorporating them into a new form of social connection. Richard Swartz, for instance, argues in "Wordsworth, Copyright, and the Commodification of Genius" that Wordsworth's idea of the "People" constitutes "an ideal community made up of 'his' [the poet's] numberless solitary readers, who become unified across space and time by the common bond of his 'word.'"; and Thomas Pfau in *Wordsworth's Profession* repeatedly stresses how Wordsworth's construction of professional identity leads to both the individuation and communal identification of his readers.[33] In order to fulfill this function, however, the Poet for Wordsworth must first break down existing cultural hierarchies. It is in this sense that he writes, in the 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," that the Poet must establish "that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanized, in order that they may be purified and exalted" (3:80–81). In this quasi-religious formulation, Wordsworth offers himself as a poetic John the Baptist, breaking down the structures of authority in the old poetic culture in order to incorporate readers into a newly leveled and purified public, leading to their eventual redemption through reading.[34]

In breaking down existing cultural hierarchies, Wordsworth's redefinition of poetry also establishes the Poet in a position of authority over his imagined public—especially since the lower class subjects to which he appealed for authorization lacked the intellectual training and public voice to contest Wordsworth's claims. Even as he appeals to the "universal heart" and language of all readers, Wordsworth insists on elevating the poet above those readers.

The Poet is "a man speaking to men," but also a man "endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind," among other superiorities (1:138). Wordsworth also stresses the necessity of education and wide reading in forming "an *accurate* taste in poetry," since such a taste is "an *acquired* taste, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition" (1:157, emphasis his).[35] Such wide reading, of course, would only be possible for a well-educated and well-to-do intelligentsia, with the necessary training, leisure, and funds—in short, for those who share Wordsworth's liberal arts university background and social privilege. When Wordsworth writes in his 1802 letter to Wilson about "descend[ing] lower among cottages and fields and among children," the word "descend" thus carries complex connotations of class and authority (*EY*: 355). Significantly, Wordsworth uses this same word in the "Preface," where he calls on Poets to "descend from [their] supposed height" (1:143) to speak in the actual language of readers. Even in this figurative "descent" from a position of cultural elitism, the Poet retains his superiority through his superior imaginative abilities: the capacity through which Wordsworth claims "one being is elevated above another" (1:128). By defining the common language of poetry in relation to the language of rural laborers, the Poet thus simultaneously breaks down existing cultural hierarchies and exalts himself above his public on a professional interpretative and imaginative height. He does not banish authority by putting everyone on the same level; instead, he puts everyone else on the same level in order to appropriate authority for himself. As Tim Fulford argues in *Liberty, Landscape, and Authority*, Wordsworth thus authorizes a rustic language and public primarily for his own poetic self-authorization.[36] His corresponding emphasis on superior talent and training suggest a specifically professional model.

Throughout his poetry, Wordsworth tends to associate himself as a Poet both with solitude and with elevation, as when he begins book eight of the *Prelude* by taking a perspective on a rural fair from the height of Helvellyn (8.1–4)—significantly juxtaposed against the Bartholomew Fair experience of promiscuous leveling in book seven. In the third "Poem on the Naming of Places" he is identified with a towering mountain cliff which comes to "bear my name"; and in "I wandered lonely as a cloud," with a cloud high above the underlying "crowd" of Daffodils. Even more explicitly, in the poem beginning "It is no spirit who from Heaven hath flown" from his 1807 *Poems*, Wordsworth identifies himself with the traveling Hesperus, which eventually stands alone in the sky:

For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
O most ambitious Star! [. . .]
while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seems't now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there, with steps that no one shall reprove![37]

Hesperus here circulates and reveals itself to all, much like the author's texts to a print market public, but it circulates from a position of autonomy and symbolically superior height. As such, it supports the poet's desire to be lifted "beyond my natural race."

Such images represent what Kenneth Johnston has called the "democratic elitism" of Wordsworth's early model of poetic identity—an elitism which became less and less democratic as time went by and as Wordsworth's cultural politics became incraesingly conservative.[38] As Eugene Stelzig argues in his essay on "Romanticism and the Aristocracy of Consciousness," Wordsworth in the 1790s and early 1800s combines "revolutionary rhetoric and democratic-egalitarian sympathies" with a general "privileging of the figure of the poet-prophet." This position creates what Stelzig calls a "Romantic tension between elitist consciousness and republican politics," in which the poet is imagined both as "a man speaking to men" and as spiritually and imaginatively elevated above his audience.[39] I have argued already that this position is a professional one, allowing Wordsworth to authorize himself in relation to the general public while at the same time claiming to serve that public. Brian Goldberg argues similarly in his essay "'Ministry More Palpable': William Wordsworth and the Making of Romantic Professionalism" that Wordsworth's appeal to an audience of common readers does not lessen his claims of superior gentlemanly identity, which would have been a typical position for upper level professionals at the time.[40] Wordsworth's poetic identity depends on this sense of hierarchy as thoroughly as it depends on leveling the public.

Such professional self-authorization did depend, however, on the existence of a general reading public, for whom the poet could provide a supposedly disinterested vocational service. Wordsworth imagined an idealized general public as early as his 1793 *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, in which he writes of "the herdsman with the staff in one hand and the book in the other" (1: 37). His letters and reminiscences are dotted with fantasies of his relation

to such a public, whose readers would confirm his professional claims by turning to his writing for moral, imaginative, and spiritual instruction. In the Fenwick notes, for instance, Wordsworth offers a delighted account of

> a labourer of whom I regret I had no personal knowledge; for, more than forty years after, when he was become an old man, I learnt that while I was composing verses, which I usually did aloud, he took much pleasure, unknown to me, in following my steps that he might catch the words I uttered, and, what is a little remarkable, several lines caught in this way kept their place in his memory. My volumes have lately been given to him, by my informant, and surely he must have been gratified to meet in print his old acquaintance.[41]

The idea of this rural laborer devotedly following the poet to overhear his poetry, though personally unknown to him, offers a trope for the unknown print market reader, entered into an intense personal relationship with the poet of which the poet himself remains unaware. Purposely following Wordsworth in order to overhear and even memorize his poetry, this laborer corresponds to Wordsworth's fantasy of a national print market audience of rustics, reading his works with analogous attention and devotion. Similarly, there is the tantalizing detail in one of Dorothy's letters of Wordsworth reading his poem "The Leech-Gatherer" to "our Haircutter below stairs" (*EY*: 364); and Wordsworth's comic but proud account, in an 1808 letter to George Beaumont, of an encounter with a grocer in a stagecoach in Lancaster, who upon hearing that Wordsworth came from Grasmere asked him (obviously not recognizing him) if he knew the poet William Wordsworth. After receiving a reply in the affirmative, the grocer then stated that this poet Wordsworth "has written [. . .] some very beautiful Poems; The Critics do indeed cry out against them, and condemn them as *over simple*, but for my part I read them with great pleasure, they are natural and true" (MY1: 210). This anecdote must have been especially dear to Wordsworth, since it not only confirms his desire for direct contact with his public, but also directly refutes the authority of the reviews.

Despite Wordsworth's authorial fantasies, however, his poetry never did appeal to a general public of all social classes. In the Fenwick notes, Wordsworth recounts "one of his cottage neighbors (not of the double coach-horse cottages) [who] has said [after Wordsworth's return from an absence] 'Well there he is, we are glad to hear him *booing* about again." The truth is, though, that Wordsworth's rural neighbors heard his *booing* (the sound he made while composing his poems during his walks) with suspicion, and never warmed to the poet, who remained cold and aloof to them.[42] His books were

not much read by local cottagers, who saw him as distant and secluded, unlike the warm and effusive Hartley Coleridge who had close personal relations with locals and whose poetry they admired.[43] "There's pomes and pomes, and Wudsworht's was not for sec as us," opined one local cottager; and another explained that "there's poetry and potry," and Wordsworth's was the kind "as takes a deal o' mastery to mak' oot" and had "nea laugh in it."[44]

As these comments indicate, Wordsworth's poetry, although ostensibly written in the language and about the subject of rustic Lake District cottagers, found its actual audience among the better educated and more well-to-do readers of the middle and upper classes. Wordsworth's publishing history bears this out, for despite his aspirations for an audience of common readers, he was never interested in publishing cheap books or reprints that such readers could afford. Even *Lyrical Ballads* cost 5 s., far beyond the buying power of rustic laborers.[45] The "Advertisement" and then "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, although they appeal to the ideal of "the real language of men," are similarly directed mainly towards middle and upper class purchasers. Wordsworth's appeal to the "real language of men" as defined by rural speech and passions is thus more rhetorical than actual. In fact, the "real language of men" describes the standardized language of print culture much better than the regional variations and dialects that marked actual rustic speech at the time, as Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* and a number of other contemporary reviewers pointed out.[46] Wordsworth's seeming appeal to the oral "real language of men" actually depends on the existence of a national print culture in the first place, demonstrating what Annette Cafarelli has described as an "uneasy alliance between the common reader and the uncommon poet."[47]

In addition to authorizing his poetic identity, Wordsworth's construction of a reading public based on the "real language of men" helped to separate him from an already existing commercial print culture.[48] "Having described the middle-class audience as consumers of a brutalized popular culture," Klancher writes in *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, "Wordsworth seeks in the rustic's alternative culture a means to reverse that consumption into a form of 'reception.' He attempts to transform commodified textual relations into an older relation of symbolic exchange" (143). In so doing, Wordsworth imagined an impossibly idealized public, constructed according to the model of the actual print public but as if without commercial associations and institutions. This idea of the public offers a purified and mystified version of print culture, structured in terms of the existing commercial public but eliding aspects which Wordsworth found unfavorable. Wordsworth's appeal to the rustic "real language of men" thus allows him to distinguish himself both from what he sees as the vulgar and degraded print

culture of the cities and from existing structures of elite poetic authority. By defining his own model of poetic language, Wordsworth could also define his authority over that language, creating a professional domain for himself outside the jurisdiction of existing social practices and cultural and linguistic hierarchies. Imagining an idealized public in this way also allowed Wordsworth to imagine the poet as independent from both commerce and patronage, truly and mysteriously autonomous.

In attempting this professional self-authorization, Wordsworth specifically contested the authority of the reviewers, with whom he became engaged in an ongoing contest of authority.[49] Wordsworth's repeated claims to disregard or ignore reviews are belied by his extreme sensitivity to them, culminating in his general assault on reviewers in the 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface." Wordsworth's heightened sensitivity to the reviews also reflects his sense of how important reviews were to book sales, which in turn reveals his deep implication in the commercial marketplace. After complaining about Southey's review in a 1799 letter to Joseph Cottle, for instance, Wordsworth makes the clearly defensive disclaimer that "I care little for the praise of any other professional critic, but as it may help me to pudding" (*EY*: 267–68).[50] In an 1807 letter to Frances Wrangham, for another instance, he takes a reviewer to task for his "gall and venom," calling him a "wretch" and a "persecutor," but then claims he cares only because "the immediate sale of books is more under the influence of reviews than is generally noticed, and the sale of this work is of some consequence to me" (*MY*1:155). This high tone of superiority, however, is belied by the vehemence of his protestation in these letters and elsewhere, including his public attack for over two pages on Francis Jeffrey in his 1816 pamphlet, *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, in which he calls Jeffrey an "infatuated slanderer" and "a mind obtuse, superficial, and inept," and goes so far as to compare him to the Roman tyrant Servius, Robespierre, and Napoleon (3:126–28).[51]

These comparisons to Robespierre and Napoleon highlight Wordsworth's charge that Jeffrey is "self-elected into the office of a public judge" without valid authority (3:127). This accusation of self-election is, of course, exactly the same charge that reviewers tended to level against Wordsworth, who had considerably less established literary authority than Jeffrey (the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*) and the critical reviews generally, yet whose professional claims in his "Prefaces" became increasingly grandiose. Frustrated by the reviews and poor sales of his 1807 *Poems* and then Jeffrey's particularly strong denunciation of the 1814 *Excursion*, Wordsworth in his 1815 "Preface" and "Essay Supplementary" actually uses these critical attacks as a rationale for proclaiming his own poetic greatness (3:35). As they contest

the authority of both readers and reviewers, these essays make the author entirely self-authorizing in relation to a future or imagined public cast in his own image. The "Essay Supplementary" begins by rejecting the judgment of all those for whom poetry is only an "occasional recreation" or "fashionable pleasure," as well as all those who judge solely from the enthusiasm of youth, arguing in a move of professional self-authorization that only those who have found the time to "cultivate general literature" and poetry "*as a study*" can be relied upon as having valid judgment (3:62, emphasis his). These speculations lead Wordsworth into an account of the necessary vocational qualifications of the Critic, which turn out to be identical to those of the Poet: "a mind at once poetical and philosophical"; disinterested "affections [. . .] as free and kindly as the spirit of society," completely without "selfishness"; "understanding [as] severe as that of dispassionate government"; "natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness"; and "active faculties" that answer those of the author but cannot be misled into admiration of unworthy objects (3:66). The emphasis on disinterestedness and imaginative training here suggest a professional model. In structuring the critic's vocational criteria as parallel to that of the poet, however, Wordsworth places the poet as the central authority to whom critics must ultimately defer. Wordsworth condemns all "critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany" in his imaginative soarings (3:66), while at the same time affirming that the "genuine poet" creates "the taste by which he is to be enjoyed" (3:80). Unsurprisingly, Wordsworth anoints himself in this position of "genuine poet" in a move of blatant self-authorization, claiming that because he knows "the source [of my poems] within my own mind, from which they have proceeded," including the necessary "labour and pains" which "has been bestowed on them," he can "afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure" (3:80). We should not let Wordsworth's subsequent canonization obscure the audacity of these claims, which dispute all others' claims to judgment and in effect make the poet jury and judge of his own importance, based solely on his own introspective self-knowledge. The strength of Wordsworth's rhetoric, which has become a kind of Romantic cliché of authorial transcendence, also registers the tenuousness of his position and unfoundedness of these claims to authority.

Wordsworth's professionalism was based on a model of vocational meritocracy, in which the writer makes his way to the top on the basis of superior education and talent, rather than social birth or connections—a model which Richard Swartz has explored in his essay on "Wordsworth and the Politics of

Ambition." As early as 1792, Wordsworth wrote to William Matthews that "You have the happiness of being born in a free country, where every road is open, where talents and industry are more liberally rewarded than among any other nation" (EY:77); and in the 1793 *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* he argues that "virtues, talents, and acquirements" should be the only necessary qualifications for political representatives in a republic (1:38). In the *Prelude* too, Wordsworth writes approvingly of Cambridge as a place where "Distinction lay open to all that came,/ And wealth and titles were in less esteem/ Than talents and successful industry" (9.234–36), affirming this ideal of a democratic vocational meritocracy.

Even as he appealed to a general public, though, Wordsworth attempted to assert his professional authority over that public and its manner of reading. The "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, for instance, both empowers readers to judge for themselves and asserts the poet's superior judgment. On the one hand, Wordsworth must appeal to the reader's own individual judgment in order to support his claims against existing poetic norms and authorities; but on the other hand, he wants to assert his own professional qualifications as superior to the reader. Towards the end of the essay, immediately after he calls upon readers to exercise their own judgment, Wordsworth claims that a reader cannot judge without "an *accurate* taste in Poetry," which must be "an *acquired* talent" based on long study, suggesting that "if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so" (1:154, 156, emphases his). The rhetorical temporization of this position, with the caveat that "This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wished him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision," shows Wordsworth's professional double bind. To advance his own claim, he must authorize his readers and persuade them to accept his positions; but in so doing, he also wants to assert his superior professional authority over those readers.

Wordsworth's overall relationship with readers is structured by a similar double imperative, as Lucy Newlyn argues in her essay, "How Wordsworth Kept His Audience Fit." [52] Readers must be active and engaged, but at the same time must follow the promptings of the Poet and ultimately acquiesce in the Poet's authority. Thus the 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" demands that the reader answer the poet's writing with a "corresponding energy" from "within his own mind" (3:82). This "exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader," though explicitly not "passive," must nevertheless be "auxiliary," and so depends on the primary activity of the Poet himself, with whom the reader must establish active sympathy (3:81). Wordsworth

thus authorizes the reader ultimately only as a secondary auxiliary to the poet's own professional authority. In the same spirit, Wordsworth was notoriously testy with readers who did not share his views of his own works, especially the intimate coteries circle that provided his primary audience and support. Thus he hectored Sara Hutchinson on how to read "Resolution and Independence"; wrote "four sweating pages" to Charles Lamb when Lamb was not warm enough in his praise of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*; instructed Lady Beamont's friend Mrs. Fermor at length on the proper interpretation of "With Ships the Sea is Sprinkled"; and heavily censured Catherine Clarkson's friend for her failure to appreciate *The Excursion* properly, to name a few significant instances.[53] Such failures to read in proper sympathy with the spirit of the author were so troubling to Wordsworth because, as Newlyn points out, he based both his identity and his model of reader response generally on his relationship with this intimate coteries audience.[54] Ultimately, Newlyn argues, Wordsworth hoped "to transform an anonymous public into a sympathetic readership, whose credential for understanding him were as sound as his family's and friends."[55] His intimate circle in effect both represented and mediated his relationship to the larger public, with which he could not have direct contact. Wordsworth's assertion of professional authority over this intimate circle of readers was thus analogous to his assertion of authority over the general public.

In typical professional fashion, Wordsworth claimed to use his poetic authority for the disinterested benefit of the public, going so far as to proclaim in a letter to Sir George Beaumont that "Every great Poet is a Teacher: I wish either to be considered as a Teacher, or as nothing" (MY1:195). He ends his public "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" with a somewhat grander version of this claim, connecting this claim of public service with a monumental professional self-authorization, as he

> takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the 'Vision and the Faculty divine;' and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, as a thing that had never been. (3:84)

Poetic identity and this public ideal of professional service were inseparable for Wordsworth. Yet as we have seen, Wordsworth's claims of disinterested

public service, like the claims of other professionals, also cannot be separated from his attempt to monopolize poetic authority and status within the expanding marketplace.

ABUNDANT RECOMPENSE: PROFESSIONALISM, POETIC IDENTITY, AND THE MARKETPLACE

I will turn now to that marketplace, to show how Wordsworth's self-constructed professional identity placed him in uneasy dependence on market culture even as he claimed to free literature from commercialism. In taking this position, Wordsworth was not alone. Paul Keen in *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s* argues that in the 1790s, radical and conservative writers alike increasingly embraced a professional ideal, defining themselves both in opposition to the commercialism of the marketplace and the unproductive leisure of the aristocracy.[56] Such writers authorized themselves in the tradition of civic republicanism by claiming to serve the professional ideals of disinterestedness and public service. Like other professionals, writers were implicated in the market, but claimed they wrote primarily to serve the public good rather than for immediate financial rewards. Yet at the same time, these writers' commitment to liberal individualism led them to affirm their sense of legal ownership over their writing, asserting writing as a legitimate form of property and creating what Keen calls a central tension in the definition of "literature."[57] Wordsworth's construction of poetic identity was thoroughly informed by this same vocational model and central tension.

On the one hand, Wordsworth claimed in typical professional fashion not to write for the sake of financial rewards, and tended to distance himself from the commercial implications of writing. As Charles Rzepka has argued in his reading of "Resolution and Independence," Wordsworth liked to imagine a relationship of reciprocal gift exchange between author and readers, in which the author offers his imaginative services rather than just a literary commodity.[58] Wordsworth explicitly opposed his professional model of authorship against what he represented as the degraded commercialism of much of print culture. In the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, this condemnation of commercial culture appears must strongly in his famous diatribe against the "degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation" which it feeds:

> For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing [sic] accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for

> extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of news hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. (1:129, 131)

As Paul Keen points out, Wordsworth here and in other passages tends to conflate the industrial revolution, the French Revolution, the overwhelming growth of print and its public, and urbanization in general.[59] In so doing, he takes a somewhat contradictory position, reminiscent of Alexander Pope and other eighteenth century poets, by opposing himself as author to the very conditions which make his professional identity possible.

Unlike these earlier poets, however, Wordsworth's professionalized anti-commercialism does not rhetorically dissociate him from literary property and profits. On the contrary, he makes especially strong claims to literary property, arguing that such property inheres *only* in the professional Poet's superior imaginative abilities and identity. Wordsworth showed an uncharacteristically strong interest in maintaining copyrights from his publishers, beginning as early as the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, at a time when it was rare for authors to hold their own copyrights after publication. Even more tellingly, he was one of the main public advocates for the extension of authorial copyright, taking a leading role in support of the M.P. Thomas Noon Talfourd in a public campaign to extend copyright terms in the 1830s and 1840s. [60] Wordsworth argued that the existing copyright term, at the time twenty-eight years or the life of the author (whichever was longer), should be extended into a permanent property right, descending as an inheritance to the author's heirs in perpetuity. In addition to publishing a public editorial in *The Kendal Mercury and Westmoreland Advertiser* (reprinted in the *Quarterly Review*) and allowing a second editorial to be published in *The Morning Post*, Wordsworth by his own estimate sent "at least 40 Letters" to influential lawmakers over a span of three days in March 1837 and over fifty within the span of a month to advocate this extension of copyright.

This concern with copyright can be interpreted as a concern for professional self-possession: in Stephen Gill's words, "for [Wordsworth] taking 'full possession of his own life' meant taking and *keeping* full possession of his own work."[61] Wordsworth's concern with copyright was also explicitly connected with a heightened concern for sales and profits. In two 1799 letters to Joseph Cottle, for instance, he both asks specifically "*what number* [of the books] have been sold" and inquires about the ownership of the copyright, while at the same time writing that he plans to drop the "Rime of the Ancyent

Marinere" from subsequent editions because he believes it has hurt sales, in order to replace it with "some little things which would be more likely to suit the common taste" (EY:264, see also 263).[62] In a letter to Longman about the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, he similarly stipulates the exact financial terms and insists upon the reversion of the copyright to himself, while at the same time proposing to market the book by "sending a few copies to the amount of half a dozen or so to persons of eminence either in Letters of in the state" (EY:310).[63] Wordsworth writes to his brother Richard that after the final sale of the edition "the copyright will revert to me, and I shall take care to know precisely, upon what terms a Bookseller can afford to take it, and he shall not have it a farthing under. These last two editions, I have sold for 1 [sic] third less than they were worth" (EY:337). Later, Wordsworth would negotiate actively with the publisher Edward Moxon to maximize his profits and keep the copyright of his editions of the collected *Poems*, in 1836 for instance refusing an offer of 2/3 of the profits from sales and retention of copyright (which would have come to £771 in profit), and a month later signing a contract for £1000 outright in addition to retaining copyright (after Moxon decided to publish in a more expensive format).[64] Wordsworth's hardball negotiations with publishers and intense preoccupation with literary property are reminiscent of Pope, arguably the two main pioneers in claiming authorial rights over their writing during the period. This active intervention in publishing and marketing is typical of Wordsworth throughout his career, as his insistence on the high moral function of his poetry was matched by an equally close attention to his ownership and financial profits in the marketplace. Lee Erickson, for instance, claims that Wordsworth was the most concerned with copyright and sales of any of the Romantic poets.[65]

For Wordsworth, as for Pope, control of copyright supported claims of autonomous poetic identity. Wordsworth in particular associated literary property specifically with the value of the author's name. In 1829, for instance, he negotiated with the publishers of a fashionable annual anthology, the *Keepsake*, to allow them to publish twelve to fifteen pages of his poetry for the whopping sum of 100 guineas, while at the same time aggressively asserting his right to submit poems to other annuals, together with his continued rights to reprint the poems in his own poetic editions. "They pay for my name fully as much as my verses," he writes," and "Poets should get what they can" (LY1:680).[66] The annuals, high-end publications which made a major initial investment in capital and sold for as much as a guinea per volume, were frankly commercial projects, with no pretensions to enduring literary merit, and Wordsworth's negotiation with the *Keepsake* shows his willingness to engage directly with the commercial marketplace. As Peter Manning argues,

Wordsworth's engagement with such explicitly commercial publication "represents less apostasy from an earlier purity than a manifestation of an investment in the literary market present from the beginning of his career."[67] Unlike the other eighteenth-century poets presented in this book, Wordsworth defined his poetic identity unapologetically in relation to the commercial print market from the beginning.

In addition to his active commercial involvement, Wordsworth was unprecedented in associating his identity as an author specifically with his poetic oeuvre, establishing a direct link between his works, his literary property, and his identity.[68] Susan Eilenberg argues that he associated his poetic oeuvre as a kind of poetic "second self," which would live on and maintain his identity after his death as long as he maintained control of his works' format and copyright.[69] This identification with his published oeuvre reveals itself in Wordsworth's organization of his 1815 *Poems* and later *Poetical Works* to "correspond with the course of human life," and his own life in particular, beginning with poems composed in his youth and then proceeding thematically "commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality" (3:28), as if the published volume and the life were equivalent. Lucy Newlyn also identifies Wordsworth's insistent involvement in controlling the presentation and layout of his works with his need to control his poetic identity and his "increasing preoccupation with the coherence and unity of the poetic self."[70]

Unlike earlier poets in this study, moreover, Wordsworth in his professional self-definition was very explicit about the connection between copyright, property, and labor. Wordsworth's argument for the extension of copyright terms was built on this Lockian equation, as the following passage from his 1838 Kendal Mercury editorial makes clear:

> A conscientious author, who had a family to maintain, and a prospect of descendants, would regard the additional labour bestowed upon any considerable work he might have in hand, in the light of an insurance upon his own life for the benefit of his issue; and he would be animated in his efforts accordingly, and would cheerfully undergo present privations for such future recompense. Deny it to him, and [. . .] you force him to turn his faculties (unless he is unjust to those whom both nature and law require that he should provide for) to inferior employments. (3:312)

Following a standard line of argument in which the literary property of copyright inheres in the author's unique personal style, Wordsworth asserts that imaginative writing is "that species of property which has the highest claim to protection," and in which the "right" of inheritance is "more deeply inherent

[. . .] than in any other" (3:312, 313). Such property, however, exists only for the author who can successfully leave the imprint of his own personality on his work. Copyright is a product of the poet's labor, and hence connected to professional self-definition through work; but it also distinguishes the superior imaginative labor of the genuine poet or genius from the comparatively menial and undignified labor of the hack, who performs only a mechanical function. Wordsworth's definition of copyright thus asserts the professional superiority and intellectual dignity of the true Poet's labor. In the terms of this definition, however, Wordsworth defines dignified authorship or "genius" in terms of lasting value in the marketplace, revealing its dependence on the marketplace even as it defines itself against certain forms of commercialism.[71] Wordsworth also uses the issue of copyright in order to define authorship as a specific "class" or category of identity (3:313). An unpublished draft goes on to compare "the condition of distinguished authors [. . .] with that of men who rise to eminence in other professions or employments" (3:318), hence by implication identifying authorship also as a "profession" and an "employment."[72] Here again, authorial identity emerges as a category in relation to literary property in the marketplace.

Wordsworth also explicitly connected genius to painstaking poetic labor, as in an 1816 letter to R.P. Gillies asserting "the necessity of Labour" in the production of works of genius (*MY*2: 301), and his public insistence in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" on the "labour and pains" he has bestowed upon his works (3:80). Although he placed great emphasis on spontaneous inspiration, he also stressed the "persevering industry" (LY3:575) of disciplined application and painstaking revision—so much so that Ernest de Selincourt claims that "it is probable that no poet ever paid more meticulous or prolonged attention to his text." In his Fenwick notes, Wordsworth similarly speaks of poetic "pains as necessary to produce merit of a certain kind which I highly valued."[73] Wordsworth was famous for tiring himself out with his painstaking revisions, and unlike Pope and other eighteenth-century poets who maintained a claim to identity as leisured "gentlemen," he never shied away from asserting his own hard labor.[74] This claim of dignified and productive labor, together with his assertion of intellectual property and public service, supported his larger claim to professional identity as a Poet.

Wordsworth's deep involvement with the commercial print market began as early in life as his professional aspirations. His attempt to make a living and define his identity through the sales of his writing began as early as 1792, when he wrote to his friend William Mathews that "The field of Letters is very extensive, and it is astonishing if we cannot find some little corner, which with a little tillage will produce us enough for the necessities, nay even

the comforts of life," asking him to "form an acquaintance with some of the publishing booksellers of London, from whom you might get some hint of what sorts of works would be the most likely to answer" (EY:76). Two years later, in planning a radical essay-periodical with Mathews with the projected title of *The Philanthropist*, Wordsworth estimates the probable audience, expenses, and profits of the undertaking; proposes a circulation network "in each considerable town of Great Britain and Ireland, [of] person[s] to introduce the publication into notice" (EY:118–20); asks Mathews to check in with "Johnson my publisher" (EY:123–29) about the sales of his recent poetic publications; and even inquires about the possibility of writing for an opposition newspaper in order to "earn my bread with my pen" (EY:136–39). Later he claims that he published the *Lyrical Ballads* "for money & money alone" and the *White Doe of Rylestone* solely "for the sake of the money" and only to the extent that "it would be likely to have a Sale" (MY1:236), and in his notes to Isabella Fenwick asserts that "I should never have ventured to send forth any verses of mind to the world if it had not been done on the pressure of personal occasion," primarily the pressure of financial exigency.[75] While these latter claims seem doubtful, in view of Wordsworth's overall vocational self-construction, they do show his full willingness to embrace the commercial marketplace in his actual practices, if not in his poetic self-construction. Even after he had deliberately embarked on a professional model of a poetic career, Wordsworth published a number of his poems in the daily newspaper, *The Morning Post*, continuing to work within the central commercial medium of print culture; and the growth of his reputation as a poet depended in large part on the publication of his poems and poetic extracts in newspaper, reviews, and magazines.[76] Wordsworth was thoroughly implicated in the commercial marketplace, even as he attempted to define his poetic identity outside the taint of commercialism.

In similar ways, Wordsworth strenuously dissociated himself from the implications of patronage even as he depended on various forms of patronage throughout his career. Raisley Calvert's bequest of £900 in 1795 was crucial in allowing Wordsworth the independence to undertake an unremunerative vocational path as Poet at that unstable period of his life. Sir George and Lady Beaumont provided similarly crucial assistance, beginning with an 1803 gift of property that literally "enfranchised" Wordsworth as a landowner, freeholder, and voter.[77] Even more significantly, the Beaumonts introduced Wordsworth to a wide coterie of sympathetic readers and elite social circles, a less direct but equally important form of patronage that helped to promote his literary reputation throughout his life. Wordsworth even went so far as to ask Lord Lowther directly for patronage in securing the position of

Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland—a position he secured through Lowther's influence in 1813 and which provided critical financial and personal stability for him and his growing family for the rest of his lifetime. Ironically, even as he asks Lowther for assistance and acknowledges that he has not been able to support himself through his "literary labors," Wordsworth uses the occasion for a proud proclamation of his independence, citing

> an utter inability on my part to associate with any class or body of literary men, and thus subject myself to the necessity of sacrificing my own judgement, and of lending even indirectly countenance or support to principles either of taste, politics, morals, or religion, which I disapproved; and your Lordship is not ignorant that except writers engaged in mere drudgery, there are scarcely any authors but those associated in this manner, who find literature, at this day, an employment attended with pecuniary gain. (MY2:2–3)

Acknowledging patronage would have undermined his claims of professional self-authorization, yet Wordsworth's poetic career would not have been possible without such patronage. Thus even in humbly acknowledging his dependence on Lowther, Wordsworth advances this proud claim of personal autonomy.

To support his claims of autonomy, Wordsworth's published poetry makes almost no mention of patronage. Although he acknowledges Raisley Calvert's bequest in the *Prelude*, Wordsworth does so in a way which emphasizes his own self-determination rather than Calvert's assistance. He writes that Calvert

> By a Bequest sufficient for my needs
> Enable[d] me to pause for choice, and walk
> At large and unrestrain'd, nor damp'd too soon
> By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet
> Far less a common Spirit of the world,
> He deem'd that my pursuits and labors lay
> Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
> Perhaps to necessary maintenance
> Without some hazard to the finer sense;
> He clear'd a passage for me, and the stream
> Flow'd in the bent of Nature. (13.357–67)

In this formulation, Calvert only clears a path for Wordsworth to flow "in the bent of [his own] Nature." Undermining Calvert's authority with the superfluous offhand remark that he was "himself no Poet," Wordsworth acknowledges the significance of Calvert's bequest while at the same time using it to

claim his own poetic autonomy.[78] It is comparatively easy, in any case, to acknowledge a long-dead patron who barely reached majority before his death and so never exercised much power over the writer in the first place. Significantly, the Prelude makes no mention, even in passing, of Wordsworth's much more powerful "patrons" at the time, the Beaumonts, and he remained loath to acknowledge patronage in his public writing throughout his career. By distancing himself from patronage in his self-construction of poetic identity, Wordsworth in effect claimed an "occupational" rather than a "status" professionalism—that is, he claimed to define his professional identity himself through his own education and talents, rather than through his aristocratic connections.

As a number of critics have commented, Wordsworth's sense of implication in the commercial marketplace is powerfully represented in chapter seven of *The Prelude*, especially in the Bartholomew Fair incident at the end of the chapter. In Lucy Newlyn's words, book seven presents a nightmare vision of consumption, amid "a vast and overwhelming system of indecipherable signs."[79] This overwhelming semiotic marketplace breaks down hierarchies and distinctions, as Ross King argues in an essay on "Wordsworth, Panoramas, and the Prospect of London," threatening to reduce all writing to commodity status and turn the professional Poet into a kind of lower class shopkeeper or ballad monger.[80] Book seven presents the danger not only of commercialism, but also of true democratic equality, in which the Poet is on the same level as his readers. Even before he reaches Bartholomew Fair at the conclusion of the book, Wordsworth describes himself as wandering through a disorienting proliferation of commercial writing: from dangling "files of ballads" to "Advertisements, of giant-size" that "Press forward in all colours on the sight" (7.209–11); theaters with words emblazoned on the actors' chests (7.309); and the famous encounter with the blind beggar, with a paper around his neck telling his story and asking for money, which critics have taken as the figure of the dependent author appealing to an unknown print market audience (7.608–23).[81] In another passage, the fronts of shops are compared with the title pages of books, trying to attract crowds of consumers:

> Here, there, and everywhere, a weary Throng!
> The Comers and the Goers face to face,
> Face after face; the string of dazzling Wares,
> Shop after Shop, with Symbols, blazon'd Names,
> And all the Tradesman's honours overhead
> Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page,
> With letter huge inscribed from top to toe (7.171–77).

The "weary throng," circulating into and out of shops, represents also the vast print market public, metaphorically coming into and out of books through the act of reading.

This commercial nightmare culminates in book seven's concluding vision of Bartholomew Fair, which carries much the same associations as Bartholomew Fair in Pope's *Dunciad.* While Pope absents himself from the main scenes of the *Dunciad,* however, Wordsworth in *The Prelude* is cast into the midst of the confusion, suggesting that he must take his place as author in this same commercial market. The passage begins with an uncontrolled proliferation of advertisements and texts, all competing with one another for the attention and money of passing spectators:

> Below, the open space, through every nook
> Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
> With heads; the midway region and above
> Is throng'd with staring pictures, and huge scrolls,
> Dumb proclamations of the prodigies!
> And chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
> And children whirling in their roundabouts;
> With those that stretch the neck, and strain the eyes,
> And crack the voice in rivalship, the crowd
> Inviting [. . .] (7.663–72)

The passage continues on in an interminable, paratactic catalog of confusion, an "anarchy and din/ Barbarian and infernal" (7.660–61), as if the crowded pages of London's print production could come to life in a single overwhelming spectacle. Significantly, Wordsworth invokes the Muse to lodge him "upon some Show-man's Platform" (7.659), as if he too is a literary vendor among the others, vying indecorously for customers. This partial elevation amidst the crowd provides no relief, however. As Sheila Kearns argues, the elevated poet continues to be subject to "the oppressive reading of others," his distinctive authorial identity lost amidst the sea of other authors and ceaseless waves of readers.[82] Amid this Babel of print culture, the individual author cannot come into any sustained sympathetic relationship with any individual reader(s); while conversely, the reader is unable to fix his or her own attention on any one author or text. As a result, individuality is lost and all are reduced to a single mass-produced mill of humanity, in an almost Blakeian vision of "one vast Mill/ [. . .] vomiting, receiving, on all sides,/ Men, Woman, three years Children, Babes in arms" (7.693–95). The spectators circulate among the booths like indiscriminate print market readers, hastily consuming a wide range of texts.

Wordsworth objects not just to the frankly commercial nature of the vendors, but to the whole spectacle's blurring together a "perpetual flow/ Of trivial objects, melted and reduced/ To one identity, by differences/ That have no law, no meaning, and no end" (7.702–5). The Bartholomew Fair vision in this respect is not just a nightmare of print culture, but a nightmare of true egalitarianism, in which all hierarchy and distinction is erased. Wordsworth's desire to be lifted by the Muse above the crowd can also be interpreted in this sense as a desire to reassert a different form of hierarchy.[83] Significantly, the passage is matched against the country fair at the beginning of book eight, which associates the poet's gaze with the heights of Helvellyn, maintaining a comfortable sense of elevation and distance. Among the fair's idealized society of equals, only the poet is placed at a position of superior height. Through this fair, the poet is associated with commerce, but only from a distance; and he is lifted far above the more humble hawkers and entertainers of the fairground, who represent a traditional and unthreatening popular culture. From his elevated vantage point, the poet can still single out specific individuals, thus expressing Wordsworth's ideal sense of relation with his public. Commerce here is represented as an organic part of the social order, which allows the poet to assert his own superior status. Book seven, in contrast, shows the poet sucked into an overwhelming vortex of commercialism, defined by his unavoidable implication in commercial culture as his identity is swallowed up into an undifferentiated crowd of vendors and consumers. The poet's platform in this all-encompassing commercial marketplace is not nearly high or distant enough above the crowd.

RETIRING AMONG THE MOUNTAINS TO WRITE: AUTHORIAL IDENTITY AND ISOLATION

In addition to financial need, Wordsworth's concern with sales may have also have reflected his need for a better sense of his relationship to a largely unknown public. Like other writers at the time, he could gauge his reputation mainly only through the reviews and the number of copies his editions sold. Hence he writes in 1819 that although "Peter Bell has furnished abundant employment to the witlings and the small critics, who have been warring with me for more than 20 years, and seem more bitter than ever," still "Somebody [. . .] must have been pleased, for the Edition was sold in a few days" (MY2:542–43); and in 1833 he expresses befuddlement that "Even the sale of my collected works, tho' regular, is but trifling—this perhaps will surprize you—and, the state of my reputation considered, is altogether inexplicable," though he speculates that the edition's sales were impacted by "the interference of the [pirated] Paris Ed: of which I know the sales have been great"

(LY2:656).[84] Unlike Pope, Cowper, and Beattie with their subscription lists, or even Gray with his circles of Cambridge literati and scholars, Wordsworth had no way to estimate his public directly. Print market sales thus not only represented actual financial gains—which Wordsworth continued to rely upon to supplement his other sources of income throughout his life—but also an indication of his overall status as a poet, crucial to him because he constructed his identity as a poet in vocational terms. Because his vocational claims depended on cultivating a general public, he could not afford indifference to his public status. As Lucy Newlyn argues, Wordsworth yearned to be popular throughout his career, and his vehement appeal to the "People" as opposed to the "Public" in his 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" attempts to compensate for his lack of contemporary reception by projecting his vocational service onto a future public.[85]

In his poetic retirement, Wordsworth faced not only a general sense of authorial disconnection from a growing public, but a particularly exaggerated form of isolation and alienation following his disappointments with the French Revolution. *The Prelude* records this sense of isolation in the vivid metaphor of a leaf separated from the tree:

> I who with the breeze
> Had play'd, a green leaf on the blessed tree
> Of my beloved Country, nor had wish'd
> For happier fortune than to wither there,
> Now from my pleasant station was cut off
> And toss'd about in whirlwinds. (10.253–58)

For Wordsworth and his fellow "Lake Poets," the scattering of republican literary circles under active government repression in the mid–1790s led to a kind of voluntary internal exile, as he moved from London to Racedown and then Alfoxenden, in secluded rural Somerset, and finally to the Lake District. Wordsworth's sense of social and political isolation was further exacerbated by the ambiguity of his social status and his pursuit of the ambiguous and socially marginal profession of poetry. With his Cambridge education and wide travel experience, Wordsworth clearly considered himself a gentleman, but until the settlement of the contested Lonsdale debt in 1802 he was a gentleman with very limited means and no inherited family estate, a reprobate from his guardians' authority, and in effect a downwardly mobile social drifter. Unlike his brothers John and Richard, who secured their social position and financial well-being through the established professions of merchant captain and lawyer respectively, Wordsworth's peripatetic and marginal lifestyle left him without an established category of identity.

Wordsworth's emphasis on constructing his own poetic identity can be seen in this sense as a compensation for the breakdown of his sense of political and intellectual community, as well as his liminal social status. His self-authorizing claims of poetic autonomy attempt to turn this isolation and marginality from a liability into a virtue. In effect, he takes the sense of isolation from a public and lack of recognized social authority that had haunted earlier eighteenth-century poets and turns it from an undermining anxiety into the foundation of his poetic project and identity. Wordsworth's "Preface" to *The Excursion*, in this respect, specifically equates authorial isolation, self-authorization, and the creation of a literary masterwork, establishing his claims to identity on the basis of his retirement from public culture and his dedication to the larger *Recluse* project:

> Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has long been finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, the Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point where he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently mature for entering upon the arduous labor which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. (3:5)

This description of the *Recluse* as "the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement" is circular, as Ashton Nichols points out in *The Revolutionary 'I'*, in that it describes Wordsworth's own situation and so characterizes the *Recluse* as essentially his own "sensations and opinions."[86] Two paragraphs later Wordsworth writes that "the first and third parts of the Recluse [*The Excursion* was to constitute the second] will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person" (3:6). In short, as an "Author retired to his native mountains" or "poet living in retirement," Wordsworth will deliver his own "sensations and opinions" in verse, making himself the central hero of his own

epic poem.[87] This description of the "sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement" might almost be taken as a prospectus for Cowper's *Task*, but it differs from Cowper in its specific vocational claims, its assertion of strong authorial identity, and its elevation of both Poet and poem to a kind of epic or prophetic significance. Wordsworth represents his retirement into the Lake District as a deliberate vocational resolution, valorizing the Poet's isolation and autonomy as an affirmation of own self-sufficient genius. In adverting to the still unpublished *Prelude* manuscript in this public manner, the passage also shows how closely Wordsworth's self-representation, his vocational self-authorization, and his larger poetic project are linked.

In claiming this position of poetic independence in retirement, Wordsworth self-consciously appeals to the precedent of Milton, as he does explicitly and at length in the following poetic "Prospectus," but he also perhaps less consciously draws from the precedent of Alexander Pope, who staked his claims to self-authorization on his retirement to Twickenham, away from London's political and commercial center. Like Pope at Twickenham, Wordsworth's withdrawal to this position of isolation was a deliberate decision, part of a larger project of constructing poetic identity. In taking this position, he joined Pope in equating the traditional model of the poet writing in exile or political opposition with a corresponding opposition to the commercial centrality of print culture. Yet Wordsworth's definition of poetic identity depended even more closely than Pope's on the institutions and categories of that print culture. In addition to his self-definition through literary property, labor, and his relationship to a general public, Wordsworth could only pursue an authorial career from the Lake District because the recently expanded provincial networks of print made it possible for an author living in the provinces to address an increasingly nationalized print culture.[88] Connecting his authorial identity specifically to the Lake District allowed Wordsworth to proclaim his symbolic distance and independence from the print market, while at the same time he continued to depend on that market in order to construct the terms of his identity in relation to a national public.

Despite his exaggerated claims to autonomy, Wordsworth's attempt to construct his authority as a poet by reconstructing the language and audience for poetry put him in a tenuous position, attempting to balance a number of opposing positions. He had to define himself in opposition both to an elite culture of patronage and a commercialized print culture, while in fact depending on both. He had to separate himself from the commercialism of the print market even as he defined his identity in terms of literary property and his vocational service to the general public. He needed to insist that the poet shares an essential language and human nature with other men, but is

also professionally distinguished and imaginatively superior. Finally, he needed to "level" his audience in order to proclaim his autonomy from existing social and cultural authorities, while at the same time imposing a new hierarchy based on the imaginative power and professional authority of the Poet. The next chapter will turn more directly to Wordsworth's poetry, to explore how his poetic self-representation emerged out of these tenuous positions as part of his overall project of vocational self-authorization. Responding to the specific circumstances he faced as an author, Wordsworth constructed a specifically professional version of identity, which he generalized into a universal model of self.

Chapter Seven

Pedlars, Poets, and the Print Market: Wordsworth's Poetic Self-Representation

In the previous chapter, I argued that Wordsworth constructed his poetic identity and relationship with readers on a professional model, as part of a larger strategy of self-authorization. In this chapter, I will explore how his self-representation developed in his poetry in relation to this same model, eventually producing a specifically authorial self that he (and subsequent readers) generalized into a universal model of self. Beginning with the poetry of *Lyrical Ballads* and the *Ruined Cottage* and *Pedlar* manuscripts, Wordsworth first experimented with poetic identity through various characters in displaced forms; then claimed such identity directly for himself in the *Prelude*, "Resolution and Independence," and other poems of direct self-representation. In the process, I will argue, Wordsworth's poetic identity and subjectivity emerged as a kind of side effect of his need to authorize himself in his chosen vocation as Poet. After he established his sense of his own identity through the *Prelude* manuscript, Wordsworth could then return to his main poetic project; and although he never completed the *Recluse*, he would write most of his poetry after the 1807 *Poems* in a public voice, about subjects other than the deep personal self. Seen in this way, Wordsworth's self-representation is inseparable from the cultural and material conditions of his authorship, and above all his need for vocational self-authorization.

Although it is all but impossible to specify the exact time when Wordsworth shifted to a professional model of poetic identity—probably a gradual development, in any case—there are interesting correspondences between his construction of authorial identity as central in his poetry and in his prose. Although even Wordsworth's earliest published poetry presents some sense of prophetic mission, the figure of the "Poet" does not emerge as central until around the end of 1801 and beginning of 1802, when he added the "What is a Poet" section to the "Preface" for *Lyrical Ballads* and added a full scale biography of the Pedlar to his *Ruined Cottage* manuscript.[1] These

dual revisions show increasing preoccupation with the nature of poetic identity, as the character of the Poet suddenly became central to Wordsworth's poetics. Around this time also, Wordsworth began to compose a series of lyrical poems, later printed as "Moods of My Own Mind" in the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*, which turn inward to focus on the poet's own mental and imaginative activities, including his explicit exploration of poetic identity in "Resolution and Independence."[2] Wordsworth's direct construction of poetic identity and his full turn to a poetry of subjectivity and self-representation occur at the same time, as he shifts from his focus on the individual, marginalized subjects of *Lyrical Ballads* to take himself as his own main subject.

"NAY, TRAVELER! REST": THE POETICS OF AUTHORSHIP IN *LYRICAL BALLADS* AND *THE RUINED COTTAGE* AND *PEDLAR* MANUSCRIPTS

Although Wordsworth did not turn explicitly to authorial identity as a central subject until around the end of 1801, there is evidence that he had begun to explore issues of poetic identity intensively as early as 1797, when he composed the first versions of the *Ruined Cottage* and what would become "The Old Cumberland Beggar."[3] These drafts were composed as part of a series of fragments on marginals and mendicants which later developed into the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. Originally, they focus on the poor people themselves and the narrator's identity is largely undeveloped, providing primarily a generic subject position of sensibility from which to observe these figures—an unspecified narrative voice which characterizes the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* overall.[4] As he revised and expanded this material in 1798, however, Wordsworth began to expand these drafts into meditations on poetics, poetic identity, and related philosophical issues, explicitly writing about the Beggar's effects on his viewers and adding the narrative frame to *The Ruined Cottage*. In the process, he separated the narrator of *The Ruined Cottage* from the Pedlar, who tells the main body of Margaret's tale and provides a displaced model of poetic identity.[5] Then from December 1801 into the following summer, Wordsworth began intensive work on the Pedlar's biography, now separate from the rest of the *Ruined Cottage* manuscript. This extensive construction of the Pedlar's biography can be seen as emerging from the need to authorize the main poetic speaker of the *Ruined Cottage* manuscript—a project of poetic authorization which soon began to eclipse the original subject of the poem, as the Pedlar began to displace Margaret as the main focus of the poem's attention.[6]

In his poems of 1802, Wordsworth also began to make his own subjectivity and poetic identity increasingly central to his poetry. Anne Janowitz

speculates in *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* that Wordsworth's addition of the 1802 "What is a Poet" section to his "Preface" may have resulted from his need to theorize the identity of the otherwise unidentified lyric "I" who appears in so many of the *Lyrical Ballads*.[7] The 1805 *Prelude* manuscript can be seen as emerging in this same way, as an attempt to authorize the otherwise unidentified poetic speaker of Wordsworth's lyrics, as well as Wordsworth's attempt to authorize himself in the larger *Recluse* project.[8] Significantly, Wordsworth used sections of the *Pedlar* in his own autobiography, simply shifting them from the third to the first person.[9] This translation shows how closely his exploration of the Pedlar's identity paralleled his own situation as a poet—a connection he made explicit in his later comment to Isabella Fenwick, that "the character I have represented in [the Pedlar] is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances."[10] Wordsworth's turn to self-representation in his poetry can be seen, in this way, as emerging out of his larger project of poetic self-authorization. Just as he constructed the Pedlar's biography to justify him as a speaker, so he constructed his autobiography in the *Prelude* to justify his own authority and poetic role. This poetic identity emerges together with a redefinition of the poet's relationship to his audience and a corresponding new justification of poetry's social role, in ways that I will explore in the following pages. In short, Wordsworth's poetic self-representation emerges as a strategy of self-authorization, in relation to his print market public.

It is revealing in this respect that although "Tintern Abbey" explores self-consciousness and identity at length, it does not seem to offer a vocational model of identity or specific reference to the role of the author in print culture. Instead, the poem abstracts the narrator's identity from all social contexts, defining him in relation to the revisited landscape, the history of his own mental development, and finally the intimate, immediate audience of his sister, whom he addresses explicitly at the end of the poem but who can be taken as the implicit addressee throughout. Wordsworth uses his sister to connect his personal self-reflections to an audience and poetic purpose beyond the self, and in this sense she mediates for the general public, to which the poem was ultimately addressed. The poem, however, does not establish any direct vocational relationship to this public and does not seem to focus on specifically poetic identity. The other poems of subjectivity in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* follow a similar pattern, leaving issues of authorial identity or relationship to the public generally unexplored. Wordsworth purports to send "Lines, written at a small distance from my house" to his sister via a little boy, as a kind of intimate version of print reception, but reflects only on his relationship to nature, not on the theme of poetic communication, personal iden-

tity, or his relation to a larger public. "Lines Written in Early Spring" strips away this frame of reception, commenting directly on nature and humanity without establishing the speaker's own identity or situation. Although Wordsworth had produced substantial versions of "The Old Cumberland Beggar" and *The Ruined Cottage* by this time, it is perhaps significant that he left them out of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, since they raise questions of poetic authority, relationship to audience, and reception that the other poems in the volume do not seem ready to address.

"Lines, left upon the Seat of a Yew-tree" is an interesting poem in this respect, as it foregrounds issues of reception while avoiding the whole issue of poetic identity and authority. The poem can be read as an early version of Wordsworth's poetics of the self, in which the author does not yet have a central role. It begins with a direct address to the individual reader, "—Nay! Traveller, rest" (1), pulling the reader abruptly aside in the tradition of the Classical *Siste Viator*, or epitaphic address to the passing traveler, which Wordsworth explores in his "Essays Upon Epitaphs."[11] The opening "Nay," preceded by an interrupting dash and followed by a forceful command, indicates that this is not initially a sympathetic reader, but must be rhetorically compelled to enter the poem by the authority of the unspecified narrative voice. By singling out the unknown reader and dictating that reader's reception of the poetic text, the poem dramatizes the author's attempt to control the reception of his work by a general print market audience—a dynamic very similar to the Ancient Mariner pulling aside the wedding guest at the start of that poem.[12] Over the course of the poem, "Lines" twice more addresses the reader as an unknown "Stranger" (21, 46), emphasizing the lack of immediate connection or relationship between author and reader and creating a dramatic situation analogous to print market reception.

In its dramatic scenario, the poem claims to be set in a specific landscape, anchoring the poetic text and creating a trope of reverse circulation analogous to the inscribed epitaph of Gray's *Elegy*.[13] In this scenario, the unknown reader must come to the text, rather than the text circulating among its readers, allowing the poem symbolic control over the contexts of its reception. As the unknown reader is invited—or rather commanded—into the Yew-tree bower, he or she is at the same time directed into the poetic text. Though invoking the tradition of funeral monuments, the poem itself is too long for actual inscription, instead offering a kind of extended print epitaph for the recluse who built and frequented the yew-seat, leading to the epitaphic conclusion "In this deep vale/ He died, this seat his only monument" (42–43). As an extended epitaph, the poem focuses explicitly on individual

identity in many of the ways Wordsworth would later theorize in his "Essays Upon Epitaphs."[14]

The poem's epitaphic biography, significantly, establishes the dead recluse as a kind of failed author—a genius unrecognized by the public and thus driven into despair. "He was one who own'd/ No common soul," "by genius nurs'd" and "pure in his heart," but overcome by "neglect" and dwindling into a gloomy solitude (11–14, 18). The poem goes on to identify the yew-seat, where the reader now sits, as the man's most frequent haunt, presenting the interior spaces of the bower as a kind of physical correlate for the interior spaces of individual consciousness. Set apart from any form of direct social space or connection, the yew-seat functions in this respect as an emblem of isolated individualization generally. Almost entirely enclosed in "circling shade" (11), the bower represents the recluse's construction of a closed, autonomous self as a refuge for his lack of connection to audience and the failure of his social ambitions. The text can even be read, in this respect, as a self-written elegy in the tradition of Gray's *Elegy* and its "kindred spirit," and thus as a similarly indirect version of poetic self-representation emerging out of isolation and alienation.

After drawing the reader into sympathy with this epitaphic subject, the poem makes an abrupt shift, using the dead recluse as a negative exemplum to direct the reader's sympathetic imagination to living community. The reader now occupies the habitual seat of the recluse, and so in a sense shares his perspective and consciousness; but the poem warns the reader away from sharing his detached individualism and morbid introversion. The appeal to the reader in the poem's final stanza to turn outwards in social identification, however, also paradoxically continues to direct that reader to solitude and introversion rather than to direct social contact:

> Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
> Howe'er disguised in it own majesty,
> Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties
> Which he has never used: that thought with him
> Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
> Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
> The least of nature's works, one who might move
> The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
> Unlawful ever. O, be wiser thou!
> Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
> True dignity abides with him alone
> Who, in the silent hour of inward thought

> Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
> In lowliness of heart. (46–60)

The reader is directed outwards, towards others; but at the same time, he is directed to connect with those others specifically through "the silent hour of inward thought"—through a process of intense solitary reading and contemplation dramatically represented by the yew-tree bower. As a site of reading, the yew-tree bower thus transforms individual alienation into what the poem calls the "holy forms/Of young imagination" (44–45), in which solitude and introspection paradoxically become the necessary conditions for true social identification. The isolated self of the reader, in other words, opens in sympathetic identification through reading in a way that the isolated self of the recluse cannot. Reading and sympathetic identification thus transform the individualized self from a site of alienation to a site of social identification and connection.

Although "Lines" represents a dramatized situation of print market reception and constructs a poetics based on reader reception, it pays little specific attention to authorship or authorial identity. Though it is possible that the disembodied voice of the "Lines" is the voice of the dead recluse himself, the poem does not explicitly make this identification. In fact, the poem does not locate its voice in any specific way in social or literary space. The confident authority of this voice, pulling the reader abruptly aside at the start of the poem and delivering an equally abrupt didactic message in the final stanza, remains completely ungrounded, and the poem gains its authority primarily from its epitaphic seriousness.

Manuscript D of *The Ruined Cottage* presents almost the exact same situation and message as "Lines," but shifts to make the author and his identity central to the poem. *The Ruined Cottage* is also epitaphic, focusing on the site of the cottage as a kind of memorial for the deceased Margaret, where the Pedlar pronounces his oral epitaph (as the Pastor does for various villagers in books five through seven of the *Excursion*).[15] Like "Lines, left upon the Seat of a Yew-tree," *The Ruined Cottage* specifically individuates the reader, creating a context for reception removed from ordinary social space and authority. *The Ruined Cottage* also dramatizes the process of reading, controlled in this case by the oral presence of the Pedlar or author figure. Significantly, the Pedlar addresses the narrator as "Stranger" in an early manuscript version—a mode of address that survives in the vestigial formal "Sir" of later versions (96, 116, 252), and which creates the same relation between author and unknown individual reader as does the opening address of "Lines." Specifying the author figure and separating him from the deceased, however, *The Ruined*

Cottage emphasizes the author's role and identity and reflects more self-consciously on the author's relation to his reader(s).

As James Chandler and other critics have pointed out, the poem is in these ways as much a dramatization of the act of reading as it is a narrative of Margaret's tragedy. Chandler writes in *Wordsworth's Second Nature* that "every careful student of [the] poem has noticed that the 'I' of the poem [. . .] is a representative of the reader," as he receives and then responds to the Pedlar's tale.[16] In the complementary role of author, the Pedlar teaches the narrator/ reader how to read, imagine, and sympathize properly. The ruins of the cottage become a kind of text for this instruction, given meaning through a process of intense sympathetic "reading." Slumbering on a bench outside the ruins, the Pedlar offers a figure of the author's symbolic presence in the text, coming awake at the moment of the narrator's arrival (i.e. the moment of reading) in order to tell Margaret's story and dictate its reception and significance. Instructed by the Pedlar/ author in this way, the narrator by the end of the poem learns how to read for himself what had at first been unintelligible, as he stands to view the cottage and its "secret spirit of humanity" one more time on his own (503).[17] The Pedlar then concludes his instruction by admonishing the narrator to "no longer read/ The forms of things with an unworthy eye" (510–11), giving a final benediction to the narrator's imaginative education and, through his explication of the spear grass on the crumbling cottage walls, a final lesson on the consolatory powers of the imagination.

In this way, the Pedlar trains the reader's imaginative and sympathetic power, allowing him or her to connect with Margaret through the act of reading.[18] In so doing, the Pedlar functions exactly like the ungrounded voice of "Lines, left upon the Seat of a Yew-tree." Just as that poem uses the recluse's story to direct the reader away from morbid individualism, leading to a process of sympathetic identification through reading, so the Pedlar uses Margaret's story to direct the reader into sympathetic identification and save him or her from Margaret's tragic isolation. In both poems, instruction in reading develops into a larger instruction in individual sympathy, imagination, and ultimately, self-construction. Whereas "Lines" does not provide any specific living focus for sympathy, however, *The Ruined Cottage* directs the reader's sympathy through identification with the author himself, whose imaginative powers he learns to emulate. Revealingly, the narrator (as a figure for the reader) joins the Pedlar on the bench outside the ruins in order to hear his tale, in a kind of mutual identification, and they sit together silently and then rise together from the bench at the poem's conclusion (526–38), affirming this mutual identification. This same bench, significantly, had been Margaret's habitual seat in her mournful period of alienation, as she watched

out over the road for news of her husband and hopes of the connection she could not find within the cottage itself (454–57, 486–90). The bench, in this sense, fulfills the exact same function as the yew-seat in "Lines": it places the reader in the dead person's habitual perspective, transforming that spot through the act of reading from a site of alienation to a site of imagination and sympathetic identification. In "Lines," the reader encounters only a text for guidance. In *The Ruined Cottage*, in contrast, the reader's education is shaped by the commanding central figure of the Pedlar or author himself. The author's mediating role in the process resembles that of a priest, except that whereas the priest mediates between the believer and God, the author mediates between the reader and his own text.

With the author figure playing such an important function in *The Ruined Cottage*, the question of authority, somewhat awkwardly avoided in "Lines" and the rest of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, comes to the surface, and with it the identity and vocational qualifications of the Poet. The Pedlar in this respect represents a displaced version of authorial identity onto which Wordsworth could project his own situation, desires, and anxieties. As he began to expand the Pedlar's biography to construct that figure's identity and justify his authority, Wordsworth experimented in the vocational construction of the Poet which would later provide the basis for his own self-representation.

The Pedlar parallels Wordsworth's situation and fulfills the vocational function of Poet in a number of ways. Just as Wordsworth turned away from the established profession of the clergy, the Pedlar turns away from the established career of a schoolteacher which his family has reserved for him (227–38).[19] Like Wordsworth, the Pedlar instead chooses a much more precarious but also more autonomous profession, in which his constant circulation suggests Wordsworth's own youthful wanderings, and at the same time the circulation of the author through print among his public. The wandering which for Wordsworth remained somewhat aimless, however, for the Pedlar becomes the defining basis of a vocation. These wanderings and the expertise they bring in general human nature, together with the Pedlar's wide and intense youthful reading, heightened mental and imaginative faculties, and habitual early contacts with a sublime landscape, become the basis of his specific professional expertise and authority. Operating in a position of autonomy seemingly independent of established human institutions and social structures, the Pedlar is represented as trained and authorized by Nature himself. Significantly, these are the same sources of authorization that Wordsworth would emphasize for himself in the *Prelude*, where he also claims direct vocational authorization as a "chosen son" of Nature (3.82). Fitting the general model of professionalism as presented in the previous chapter, the

Pedlar is defined by his dignified intellectual work and achieves his status through education, labor, and above all professional merit.

Peddling, of course, would have been considered a trade rather than a profession at the time, since it did not involve liberal arts training, made no direct claim to disinterested public service, and was explicitly commercial in outlook and purpose. All in all, peddling was a decidedly low status occupation, as reviewers of Wordsworth's *Excursion* were quick to point out: a seemingly egregious mismatch for the Pedlar's high diction and lofty thoughts, and hence a blatant violation of poetic decorum.[20] Wordsworth, however, represents that Pedlar more in terms of the professional qualifications of poetry than the commercial qualifications of peddling. It is significant that the Pedlar reads widely during his youth in poetry, mathematics, religion, and popular folklore, a kind of liberal arts curriculum that has little to do with peddling but simulates a form of professional training. He is also described primarily in terms of intellectual rather than physical labor (other than his walking, which Wordsworth associated specifically with poetic composition), and though he presumably depends on his sales to make a living (as an author would), the Pedlar is distanced in the poem from direct commercial associations. Although the Pedlar's "pack of rustic merchandise" is mentioned in passing (*Ruined Cottage*, 44; *Pedlar*, 316), the poems never actually describe him in the act of selling anything and never directly describe his wares, instead focusing primarily on his solitary meditations. The Pedlar's relationship to Margaret, for instance, includes no account of buying or selling or other commercial aspects of his trade, and he seems more like a minister for her than a traveling salesman. As Alan Liu points out, the Pedlar's commercial relationships with his buyers are translated into imaginative or spiritual relationships, though still expressed in commercial terms: "He could *afford* to suffer/ With them whom he saw suffer. Hence it was/ That in our best experience he was *rich*,/ And in the wisdom of our daily life" (MS. E, 328–31, emphases mine).[21]

Though it describes the Pedlar's wanderings and their effects on him for over a hundred lines, *The Pedlar* manuscript makes almost no specific reference to his trade. Ignoring the fact that his profession is to meet people and sell them things, it sets him in "solitude and solitary thought" (266), widely observing human society with a general receptivity but "tuned [. . .] to sympathy with man" by "Nature" (274–76), and specifically walking "among the impure haunts of vulgar men/ Unstained" (250–51). The unspecified "labor" of the "lone enthusiast" seems more likely to be the work of writing poetry than that of selling cheap wares (261–62). Following a professional model, the Pedlar is distanced form commercial associations—"unstained" by commerce as by contact with a vulgar public—and instead given a broad disinterestedness and

seeming autonomy. He is not wholly disconnected from his commercial function, but defined through the services he provides to the general public rather than the profits he makes from it—exactly the position that Wordsworth would claim for his own authorship.

In these ways, the Pedlar is also specifically associated with the bard or minstrel tradition, discussed at length in my earlier chapter on Beattie.[22] Bardic identity fits the professional model quite closely, allowing claims for the poet's autonomy, disinterestedness, self-authorization, dignity, public service, and distance from commercial motivations. As in the professional model generally, the Pedlar's maintenance is described more as a kind of honorarium than a market exchange. Although he receives Margaret's gifts during his repeated visits, the Pedlar is not characterized as dependent upon her or involved in a commercial relationship with her. Instead, she regards him with veneration as a figure of fatherly authority and wisdom, giving him "a daughter's welcome" (95) that completely elides his commercial function. "His eye/ Flashing poetic fire" as he "repeat[s]/ the songs of Burns, or many a ditty wild/ Which he had fitted to the moorland harp—/ His own sweet verse " (*Pedlar*, 318–22), the Pedlar even fulfills the function of the bard or minstrel directly at times. This role becomes even stronger in subsequent revision, when in MS. E he sings "Scotch Songs, sometimes, but oftener [repeats]/ Scotch poetry, old Ballads, and old Tales—/ Love Gregory, William Wallace, and Rob Roy" (85–87). His association with Scottish national songs places him in the bardic tradition as carrying the voice of the nation: a role which Wordsworth imagined for himself, I have argued, in hoping for the general circulation of his works among the rustic populace.[23] *The Excursion* makes this connection with bardic identity directly, identifying the Pedlar with the figure of the minstrel in an extended passage at the beginning of book two that idealizes the minstrel as moving freely among royal and aristocratic courts, abbeys, outlaws, hermits, and wandering pilgrims, in the process "opening from land to land an easy way/ By melody, and by the charm of verse" (2.17–18). The Pedlar, according to the poem, surpasses "the noblest of that honored Race" [i.e. minstrels] in his imaginative capacities, and seems to exist with a similar fortunate freedom (2.19). He also seems independent of economic considerations, as even during the troubled times in which "many rich/ Sunk down as in a dream among the poor,/ And of the poor did many cease to be" he continues in his vocation and imaginative self-sufficiency as if unaffected (141–43).

Like bards and minstrels, pedlars could also represent the poet's idealized relationship of direct contact with a broad public. Pedlars circulated widely among various social classes during the early modern period and had an immediate oral relationship with their public. Wordsworth's poetry often

shows a desire for this same kind of wide circulation and oral relationship with his audience, in ways that seem to compensate for his anxieties of reception and lack of direct contact with his print public.[24] Various sources record Wordsworth reading his poems aloud to a large number of friends, acquaintances, and even previously unknown visitors, and so assuming this oral relationship directly.[25] Imagining his relationship with his print audience as oral allowed Wordsworth to imagine a similarly intimate, sympathetic relationship with his otherwise unknown readers. At the same time, it allowed him to assert authorial control over the process of reception, as the Pedlar does in *The Ruined Cottage*. In imagining the oral relationship of "a man speaking to men," Wordsworth thus imagined an unequal power dynamic, somewhat analogous to a professional person's relationship to his clients.

The figure of the pedlar also represents other aspects of authorship. According to historians, pedlars served as "cultural mediators," bridging the gap between different classes and different regions by spreading news, fashions, and manners throughout their routes.[26] The start of book eight of the *Excursion* goes as far as to compare Pedlars with Knights, associating their vocational wanderings and their civilizing functions: both "refine/ Rude intercourse" and "expel,/ By importation of unlooked-for arts,/ Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;/ Raising, through just gradation, savage life/ To rustic, and the rustic to urbane" (8.66–71). Pedlars tended to carry not only their primary goods of linen, haberdashery, and a wide assortment of commercial trinkets, but also secondary "cultural" wares such as cheap ballads, prints, or pamphlets. As such, they were closely associated with popular culture, making the Pedlar an appropriate medium for Wordsworth's appeal to folk culture and the ballad form. Pedlars sometimes even sang ballads to help sell them, and so performed a minstrel function directly.[27] Like the figure of the bard or minstrel, pedlars thus mediated not only between the various classes of society, but also between print and oral culture.[28] Through the Pedlar, Wordsworth could imagine himself as circulating via his works throughout the nation in a similar way, establishing direct contact with a public of all social classes, educating their sensibilities, and defining his own dignified authorial identity without incurring the stigma of commerce. Like the Pedlar, Wordsworth wanted to operate outside existing systems of social authority, drawing his authority directly from Nature, his own personal talents, and his unique imaginative training. The Pedlar thus offers a displaced figure of Wordsworth's own professional identity, as well as a kind of rehearsal for Wordsworth's own poetic self-representation. In the Pedlar, the poet's sense of isolation in relation to his public is transformed into an individualized ministry and a vocational autonomy.

DISPLACED FIGURES OF AUTHORSHIP: THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR AND THE LEECH-GATHERER

Much like the Pedlar, the Old Cumberland Beggar and the Leech-gatherer provide displaced figures of authorial identity, embodying vocational roles in ways that allowed Wordsworth to experiment with the role and identity of the author before representing his own authorial identity directly. In contrast with the Pedlar, however, these figures are more destitute and more marginal, representing darker aspects of Wordsworth's marginal professional status. As Gary Harrison points out in *The Vagrant Muse,* the idea of "independence" (as in "Resolution and Independence") was by Wordsworth's time linked both to the idea of the virtuous and industrious poor and to the situation of the print market author, earning a precarious living through his or her writing. As Harrison writes, "Wordsworth saw in beggars and vagabonds a troubling double for the poet—a marginal whose questionable value to society needed to be justified."[29] Both the Old Cumberland Beggar and the Leech-gatherer provide specific instances of this connection, as Wordsworth's justification of their independence despite their marginal social positions becomes, among other things, a justification of his own vocational role and identity.

Both the Old Cumberland Beggar and the Leech-gatherer circulate widely, and both represent the kind of immediate, one-to-one relationship that Wordsworth liked to imagine with his own readers. Whereas the Leech-gatherer maintains a dignified agency and voice in the face of hardship, however—reassuring to the narrator as he thinks of "mighty Poets in their misery dead" (123)—the Old Cumberland Beggar is reduced to a passivity more reminiscent of a material text than an author. Although he is an object of sustained sympathetic attention by a wide variety of people from all social classes throughout the poem, the Beggar sees none of them, his eyes fixed habitually on the ground. Seen but unseeing in his circulation, the Beggar offers an emblem of the author circulating via his works among unknown print market readers. The Beggar is repeatedly described as solitary in the poem, and the phrase "He travels on, a solitary man" is repeated twice verbatim only twenty lines apart (25, 44), calling attention to the Beggar's circulation as well as his solitariness. The Beggar is connected directly to nature and to solitude, like the Pedlar, but in a more ambivalent way that represents the more troubling dependencies of a poetic vocation.

Despite his decrepitude, vulnerability, and direct dependence on others, however, the beggar also serves a dignifying social function analogous to that of the Poet. Metaphorically linked to writing, he is identified as a "record" binding together "past deeds and offices of charity" as he "creeps/ from door to door" (79–82), fulfilling the same function that Wordsworth ascribes to

the epitaph in the village churchyard in his "Essays Upon Epitaphs" (which provides a "favourable Register lying open to the eyes of all" (2:64)). Although he has no direct agency of his own, the Beggar educates and gradually elevates the sympathetic and imaginative power of his "readers" in precisely the same manner Wordsworth argues the Poet must do in his "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*.[30] Through repeated contact with the Beggar, "The mild necessity of use compels/ To acts of love, and habit does the work/ of reason," until "the soul,/ By that sweet taste of pleasure [in giving alms] unpursu'd/ Doth find itself insensibly disposed/ to virtue and true goodness" (91–97). The emphasis on pleasure and habitual contact in enlarging the faculties of viewers repeats the description of poetry's function in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* exactly. Active observation and charity to the Beggar thus becomes analogous to the reader's active imaginative response to a poetic text. Unlike Wordsworth's ideal Poet figure, the Beggar has no direct control over the process of his reception, relying entirely on the charity of his "readers." Despite this lack of active agency, however, the Beggar performs exactly the same service as the Poet, binding together a society of scattered individuals by educating their individual sensibilities and providing a central focus that allows them to associate and identity with one another.

As Alex Dick argues in his essay on "The Unproductive Labors of the Old Cumberland Beggar," Wordsworth's vehement justification of the Beggar's role ("deem not this man useless" (66)) thus registers not only his opposition to the reform of the charity laws, but also his more immediate need to justify his own poetic vocation, which also serves no obvious utility.[31] The Beggar, in this respect, is very similar to the main figure in "A Poet's Epitaph," another poem first published in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* which explores authorial identity even more directly. The main figure addressed by the poem, a "second self" called in sympathetic identification to stretch his body or "build thy house full length" upon the Poet's grave, shows a similar lack of social usefulness. Like the Beggar, he is an "idler in the land" (54), associated with the English pastoral emblems of "running brooks," "noonday grove[s]," and "noontide dew" (39, 41–42). He too is "weak" and identified with "solitude" in Nature (48, 58, 53). This figure of the Poet is less passive than the Beggar, in that he can impart "random truths" from common things," and thus produce "the harvest of a quiet eye/ That broods and sleeps on his own heart" (48–52), and "impulses of deeper birth/ Have come to him in solitude" (47–48). Significantly, this figure is introduced after a parade of other more established professions are summoned and rejected in turn as unfit to associate with the Poet's tomb: "Statesman," "Lawyer," "Doctor" [i.e. clergyman], "Soldier," "Physician," and finally and more generally, "Moralist."

This catalog of rejected professions suggests that the Poet has his own profession, different from these others in qualifications and function. In "A Poet's Epitaph," however, this function remains largely undefined, though clearly valorized. The poet figure is not associated with any particular social service and does little else in the poem *but* establish his own identity, by associating himself with the dead Poet's grave. By educating and providing a focal point for others' sympathy, the Old Cumberland Beggar provides a more specific model of what the Poet's defining professional service to the public might be.

The Old Cumberland Beggar also indirectly allows the narrator of the poem to construct his own identity as a poet. "Him from my childhood have I known," the narrator asserts early in the poem (20). Later he describes the beggar's influence in educating those

> By their good works exalted, lofty minds
> And meditative, authors of delight
> And happiness, which to the end of time
> Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
> In childhood, from this solitary being,
> This helpless wanderer, have perchance receiv'd
> (A thing more precious far than all that books
> Or the solicitude of love can do!)
> That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
> In which they found their kindred with a world
> Where want and sorrow were. (98–108)

The "authors of delight/And happiness, which to the end of time/Will live"—specifically using the word "authors"—suggests that Wordsworth includes himself in this same category, classifying his own writings among what he elsewhere calls the "productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance" (3:35). Hence even in using the Cumberland Beggar to represent the anxious marginality of authorship, Wordsworth also constructs a contrasting model of his own projected authorial dignity and transcendence.

Whereas the Beggar dramatizes the public services and identity of the Poet in a displaced form, the Leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" provides a more direct vehicle for self-representation and self-authorization. The isolation and continual circulation of the Leech-gatherer, his stirring the waters of the pond with his pen-like staff, and his trade of gathering leeches all suggest his function as a symbolic representative of the Poet, operating within the print market contexts of the time. As Robert Essick and Cheryl Wanko have argued in short essays on leechcraft and poetry, the

Leech-gatherer exemplifies aspects of Wordsworth's overall poetics. The Leech-gatherer collects his leeches passively by standing in the pond and allowing them to affix to his legs, just as Wordsworth theorized passivity and receptivity as central to the process of poetic composition. At the same time, the Leech-gatherer's association with healing reflects Wordsworth's sense of his own vocational function, transferring the poems (like leeches) from himself to his readers for their imaginative and spiritual benefit.[32]

In pursuing this trade, the Leech-gatherer, is autonomous and wanders freely throughout the country, much like the Pedlar. His words, as "each in solemn order followed each,/ With something of a lofty utterance drest;/ Choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach/ Of ordinary men; a stately speech" (100–3), suggest the cadenced dignity of verse. In contrast, the dehumanized materiality with which his body is described, first as a "Stone" (64) and then as a "Sea-beast" (69) crawled out to sun itself, suggests the materiality of the text. Like a text to which one can return for repeated rereadings, the Leech-gatherer seems willing to repeat himself indefinitely in response to the narrator's repeated inquiries. Part dignified intellect and part material body, "not all alive nor dead" (71), the Leech-gatherer seems to represent the symbolic presence and circulation of the author in his texts—a kind of extended authorial life which, I have argued in the previous chapter, Wordsworth projected through his own writing.

Although the Leech-gatherer is defined by his work, his commercial function, like that of the Pedlar, is notably absent from the poem. In an earlier draft, much closer in its details to the actual encounter that Dorothy records in her *Grasmere Journal*, the Leech-gatherer is specifically described as a pedlar, wearing "Beneath his Cloak a round & bulky Pack,/ A load of wool or raiment it might seem," and his commercial function is specified exactly:

> This is my summer work in winter time
> I go with godly books from Town to Town
> Now I am seeking Leeches up & down
> From house to house I go from Barn to Barn
> All over Cartmell Fells & up to Blellan Tarn.[33]

Even in this earlier version, Dorothy's detail about the Leech-gatherer's occasional begging is suppressed, as a decidedly less "independent" activity.[34] As he revised the poem, Wordsworth further reduced the Leech-gatherer's biographical details and distanced him from his commercial function, turning the Leech-gatherer into a more appealing symbolic representative of Wordsworth's own imagined vocational identity. Although the commercial reality of the Leech-gatherer's work is still acknowledged in the final published

poem, the actual details are elided, increasing his dignity and autonomy while distancing him from commercial associations. Instead of wandering "from Barn to Barn" among his customers, as in the earlier draft, he now wanders "from Pond to Pond" and "from moor to moor," as if he gains his "honest maintenance" directly from nature without needing to enter the marketplace or address his customers (110, 112). The finished poem focuses entirely on the act of gathering the leeches—and by analogy, the act of composing poetry—ignoring all relationship to the public. The independence of the Leech-gatherer in this way seems to affirm the similar independence of the Poet, also able to continue in his dignified vocation regardless of the actual public's response. In the action of the poem, the Leech-gatherer plays a poetic rather than a commercial role, educating the narrator with his "stately speech" and example, though no commodities or money exchange hands (103). The shift of title, from "The Leech-gatherer" to "Resolution and Independence," similarly shifts attention from the Leech-gatherer's commercial function to his philosophical message and service.

In his essay "A Gift the Complicates Employ: Poetry and Poverty in 'Resolution and Independence'," Charles Rzepka associates the Leech-gatherer in this way with a gift exchange rather than commercial economy, arguing that he represents an idealized version of poetic vocation that compensates for some of Wordsworth's professional anxieties.[35] One such anxiety, Rzepka argues, is lack of productivity. The narrator begins, in this respect, in a state of idleness, as if "others" (perhaps patrons, or readers) will love him and provide for him without his own effort. Rzepka reads the poem in this way as a symbolic resolution of Wordsworth's professional anxieties at a time of financial difficulties and upcoming marriage: a self-addressed admonition to get back to work after a long period in which his imagination had lain fallow. In so doing, the poem also affirms his ability to continue writing and so continue to provide for his "worldly maintenance" in spite of an unpredictable print market public and the equally unpredictable resources of his personal imagination. Rzepka interprets the staff, with which the old man stirs the waters of the pool "as if he had been reading in a book" (88), as an emblem of authorial labor and revision, and notes the emphasis on labor throughout the poem.[36] Gary Harrison offers a similar reading of the poem in *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse*, claiming that the Leech-gatherer represents the liminal but charismatic status of authors and reflects the ambivalent need for "independence"—a word connected both with authors and with the deserving poor.[37] The narrator identifies himself specifically as a poet in the poem, comparing his situation with that of Burns and Chatterton and including himself in the category "We Poets" (48). With

these associations, the encounter with the Leech-gatherer allows Wordsworth to affirm his poetic autonomy and dignity in spite of the anxieties of authorship.

The Leech-gatherer also suggests a justification for poetic self-representation which Wordsworth made central to his own author-centered poetics. Although seemingly independent of audience, the Leech-gatherer does educate the narrator by providing an example of imaginative autonomy and self-defining subjectivity. By speaking of his own life, the Leech-gatherer allows the narrator to construct his own identity according to a similar model. Wordsworth's self-representation performs the same function for the individual reader, providing a model of imaginative self-construction which justifies his poetry in terms of public service without needing to recognize or address his reader directly.

All three figures, the Pedlar, the Old Cumberland Beggar, and the Leech-gatherer, represent related versions of Wordsworth's vocational identity as a Poet. All three are involved in immediate or oral relationships as they circulate, representing a sense of connection with an unknown print market public and, for the Pedlar and Leech-gatherer, some control over the terms of reception. Through these relationships, all three figures directly or indirectly instruct others in how to "read" properly and in the process develop the sympathetic and imaginative powers of those "readers." All three are connected to trades in some way (if one takes begging as a kind of trade), but relate to others primarily through gift rather than commercial exchange, and each one's primary function in the poem is to provide disinterested service to others. At the same time, all three figures are connected to and in some way directly authorized by Nature, independent of existing human systems of authority. These aged but constantly circulating figures represent a sense of longevity and lasting value which suggests the function of the "Classic" text—like the Beggar, whom the narrator has known since childhood but who seems no older now than he was then (22–23). With these associations, the figures provide a kind of mythic initiation into poetic identity that allows Wordsworth to imagine his own identity outside existing systems of authority. In this capacity, all are old men, carrying staffs that evoke a kind of mage-like authority and mentorship. Yet because these figures have low social status, they can authorize Wordsworth as a poet without threatening his autonomy. Like earlier eighteenth-century poets such as Beattie and Gray, Wordsworth thus uses these displaced figures of authorial identity to explore and indirectly construct his own authorial role and identity. He goes beyond Beattie and Gray, however, by turning in *The Prelude* to construct his own direct self-representation and poetic identity.

WANDERING, VOCATION, AND SELF-REPRESENTATION

The wanderer is an important figure of poetic identity throughout Wordsworth's poetry. Looking beyond these three particular poems to Wordsworth's overall oeuvre, figures of the wanderer proliferate everywhere. The loco-descriptive narrators of *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* and both the male protagonist and main female character of the Salisbury Plain poems are all wanderers. The first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* adds to this catalog of drifters and otherwise solitary and alienated individuals, including not only the Mariner in Coleridge's opening "Rime," but the "Female Vagrant" (lifted from the Salisbury Plain manuscripts), "The Mad Mother," the "Old Man Travelling," the ruined shepherd in "The Last of the Flock," the "Forsaken Indian Woman," and Wordsworth himself in "Lines, written a few miles above Tintern Abbey."[38] Although in one sense these figures represent the breakdown of British rural society under the pressure of war and economic hardship—depicting the actual vagrants whom Wordsworth would have encountered in his travels and later on the public highway in front of his Grasmere cottage—in another sense they allow Wordsworth to explore the liminality and marginality of own identity. Taken in this sense, the social breakdown portrayed in *Lyrical Ballads* and Wordsworth's other poetry of the period represents not only the social fragmentation of Britain under the pressures of bad harvests, industrialization, and war, but also the fragmentation of the reading public and isolation of the individual author within the changing social and economic contexts of writing.

It is significant in this respect that Wordsworth so often represents himself as a wanderer, in what becomes almost his paradigmatic mode of self-representation. Poems such as "Stepping Westward," "The Solitary Reaper," "The Discharged Soldier," "A Night-Piece," "I traveled among unknown men," "I wandered lonely as a cloud," "The Highland Girl," *The Excursion*, and the opening of the *Prelude*, in addition to so many of the *Lyrical Ballads*, place him out on the public paths and highways. Wordsworth did in fact walk and travel continually throughout his life, and he liked to compose his poetry while walking outdoors on level ground, but wandering has other, more significant associations with his poetic identity. As Gary Harrison argues in *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse*, Wordsworth tended to envision his own authorial identity in terms of vagrancy or wandering, as when he sets off on the open road at the beginning of the *Prelude* to affirm his vocational identity, after having pitched his "vagrant tent" during his time in London (6.70).[39] "Few sights more please me than a public road," he declares in book twelve of the *Prelude*, "such object hath had power/ O'er my imagination since the dawn/ Of childhood" (12.145–48). In the Fenwick notes, Wordsworth asserts "wandering" as his

passion, comparing himself in this respect explicitly with the Pedlar.[40] Wandering in these ways reflects his sense of poetic autonomy and desire to distance himself from existing social hierarchies and authorities, but it also reflects his idealized relationship with a general print market audience.

As with the Pedlar, the wandering poet's circulation stands in symbolically for the circulation of his works, giving him an oral relationship and immediate one-to-one contact with his audience that alleviates anxieties of disconnection from the public and allows him to assert control over the terms of his reception. Though Wordsworth was often accompanied by others on his walks and tours, his poems tend to represent him as solitary and autonomous. By the same token, within his poems he tends to come into contact with other solitary individuals. Rarely in his poems does he encounter more than one, or at most two or three, other people.[41] Wordsworth's poems of wandering thus provide a model for his imagined one-to-one hermeneutic relationship with an audience of individual readers. Significantly, he does not usually represent himself in the bardic role of addressing a knot or crowd of listeners (*Peter Bell* provides a notable exception), but in sustained relationship with individuals more characteristic of solitary print market reading. Thus even Wordsworth's imagination of poetic orality is structured by print culture.

Wandering on the public roads also allows Wordsworth to represent himself encountering what is an essence a democratized public of travelers from all social classes, especially lower class rustics and indigents who would probably not encounter his poetry in print form. As the steady streams of travelers and vagrants passed by Wordsworth's door at Grasmere cottage on the main highway through the Lake District, they became a living manifestation of the general public to which he addressed his writing. In the process, they affirmed both the common humanity and stubborn individuality of his audience. Hence in an extended passage of book twelve, Wordsworth declares his affinity for "Pathways" and "lonely Roads," where "wandering on from day to day" he can "meditate in peace, and find/ The knowledge which I lov'd, and teach the sound/ Of Poet's music to strange fields and groves," and at the same time "converse with men where if we meet a face/ We almost meet a friend" (12.124, 137–42). This celebration of the public road then develops into one of Wordsworth's great affirmations of "the dignity of individual Man" (12.83), regardless of class, since all people (and readers) share one "universal heart" (12.219). It is on the "lonely road," which he describes as a "school," that Wordsworth

daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind,

> There saw into the depths of human souls,
> Souls that appear to have no depth at all
> To vulgar eyes. (12.163–68)

As a "school," the roads allow Wordsworth to learn about human nature and develop his vocational credentials as a Poet. At the same time, the roads represent the larger public "school" in which he claims his primary function as a teacher, as he meets, edifies, and enlarges the "universal heart" of his public, one individual encounter at a time. This emphasis on the dignity, depth, and common humanity of each individual may be a democratic credo, but it is also a vocational credo, leveling and expanding the public in order to assert Wordsworth's own professional function as a poet.

The opening passage of the *Prelude* shows how this trope of wandering is linked to Wordsworth's sense of vocation and his project of self-representation. Wordsworth describes himself in the *Prelude* as a "Traveller" whose "Tale is of myself" (3.196–97), and at the beginning of poem constructs his identity specifically through wandering. The poem begins, in this respect, *in media res,* with the poet already on the road, having escaped from the city's "prison" and now "free, enfranchis'd and at large" (1.8–9). As Brook Hopkins argues in "Wordsworth's Voices: Ideology and Self-Critique in *The Prelude*," this opening section is characterized both by a massive egotism—repeating "I," "me," and other possessive forms of the first person 23 times in the opening verse paragraph alone—and at the same time by a repeated exploration of the theme of freedom.[42] Comparing himself to a "wandering cloud" (1.18), Wordsworth begins with complete autonomy and complete separation from social space and authority: hence with an open field for vocational self-authorization. His almost existential act of self-determination, "I made a choice/ Of one sweet Vale whither my steps should turn" (1.81–82), offers itself also as an entirely free choice of vocation, as the following lines make clear: "nor did I fail/ To add, meanwhile, assurance of some work/ Of glory, there forthwith to be begun,/ Perhaps, too, there perform'd" (1.84–87).

As David Simpson documents in *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, this opening section returns repeatedly to the necessity of labor: the contrast between the absolute freedom of choosing his own vocation, on the one hand, and the need to embark on his great vocational task, on the other.[43] Almost immediately, the spontaneous bardic wandering with which the poem begins transforms into the necessity of vocational labor, through which both Wordsworth's poetic identity and professional service must be defined: the need to "dedicate myself to chosen tasks" (1.34), or in short, to get to work. From this point of vocational choice until the poem launches into its autobiographical

narrative, the *Prelude* is haunted by the necessity of labor, alternating between cheerful assurance of a future work to be performed and despondency at the poet's inability to begin that work. This tension, between an emphasis on spontaneity and receptivity, on the one hand, and the need to define his identity through labor, on the other, was central to Wordsworth's construction of his identity as poet. As David Simpson argues in his extended reading of "The Gipsies," Wordsworth was both fascinated with leisure and deeply anxious about the perceived unproductivity of poetic work.[44] The entire opening section of *The Prelude* fluctuates rapidly between these poles, beginning with the prospect of "long months of ease and undisturb'd delight" (1.28), as he lies on the "genial pillow of the earth" hearing and seeing nothing but the occasional dropping acorn (1.88–94); then offering "trial of my strength" in renewed poetic composition, lapsing into "utter silence," and declaring a "sabbath," or temporary freedom from work (1.103,108,113); and finally rousing himself once more to begin his epic poem before declining into failure and despondency at his inability to fix upon a theme, let alone begin writing. Ultimately, Wordsworth's poetic identity depends on his ability to complete this epic "work/ of glory" (1.85–86) which he projects, and which alone can justify the terms of his self-appointed poetic office.

As he prepares to undertake this "glorious work," Wordsworth turns to evaluate his training and capacities (or professional credentials) for the task, making "rigorous inquisitions" of himself (1.159–60). The catalog which follows essentially repeats the same terms that Wordsworth lists as necessary to the Poet in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and other theoretical writings: "the vital soul," or natural sensibility and imagination; "general truths," or general liberal arts learning and knowledge of human nature; and "external things,/ Forms, images; [and] numerous other aids/ Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil/ And needful to build up a Poet's praise," or the specific skills of poetic composition, acquired through long study in literature (1.162, 163, 166–69). Thus even at this point, before he has failed in his attempt to choose a poetic theme, the necessity of self-authorization turns Wordsworth inward into poetic self-representation, in order to enumerate his own personal qualifications. No one else can affirm Wordsworth in this identity of Poet, so he must do so himself, as the need for vocational self-authorization leads directly to self-representation.

Wordsworth's choice of poetic identity in this opening section is also associated with vocational dignity, disinterestedness, social service, and distance from commercial motivations: all significant aspects of the professional model. The poetic vocation requires "active days, of dignity and thought,/ Of prowess in an honorable field,/ Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and

delight,/ The holy life of music and of verse" (1.51–54). This description establishes poetry as an "honorable" and even "holy" profession, which requires "active days" of labor. Wordsworth makes no connection between the active work of this vocation and the commercial realities of making a living, however. Instead, he describes himself in terms of professional service in religious language that invokes the profession of clergyman that he rejected: "cloth'd in priestly robe/ My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,/ For holy services" (1.61–63). Wordsworth does not, however, specify his audience or exactly what services he will perform: a lack of attention which suggests he will be granted a poetic "living" as removed from the insecurities of commercial exchange and audience as a living in the Anglican Church.

Both in his freedom from financial concerns and his autonomy, Wordsworth represents himself as a latter-day bard or minstrel figure, much like his own Pedlar. He anoints himself in this holy role, "singled out" for "holy services" not by others, but by his own professional self-authorization (or by Nature itself, which amounts to much the same thing). This self-authorization takes place completely without reference to a public or the specific services he will perform, though it is clear that he must perform vocational "services" of some sort. Wordsworth represents himself as telling his "prophecy" in "poetic numbers" to the "open fields" (1.59–60), without a human audience. In the process, he hears not only the external sound but also the "internal echo" (1.65) of his own voice, becoming in effect his own audience. Although initially exhilarating, however, this absolute freedom and separation from a public rapidly generates a disabling anxiety, in which the poet's self-assertion becomes "a redundant energy/ Vexing its own creation" (1.46–47). Wordsworth's inability to fix on a specific poetic theme, in this respect, may reflect his lack of an established public audience or context, which leads to a rising crescendo of self-doubt and desperation. His admission of failure concludes with the simile of "Unprofitably travelling towards the grave,/ Like a false Steward who hath much receiv'd/ And renders nothing back" (1.270–72). This "false steward," of course, comes from the parable of the talents in the Gospel of Matthew, and has both vocational and commercial implications. Here, it demands that the poet get to work, primarily to fulfill a social and religious duty, but also secondarily to earn a living. Most importantly, though, Wordsworth must get to work in order to sustain his own self-authorized poetic identity, which depends both on poetic production and public service.

This opening section connects Wordsworth's frequent trope of wandering with his vocational identity. It reflects his claims to authorize himself in the dignified and autonomous calling of Poet, completely independent of

existing social authorities, and his corresponding sense of isolation and anxiety, including his sense of separation from audience and uncertainty of poetic purpose. As such, it repeats many of the themes Wordsworth had explored earlier through displaced figures of authorial identity, such as the Pedlar, the Old Cumberland Beggar, and the Leech-gatherer. As this sense of separation from audience and need for self-authorization baffles Wordsworth's attempt to find a poetic subject, he turns back upon himself once more, and the poem shifts into its full-scale autobiographical project. This project, however, has already been underway from the beginning. By the time he launches into the account of his own life, shifting direction mid-line in the famously self-referential exclamation "Was it for this" (1.272), Wordsworth has already effectively taken himself as his own subject, offering more direct and specific self-representation in these opening lines than almost anywhere else in his preceding poetic oeuvre. The need for vocational self-authorization, in isolation from an established social context or audience, thus drives Wordsworth directly into his project of self-representation.

SELF-READING, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SELF-AUTHORIZATION

Wordsworth's *Prelude,* as a number of critics have pointed out, is not just a general autobiography, but a specifically vocational, teleological account of how Wordsworth developed into a Poet: "The Growth of a Poet's Mind," as the subtitle puts it.[45] Clifford Siskin calls the poem a massive vocational self-authorization, the "most extraordinary resumé in English history." M.H. Abrams connects it with the tradition of the *Künstlerroman,* or (auto)biography of the author's development. Kenneth Johnston characterizes the poem as a massive self-authorization to jump start the stalled *Recluse* project—Wordsworth's attempt to establish his poetic identity and authority in order to gain traction for his larger project.[46] Wordsworth himself describes the poem, in his "Preface" to *The Excursion,* as an "ante-chapel" to the projected "gothic church" of his complete poetical works (3:5), and in a letter to George Beaumont, as a "portico" to the greater work of the *Recluse,* "part of the same building" (EY:594). As even the name of the poem suggests, *The Prelude* was not designed as a destination but as an entryway. The same can be said of Wordsworth's self-representation and construction of authorial identity generally: that it was not an end in itself, but the entryway through which he hoped to achieve the greater, more public works he projected. *The Prelude* was meant to serve the same purpose, in this respect, as the biography of the Pedlar at the start of *The Excursion,* establishing the identity and authority of the poet in order to support his later utterances. In a strange twist of literary history, as

Ashton Nichols points out in *The Revolutionary 'I,'* the grand entryway has since become the main poetic cathedral, as *The Prelude* and its construction of personal and authorial identity has supplanted *The Excursion* and the never-accomplished *Recluse* as Wordsworth's definitive poetic monument.[47]

The Prelude is structured throughout by this vocational purpose, and it both begins and ends with reference to the larger *Recluse* project that Wordsworth had established as his main poetic goal. The first book opens by taking stock of possible themes for this project and the poet's capacities for carrying it out, as Wordsworth dedicates himself to his poetic vocation. From there, the poem expands into an epic account of his development and the specific professional education and expertise that qualifies him for this role. Beginning with his youthful education, as a "chosen son" of Nature, the poem documents Wordsworth's development through the ever widening interruptions of Cambridge, the walking tour in the Alps, his sojourn in London, and the French Revolution, circling back in book 10 when, with a little help from his friends, he realizes his "true self" as a "Poet," finding "beneath that name/ My office upon earth, and nowhere else" (10.915, 919–20). *The Prelude* then concludes by proclaiming that "this History is brought/ To its appointed close: the discipline/ And consummation of the Poet's mind" (13.269–71), with the hope that "the history of a Poet's mind/ Is labour not unworthy of regard" (13.408–9). The self that Wordsworth represents in the *Prelude*, in short, is from beginning to end his vocational self as a Poet, and the poem is structured throughout around this drama of vocational self-affirmation. It ends where it begins, with the Poet's current situation, having reached

> The time (which was our object from the first)
> When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
> Suppose my powers so far confirm'd, and such
> My knowledge, as to make me capable
> Of building up a work that should endure. (13.274–78)

Wordsworth's confidence is belied here by the conditionality of the hope—for the great "work" remains to be accomplished—but the poem's construction of poetic identity is clearly inseparable from this larger poetic ambition. Its self-representation exists primarily to confirm his poetic powers and authority.

Various critics, such as Sheila Kearns, Ashton Nichols, and Leon Waldoff, have written at length about the rhetorical processes through which Wordsworth constructs this model of the self as apparently autonomous—showing, for instance, how he proclaims his self-determination and distances himself from Coleridge even as he uses Coleridge as the central addressee of the poem.[48] I have made a general case already for how this "self" of the Poet

is structured by the model of professionalism, in relation to the poet's print market public. In the remainder of this chapter, I want to focus on two specific ways that Wordsworth's self-representation connects with this professional model and its print market contexts. His claims to autonomy for the self, I will argue, are usually advanced as professional claims; and he tends to make these claims and construct his poetic identity through a specific strategy of professional self-authorization in which the poet becomes his own primary judge and interpreter, which I will term the strategy of self-reading.

Earlier in the chapter, I argued that Wordsworth tends to construct his poetic identity through individual encounters outside existing structures of social and poetic authority. Marginal figures such as the Pedlar, Leech-gatherer and Old Cumberland Beggar assist him in this process of self-authorization, providing examples of imaginative self-sufficiency and vocational autonomy. The Pedlar provides a particularly important model of such self-sufficiency. When he first meets the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*, the narrator has been wandering alone, hot and weary over a "bare wide Common" (19), but he finds the Pedlar lying with "his hat/ Bedewed with water-drops, as if the brim/ Had newly scoop'd a running stream" (49–50). The bedewed hat at mid-day offers an emblem of imaginative self-sufficiency. Significantly, the Pedlar's first act upon awakening is to direct the narrator to refresh himself by scooping water at the well—an office that Margaret once performed for weary travelers, but which the self-authorizing poet must now learn to do for himself, just as he must learn to produce and affirm his own individual identity. Over the course of the poem, as the narrator internalizes the lessons of the cottage, he also develops this internal imaginative self-sufficiency, in effect transforming the cottage's external well into an internal source. This emphasis on self-authorization and autonomy runs throughout Wordsworth's poetry of the self, from "Tintern Abbey" through "Elegiac Stanzas"; not always directly invoking but always related to his construction of vocational identity. Sometimes this construction of identity depends on the projection of an outside reader or "second self," as at the beginning of "Michael" when he calls on "youthful Poets" to become his "second Self" after he is gone (38–39). At other times, as when "My Heart Leaps Up" claims that "the Child is Father of the Man," this self-authorization becomes a closed circle and the poet both affirms and produces himself.

Both kinds of self-authorization are often connected to the trope of self-reading. In her book on *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography*, Sheila Kearns focuses on the way Wordsworth constructs his self-representation through the division between what she calls "two consciousnesses," the current writing subject and the past remembered self.

According to Kearns, Romantic autobiographers in their relationship to an unknown public faced the "paradoxical predicament of making themselves the subject of their own discourse while at the same time submitting themselves to being subject to the reading of others."[49] In response, she claims, such writers often established their sense of authority by writing the act of reading and the process of reception into their own texts. In a similar position, Charles Rzepka in *The Self as Mind* argues that the Romantic construction of the self responds to the author's separation from audience.[50] Rzepka's book focuses on how Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats take power to construct and define their own identities by writing their readers' responses into their poetry, creating an appropriate "greeting of the spirit" that confirms the identities they have constructed and protects them from the possible appropriations of unknown readers. Kearns, in contrast, focuses on how Wordsworth sets himself up as the "master-reader" of his own autobiographical text, taking control of the process of reading himself (107). Combining and building from these positions, I will argues that this "self-reading" is part of Wordsworth's larger vocational project of self-authorization. Self-reading supports not only *The Prelude*, with its model of the "spots of time," but the turn to subjectivity and self-consciousness throughout Wordsworth's poetry. Self-reading, self-consciousness, and self-authorization, in this respect, reveal themselves as inseparable elements of a single process of professional self-construction.

This link between self-reading and self-authorization appears from the beginning of the *Prelude*, in the "glad preamble" and "post preamble" passages interpreted earlier in this chapter. In these passages, Mary Jacobson and Sheila Kearns point out, the internal echo of the poet's voice supersedes the external sound as primary.[51] This "echo" becomes a dominant trope in the introductory section and indeed throughout the *Prelude*, connected closely to the project of self-representation and self-consciousness. "My own voice chear'd me," Wordsworth writes, "and, far more, the mind's/ Internal echo of the imperfect sound," as he takes his own words and mind as his subject (1.64–65). Pronouncing his poetry to the "open fields," the poet becomes his own primary audience, independent of the public, and his attention focuses on the internal "creative breeze" of his own imagination, which will eventually emerge as the poem's dominant theme (1.59, 43). In making himself his own primary audience, the poet thus directs his attention inward in the process of authorizing his own identity.

This process of self-reading continues throughout the poem and reaches its culmination in the ascent of Snowdon at the beginning of book thirteen, the poem's triumphant affirmation of vocational identity. In order

to understand Mount Snowdon fully as an episode of self-reading, it is first necessary to call attention to the textual self-reflexivity that runs throughout the *Prelude*. A number of critics have explored the way that the poem turns back upon itself again and again, creating a complex temporality that overlaps the time of the events narrated, the past time of the poem's composition, and the present moment of composition.[52] Often this temporality is represented by images of streams and rivers: imagery that Wordsworth uses throughout his poetry to signify sound, human voice, and poetry.[53] Two passages in particular are worth quoting in full for their extended use of this metaphor. At the start of book nine, as he turns to sum up and consolidate the poem's progress before moving on to his involvement with the French Revolution, Wordsworth describes the course of the poem through the metaphor of a river turning backwards repeatedly upon itself:

> As oftentimes a River, it might seem,
> Yielding in part to old remembrances,
> Part sway'd by fear to tread an onward road
> That leads direct to the devouring sea,
> Turns and will measure back his course, far back
>
> Towards the very regions which he cross'd
> In his first onset; so have we long time
> Made motions retrograde, in like pursuit
> Detain'd. But now we start afresh; I feel
> An impulse to precipitate my verse [. . .] (9.1–10).

The metaphorical sense of this passage is straightforward, describing the course of the poem as a river flowing in broad retrogrades towards its destination. A later passage in book thirteen is more subtle, blending the metaphor of river as poem with the metaphor of river as poet's life:

> This faculty [Imagination] hath been the moving soul
> Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
> From darkness, and the very place of birth
> In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
> The sound of waters, follow'd it to light
> And open day, accompanied in its course
> Along the ways of Nature; afterwards
> Lost sight of it, bewilder'd and engulph'd,
> Then given it greeting, as it rose once more
> With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast
> The works of man and face of human life [. . .] (13.171–81).

This passage, following shortly after the ascent of Snowdon, identifies the stream with the "long labor" of the poem—both the labor of writing and the labor of reading—but also identifies the stream with the "true self" of the Poet whose development the poem traces. This vocational idea of "true self" is the central unifying thread of the poem, "lost sight of [. . .] bewilder'd and engulphed" at Cambridge and then after the French Revolution, but reappearing towards the end of book ten, when Wordsworth recommits himself to his poetic identity and vocation.

The ascent of Snowdon culminates the poem's pattern of turning back on itself to assimilate previous materials. In so doing, it provides the final retrograde assimilation that unites the entire poem into a single coherent expression of Wordsworth's poetic identity. Mount Snowdon is, in this sense, not only the final culminating spot of time in the poem; it is the master spot of time upon which all the others ultimately depend. It provides the telos of professional self-affirmation in which both the poem's and the self's entire development is grounded, and without which neither self nor poem would be coherent. Although in one sense it concludes the poem, the ascent of Snowdon is also the necessary vocational confirmation which supports the whole project of poetic self-representation. Its placement out of chronological order as the final spot of time in the poem reflects this importance.[54] This final vision on the top of Mount Snowdon represents Wordsworth's self-installation on the peak of his own Parnassus; or alternatively, it represents the top of his own personal Sinai, where he receives the revelation of his transcendent poetic identity not from God, but from Nature and himself.

The vision on Snowdon, in this sense, offers an almost Napoleonic moment of self-authorization. Wordsworth begins this final ascent with a "youthful Friend" and local "Guide" (13.2, 8), but describes himself as quickly leaving these companions behind, so that he arrives at his culminating vision alone in a position of complete autonomy. In the moment of vision, as the "Light [falls] upon the turf" (13.39–40), Wordsworth experiences what is in effect a transcendental self-affirmation of his own "mighty Mind" (69):

> from the shore
> At distance not the third part of a mile
> Was a blue chasm, a fracture in the vapour,
> A deep and gloomy breathing-place thro' which
> Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
> Innumerable, roaring with one voice.
> The universal spectacle throughout
> Was shaped for admiration and delight,
> Grand in itself alone, but in that breach

> Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
> That dark deep thorough-fare had Nature lodg'd
> The Soul, the Imagination of the whole. (54–65)

Drawing from the river and water imagery throughout the poem, the mingling of many waters here into a single voice represents the mingling of the poem's materials (and the poet's life) into a single deep self. In his visionary act, the poet's imagination registers the disparate materials of his own poem and life and unifies them into a single poetic subjectivity, through a figurative act of self-reading. In other words, by exercising his imagination on the materials of his own mind and poem, Wordsworth's "self-reading" constructs his own autonomous identity. The vision confirms for him what he has wanted to hear all along: that he is a great poet, one of the "mighty Mind[s]" who exercise their shaping imaginative power both over the external creation and their fellow mortals (or readers), so that "even the grossest minds must see and hear/ And cannot chuse but hear" (13.69, 83–84). It is not accidental that Wordsworth's great moment of vocational self-affirmation is also the moment of his strongest, most direct claim of power over his readers.

The lines that follow this vision focus on explicating the properties of the "mighty" or "higher minds" (13.90), among whom Wordsworth claims to belong. These lines offer the poet's extended interpretation, or self-reading, of his own visionary text: "a meditation" that occurs not in the actual moment of vision but later, "that night/ Upon the lonely mountain when the scene/ Had pass'd away," as if in the process of continued re-reading (13.66–68). The qualities of these "higher minds" that Wordsworth reads from his vision, moreover, are unambiguously the professional qualities of the Poet—the same qualities Wordsworth surveyed in himself at the start of the poem, and which he attempts to define in the "What is a Poet" section of his "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and other theoretical writings. Just as the "Preface" describes the Poet as having greater powers of sensibility than other men, allowing him to be "affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present" and making him "capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants" (1:138, 128), so too the "higher minds" described in the *Prelude* "build up greatest things/ From least suggestions; ever on the watch,/ Willing to work and to be wrought upon,/ They need not extraordinary calls/ To rouze them" (13.90, 98–102). The Poet's "more comprehensive soul" and tendency to "contemplate similar volitions as manifested in the Goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them" (1:138) in the "Preface" similarly matches the *Prelude's* account of how mighty minds send forth a "transformation" from themselves, creating or

catching a "like existence" in the world around them (13.94–95). The description of the power the "moulds [. . .,] endues, abstracts, combines," exerting a "domination" upon the "outward face of things" in the *Prelude* is virtually identical to Wordsworth's definition of "Imagination" in his "Preface" to the 1815 *Poems*, as the faculty which endows objects with "properties that do not inhere in them," "shapes and *creates*," and above all, "draws all things to one" through its "indestructible dominion" (3:32, 34, 36). The lines following the Mount Snowdon vision thus express Wordsworth's vision of the highest human faculties, but at the same time they express the ideal qualifications of the professional Poet. The self, in short, is constructed according to the vocational model of the Poet.

The self-constructing power of Wordsworth's imagination here resembles that of God in Coleridge's famous definition of Imagination. Just as God is presented as a kind of divine "Author," producing Himself in an ongoing autonomous act of self-construction as the "infinite I AM," so Wordsworth as author operates as both subject and object in a perpetually self-generating creative act, which combines self-writing with self-reading.[55] In this model of self-authorization, Wordsworth becomes his own primary reader, and all subsequent readers must experience the vision and its significance through his interpretations. The friend and guide that begin the ascent of Snowdon later assume this position as future readers. Presumably they eventually catch up and join the poet at the top of Snowdon, but they are not mentioned again in the poem. Nevertheless, their implicit presence is registered by the shift from first person plural to first person singular in line 53—a "we" which may also identify Wordsworth with the transcendent and solitary height of the moon. This "we" includes future readers as well, who are rhetorically placed to encounter and interpret the vision through Wordsworth's own eyes, or at least over his shoulder.

In positioning the poet as his own primary self-reader, the poem also isolates him from all external sources of authority. Even Coleridge and Dorothy, who play such significant roles in Wordsworth's self-construction in the poem—the former as his primary addressee, the latter as the one who helps to bring him back to this "true self"—are rigorously distanced from this and self-defining vision. Although Wordsworth eventually appeals to them as part of his self-affirmation, this appeal is buffered by almost 150 lines of his own authoritative interpretation of his vision (they appear from line 211). The chronology of the event also confirms Wordsworth's independence. Although the idea of the Imagination came from Coleridge, Wordsworth climbed Snowdon in 1791, years before he met Coleridge or began to live with Dorothy. By establishing his visionary power and identity

through this early moment, Wordsworth thus subtly signals his autonomy. At this culminating moment of self-authorization, the poem recognizes no other authority but Wordsworth's own and no external influences but Nature and his own Imagination.

It is significant that this vision of the "mighty mind" quickly develops into a celebration of absolute autonomy. In concluding its characterization of "higher minds," the poem claims that

> the highest bliss
> That can be known is theirs, the consciousness
> Of whom they are habitually infused
> Through every image, and through every thought,
> And all impressions [. . .]
> [. . .];
> Hence sovereignty within and peace at will,
> Emotion which best foresight need not fear,
> Most worthy then of trust when most intense:
> Hence cheerfulness in every act of life,
> Hence truth in moral judgements and delight
> That fails not in the external universe (13.107–11, 114–19).

This proclamation of the absolute autonomy or "sovereignty" of the self is also a proclamation of the autonomy of the professional Poet, able to construct his own identity through self-reading regardless of the response of his audience. This insistence on individual autonomy runs throughout the *Prelude*, almost always associated with the "self-sufficing power of solitude" (2.78), as Wordsworth puts it in book two, or the "inviolate retirement" of the "individual Mind," as he puts it elsewhere in his "Prospectus" to the *Recluse* (3:6, lines 77–78).[56]

Often this claim of autonomy takes the metaphor of the self providing its own foundations, as the individual mind becomes its "own upholder" (12.261). After the Snowdon vision, Wordsworth writes that

> Here must thou be, O Man!
> Strength to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
> Here keepest thou thy individual state:
> No other can divide with thee this work,
> No secondary hand can intervene
> To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
> The prime and vital principle is thine
> In the recesses of thy nature, far
> From any reach of outward fellowship,

> Else 'tis not thine at all.—But joy to him,
> O joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
> Here the foundations of his future years! (13.188–99).

Wordsworth describes childhood in the *Prelude* as "the base/ On which [one's] greatness stands" (11.331–32), and explains how through "unknown causes" (probably referring to his mother's death) "the props of my affections were remov'd,/ And yet the building stood, as if sustain'd/ By its own spirit" (2.292, 294–96). In the *Excursion* he writes similarly of how "the foundations of [the Wanderer's] mind were laid" (1.132). In book one of the *Prelude*, by contrast, Wordsworth describes his inability to begin work on an epic theme as in part due to a lack of such foundations: "the whole beauteous Fabric seems to lack/ Foundation, and, withal, appears throughout/ Shadowy and unsubstantial" (1.227–29). In the act of self-reading as in the act of poetic self-authorization, "the mind is to herself/ Witness and judge"; or as Wordsworth puts it in another passage of *The Prelude*, "I took/ The balance in my hand, and weigh'd myself" (12.367–68, 4.148–49). By writing the *Prelude*, Wordsworth in effect provides his own professional foundation, constructing his identity as a Poet as if independent from all external sources of authority.

The poem's publication history confirms this claim of professional autonomy, establishing the poet's construction of his own identity as ultimately independent of his public. *The Prelude* was not meant for publication during Wordsworth's lifetime, but nevertheless allowed him the sense of having successfully authorized his own identity. Bizarrely, Wordsworth could even use this unpublished manuscript as the basis for his public claims, as when he refers to it for authorization in his published "Preface" to *The Excursion* (3:5). Keeping his self-authorizing manuscript private, Wordsworth could keep control of his own professional identity from the public, reading from his manuscript to friends and family for their selective affirmation and compulsively revising it as his sense of his own poetic identity continued to develop and change.[57] The strategy of self-reading, in this sense, was actual as well as figurative, as Wordsworth became his poem's own primary audience, establishing himself as the master interpreter (and rewriter) of his own poetic identity.

This same structure of self-authorization through self-reading is fundamental to the whole idea of the "spots of time" and to Wordsworth's poetry of self-consciousness generally. Various critics have explored how Wordsworth's strategies of self-representation depend on a process of "perpetual self-duplication," as Sheila Kearns puts it. Jay Ward in *Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Barthes* describes Wordsworth's "spots of time" as a process of compulsive return, not only to memory but to his own

manuscripts, stabilizing the past as text for endless rounds of rereading and revision. Herbert Lindenberger in *On Wordsworth's Prelude* also calls attention to the repetitive structure of the spots of time, which repeat the same imaginative and formal patterns again and again and seem to multiply *ad infinitum*.[58] Critics with a post-structuralist orientation, such as Frances Ferguson, J. Douglas Kneale, and Mary Jacobus, have pointed out how the spots of time tend to be associated in various ways with writing, as in the letters engraved in the turf in book eleven (11.295–302).[59] Wordsworth's description of spots of time as "passages of life" (11.270) has a dual meaning for such critics, signifiying both a "passage" of time and a "passage" of text. The spatializing metaphor of the phrase, "spots of time," similarly turns time or memory into physical text, as an object for repeated re-readings. The spots of time, these critics have argued, serve as textual monuments for the enshrinement of Wordsworth's poetic identity, allowing him to continually authorize himself and construct his identity through successive rounds of self-reading. Post-structuralist critics use such interpretations to argue for the textuality and instability of the self constructed by the poem. This textual monumentalization, however, can also be linked to Wordsworth's claims of self-possession, both over his text and his own identity. Wordsworth was insistent about keeping legal property over his own writing, and Susan Eilenberg has explored his association of copyright with a kind of possession over his own identity, which might be continued in some sense even after death.[60] The intense self-consciousness to which the spots of time all lead, a kind of mental self-reading later duplicated by the actual self-reading of the poetic text, constructs the poet's self as a kind of imaginative corollary of this legal self-possession

Once identified, this process of self-authorization through self-reading can be seen as running through much of Wordsworth poetry of subjectivity. The "Blind Beggar" passage in book seven of *The Prelude*, which many critics have associated with Wordsworth's autobiographical project, can be understood in this way specifically as a failure of self-reading (7.608–23). Charles Rzepka argues that "the blind beggar's vulnerability to his unseen audience corresponds to the writer's sense of vulnerability before his anonymous and unseen readers," while Paul Jay identifies the beggar's note as marking the limits of Wordsworth's autobiographical project, an ultimate aporia between author, life, and reader.[61] The beggar's blindness certainly signifies his disconnection from audience and vulnerability to his readers, and thus his inability to control the terms of his reception and his relation to audience. Just as significantly, though, the blindness also signifies the beggar's inability to read his own text and consequent failure to construct his own identity and authority. The impossibility of self-reading here threatens to spiral into a vertiginous loss

of all identity. At the same time, it reduces writing to a purely commercial function, directly appealing to and dependent upon the commercial generosity of the "reader" or almsgivers. Though it displays Wordsworth's anxieties of authorship, the passage also demonstrates his own capacities for self-construction in most positive ways. In contrast to the beggar's dependence and vulnerability, Wordsworth's ability to enshrine this particular moment as a spot of time for his own future rereading affirms his self-authorizing power. Self-reading, in this sense, is equivalent to self-possession.

The model of self-reading also sheds light on the "Boy of Winander" passage (5.389–422), another episode that critics have interpreted in relation to the anxieties of authorship. Geoffrey Hartman in his essay on "Reading and Representation: Wordsworth's 'Boy of Winander'" interprets the poet's turn to the boy's grave as establishing Wordsworth in the role of the properly engaged reader. Ashton Nichols' *The Revolutionary "I"* connects this act of reading specifically to autobiography, noting that the passage was initially written in the first person about Wordsworth's own childhood (though without the potentially eery conclusion of the poet standing at his own grave). In this autobiographical sense, Nichols argues, the poem offers a kind of disguised epitaphic memorial for Wordsworth's own past self, constructing his identity by bringing together past and present in a single unifying moment of self-awareness.[62] Lucy Newlyn in *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism* interprets this same episode as an "allegory of the anxiety of reception," in which the boy's call to the unseen owls parallel the poet's address to his unseen audience, and the owls' failure to respond reflects the poet's fear that he may fail to register the responses of his readers, or that he may not be read at all.[63] Newlyn does not develop this reading in terms of self-reading or professional self-authorization, but the implications seem clear. As in many of the spots of time, the boy begins in an active and outward-directed role, shifting to intense self-awareness when the anticipated response fails to materialize. Disconnection from audience thus leads to intense awareness of self. The poet's reflections on his own youthful experience continue this pattern, as the relation between poet and past self introduces a self-consciousness over time and substitutes for the relation between boy and owls. In a similar way, self-reading the relation between the poet and his own text substitutes for the relation between poet and audience. The intensity and length of the poet's reflections upon the grave, where he repeatedly stands silent "a full half-hour" (5.421), suggests the intense engagement that Wordsworth demanded from his own readers, but makes even more sense if we understand the passage as a form of self-reading and poetic self-authorization. The poet can return to the grave, as

to his own text, again and again, in what becomes a repeated self-affirmation of his own identity even in the face of alienation and change.

This achievement of professional autonomy through self-reading is also central to "Resolution and Independence." The repetition of the narrator's questions to the Leech-gatherer at the end of the poem, combining the narrator's egoistic self-preoccupation with the Leech-gatherer's steadily repeated answers, has long been a subject of puzzlement, satire, and critical commentary.[64] One significant line of interpretation understands the Leech-gatherer as a kind of authorial double or "doppelgänger," in what becomes a symbolic self-confrontation between the poet and his professional fears and anxieties.[65] Peter Manning argues in this sense that the poem enacts the classic Freudian compulsion to repeat, in which the Leech-gatherer represents part of Wordsworth's unconscious, split off and repressed from consciousness due to high levels of anxiety, then subsequently reintegrated with consciousness over the course of the poem until the old man finally fades back into the nothingness from which he abruptly appears. Thus for Manning, the poem allows Wordsworth to come to terms symbolically with his own anxiety, without having to make any changes in his actual situation. Other critics, such as Charles Rzepka, Gary Harrison, and Kurt Heinzelman, have explored the Leech-gatherer's more specific connections to poetic identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter.[66] These two lines of reading come together—and the repetitions at the end of the poem begin to make more sense—if the encounter with the "Leech-gatherer" is understood as another example of self-reading.

Heinzelman has argued in this respect that Wordsworth "become[s] his own reader" in the poem, demonstrating the reader's proper relationship to the author through his own relationship with the Leech-gatherer.[67] The Leech-gatherer, in Heinzelman's interpretation, repeats himself as patiently as a text, which the narrator returns to in successive re-readings until he can discover the text's full meaning. The poem's textual details support such an interpretation. The Leech-gatherer appears out of nowhere and vanishes back into nowhere, existing only as the narrator keeps him "before me in full view" (63), like an imaginative vision produced through the act of reading. He first appears, moreover, associated with reading, bending over the pond "as if he had been reading in a book" (88). As they interact, the narrator's thoughts and the old man's speech mysteriously begin to blend into one another, as if they are inseparable parts of a single process: "While I these thoughts within myself pursued,/ He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed." The old man's voice, described as "like a stream/ Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide," evokes the internal stream of consciousness, and his body, like a body "met with in a dream," is peculiarly insubstantial, redeployed by the

"mind's eye" of the narrator, who at the end of the poem seems to glimpse him "on the weary moors [. . .] Wandering about alone and silently" (114–15, 117, 136–38). In all these ways, the Leech-gatherer seems more like an imaginative vision than a physical presence. When the narrator turns away from his "text" with a final sense of resolution, the Leech-gatherer abruptly vanishes, and the narrator is left alone with his own interpretation and internalized meaning.

This process of reading in the poem not only models reading in general, but specifically vocational self-reading. Earlier, I argued for the many ways in which the Leech-gatherer represents displaced aspects of Wordsworth's own authorial identity, symbolically initiating him and giving him a sense of self-sufficiency and independence as a poet. The narrator's final self-admonition becomes, in this sense, self-referential: "'God,' said I, be my help and stay secure;/ I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor" (146–47). "Leech-gatherer" here can refer to the figure of the Leech-gatherer, but it can also refer to the poem itself, which was initially entitled "The Leech-gatherer." Read in this way, the poem dramatizes a self-referential encounter with the poet's own text—a process of revision and rereading through which he registers his vocational anxieties but ultimately establishes his sense of his own imaginative autonomy. At the same time, the poet's autonomy is confirmed, as he becomes his own future audience. The poetic text becomes a resource for future re-readings and a foundation of vocational self-affirmation in time of need. Just as the Leech-gatherer's body is "bent double, feet and head/ Coming together in their pilgrimage" (73–74), so too the poetic self turns inward in the poem into an almost complete circle of self-authorization.

One final poem, "A Solitary Reaper," provides an example of how this model of self-reading and vocational self-authorization appears in many of Wordsworth's poems of subjectivity that do not seem to comment directly on poetic identity. The poem begins with a first person wandering "I," solitary, lonely, and disconnected from any recognizable social space or relationships. As in so many of Wordsworth's poems of wandering, this narrator comes into contact with an individual "other" whom he uses to affirm his own identity, self-reliance, and vocational purpose. Much like Wordsworth's appeal to rural subjects and the "real language of men" in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, this encounter with the reaper allows him to affirm his sense of professional mission outside existing structures of identity and authority.

Singing without any sense of immediate audience, the reaper herself becomes a kind of poet figure, a folk version of the individual author who gets her authority through an organic social tradition and a sense of direct connection to the earth. Overhearing the reaper's song without her recognition of his

presence puts the narrator in the position of the print market reader, for whom the author unknowingly performs. The poem's opening invocation to "Behold," and "Stop here, or gently pass" (1, 3–4), as Geoffrey Hartman and Don Bialostosky have argued, summons the actual reader to share this position, as if narrator and reader encounter the reaper together from the same perspective.[68] Bialostosky goes on to interpret the poem as a failed attempt at communication with this reader, who inevitably does not respond, leaving the narrator to "appropriate the encounter for himself regardless of his failure to engage others in it, declaring its value and his independent power in defiance of his previous listeners' nonparticipation and without bothering to address his present listeners directly" (144). In this way, Bialostosky interprets the poem as "the intense efforts of a precariously marginal individual to win social confirmation," as "a deracinated bourgeois poet caught between a traditional society he cannot recover [the reaper's] and a contemporary society he cannot persuade [his readers]" (151).

In contrast with Bialostosky, I do not see how the poem suggests the reader's failure to respond—or that it even invites the reader's explicit response in the first place. Instead, the poem's opening lines seem to establish a sense of connection between narrator and reader, projecting the poet's sense of solitude and alienation from audience onto the reaper instead, who has a mysteriously elegiac tone and is repeatedly described as solitary in the poem's opening lines. Though he places the reader in the same position as himself, the narrator takes complete control in interpreting the reaper's song and dictating the terms of the poem's reception, leaving the actual reader little free imaginative space. Because the reaper's words cannot be understood or even directly represented, the reaper's singing comes to the reader entirely mediated through the reception of the narrator, who in effect uses the reaper to foreground his own imaginative response: the true subject of the poem. Like the folk tradition from which Wordsworth draws in his appeal to rural language and subjects, the reaper sings "as if her song could have no ending" (26). The narrator, in contrast, imposes a definite form on the poem and ends by internalizing and thus claiming a sense of possession over her song: listening "till I had my fill," he bears the music afterwards in his heart "long after it was heard no more" (29, 32). In the process, he effectively translates her oral song into his own poetic property: not only the imaginative property that he internalizes, but the legal property of the published poetic text, over which he can claim copyright. The reaper's song is in the "public domain" and does not bear the imprint of her own distinct personality. The narrator of the poem, in contrast, impresses his own individual identity and form onto the song. Just as in the definition of copyright, he transforms the free resources of "nature"—in

this case the reaper, naturalized by the poem as a representative of folk culture—into his own private poetic property.

As in other spots of time, the poem ends in an intense self-consciousness which becomes a literal text for future re-readings, and thus future affirmations of the poet's imaginative capacities and autonomy. Though he asserts his strong control over the significance of the reaper's song, Wordsworth's invocation of the actual reader in the poem's opening lines allows him to present his personal self-authorization as a vocational service. Similar to the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*, he teaches the reader how to "read" the song properly and so how to construct a similar sense of imaginative autonomy. The reaper thus allows Wordsworth to authorize himself in relation to his unknown print market readers, mediating his relationship with those readers in complex ways. In displacing his own poetic isolation onto the reaper, he simultaneously claims poetic property, justifies his vocational service to the reader, and constructs his own seemingly autonomous identity.

Wordsworth's repeated trope of self-reading does not explicitly engage with the commercial marketplace, but its construction of poetic autonomy in relation to audience is informed throughout by the structures and pressures of print market authorship. Self-reading, with its strong assertion of poetic autonomy, directly compensates for the poet's sense of alienation and anxiety towards audience. Its claims to self-possession parallel the self-possession of copyright and literary property. At the same time, self-reading provides an imaginative model for readers to imitate, allowing the poet to claim a vocational service towards those readers. In these ways, the trope of self-reading shows how the print market context structures even poems which seem at first glance to have nothing to do with it, by shaping the ways in which Wordsworth constructs his vocational identity and authority.

THE RETURN TO PUBLIC POETRY: *THE EXCURSION* AND AFTERWARDS

With the publication of the *Ruined Cottage* and *Pedlar* manuscripts as the first book of *The Excursion* in 1814, Wordsworth signaled his turn away from the poetry of self-representation, subjectivity, and self-authorization to the more public voices and themes which would characterize most of his future poetry. Though Victorians often viewed *The Excursion* as his culminating poetic achievement, later readers have tended to find his poetry of subjectivity much more powerful than his poetry of public pronouncement. For Wordsworth, however, the poetry of the self represents only a significant detour from his main poetic project: constructing a body of poetry on large social and philosophical themes. *An Evening Walk, Descriptive Sketches*, the

Salisbury Plain poems, and *The Borderers* can all be read as part of this public project, as can many of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which comment in more or less direct ways on social and political issues. *The Excursion* in this respect begins with its construction of the Pedlar's identity and his imaginative education of the narrator, but builds quickly to more public themes. After presenting the Solitary as a figure for the disruptions of the French Revolution, the poem introduces the Pastor as a more institutionally sanctioned figure of poetic and social authority, then goes on to celebrate the institutions of British church and state, call for universal education, and oppose the degrading effects of industrialization. By beginning with its construction of the Pedlar's identity, the poem shows how closely the project of self-representation is connected with the need for poetic authorization. Significantly, *The Excursion* pays a great deal of attention to establishing the Pedlar's (later Wanderer's) identity, and very little attention to the identity of the Pastor, who already has a recognized social position and authority. Because of this established vocation, representation of the Pastor's life and identity is simply not needed. Much of Wordsworth's early poetry focuses on the self because of his need to establish his own identity and authority. When he did develop a more secure sense of identity and authority, he used it to comment widely on historical, religious, and political issues, and his later poetry pays relatively little attention to the self.

In view of this trajectory, we can consider the poems of the "Great Decade" as having roughly the same relationship to Wordsworth's overall oeuvre as the biography of the Pedlar has to the *Ruined Cottage* and larger *Excursion* project. Wordsworth turned to the Pedlar's biography as a full-scale poetic project when he found he needed to justify the Pedlar's poetic role and authority as the main speaker in *The Ruined Cottage*. In the same way, he turned to autobiography, and to his poetry of subjectivity and self-representation in general, in order to construct his own professional identity as a poet and so authorize himself for his larger poetic mission. Professional self-authorization was not the only factor in Wordsworth's turn to the self, but it was a crucial one, and it structures his poems of self-representation throughout his career, leaving traces of his print market situation in various ways. Facing the eighteenth-century poet's separation from the public with an aggravated sense of personal isolation, Wordsworth embraced a professional model of poetic identity, and in the process made his relationship to the general public, poetic property, and the marketplace central to his identity in a way earlier poets had not. Even when he claimed poetic autonomy, Wordsworth still justified his identity in terms of vocational service. As a result, even his most private poetry of the self bears traces of his relationship

to the print market public, including the unpublished *Prelude* manuscript. Wordsworth's poetics of the self was in these senses neither a product of pure imagination nor an inevitable telos of eighteenth-century poetic development, but a response to very specific historical and personal circumstances. As the Epilogue will argue, his deep personal self is the professional self of the author, universalized to include every possible print market reader as well.

Epilogue: The Romantic Deep Self as Authorial Self

There is an episode in *The Prelude*, which I will call the "Island Minstrel" episode, that has received relatively little critical attention, but that can be read as central to Wordsworth's model of subjectivity and related constructions of authorship and self. In the passage, which comes early in book two, Wordsworth describes his childhood boating expeditions on Lake Windermere, in which one boy is left alone to play his flute as a "minstrel" on an island in the lake:

> But ere the fall
> Of night, when in our pinnace we return'd
> Over the dusky Lake, and to the beach
> Of some small Island steer'd our course with one,
> The Minstrel of our troop, and left him there,
> And row'd off gently, while he blew his flute
> Alone upon the rock; Oh! then the calm
> And dead still water lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart, and held me like a dream. (2.170–80)

This individual isolation on the island, so prevalent in eighteenth-century and Romantic writing from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* through the drifting icebergs of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, reflects here as elsewhere both the general isolation of the individual from society and the specific isolation of the author or poet from his or her public.[1] Left alone by the others on the island, the Minstrel plays without any immediate contact with his audience. Yet, at the same time, Wordsworth's Minstrel is aware, or at least hopeful, of being overheard by others: in this case by the young Wordsworth and the other boys drifting out on the water.

The isolation of the Minstrel, moreover, creates a sense of individuation or even imaginative isolation in his hearers. Though the boys are together in their "pinnace," Wordsworth describes himself directed by the solitary sound of the flute into his own separate consciousness, in what becomes another characteristic "spot of time." He notices the sky with increased awareness, "never before so beautiful," and as in so many of the other spots of time, enters a state of intense and dreamlike self-consciousness. The presence of the other boys no longer seems to matter, as the narrator enters into a powerful, individual relationship with the song of the unseen flute-player. Both Minstrel and listener, author and reader, are alone and self-sufficient in their own imaginative activity, while at the same time defining their respective individualities in relation to one another. Thus the poet communicates the "self-sufficing power of solitude" (2.78) to the individual reader(s) he cannot see, allowing them to construct their own individual selves in relation to his seemingly autonomous identity as Poet. Wordsworth and his friends deliberately staged this scenario, influenced no doubt by Beattie's *Minstrel* and prevailing poetic fashions. In Wordsworth's account of the incident, however, the isolated poet finds his justification in the answering response of the individual reader/ listener. The Minstrel does for Wordsworth exactly what he later claims the poet must do for the reader: his song "send[s] the soul into herself," producing the sense of inner depths and deep personal identity in the listener (*Prose* 3:83).

This relationship between the unseen author and unknown reader(s) is central to one main strand of Romantic poetics. Thus Shelley claims in his *Defense of Poetry* 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," and John Stuart Mill in his 1833 essay "What is Poetry" claims that "all poetry is of the nature of soliloquy."[2] As such claims intensify, Romantic period poets begin to express an unprecedented indifference or even scorn towards the idea of an audience.[3] Although poetry even for the later Romantics never lost its social and political significance, it would be increasingly conceptualized as written by isolated individual authors for equally isolated individual readers, culminating in a position such as Matthew Arnold's "Marguerite" poems, in which each individual becomes "enisled" in "the sea of life," and "we mortal millions live *alone*." In Arnold's "The Buried Life," the self-referential stream of Wordsworth's *Prelude* is transformed into "the unregarded river of our life," where it becomes the "genuine self" in the "deep recesses of our breast" and "pursue[s] with indiscernible flow its way," at once safeguarded and alienated from the ordinary shocks and intercourses of daily life. [4] Far from being a linguistic or vocational construction, the "deep self" of these poems is imagined as out of reach, not only to

others but to the subject or author himself. The purpose of poetry subtly shifts from constructing the self to recovering a self which is assumed as already naturally given.

This Wordsworthian model of the self was generalized during the Victorian period, as readers such as John Stuart Mill found in Wordsworth's poetry an antidote for the utilitarianism, busyness, industrialization, and sometime alienation of nineteenth-century life. Reader after reader followed Mill's pattern in the *Autobiography*, praising Wordsworth as the poet who put them in touch simultaneously with self, feeling, and nature: in Mill's words, "a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings."[5] In the process, Wordsworth's stance of autonomous self-authorization shifted from an egotistical social oddity, as it was for many early nineteenth-century reviewers, to an accepted model of the visionary poet. Receiving streams of literary pilgrims at his "seat" at Rydal Mount and showing many of them around the grounds himself, in the same individual author-to-reader relationship he imagined in his writing, Wordsworth became institutionalized in the public imagination in the 1830s and 1840s as a defining figure of poetic identity.[6] At the same time, his portrait began to be reproduced on the frontispiece of his *Works* and distributed in engraved images throughout the English-speaking world.[7] Wordsworth's poems were also distributed widely in various selections and anthologies, including Hines' 1831 *Selections ... Chiefly for the Use of Schools and Young Persons*, and gradually became a standard part of the British educational curriculum.[8]

In the process, the model of individual identity that Wordsworth constructed for himself as an author became naturalized as a universal model of personal subjectivity and identity. In part, this development was precipitated by historical and cultural changes Wordsworth could not have predicted. In part, though, it followed patterns already laid out in his writing: replacing the authority of aristocratic culture with that of the independent professional poet, democratizing the public, and placing the poet in an imagined one-to-one hermeneutic relationship with his readers. This privatization of literature, democratization of the public, and professionalization of the poet went hand in hand, as authorship emerged as an increasingly recognized and dignified profession in its own right. In 1800, only 400 respondents to the British census identified themselves as "authors"; by the end of the century, that number had reached 13,000.[9]

The generalization of the deep personal self was an essential part of Wordsworth's author-centered poetics from the beginning. As a number of critics have pointed out, Wordsworth's model of the self claims to be both

uniquely personal and universal at the same time.[10] Though he does base his identity on his own unique personal background and experiences, he also offers it as a general model for readers to emulate, regardless of their specific social positions. In book 12 of the *Prelude* Wordsworth writes:

> Of genius, power,
> Creation and divinity itself
> I have been speaking, for my theme has been
> What passed within me. Not of outward things
> Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
> Symbols, or actions, but of my own heart
> Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind. (3.171–77)

This creative power and genius are the specific vocational attributes of the Poet. Wordsworth can only validate the Poet's professional function and self-representation, however, by making the autonomous personal self of the Poet universal, so that the Poet can provide a model for the self of the reader. By writing about his own experience, the Poet can then claim to educate the imagination, subjectivity, and moral agency of his individual readers. It is in this sense that the Poet does "not write for Poets alone, but for men" (1:143), because the professional activities of the Poet are defined as central to all individual subjectivity, and ultimately to the moral and spiritual well-being not only of individuals but of the nation as a whole. Thus the passage continues, generalizing Wordsworth's sense of deep personal subjectivity:

> Points have we all of us within our souls
> Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
> Breathings for incommunicable powers;
> Yet each man is a memory to himself,
> And, therefore, now that I must quit this theme,
> I am not heartless, for there's not a man
> That lives that hath not had his god like-hours,
> And knows not what majestic sway we have
> As natural beings in the strength of nature. (186–94)

In the same spirit, Wordsworth claims to see "into the depths of human souls,/ Souls that appear to have no depth at all/ To vulgar eyes" (12.166–68), and remarks as he wanders through the London crowds that "the face of every one/ That passes by me is a mystery" (7.597–98), concealing a unique and ineffable inner depth. As Wordsworth constructs his independent authorial self in dependent relation to his readers, he asks those readers to reciprocate

by constructing their individual subjectivities and identities in sympathetic response to his own, through the same model of internalized imaginative activity. Thus the Poet's self-construction of his own specifically vocational identity becomes a general model for readers everywhere, and the deep autonomous self of the author and deep autonomous self of the reader emerge inseparable from one another.

As lyric poetry was re-theorized along the lines that Wordsworth presented and poetic self-representation became increasingly common, its connection with vocational self-authorization in Wordsworth's poetry was concealed. Early nineteenth-century reviewers clearly identified a connection between Wordsworth poetic "egotism," his tendency to focus on his own life and subjectivity in his poetry, and his larger tendencies of self-promotion.[11] Even the notoriously "egotistical" Wordsworth, however, could only justify self-representation in relation to his ultimate vocational purpose of educating and morally uplifting the public. For the readers, critics, and poets who came after him and read his poetry in the spirit of this new poetics, however, self-representation seemed increasingly valid for its own sake.

The so-called "second generation" of Romantic poets inherited this model of poetic autonomy, self-representation, and subjectivity from Wordsworth already formed, and so could inflect it to their own purposes. Even these poets, however, did not detach such self-representation from larger social and political goals.[12] Keats and Shelley, who later became icons for the Romantic ideal of art for art's sake, retained a strong sense of political involvement and vocational responsibility to their readers. Shelley was notorious for his radicalism, and Keats in his letters claimed that the poet must be a kind of imaginative physician, balancing his celebration of the autonomy of beauty with his continued obsession about poetry's ultimate social usefulness. Thus Keats' "Fall of Hyperion" turns in its 1819 revision to focus squarely on the social purposes of poetry, classifying its poetic narrator as a "dreamer weak," a "fever of thyself," and a member of the "dreamer tribe" (162, 169, 198). Keats continues to ask Wordsworth's question, "What is a Poet"—in this case, "What tribe [do I belong to]?" (194)—in relation to audience and vocational service.[13] Even Byron, for all his exaggerated performance of the autonomous self, embarked on his poetic career with strong political purposes, which continued in more comic forms in *Don Juan.* The model of poetic self that these poets inherited was still linked to the model of public service and vocation, and hence to the print market public. It was only later, when the idea of the Romantic artist had caught the general imagination and "Romanticism" had emerged as a recognized literary period, that poetic self-representation could be seen as fully justified for its own sake.

As British society gradually transformed through its political and economic "long revolution," new models of individual identity became increasingly desirable.[14] The print market poet's sense of isolation from audience came to represent the larger sense of individuation and separation from a preestablished social order which characterized modernity as a whole, and the authorial self of Romantic poetry came to seem like a general model of identity. The individualism which had seemed so threatening to traditional structures of authority during the eighteenth century and in the prolonged struggles after the French Revolution became, by the time the Reform Bill passed in 1832, generally acceptable and in a certain sense even necessary. As a social model based on spatial metaphors of ranks and orders transformed into a model of free-circulating, self-producing individuals, poetic self-representation established a pattern for the production of individual identity throughout modern society. Lyric poetry increasingly justified itself through its claims to develop the imaginative faculties, and hence moral and self-making capacities, of individual readers.

The self of the lyric poets was not of course the only or even primary model for this modern individualism. Biography flourished as a genre beginning around the middle of the eighteenth century, and autobiography emerged as a major genre in its own right early in the nineteenth century. The novel also focused on individual identity, addressing itself to solitary readers and providing models of "round" or "deep" individual character as a pattern for the construction of identity generally.[15] In distinction from these other genres, however, the lyric allowed writers to produce their identities as if outside the detailed social contexts of the novel and other forms of life writing. Just as it allowed authors to construct their identities as if independent of the commercial marketplace, so too the lyric allowed readers to imagine their self as independent from social relations, and thus truly autonomous.

In this imagined autonomy, the specific social and economic pressures which produced such a model were ignored or forgotten, if they had ever been noticed at all, and lyric poetry began to seem like the natural and inevitable home of the deep personal self. This universalized self of lyric poetry, however, was a specifically middle class self, as Thomas Pfau has argued in *Wordsworth's Profession*: socially and physically mobile, imaginatively self-regulating, and defined through the intellectual work of its own production, while at the same time claiming to transcend social and commercial contexts.[16] It was, I have argued, the specific self of the Poet, producing and authorizing his or her own poetic identity. This authorial self was a type, produced within the specific discursive and institutional contexts of print culture, but these contexts were disguised in its claims to naturalness, transcendence, and personal uniqueness. In

short, the authorial self became a type which denied its own typicalness, projecting instead an underlying unified "self" or "subject."

Since Wordsworth's time this autonomous authorial self has been naturalized and universalized: everyone, we tend to believe, possesses such a self as part of their essential human nature, as a kind of inalienable birthright. I want to suggest the contrary: that the way we produce our selfhood today emerged in historical contexts out of particular discursive practices, which themselves developed in response to specific social and material conditions. By producing the specifically authorial self of Wordsworthian lyric poetry, eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century print culture has had a major influence in producing the selves we experience today as the essential and inalienable category of our existence. The lyric self is only one of many strands in the modern deep personal self, but it is a significant one.[17]

It is for this reason, and because our society is still constructed in terms of the possessive individualism of the capitalist marketplace, that Romantic poetry and Romantic ways of reading continue to exercise such power today, despite all the recent developments of postmodernism and post-structuralist theory. By understanding the contexts within which poetic self-representation emerged, we can better understand the social and material contexts within which our own self-construction continues. We can better understand what we must do and what social and material conditions we must change in order to reconstruct our selves, not as autonomous and alienated individuals, but as part of one another and of everything around us—members of the human and non-human environments from which we cannot separate ourselves, and which together structure our existence.

Notes

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. For details of Pope's publication arrangements, see David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). *The Epistle to Arbuthnot* appeared as a separate folio on Jan. 2 1735, then was published in these three versions of the 1735 *Works II* in April and July. Because the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* copyright had not yet reverted back to Pope, it probably formed part of Gilliver's copyright in the Works (for which Pope and Gilliver shared copyright). See 117–31, esp. 124–26, for these complicated arrangements. The poem is quoted from *Imitations of Horace*, vol. 4 of the *Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1939).
2. Quoted by line number from MS. D, in *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979). Subsequent quotations in this paragraph are from the reading text of "The Pedlar," as printed in *Romanticism: an Anthology*, ed. Duncan Wu (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998).
3. For a convenient summary of this activity, see Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996), 50–52.
4. See *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, 17, for identification of these passages. On critics' attacks against Wordsworth's egotism, see my essay, "Wordsworth's 'System,' the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority," forthcoming in *European Romantic Review*.
5. David Saunders and Ian Hunter, "Lessons from the 'Literatory': How to Historicize Authorship," *Critical Inquiry* 17:3 (1991): 478–509 (483).
6. For sources supporting the information in this and the following paragraph, see my chapter one, below.
7. Robert Griffin, *Wordsworth's Pope: A Study in Literary Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995). On this Romantic tradition as beginning with the Wartons, see also David Fairer, "Creating a National

Poetry in the Tradition of Spenser and Milton," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry*, ed. John Sitter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 177–201, together with chapters 8 and 9 of Fairer's *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1789* (N.Y.: Longman, 2003), 144–91.

8. See my chapters on Pope and Wordsworth, below, for fuller discussion and scholarly documentation of their engagement with copyright, their contracts and negotiations with printers, and their attempts to define and control their own poetic oeuvres. John Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: an Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (N.Y.: Mansell, 1994), gives a good overview of both authors' activities in relation to copyright law.
9. As a result, Pope and Wordsworth have each generated full-length critical studies of their literary portraits and other images. See Frances Blanchard, *Portraits of Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1959), and William Wimsatt, *The Portraits of Alexander Pope* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965).
10. For an account of the rise in Wordsworth's reputation and his status as a poetic sage for the Victorians, see Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
11. This claim, that Wordsworth's poetry marks the transition to modern poetics, has been advanced by a large number of critics and is the specific subject of Robert Rehder, *Wordsworth and the Beginning of Modern Poetry* (London: Croon Helm, 1981).
12. For an account of *The Minstrel*'s immense influence on the development of Romantic self-representation, see Everard King, *James Beattie's The Minstrel and the Origins of Romantic Autobiography* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1992).
13. Marshall Brown, *Preromanticism* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991).
14. Charles Rzepka, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986).
15. Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
16. Linda Zionkowski, *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784* (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2001); George Justice, *The Manufacturers of Literature: Writing and the Literary Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2002); Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998); Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: the Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000). Other significant recent studies include *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750–1850*, eds. E.J. Clery, Caroline Franklin, and Peter Garside (N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996);

and *Writers, Books, and Trade: an Eighteenth-Century Miscellany for William B. Todd*, ed. O.M. Brack, Jr. (N.Y.: AMS Press, 1994). For more sources, see my chapter one, below.

17. See for instance *Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Woodman (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998). The "long eighteenth century" is often defined in historical terms, as in Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), or the work of Lawrence Stone.
18. Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591–1791* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), 21.
19. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989) and *Human Agency and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984). I follow Mascuch's example in putting together these positions in this way. For a psychologist's definition of identity in terms of the production of personal narrative, see Roy Baumeister, "The Self," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 2 vols., eds. Daniel Gilbert, Susan Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1998), vol. 1, 680–740, esp. 680–93.
20. Keats' charges of "poetic egotism" are perhaps the most famous—see his letters of 3 Feb 1818 to J.H. Reynolds, 21 Feb. 1818 to George and Tom Keats, and 27 Oct. 1818 to Richard Woodhouse, in *The Letters of John Keats, 1814–1821*, 2 vols., ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 1:223, 237, 386–87. See also my essay on "Wordsworth's 'System,' the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority," forthcoming in *European Romantic Review*, for similar charges of egotism from Hazlitt and other reviewers and a full account of reviewers' responses to Wordsworth's 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*.
21. On the emergence of autobiography as a word and a genre, see also Jerome H. Buckley, *The Turning Key: Autobiography and the Subjective Impulse Since 1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 18–19; Rehder, 76–79; Martin A. Danahay, *A Community of One: Masculine Autobiography and Autonomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993), 11–12; and Eugene Stelzig, "Rousseau, Goethe, Wordsworth and the Classic Moment of Romantic Autobiography," *Neohelicon* 18:2 (1991), 249–71. Buckley estimates that before 1800 only 23 autobiographies had been written by men in Britain, many of them quite slight, whereas over 175 were written over the course of the nineteenth century (19).
22. On Ben Jonson as an early model of possessive authorship, including his supervision of the ground-breaking 1616 folio of his *Works* and his unprecedented emphasis on self-representation in his writing, see Richard

Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), chapter 3, esp. 183; Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002) and *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002), esp. 82, 94–95; and *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, eds. Jennifer Brady and W.H. Herendeen (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1991).

23. See Sara van den Berg, "Ben Jonson and the Ideology of Authorship," in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, eds. Brady and Herendeen, 111–37. Van den Berg claims that none of the poems in Jonson's 1616 *Folio* refer to his personal quirks or appearance, but position him only in terms of these more general attributes (130). Later poems such as "My Picture Left in Scotland" are more specific but still relatively generalized—not surprisingly, given the strictures at the time against writing directly about one's self.
24. Leopold Damrosch, *The Imaginative World of Alexander Pope* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1987), 19.
25. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), describes a variety of instances of self-fashioning in the sixteenth century, but also makes it clear that this self-fashioning always depended on it relation to an outside order and outside source(s) of authority (see esp. 9). Evelyn Tribble in *Margins and Marginality: the Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1993) similarly writes that during the Renaissance, "the authority of the subject to speak has yet to be invented; the writer is not self-authorized but authorized by others, by plural, external, potentially competing guarantors of the text" (57). Arthur Marotti in *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995) interprets early modern front matter in printed works as a negotiation of this social position, arguing that all parties—including authors, publishers, printers, readers, and dedicatees—had to be positioned in relation to these larger social structures of authority (see esp. 222–23 and 291). Marotti presents Sidney as a rare instance of a self-authorizing writer, who because of his high social status could essentially offer patronage to himself, and who helped to increase the overall social prestige and acceptability of print authorship (228–29, 236, 316).
26. Eckhard Auberlen, *The Commonwealth of Wit: the Writer's Image and His Strategies of Self-Representation in Elizabethan England* (Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1984), 116–18, 131. Auberlein explores the multiple ways that Jonson positioned himself in relation to patrons in order to claim authority for himself. See also Robert C. Evans, *Ben Jonson and the Poetics of Patronage* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1989), who argues for Jonson's dependence on the hierarchies of patronage in constructing his own identity (see esp. 9, 23–26, 40). Helgerson in *Self-Crowned Laureates* argues

that Jonson depended on his relationship with the court and role of masque-writer for his claims to high social status, and comments on Jonson's substantially increased earning potentials after he began this new role as unofficial court poet after James I's accession in 1603 (166, 179). See also Arthur Marotti, "Manuscript, Print, and the Social History of the Lyric," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell*, ed. Thomas Corns (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 52–79, in which he argues that Jonson's poems, like the poetry of his era generally, almost all emerged out of specific social milieus and occasions (52–53).

27. On authors' lack of earning potential before the eighteenth century, see Auberlen, 13, and Stephen Dobranski, *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), who argues that "printers and publishers probably only paid authors when it suited their own interests" and not out of any sense of legal or moral obligation (24). On authors' lack of control over their published works, see Dobranski, 22, and Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993), 101. Loewenstein's two recent studies, cited above, document authors' growing attempts to claim control over their writing during the seventeenth century, but such attempts remained intermittent and fragmentary and did not present a concerted ideology of authorship.
28. Evans, 26. See also *Patronage in the Renaissance*, eds. Guy Fitch Little and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), on the pervasive significance of patronage to Renaissance society. See especially Arthur Marotti's essay, "John Donne and the Rewards of Patronage," 207–34, which lists many of the forms of patronage during the period, far beyond immediate financial rewards. Marotti claims that literary patronage was inseparable from the social and political order, and that in this sense "almost all English Renaissance literature is a literature of patronage" (207).
29. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print*, 291; see also 222–23. On the social positioning of early modern lyrics, see also note (41), below.
30. *Ibid.,* 216.
31. Helgerson claims that all English poets were amateurs in the 1570s, and specifically contrasts the professional claims of the "laureates" against this stance of deliberate dilettantism, in which lyric poetry was identified as ephemeral, youthful, and even prodigal or irresponsible (*Self-Crowned Laureates*, see esp. 22, 27–29, 58, 108–9). Even Helgerson's "laureates," however, did not define themselves through literary earnings or property, but through their claims of personal ambition and dignified national service. On the stigma of publishing for money, see Auberlen, 132; and on the association of writing with youthful prodigality, see Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976). The commercial stigma of publishing lyric poetry continued well into the eighteenth century, as my chapters on Gray, Cowper, and Beattie explore; see also note (38), below.

32. Quoted from Helgerson, *Laureates*, 46. See also 26, on the vital importance of Horace and Virgil as Classical precedents in authorizing laureate ambitions and identities.
33. Milton provides a notable exception, as he constructed his identity specifically in opposition to a traditional social order, wrote extensively about himself in some of his prose pamphlets, and claimed an unprecedented autonomy in his poetic vocation. Even Milton, however, remained uneasy about autonomous self-assertion, as the example of Satan in *Paradise Lost* make apparent, and continued to construct his identity in relation to existing types. Despite his famous 1667 contract, selling his rights to *Paradise Lost* to printer Samuel Simmons for £5 plus a series of incentives based on future sales, Milton did not construct his identity in relation to a general print market public or through claims of authorial property. Milton's seven-year period of independent vocational training, supported by his father, is unique, and he can be seen as a uniquely liminal figure for authorial identity.
34. John Dolan, *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
35. Saunders and Hunter, "Lessons from the 'Literatory'." Saunders and Hunter argue that the construction of the author was a "makeshift solution to problems arising from new circumstances and from the unforeseen interactions of cultural, legal, economic, technological, and ethical institutions," and that legal and ethical (and other) strands of the discourse of authorship developed often independent of one another, rather than as parts of a single unified discourse. While this multiplicity of discourses is important to keep in mind, I believe that Martha Woodmansee's and Mark Rose's accounts of the development of copyright in relation to the developing discourses of authorial genius and independence remain compelling. See Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994), and Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993).
36. See the sources cited in notes (22) and (26), above.
37. Loewenstein, *Author's Due*, traces the history of such early claims in relation to a wide movement to challenge guild privileges and monopolies. Until the eighteenth century, authors' rights were almost always asserted to support some other position, as in disputes between rival stationers over publishing monopolies or disputes between the Stationers' Company and anti-monopolists (102). On the scarcity of poets between Jonson and Pope who published their own *Works* during their lifetime, see James McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 46; and Marotti, in *Cambridge Companion ... Donne to Marvell*, ed. Corns, 70.
38. See Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 25 and 38, on the stigma of print and commercialism for Rochester and court coteries writers during the Restoration. On the stigma of print and commercial involvement for earlier writers, see Wall,

x, 17, 56–57; Auberlen, 132; Marotti, *Cambridge Companion ... Donne to Marvell*, ed. Corns, 68–69, and *Manuscript, Print*, 210; and J.W. Saunders, "The Stigma of Print: a Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Audience," *Essays in Criticism* 1 (1951): 139–64.

39. Fairer, *English Poetry*, chapter 1, 1–20.
40. In addition to Marotti, see Wall, esp. 13–14 and 35–38, who discusses sonnet sequences as a form of conversation and rivalry between communities of male writers; and Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), esp. 177–81 and 218–29. Love describes the manuscript coteries of the Universities and Inns of Court extensively.
41. On the continuity between manuscript circulation and early printed miscellanies and anthologies, including the lack of emphasis on authorial identity and continued markers of social context in such publications, see Marotti, *Manuscript, Print*, 212–19, and Wall, 23–25, 55–56, and 96–108. Wall writes that miscellanies were not generally organized in terms of authorial identity, and no miscellany before 1602 divided poems into sections by author, as "even prestigious writers did not become the central rubric through which the text was known" (98, 101). Wall, Love, and Marotti all discuss how print tended to emphasize the importance of authorial identity over time, as opposed to manuscript circulation or scribal publication.
42. See Love, 181, on manuscript poetry as communal property. Wall, Love, and Marotti all discuss the differences between manuscript and print form, arguing that manuscript encouraged a more actively sense of readerly participation, in which readers could freely alter texts in transcription.
43. Fairer, *English Poetry*, chapter 6, 102–21.
44. Ian Maxted, "Single Sheets From a Country Town: the Example of Exeter," in *Spreading the Word: the Distribution Networks of Print*, eds. Robin Meyers and Michael Harris (Winchester, England: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), 109–29 (118). See chapter 1, note (1), below, for some sources on the various forms this print took in penetrating throughout British society.
45. See Siskin, *Work of Writing*, esp. chapter 4, 103–29, on Wordsworth's association of himself with professionalism, defining his identity through work. My chapter six on Wordsworth describes this professional ideal at much great length, in relation to the positions of Siskin and other critics.
46. Anne Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1993); Marlon Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women's Poetry* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). For a condensed version of Ross' argument and a specific connection between masculine self-possession and the construction of individual identity, see his essay, "Romantic Quest and Conquest: Troping Masculine Power in the Crisis of Poetic Identity," in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne Mellor (Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1988), 26–51. On male Romantic appropriations of the feminine, see

also essays in that volume by Alan Richardson, "Romanticism and the Colonization of the Feminine," 13–25, and Stuart Curran, "Romantic Poetry: the I Altered," 185–207; together with Susan Wolfson's essay "Gendering the Soul," in *Romantic Women Writer: Voices and Countervoices*, eds. Paula Feldman and Theresa Kelley (Hanover, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England, 1995), 33–68.

47. Zionkowski, *Men's Work*.
48. On the particularly strong association of women writers' morality and personal identity with their work, see Sarah Prescott, *Women, Authorship and Literary Culture, 1690–1740* (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2003), esp. chapter 3, 69–101, and Jane Spencer *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), esp. 23–33. Spencer discusses the division between the Katherine Philips tradition of modest female virtue and manuscript circulation and the Aphra Behn tradition of female commercial writing and sexual freedom, including the discrediting of the Behn tradition due to increased emphasis on female domesticity and moral purity around the middle of the eighteenth century (see 12–33). See also Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660–1800* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989); and Marilyn Williams, *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650–1750* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1990), who offers a particularly extensive discussion of the Behn vs. Philips traditions. This close connection between the personal morality of women writers and their works continued throughout the Romantic period, as evidenced by popular and critical responses to the writing of Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. See for instance Linda H. Peterson, "Becoming an Author: Mary Robinson's *Memoirs* and the Origins of the Woman Artist's Autobiography," in *Re-Visioning Romanticism*, eds. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 36–50.
49. Wall has explored the associations between writing, gender, and sexuality in early modern England extensively in *The Imprint of Gender*, see esp. 15–16 and 280–81. Though her study deals with a slightly earlier period, the same potential association between circulation of writing and sexual circulation carried over to the end of the eighteenth century, limiting women to clearly defined "feminine" genres and themes to avoid this potential stigma. See for instance Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 193.
50. Katherine Philips was a paradigm-setting example in these ways for later female poets, consistently disparaging any desire for literary fame and claiming to enter print only at the urging of others: see Marilyn Williams, chapter 3, esp. 64–68. On the tendency for women poets to use subscription publication and so address their writing within the contexts of a familiar community, see Prescott, 126–27; Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 193–203; and Claudia Thomas Kairoff, "Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Readers," in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry*, ed. Sitter, 157–76.

See also Judith Hawley, "Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*: Losses and Gains," in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment*, eds. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1999), 184–98, esp. 188, on female poets' tendency at the time to associate their writing with motherhood or mourning. Stuart Curran's essay, "Romantic Women Poets: Inscribing a Self," in the same collection, 145–66, argues for women writers' tendency to include family members, friends, and precursor figures in their construction of literary identity; see also Ross, *Contours of Masculine Desire*, 302–3 and 315. Curran's essay "Mothers and Daughters: Poetic Generations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Forging Connections: Women's Poetry from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, eds. Anne Mellor, Felicity Nussbaum, and Jonathan Post (San Marino, Cal.: Huntington Library, 2002), 147–62, focuses specifically on the often intense and supportive relations between female writers and their mothers. On the female tendency to denigrate fame and posterity during the Romantic period, as opposed to the male tendency to seek it, see also Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), chapter 3, 65–94.

51. Mellor defines this tradition of the "poetess" against another tradition of public, political female writing at the time, in her essay on "The Female Poet and the Poetess: Two Traditions of British Women's Poetry, 1780–1830," in *Women's Poetry and the Enlightenment*, eds. Armstrong and Blain, 81–98; and then at more length, focusing on the public political tradition, in *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780–1830* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2000). Critics have recently begun to explore the darker side of self-effacement in female poetry of the period, largely ignored by nineteenth-century commentators, including the prevalence of death, alienation, dissolution of the domestic circle, failure of love, and other forms of destabilization and violence in such poetry. See for instance Susan Wolfson, "'Domestic Affections' and 'the Spear of Minerva': Felicia Hemans and the Dilemma of Gender," in *Re-Visioning Romanticism*, eds. Wilson and Haefner, 128–66, and Anthony John Harding, "Felicia Hemans and the Effacement of Women," in *Voices and Countervoices*, eds. Feldman and Kelley, 138–49.

52. On the construction of this alternate model of "relational" identity, in which the self is defined in connection and relationship with others, both human and non-human, see Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, esp. 1–11; Ross, *Contours of Masculine Desire*, esp. 274–75, 291–95, and 302–15; and Susan Levin, "Romantic Prose and Feminine Romanticism," *Prose Studies* 10:2 (1987): 178–95. On women's supposed exclusion from the discourse of the sublime, see Mellor, *Romanticism & Gender*, chapters 5 and 6, and Jacqueline Labbe, *Romantic Visualitues: Landcape, Gender, and Romanticism* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

53. On Hemans' association with domesticity, see Ross, *Contours of Masculine Desire*, 289–98, together with Susan Wolfson's essay in *Re-Visioning Romanticism*, eds. Wilson and Haefner. On the tendency of female poets to disclaim market involvement, see Ross, *Ibid.*, 229. On Charlotte Smith's justifying her publication through appeal to the necessities of her family, see Hawley's essay in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment*, eds. Armstrong and Blain, esp. 188.
54. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 113–28. Lawrence Lipking's essay "The Birth of the Author," in *Writing the Lives of Writers*, eds. Warwick Gould and Thomas F. Staley (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 36–53, provides a provocative recent meditation on this issue. For fuller discussion of the "birth of the author" in relation to these wider contexts, see my chapter one.
55. Quoted from *The Confessions*, trans. J.M. Cohen (N.Y.: Penguin, 1953), 17.
56. See Mascuch on the genres of spiritual writing and criminal confession and how they developed into autobiography. Christopher Fox describes the shift from characterizing the self in terms of the old theological category of "soul," as a kind of incorporeal substance, to the secular self as a product of individual (self-)consciousness, in *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988). Fox presents Locke as the key innovator in this new model of self and explores the series of often heated debates around Locke's theories in the early eighteenth century, before his new model became generally accepted. See also John Lyons, *The Invention of the Self: the Hinge of Consciousness in the Eighteenth Century* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1978), esp. 50; and Roger Smith, "Self-Reflection and the Self," in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (N.Y.: Routledge, 1997), 49–57, esp. 50, 57.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Quoted from Terry Belanger, "Publishers and Writers in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Isabel Rivers (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1982), 5–25 (6). On the penetration of print in various forms throughout British society, see also James Raven, "The Book Trades," in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (N.Y.: Leicester Univ. Press, 2001), 1–34, esp. 1; and Margaret S. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England*, 1680–1780 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), chapter 7, 172–92.
2. Quoted from *The Adventurer* 115, Dec. 11, 1753, in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson,* vol. 2, *The Idler and The Adventurer*, eds. W. J. Bate,

John M. Bullit, and L.F. Powell (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), 457–58.

3. In addition to the two volumes edited by Isabel Rivers, cited above, my discussion of the development of the print market and its related forms and institutions draws from a variety of sources which I will be citing extensively in the following pages. Notable sources include: Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1987); William G. Rowland, Jr., *Literature and the Marketplace: Romantic Writers and Their Audiences in Great Britain and the United States* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1996); Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994); Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957); Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1966); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997); John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (N.Y.: Croon Helm, 1988), *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), and *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: an Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (N.Y.: Mansell, 1994); Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: the Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993); Marjorie Plant, *The English Book Trade: an Economic History of the Making and Sale of Books* (London: George Allen & Unwinn, 1939, rev. 1974); Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and their Users* (London: Library Association, 1969); *Writers, Books, and Trade: an Eighteenth-Century Miscellany for William B. Todd*, ed. O.M. Brack, Jr. (N.Y.: AMS Press, 1994); Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters & Samuel Johnson* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987); *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750–1850*, eds. E.J. Clery, Caroline Franklin, and Peter Garside (N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, eds. James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996); Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996); Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: the Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000); Kathyrn Sutherland, "'Events … Have Made Us a World of Readers': Reader Relations, 1780–1830," in *The Romantic Period*, ed. David Pirie (N.Y.: Penguin, 1994); Barbara Benedict, "Publishing and Reading Poetry," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. John Sitter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 63–82; Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999); *Spreading the Word: the Distribution Networks of Print*, eds. Robin Meyers

and Michael Harris (Winchester, England: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1990); Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: the Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003); David Saunders and Ian Hunter, "Lessons from the 'Literatory': How to Historicize Authorship," *Critical Inquiry* 17:3 (1991): 479–509; and Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998). The older studies, A.S. Collin, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson: Being a Study of the Relation Between Author, Patron, Publisher and Public, 1726–1780* (London: Robert Holden, 1927); and Alexandre Beljame, *Men of Letters and the English Public in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. E.O. Lorinmer (London: Kegan, Paul, Trubner, 1948) are dated in some ways but still worth consulting.

4. John Brewer in *The Pleasures of the Imagination* argues that this transfer of the arts from the "court" to the "town" was a central event in the development of eighteenth-century culture and civil society. See also M.H. Abrams, "Art as Such: the Sociology of Modern Aesthetics," in *Doing Things With Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (N.Y.: Norton, 1989), 135–58. As Abrams points out, the modern idea of the "arts" as a single coherent category including literature, painting, music, etc., also emerges during this period. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), offers a seminal discussion of the new idea of "culture" and its separation as an autonomous sphere in its own right during the nineteenth century.
5. On the emergence of consumer society in eighteenth-century Britain, see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization Of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1982). The classic theory on print's role in establishing and maintaining a new social order in the "public sphere" is Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), though many have since elaborated on this idea. See especially Terry Eagelton, *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984) and *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); and Peter Hohendahl, *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982).
6. Alvin Kernan in *Printing Technology, Letters & Samuel Johnson* makes Johnson the hero in his account of the emergence of authorship as a dignified and independent profession in relation to the commercial print market.
7. Michel Foucault defines the "author function" in his influential essay, "What is an Author?," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 113–28.

8. M.H. Abrams' classic study, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), still provides the best general summary of this shift. See also his more recent essay, "Types and Orientations of Critical Theories," in *Doing Things With Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (N.Y.: Norton, 1989), 3–30. Anne Williams, *Prophetic Strain: The Greater Lyric in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), offers a thorough study of how the subjective lyric became a dominant poetic form over the course of the eighteenth century.
9. Plant, 84–88, and Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 51–52. Plant writes that there were 59 master printers in 1662 at the beginning of the Licensing Act, and Feather that there were still 20 unlicensed printers as late as 1675.
10. Beljame, 248–52; Williams, *Long Revolution*, 181–84; Lee Lowenthal, *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 54.
11. Feather, *Provincial Book Trade*, 12. Feather estimates that there were about 20 provincial papers in 1730 and over 40 by 1750.
12. Figures from Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 24; Williams, *Long Revolution*, 183, 185; and Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 45.
13. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), 210.
14. Williams, *Long Revolution*, 179.
15. *Ibid.*, 173–84; Kathleen Wilson, "Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720–1790," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29:1 (1995): 70–96, esp. 72–75; and Stephen Botein, Jack R. Censer, and Harriet Ritvo, "The Periodical Press in English and French Society: a Cross-Cultural Approach," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23:3 (1991): 464–90. Typical newspaper contents are described in Williams, *Long Revolution*, 181–83, and Botein et al., 479. These sources argue that the English press during the eighteenth century reflected the perspectives and attitudes of the middle class in its rhetorical orientation as well as its subject matter, helping shape a sense of shared class identity which stands out in contrast to French journalism, which typically took a more aristocratic perspective and so did not stimulate the middle-class public or self-awareness in the same way.
16. Williams, *Long Revolution*, 181–82, and Botein et al., 472.
17. For the role of advertising in promoting the sale of books and the role of the provincial newspaper in creating national networks of distributions, see Feather, *Provincial Book Trade*, 19–28 and 44–53, and C.Y. Ferdinand, "Local Distribution Networks in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Spreading the Word*, eds. Myers and Harris, 131–49.
18. On the growth of the provincial trade in interdependence with London book-sellers as the provinces' share of the market increased, see Feather, *Provincial*

Book Trade, 9–11, 120–21, and his essay "On the Country Trade in Books," in *Spreading the Word*, eds. Meyer and Harris, 165–83, esp. 165, 171. For information on provincial readership, see also Roy McKeen Wiles, "The Relish for Reading in Provincial England Two Centuries Ago," in *The Widening Circle*, ed. Paul J. Korshin (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 85–115; and Kaufman, 215, who argues against the thesis that London contained a disproportionately large percentage of the English reading public. On the importance of ephemera to the country printing and bookselling trade, see esp. Ian Maxted, "Single Sheets From a Country Town: the Example of Exeter," in *Spreading the Word*, eds. Meyer and Harris, 109–29.

19. On the significance of *The Spectator*, see for instance Beljame, 263–307, and Collins, 232–35. More recent critics have complicated such an unqualified view of Addison and Steele's role in the *Spectator*, but the journal with its spectacular sales history, popular acclaim, and widely influential depiction of the ideal of the disinterested "gentleman" remains crucial to the story of the formation of the middle-class public. See for instance Brewer, 99–108.
20. Beljame, 310–11.
21. Feather, *Provincial Book Trade*, 46. Feather describes Cave's magazine as "the first periodical to command a large and truly national market" (20).
22. Collins, 241–42. See also Antonia Furster, "Review Journals and the Reading Public," in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 171–90, for a convenient overview of the reviews' emergence and role; and Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), on the reviews' importance in generating an audience for writers.
23. Figures from Furster in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 178. The figures for 1797 come from the 1842 estimate of C.H. Timperley, cited in that source.
24. See Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 50, for a convenient list of these and later major reviews.
25. James Basker, "Criticism and the Rise of Periodical Literature," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 4, *The Eighteenth Century*, eds. H.B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 316–32 (316).
26. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 31–43, describes these "institutions of the public sphere," which for Habermas were epitomized in England by the coffeehouse and the journal or newspaper. The "public" constituted by such institutions, as Habermas argues, was "from the outset [. . .] a reading public," since the institutions that made up the public sphere all depended either directly or indirectly on print: the only medium at the time through which the scattered social circles and clienteles of the coffeehouses and other cultural institutions could recognize themselves as a single public, and the only medium for the expression of "public opinion" (quoted from

23; on public opinion see esp. 89–102). See also Kaufman, who concentrates on libraries but includes substantial accounts of book clubs, subscription societies, coffeehouses and other forms of social organization; and Altick, who gives a general survey of such institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

27. On the commercial lending libraries, see Kaufman; Christopher Skelton-Foord, "Economics, Expertise, Enterprise and the Literary Scene: the Commercial Management Ethos in British Circulating Libraries, 1780–1830," in *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 136–52; James Raven, "From Promotion to Prescription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries," in *Practice and Representation of Reading*, eds. Raven et al., 175–201; and Devendra Varma, *The Evergreen Tree of Diabolical Knowledge* (Washington, D.C.: Consortium Press, 1972).
28. Sutherland, "Events," 10, 15, 45–46. On the opening up of the market to cheap reprints after the 1774 *Donaldson v. Becket* case ended perpetual copyright under common law, see also Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 17. On the high prices set by booksellers, see Stephen Behrendt, "The Romantic Reader," in *Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Duncan Wu (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), 91–100 (92). James Raven estimates the potential book-buying population as much higher, judging the 25% of the public with earnings between £50 and £400 in 1780 as able to buy books (*Judging New Wealth*, 58).
29. See Raven in *Practice and Representation of Reading*, eds. Raven et al., 182, together with Skelton-Foord in *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 137, for this range of services & prices; Skelton-Foord, 142, on nightly loans, and 143, on shipping services.
30. *Ibid.*, 14.
31. *Ibid.*, 144; Sutherland, "Events," 12.
32. See James Raven's essay in *Practice and Representation of Reading* on this anxiety and the way libraries met it by emphasizing their exclusivity, even as they attempted to maximize commercial earnings. Raven argues that the design and representation of private libraries, which were increasingly popular at the time, also reflected this attempt to regulate reading practices.
33. For various estimates of literacy rates, drawing on different methods and studies, see Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print, and Politics in Britain* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1999), 41–42; J. Paul Hunter, "'The Young, the Ignorant, and the Idle': Some Notes on Readers and the Beginnings of the English Novel," in *Anticipations of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany*, eds. Alan Charles Kors and Paul Korshin (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 259–82 (261–64); Richardson, 45; and Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 94–96. Clifford Siskin provides a useful, concise summary of recent scholarship and competing claims on the issue in *The Work of Writing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998), note 4,

229–30. Literacy rates are notoriously difficult to establish from such scanty and ambiguous evidence as the percentage of signatures in marriage registers.

34. Altick, 39–41.
35. Kaufman, 218. For statistics on the circulation of the *Rights of Man*, including skepticism towards Paine's claim that up to 1,500,000 copies had been circulated by 1809, see Altick, 70–71, and Williams, *Long Revolution*, 163.
36. Cited in J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: the Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (N.Y.: Norton, 1990), 62–63, and Kathyrn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 27.
37. Weedon, 34
38. Raven makes the point about price being more constraining than literacy in *Judging New Wealth*, 57.
39. Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 2. According to Raven the number of total printed titles increased by an average of 2% per year from 1740 to 1800, but 3.5% per year in the shorter subperiod of 1780 to 1800. See also figure 1 in *Judging New Wealh*, 32.
40. Circulation figures drawn from Williams, *Long Revolution*, 160–67; Altick, 47–50 (population figure on 70); and Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 50. Altick offers very useful appendices of sales figures for nineteenth-century "bestsellers" and typical periodical circulations on 381–396.
41. Erickson, 29.
42. Sutherland, "Events," 31, 34; Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 101; and Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 207 n. 33.
43. See Johns, 260, for almanac figures. Figures on the *Repository Tracts* are from Altick, 75–77. For a fascinating discussion of More's tracts in relation to these other popular forms, see Susan Pedersen, "Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 25:1 (1986): 84–113. For an account of this same popular audience and the popular print trade in an earlier period, see also Theresa Watt, "Publisher, Pedlar, Pot-Poet: The Changing Character of the Broadside Trade, 1550–1640" in *Spreading the Word*, eds. Myers and Harris, 60–81, a condensed version of material in her *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991).
44. On this boom period for poetry and its passing, see Erickson, chapter 1, 19–48.
45. Figures from *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 154; Bennett, 207 n. 33; and Sutherland, 38. For a convenient chart of the print run of Longman's best-selling poetry in the early nineteenth century, see *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 155.
46. Erickson, esp. chapter 1, 19–48. Figures on 28–29.
47. *Ibid.,* 29. See Peter Manning, "Wordsworth in the Keepsake, 1829," in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and*

Reading Practices, eds. John Jordan and Robert Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 44–73, for an account of Wordsworth's 1829 negotiations to have some of his poems printed in *The Keepsake*, together with a general description of the annuals.

48. On the tendency of commentators at the time to conflate the French Revolution and the printing revolution, see Sutherland, 6–7; Newlyn, 6; and Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 8–10. On the fear of widespread lower class reading after the Revolution, see also *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 17. Annette Wheeler Cafarelli explores the Romantic poets' ambivalent relationship with a "common" reading public in "The Common Reader: Social Class in Romantic Poetics," *JEGP* 96:2 (1997): 222–46. See Bradley Deane, *The Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2003), chapter 3, on renewed attacks against the "sensationalism" of mass reading practices in the late 1850s; and Helen Small, "A Pulse of 124: Charles Dickens and a Pathology of the Mid-Victorian Reading Public," in *Practice and Representation of Reading*, eds. Raven et al., 263–90, on the manifestation of those anxieties around Dickens' public reading tours, beginning in 1858.
49. Sutherland, "Events," 17–21.
50. This division of the public emerges most markedly with the appearance of a wide variety of radical periodicals during the crisis years of 1816–19. On the constitution of this self-conscious working-class audience, see Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, chapter 4, 98–134, together with Altick, 65–77 and 325–29.
51. See note (56), below, on these paper and press developments. See Altick, 260–77 and 332–39, and Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 78–79, on the rise of mass-produced cheap literature. Examples, in addition to those listed in the paragraph, include Constable's *Miscellany* series and Brougham's *Library of Useful Knowledge* series, both begun in 1827; and the 1822 *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, which circulated up to 80,000 to 100,000 copies.
52. See Williams, *Long Revolution*, 181, 185–86, 190, 192, for information on the gradual reduction of newspaper stamp and advertisement taxes. The Stamp Duty was specifically used as a form of political control to impede the circulation of cheap radical publications. Drastic reduction in these prohibitively high taxes did not occur until 1836 (for the Stamp Duty) and 1833 (for the advertisement tax)—the Stamp Duty was reduced from 4d. to 1d. The heavy paper tax of 3d. per lb. was halved in 1837, although not repealed until 1861 (Plant, 332).
53. Williams, *Long Revolution*, 190–94.
54. Appendix B of Altick, 383–86, offers figures on the overall sales of novels. Chapter 12, 260–93, summarizes the drop in book prices and the development

of various forms of cheap literature during the nineteenth century. By 1840 the standard price for a new novel remained as high as 31s. 6d. in three volumes, but cheap reprints of 5 to 6s. per novel catered to a whole new group of (still basically middle-class) readers, and number or serial publications and "library" series, such as Constable's *Miscellany*, sought a new mass public for even cheaper editions. See Chittick, chapter 2, 18–42, for a summary of the print market in the 1830s, including the waves of cheap, mass-reproduced novels which began to appear at the time. See also Simon Eliot, "Some Trends in British Book Production," in *Literature in the Marketplace*, eds. Jordan and Patten, 19–43, esp. 39–41, on the increasing marketplace dominance of mass cheap editions after 1835.

55. See Chittick, 26, 31–32 on these periodicals and their circulation; Deane, 36–37, for specific *Penny Magazine* circulation figures and profit margins; and 63, on the new novel production for the "penny market."
56. For an overview of the development of mechanical presses and the mechanization of other aspects of the print industry in the early and mid nineteenth century, see Plant, chapters 13–15, 269–340. On the increase in paper prices during the Napoleonic Wars and the gradual fall of prices afterwards, together with the gradual repeal of government taxes on paper, see 200–3 and 325–33. See also Erickson, for an account of fluctuations in the price of paper and its impact on literary forms.
57. Weedon, see 34, 52, 57, 60–61, 97 for specific claims.
58. Plant, 462–63, estimates the number of new titles printed annually (as opposed to the total number of titles printed, which includes reprints) as rising from about 100 per year between 1666 and 1756, to 372 per year from 1792 to 1802, 580 per year over the next quarter century, and then suddenly over 2,600 per year around the middle of the nineteenth century. As Plant points out, these increases in part reflect increases in population, but the final, mid nineteenth-century rise is far out of proportion to the population increase at the time. James Raven's figure one in *Judging New Wealth*, 32, gives a more updated account (and a compelling visual representation) of the growth of all forms of publication between 1740 and 1800, based on the *Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalog*. Drawing from the work of C.J. Mitchell, Alvin Kernan in *Printing Technology, Letters, and Samuel Johnson*, 60–61, speculates on the possibility of a decline in publishing output at mid-century, but Raven's figures seem to disprove that hypothesis (Raven counts more than just books, however). Figures for the nineteenth century are given in Eliot, in *Literature in the Marketplace*, eds. Jordan and Patten, 28–32, and in Weedon.
59. Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 8–9, and Plant, 62–68. To avoid confusion, Belanger uses the single term "bookseller" to indicate the combined publishing/bookselling role.
60. See Plant, 158–63, and Johns, 94–98, for a description of these printing-house customs, related to but often substantially elaborating upon the

structures of the guild as a whole. Plant describes the breakdown of the apprentice system and the onset of factory conditions from 356ff.

61. See Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 10–11, for a description of the London book trade during the eighteenth century; Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 17–19 on increased profits and risks in bookselling after the 1774 decision revitalized the market; and Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, 42, on the collapse of the old closed auction system. For a description of changes towards the end of the century, see also Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 139–40 and 148–49; and Leslie Chard, "Bookseller to Publisher: Joseph Johnson and the English Book Trade, 1760–1810," *The Library*, 5th ser., vol. 32 (1977): 138–54, which describes the growing necessity of large amounts of capital in the publishing industry and the overall transition from co-operative to large competitive firms. Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics*, 94, also describes the separation of large publishing firms from retail bookselling around this time in response to these new market conditions.
62. On increasing capitalization and better credit arrangements, see Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 9–10. On the relative stasis of printing technology, see *Ibid.*, 5, together with Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 130–31.
63. Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, 43–44 and 61–65. On increased attempts to attract and retain authors to generate new copyright material after 1774, see Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 16.
64. Sutherland, "Events," 8; Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 22–24; Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, 52.
65. Benedict in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Sitter, 80.
66. On the success of Dodsley's *Collection* and its imitators, together with the popularity of miscellanies throughout the eighteenth century, see Michael F. Suarez SJ, "The Production and Consumption of the Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellany," in *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. Clery et al., 217–46. On miscellanies and anthologies, see also Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), and her essay in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Sitter, 72–75.
67. John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), provides an excellent discussion of this issue of cultural capital: see especially his chapter on Thomas Gray, 85–133.
68. See Thomas Bonnell, "Bookselling and Canon-Making: the Trade Rivalry Over the English Poets," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 19 (1989): 53–69. Bonnell lists the bibliographic information for eleven multi-volume "classic" poetry series appearing between the 1760s and 1790s, in "Speaking

of Institutions and Canonicity, Don't Forget the Publishers," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 21:3 (1997): 97–99. On the complementary role of anthologies in this process, see Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader*. See also Ezell, 123–39, who similarly explores the role of reprint series in the definition of the literary "classic," in relation to new practices of scholarly editing and commentary. Ezell estimates that 100 different reprint series were launched between 1800 and 1830. On new forms of scholarship and their role in constituting vernacular "classics," see Marcus Walsh, "Literary Scholarship and the Life of Editing," in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 191–215; and Jonathan Kramnick Brody, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998). Fiction series such as Robert Cadell's cheap reprints of the Waverly novels in 1829 and Bentley's *Standard Novels* series beginning in 1831 began to extend this same "classic" status to novels as well (see Erickson, chapter 6, 142–69).

69. Saunders and Hunter, cited above; David Saunders, *Authorship and Copyright* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1992).
70. Feather, *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics*, 44–60, and Rose, *Authors and Owners*, 31–36, describe the authority of the Company before 1695 and the dangers to the industry when the Licensing Act lapsed. See also Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 38–42, for an account of the origin of "copies" as private, licensed property in the Stationers' Register. Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002), offers a history of the Stationers' Company, the Stationers' Register, and the evolution of literary property with a focus before the eighteenth century, within the overall context of early modern guilds and monopolies.
71. The congers allowed these powerful booksellers to put effective pressure on retailers not to market pirated books, because congers members could then withhold their own books from such offending retailers. On this and other strategies for controlling piracy, which did not work well outside the immediate London area, see Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 74–83, and *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics*, 71–72.
72. See Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 67–83, and Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 10–18, for information on the congers, the value of "copies," and the closed auction system of copyright sales.
73. For an account of the formation of the English Stock, see Feather, *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics*, 20–25.
74. See Saunders, *Authorship and Copyright*, 51.
75. Feather, *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics*, 64.
76. *Ibid.*, 61–62, offers an account of these changes to the Bill's language.
77. See Rose, esp. chapter 3, 31–48.
78. *Ibid.*, 48; Feather, *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics*, 64.

79. See Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics*, chapter 3, 64–96; Saunders, *Authorship and Copyright*, chapters 2 and 5, 35–74 and 122–48; and Rose, 49–112, for in-depth explorations of these legal struggles to define copyright and the competing interests represented.
80. On these authors' support of copyright, see Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics*, 125–41, and Susan Eilenberg, *Strange Powers of Speech: Wordsworth, Coleridge and Literary Possession* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), chapter 6, 192–212. Wordsworth complained that more authors did not support his advocacy of the bill, repeatedly brought before parliament by the M.P. Thomas Noon Talfourd.
81. My discussion here and in the following paragraphs on the connection between discourses of authorship and legal debates over copyright draws largely from the work of Mark Rose and Martha Woodmansee, *Author, Art, and the Market*, cited above. Saunders in *Authorship and Copyright* and Saunders and Hunter in "Lessons from the 'Literatory'" also argue that the Statute of Anne concerned booksellers' and not authors' rights.
82. See Rose, 5–6, who quotes the relevant passage from Locke.
83. *Ibid.*, 87–91. On the significance of patents and their relation to literary copyright, see also Pamela Long, "Invention, Authorship, 'Intellectual Property,' and the Origins of Patents: Notes Towards a Conceptual History," *Technology and Culture* 32:4 (1981): 846–84.
84. Woodmansee, *Author, Art, and the Market*, esp. chapter 2, 35–55. See also Rose, 104–7 and 114–29; Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*, chapter 2, 30–48; and William Rowland, Jr., 190–93, all of whom comment on the relation between these commercial developments and the emergence of the mutually defining categories of "hack" and "genius." See also Zeynep Tenger and Paul Trolander, "Genius Versus Capital: Eighteenth-Century Theories of Genius and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," *MLQ* 55:2 (1994): 169–89, which explores the conflict between the discourse of genius and the discourse of political economy towards the end of the eighteenth century, both trying to define themselves as central to the wealth and social well-being of the nation.
85. Fielding is quoted from Rose, 119; Young from the facsimile edition of *Conjectures on Original Composition* (Leeds, England: Scolar Press, 1960), 12; Goldsmith from *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), vol. 1, 316.
86. See Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1994), 37–38, on the idea of genius as ultimately depending on the marketplace. Alvin Kernan in *Printing Technology, Letters, and Samuel Johnson* discusses the emergence of the "author" as a category of dignified identity in its own right, as opposed to the mere "drudge" or "hack" enslaved by market conditions. Kernan makes

Samuel Johnson the central hero in the production of this new, independent authorial identity (see esp. 3–7 and 16–23).

87. See esp. Woodmansee, "Genius and the Copyright," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17:4 (1984): 425–48 (426–27).
88. See Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1998), esp. 70–74, 101–2, together with the sources in note (38) of my Introduction, above.
89. Johns, see esp. 102–3, 175–77, on the potential stigma of engaging with printers and publishers and visiting their shops; and 32–33, 77, 222 on issues of printing and propriety. As Johns points out, the term "propriety" is etymologically linked to "property." See also Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 25, 38, 46, on the negative associations of commercial publication for the aristocratic coteries poets of the Restoration.
90. On authors' lack of formal rights or control over printed work and the frequency of alteration and misattribution, see Johns, 228, together with the sources in note (27) of my Introduction, above.
91. See Suarez in *Books and Their Readers*: *New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 240, on this tendency to bend copyright law for miscellanies.
92. On this continued stigma into the Victorian period, see Deane, chapter 1, 1–25, and Erickson, 172–77.
93. Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, esp. 2–5. See also Kernan on Johnson as a representative of dignified independent authorship.
94. Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 19.
95. Keen, 8–9, 77–97.
96. On this appeal to posterity and the related idea of literature transcending the marketplace, see for instance Bennett, chapter 2, 38–64.
97. Quoted from Rose, 104–5. On the general terms of this debate, see 89–91, 104–7, and 113–29.
98. Quoted from Woodmansee, "Genius and the Copyright," 426. See also Rose, 1, and Chartier, *Order of Books*, 32–40.
99. Mark Rose makes this point in *Authors and Owners*, arguing that "by 1774 many respectable writes—most notably Samuel Johnson—were acknowledged authors by profession" (105). See also Kernan's account of Samuel Johnson and the rise of authorial identity.
100. On the conditions of English authorship at the time, see Beljame, 338–39, and Collins, who writes: "In 1726 literature had been little more than a hanger-on in society and politics, and in no sense a profession; but in 1780 men of letters were independent, forming a society of their own, servants of the public like any other profession, and well paid for their labors" (231). On the comparative failure of "authorship" to emerge as a professional identity in France during the same period, see Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1984), chapter 4, 145–89, which argues that

by mid-century the category of "writer" or "author" in its own right still did not exist. For various other discussions of the situation of the French author towards the end of the *ancien régime*, see also Darnton, "The Facts of Literary Life in Eighteenth-Century France," in *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, vol. 1 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, ed. K.M. Baker (N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1987), 261–91; John Lough, *Writer and Public in France from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 207–17; and Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1991), 56–61. These scholars differ somewhat on the earning potential of French writers, and Chartier speculates on the emergence of the "author" in the final decades of the *ancien régime*, but all agree that the author in France remained much more dependent on patronage and state institutions than in England. They also agree that it was much more difficult and much rarer to earn a living by writing for the print market in France than in England; that the earning potentials of French writers were significantly lower; and that as a result the figure of the dignified, independent "author" did not exist in France to the same extent that it did in England. Government censorship also participated in this marginalization of authorial identity, in that it forced a great deal of writing "underground," where it mingled with other underworld activities such as libel and pornography—see Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982).

101. Pat Rogers, *The Eighteenth Century* (N.Y.: Holmes and Meier, 1978), 44. For information on the importance of the magazines in stimulating authorship and supporting authors, see also Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 111, and Basker, in *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, eds. Nisbett and Rawson, 325.
102. On the prevalence of periodical writing and the difficulty of earning a living through book sales in the eighteenth century, see Belanger in *Books and Their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 20–22. Terry Belanger writes there that "most writers in the first half of the eighteenth century could not earn their living from *belles lettres*," and when in the second quarter of the century writers such as Johnson began to make a living through their writing, they did so by depending mostly "on the market in periodicals, not books, for their principal livelihood" (21–22). For a comparison of English and French writers' earning potentials, see Lough, 201.
103. Erickson, 71, 88. Figures on periodical earnings come from Erickson, 75, 78, and Harry Ransom, "The Rewards of Authorship in the Eighteenth Century," *Univ. of Texas Studies* 18 (1938): 47–66 (60).
104. Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 169.
105. Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 16; Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 14.

106. Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 169–75 (169); Belanger in *Books and their Readers*, ed. Rivers, 22; Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 20–21. On royalty agreements becoming more common in the 1850s, see Weedon, 96, 143.
107. Erickson, 29. Other figures come from Raven in *Books and their Readers: New Essays*, ed. Rivers, 16, 20–22; Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, 39.
108. Erickson, 36–37. Erickson estimates that 70% of all publications lost money (89).
109. Figures from Carrol Fry, *Charlotte Smith* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 10, 30–31; and Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry, and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester, England: Manchester Univ. Press, 2003), 9. In comparison, Smith received £50 for *The Emigrants* in 1793.
110. W.J.B. Owen, "Costs, Sales, and Profits of Longman's Editions of Wordsworth," *The Library*, 5th ser., no. 12 (1957): 93–107 (95–96).
111. Figures from David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 40–41; Ransom, 52–53; Erickson, 22; Sutherland, "Events," 38.
112. *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public*, eds. E.J. Clery et al., 12. On Francis Burney's earnings as a novelist, see Sara Salih, "*Camilla* in the Markeplace: Moral Marketing and Feminist Editing in 1796 and 1802," in *Ibid.*, 120–35.
113. On subscription publication, see Benedict in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Sitter 75–76; Raven, *Judging New Wealth*, 39; and Brean Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670–1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 69–70. On women poets' tendency to publish by subscription, see note (50) in my Introduction, above.
114. Figures cited from Clifford Siskin, "Wordsworth's Prescription: Romanticism and Professional Power," in *The Romantics and Us*, ed. Gene Ruoff (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990), 303–27 (308).
115. Feather, *History of British Publishing*, 171; Rose, 110–12.
116. Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), see esp. the Introduction, 1–12, and chapter 10, 246–85. Griffin argues persuasively against the common interpretation of Johnson's scathing rejection of Lord Chesterfield, upon completion of his dictionary in 1755, as the definitive end of patronage (246–47). See also Paul Korshin, "Types of Eighteenth-Century Literary Patronage," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 7:4 (1974), 453–73, which essentially agrees with Griffin's position. My discussion of eighteenth-century patronage relies heavily on these two sources.
117. Coleridge declined an offer to begin preaching as a Unitarian minister after being given a £150/yr. annuity by the Wedgewoods beginning in 1798. Wordsworth's career was similarly enabled by his receipt of a £900 bequest after the death of Raisley Calvert in 1795, which was essentially an act of

patronage, and by various later forms of patronage by the Beaumonts and Lord Lowther, who procured him his lucrative position as stamp distributor for Westmoreland and parts of Cumberland in 1813.

118. Griffin, *Literary Patronage*, 271. Griffin describes this new form of patronage as "democratic" (267–68). Hammond, 69–70, argues that subscription publishing helped make the transition to a commercial literary market possible.

119. See Siskin's essay in *The Romantics and Us*, ed. Ruoff, cited above, and his book-length study *The Work of Writing*. See also Williams, *Long Revolution*, 74–76, which discusses this change in categories of identity within the contexts of the overall development of the autonomous individual. On the shift from an old "status" model of professionalism to a new "occupational" model, defined not by social status and inheritance but by individual education and talents, see Brian Goldberg, "'Ministry More Palpable': William Wordsworth and the Making of Romantic Professionalism," *SiR* 36:3 (1997): 327–47. My chapter 7, below, begins with a general discussion of professional models during the period.

120. *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, eds. Raven et al., provides an excellent collection of essays on the history of reading from Medieval times through the nineteenth century, with a useful overview of recent scholarship in the Introduction, 1–21. See also Hunter, *Before Novels* and "'The Young, the Ignorant, and the Idle'." Jonathan Rose offers a stimulating polemic on how to approach a history of reading, especially in relation to English working class readers, in "Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53:1 (1992): 47–70.

121. Joan Pittock, *The Ascendancy of Taste: the Achievement of Joseph and Thomas Warton* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1973), 2, argues for the inescapable subjective implications of the term and its now-dead metaphor. See also Robert Holub, "The Rise of Aesthetics in the Eighteenth Century," *Comparative Literature Studies* 15:3 (1978): 271–83; David Marshall, part i. of "Taste and Aesthetics," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, eds. Nisbett and Rawson, 633–57; and Kramnick, 54–84.

122. See Abrams, "Art as Such," in *Doing Things With Texts*, 135–58 (138); and chapter 1 of *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 3–29. On the general commercialization of the arts and its effect on aesthetic theory, see Brewer, together with Jane Tompkins, "The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response," in *Reader-Response Criticism: from Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980), 201–32, esp. 211–18.

123. E.N. Hooker, "The Discussion of Taste from 1750 to 1770, and the New Trends in Literary Criticism," *PMLA* 49 (1934): 577–92.

124. *Ibid.*, 589. See also Nathaniel Teich, "Evaluating Wordsworth's Revolution: Romantic Reviewers and Changing Taste," *Papers on Language and Literature*

11:2 (1975): 206–23, which discusses Wordsworth's prose writings of the early 1800s as accepting this breakdown of consensus on taste.

125. Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, see esp. chapter 1, 18–46. See also Brewer, 87–108, on the ideal of social consensus in eighteenth-century polite culture and discourses of taste; and Eagelton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, chapters 1 and 2, 13–69, for an interesting theory of how taste united society by leading separate individuals on internalize standard "laws" as if these laws were products of their own subjective freedom.
126. Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 20.
127. Quoted from Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, 3 vols., ed. George Birbeck Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), vol. 3, 441. See Kernan, 226–27, and Robert DeMaria Jr., "Samuel Johnson and the Reading Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 16:3 (1992): 86–102, on Johnson's relation to changes in reading practices and theories.
128. Trevor Ross, "Copyright and the Invention of Tradition," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26:1 (1992), 1–27 (15–16). For other sources on the growth of reading and Johnson's invocation of the common reader, see Kernan, chapter 6, 204–40, and DeMaria, Jr.
129. Chartier, *Order of Books*, 17, reviews large-scale shifts in reading around this time, including Rolf Engelsing's controversial theory of the general shift in reading practices from "intensive" reading of a few works to "extensive" skimming of many. See also Abrams, *Doing Things With Texts*, 145, which speculates on how the commercialization of print led to more isolated private reading; and Daniel Wilson, "The Death of Orality and the Rise of the Literate Subject" in *Subjectivity and Literature from the Romantics to the Present Day*, eds. Philip Shaw and Peter Stalwell (N.Y.: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 159–70, for a broad argument about the origin of modern subjectivity in relation to private reading around this time.
130. Raven in *Practice and Representation of Reading*, eds. Raven et al., 187–200. On the development of libraries as a standard feature in country houses, see also Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: a Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), chapter 6, 164–80. Before the emergence of the library as a standard room, books were generally kept in exclusive private closets, which would seem to suggest that reading became less rather than more private over time. I would interpret this development, instead, as indicating the greatly increased importance of book ownership and reading generally. Reading still took place in private closets, but now was further emphasized in the home through the construction of substantial libraries and amassing of large book collections.
131. See J. Paul Hunter, "Novels and 'The Novel': The Poetics of Embarrassment," *Modern Philology* 85:4 (1988): 480–98 (490), on the increasing prevalence of private studies during the period.

132. Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), see esp. chapter 2.
133. Barbara Benedict offers an interesting variation of this argument in *Making the Modern Reader*, 210–13, arguing that the changing nature of literary anthologies during this period increasingly constructed reading as a private, solitary act. See also Jane Tompkins' discussion of the history of reading practices and aesthetic theory in *Reader-Response Criticism,* ed. Tompkins.
134. John Sitter. *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982).
135. See Kernan, 220–26, together Rzepka, *Self as Mind.* Rzepka begins his book with a provocative reading of Gray's *Elegy* as an example of poetry defining the self through consciousness, which also brings the potential danger of solipsism. On this sense of isolation or solipsism as a kind of absolute evil for Augustan writers such as Pope and Swift, see William C. Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment: the Poetics of Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistles* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991).
136. Hallam's essay appeared in *Englishman's Magazine* 1 (August 1831) and is reprinted in *Victorian Sentries: Reviews of Poetry*, ed. Isobel Armstrong (London: Athlane Press, 1972), 84–101. Mill is quoted from *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 1, *Autobiography and Literary Essays*, eds. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1981), 349.
137. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760–1830* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), 182. Butler argues that the later Romantics remained unavoidably occupied with political concerns, and that even the shift from public to private focus had a recognizable political significance at the time (see esp. 85 and 143–54).
138. For versions of this claim, see Rowland, Jr., 3, 188, and Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 3, 14, 172.
139. Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 172.
140. Cafarelli, 244. See also Rzepka, *Self as Mind*, and Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, for accounts of how Romantic period writers responded to this anxiety.
141. Butler, 179, 82.
142. Hence Wordsworth's continuous inquiries about the sales of his volumes and his dejection when low sales and poor reviews for his 1807 and 1815 *Poems* and 1814 *Excursion* indicated his lack of a public. For his attitudes towards sales and reviews, see my chapter 6, below. On the increased importance of the reviews in both shaping and representing the response of the public, see Donoghue.
143. Quoted from *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., eds. W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Univ. Press, 1974), 3:80.
144. Rzepka argues for this need to construct a sympathetic response throughout *The Self as Mind*; he specifically cites Keats' phrase, the "greeting of spirit,"

on 27. Kernan, 225, claims that authors and readers began to be commonly figured in texts during the eighteenth century, in response to this sense of the author's isolation from audience. See also Rowland, Jr., 6, and Tilottama Rajan, *The Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), 2–4.

145. *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3:82; S.T. Coleridge, *Lectures 1808–1819*, ed R.A. Foakes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), i. 86. For discussion of this hermeneutics of reading, see Rajan; Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, esp. 70, 84, 86–87, 104, 309, 312; Abrams, *Mirror and the Lamp*, chapter 9, 226–62; and Thomas McCarthy, *Relationships of Sympathy: the Writer and the Reader in British Romanticism* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1997), chapters 1 and 5, 23–55 and 144–67.

146. Woodmansee, *Author, Art, and the Market,* chapter 6, 111–47, provides a sustained discussion of how emerging ideas of genius and copyright interacted with this new model of the hermeneutic relationship between author and reader. See also the sources listed in note (122), above.

147. See Rajan, chapter 2, 36–68, for a discussion of Schleiermacher's *Compendium* in relation to this author-focused hermeneutics, together with McCarthy, chapters 1 and 5, 23–55 and 144–67.

148. Rajan, 29.

149. On the discourses of sympathy and sensibility, see McCarthy; C.B. Jones, *Radical Sensibility* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1993), esp. the introduction and chapter 1, 1–58; J. Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986); J. Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), chapter 1, 18–56; and Stephen Cox, *"The Stranger Within Thee": Concepts of the Self in Late 18th Century British Literature* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), chapters 2 and 3, 13–58. As John Radner points out in "The Art of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century British Thought," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 9 (1979): 189–210, there was fundamental disagreement over whether the exercise of sympathy through reading literature strengthened the faculty's power, by repeated exercise, or weakened it, by progressive dissipation. Supporters of imaginative literature, however—which tended to include the writers themselves—generally believed that proper reading had a positive effect. See Pittock, 12–15, together with the other sources listed in note (121), above, for links between the idea of taste and these later discourses, including taste's emphasis on the connection between aesthetic appreciation, individual emotional response, and social harmony. See also Eagelton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, chapters 1 and 2, 13–69, and Brewer, on the social significance of this idea of "taste." Klancher, *Reading Audiences,* 29–33, discusses how the circulation of texts through society was identified as a source of social cohesion, through the metaphor of the circulation of blood.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. For an account of the new copyright law and Pope's becoming the first author to defend his copyrights consistently in court, see Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), chapters 3 and 4, 31–66. Many critics have argued that Pope was the first major author to support himself comfortably through the sales of his imaginative writing to a commercial audience. See for instance Reginal Harvey Griffith, *Alexander Pope: A Bibliography*, 2 vols. in 1 (Austin: Univ. of Texas, 1922–1927), who writes that "Pope was the first man in English literature to accumulate an independent fortune from the sale of books that were written as works of art" (vol. 2, xlvi); and more recently, Brean Hammond in *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670–1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), who writes that "Pope has a fair claim to be the first great professional writer in English letters: the first writer to make a fortune by applying extraordinary commercial acumen to the exploiting of his literary talent" (292). One might also argue that this honor belongs to Addison and Steele with their publication of the *Spectator* in 1711–12, but the length of time and success with which Pope exploited the print market, his strong claims of authorial independence, and his defence of his own copyright both in publishers' contracts and in court distinguish him from Addison and Steele, as does the central role of his writing in establishing his identity.
2. Besides the two sources cited in note (1) above, see A.S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson: Being a Study of the Relation Between Author, Patron, Publisher and Public, 1726–1780* (London: Robert Holden,1927), 124–27, which cites Pope's unprecedented independence as a man of letters—a position which would not be emulated by others until later in the century. For an account of Pope's construction of his own personal identity throughout his poetry, see Dustin Griffin, *Alexander Pope: The Poet in the Poems* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978).
3. David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Foxon divides Pope's career into these same three periods, in the three chapters of his book. I rely heavily on him for my account of Pope's publishing arrangements and authorial career.
4. See Griffith, who writes that "If Pope is not the greatest among English poets, he is the greatest advertiser and publisher among them" (vol. 2, xlvii); and Ian Jack, "Pope and his Audience: from the *Pastorals* to the *Dunciad Variorum*," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century IV*, eds. R.F. Brissenden and J.C. Eade (Canberra: Australia National Univ. Press, 1979), 1–30, esp. 3.
5. James McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 2.
6. Ripley Hotch, "Pope Surveys His Kingdom: *An Essay on Criticism*," in *Critical Essays on Alexander Pope*, eds. Wallace Jackson and R. Paul Young

(N.Y.: G.K. Hall, 1993), 103–14 (103). See also Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*.

7. Leopold Damrosch argues for the unprecedented amount of personal information in Pope's poetry in *The Imaginative World of Alexander Pope* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1987), 19.
8. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing*, 294; Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia Thomas, eds., *More Solid Learning: New Perspectives on Alexander Pope's Dunciad* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2000), 165.
9. *Ibid.*, 30–31.
10. Claudia Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries: Skirmishes on the Borders of Gentility," in *Cutting Edges: Postmodern Critical Essays on Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. James E. Gill (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1995), 275–300 (284).
11. McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, 2–3. For an argument on the connection between print, self-presentation, and deformation in Pope's poetry, see Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996).
12. See *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols., ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), i. 120, for Pope's letters describing these portraits. See also Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, 39. References to the letters will henceforth be cited parenthetically by *Cor.*, followed by volume and page number in the text.
13. For an account of some of Pope's most important early friendships, see Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (N.Y.: Norton, 1985), chapter 5, 89–117. John Paul Russo, *Alexander Pope: Tradition and Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), 42–53, discusses how Pope established a sense of himself through these early friendships as the poetic heir to Dryden, since Dryden had been friends with many of those who encouraged Pope. Mack offers a daunting list of Pope's friends throughout his career, supporting his claim that Pope "had an unusual talent for friendship" (186).
14. Pope's genius was proclaimed to him from an extremely early age. Sir William Trumbull wrote him in 1705 that he was liable to equal Milton—"I know no body so likely to equal him, even at the age he wrote most of them, as your self" (*Cor.* i. 10)—and Granville in a letter to a friend compared his Pastorals favorably to Virgil's (letter quoted in Russo, 50), a claim which was no doubt passed on to Pope in some form. On Pope's modeling of himself after Dryden, see esp. Russo, 53.
15. For an account of the publication of the *Miscellanies* by Tonson, see Mack, *A Life*, 121–24. Griffith describes Tonson's approaching Pope to be his publisher at the age of 18 (xli). Pope and Ambrose Philips were the featured writers in the sixth *Miscellany*. Though the volume started with Philips' pastorals, it ended with Pope's, and Pope's poetry (including the "Episode of Sarpedon"

translated from Homer) took up by far the greater part of the book. For a detailed description of the *Miscellany's* layout, see Foxon, 18–23.

16. Foxon, 18.
17. For an excellent summary of Pope's relations of patronage and the wide variety of services provided for him by patrons not only during his early career but throughout his life, see Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), chapter 6, 123–54. Griffin discusses how later in life Pope defined himself as independent and therefore outside of relations of patronage, while at the same time continuing to benefit from such patronage relations.
18. See Jack, 3, on Pope writing the names on the manuscript copies. As this practice shows, Pope was not only acquiescent but actively self-promoting through these relations of patronage.
19. See Mack, *A Life*, 107, for an account of Trumbull's influence. Apparently, as Joseph Spence relates the incident, Bolingbroke remarked as he leafed through the "First Satire of the Second Book" of Horace lying on Pope's table "how well it would hit my case, if I were to imitate it in English." James McLaverty argues in *Pope, Print, and Meaning* that Pope had planned for some time to follow up the *Dunciad* by writing in the Horatian manner, and merely used Bolingbroke's suggestion as an impetus or pretext (143–44). Bolingbroke's remark is of course casual, hardly the formal request of a patron, and Pope would not have embarked on this extensive project if it had not suited his own interests at the time, but it remains significant that he openly attributed the project's origins to Bolingbroke. Spence is cited in Brean Hammond, *Pope* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986), 57.
20. On Pope's involvement with coteries manuscript circulation, see Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999), 61–68. Ezell estimates an average time of 10 years between writing and publication for Pope's poems composed between 1700 and 1710, and an average of five years for poems composed between 1711 and 1720. On the general interpenetration of manuscript and print culture during the period, with particular focus on Pope, see also David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1789* (N.Y.: Longman, 2003), chapter 1, 1–20.
21. See Mack, *A Life*, 124, for a brief account of this traditional relation between publisher and author; and my own chapter one, above, for a more developed account of these relations. For a full account of Pope's relation to his publishers and the status of his copyrights during this period, see Foxon, chapter 1, 1–50, including a convenient summary table of Pope's early career, detailing printers, publishers, copyright fees, and edition sizes where known (40–41). Note that Pope received the higher price of 30 guineas for both *Windsor Forest* and *The Temple of Fame*. For some figures on standard remuneration for poetry at the time, see Ian Watt, "Publishers and Sinners: The Augustan View," *Studies in Bibliography* 12 (1959): 3–20, esp. 11–12; and Harry

Ransom, "The Rewards of Authorship in the Eighteenth Century," *Univ. of Texas Studies* 18 (1938): 47–66.

22. McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, 46–48; see chapter 3, 46–81, on the 1717 *Works* in general. As McLaverty points out, Ben Jonson provided the major example of publishing one's *Works* in one's own lifetime, but his precedent was not widely followed, and Pope could just as appropriately have used the more customary title for poetic collections, *Poems on Several Occasions*.
23. *Ibid.*, 56. See chapter 3 in general, esp. 49 (on Pope's control of print format); 50–56 and 61–62 (on emerging models of authorial responsibility and the 1717 *Works* as centered around Pope's authorial identity); and 68–69 (on the attempt to establish a poetic canon). See also 14–15, on Pope's attempt throughout his career to control all aspects of printing and reception.
24. My account of the publication arrangements for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations come from Foxon, chapter 2, 51–101. For characterization of subscription as a kind of "democratic" patronage, see Griffin, *Literary Patronage*, 267–69, and Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing*, 69–71.
25. For an account of the social distribution of Pope's subscribers, including aristocracy, military men, professionals, members of parliament, gentry, and to a lesser extent members of the court, universities, merchants, and clergymen, see Pat Rogers, "Pope and His Subscribers," in *Essays on Pope* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 190–227, esp. 215–23; and Matthew Hogart, "The Subscription List for Pope's *Iliad*," in *The Dress of Words: Essays on Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Robert B. White, Jr. (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1978), 25–34. Both essays provide a detailed statistical analysis of the subscriber data, analyzed according to rank, office, political affiliation, age, sex, and family connection. See also Susan Staves, "Pope's Refinement," *The Eighteenth Century* 29:2 (1988): 145–63, in which she characterizes Pope's subsciption lists as a register of the new class of the "polite" which he cultivated and helped to define.
26. De Quincey is cited in Staves, 155.
27. For an estimate on this inheritance, see Pope's claim to Martha Blount as reported by Joseph Spence, quoted in Damrosch, 58n. Pope's father had retired to live off a non-invested fortune of £10,000 in 1688 (see Mack, *A Life*, 44), so Pope's claim seems reasonable.
28. For an account of Pope's astute and active marketing in collecting subscribers, see Rogers, *Essays on Pope*, 190–208. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's remark is quoted from Foxon, 63.
29. Watt, "Publishers and Sinners," 20.
30. Foxon, 102. See the entire chapter 3, 102–52, for an account of Pope's new relations with printers and publishers, as he assumed close control of the format and distribution of his works during these later years of his career.
31. *Ibid.*, 117–20. On Pope's helping to set up Gilliver and then Dodsley in the publishing business, see 104.

32. Foxon estimates that Pope made £1000 from sales of his prose works alone between 1737 and 1742 (138).
33. *Ibid.,* 104, 106. Foxon also describes Pope's increasingly close control over the physical format of his publications.
34. See *Ibid.,* 145, which quotes Pope's 1741 letter: "I have done with expensive Editions for ever, which are only a Complement to a few curious people at the expence of the Publisher" (*Cor.* iv. 350). This shift to the octavo format is clearly motivated by the attempt to maximize profits and exploit the changing demographics of the book-buying market. See also McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning,* 209–10 and 214–16.
35. For accounts of Pope's unprecedented defense of his copyrights in court, see Rose, 58–66; John Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: an Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (N.Y.: Mansell, 1994), 77–79; and Foxon, Appendix A, 237–51. As Rose remarks, "Pope was not the first English author to go to court," but he was "the first author to make regular and repeated use of the [1710] statute [of Anne, which established copyright]" (59).
36. William Wimsatt, *The Portraits of Alexander Pope* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965), makes this claim (xv) and details the various portraits and reproduced images of Pope circulated throughout English society. On authorized and unauthorized versions of Pope's image and the relationship between them, see Deutsch, chapter 1, 11–39.
37. Harold Weber, "The 'Garbage Heap' of Memory: At Play in Pope's Archives of Dulness," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33:1 (1999): 1–19 (2).
38. Deutsch, 27.
39. For a definition of monoglossic versus heteroglossic discourse, see Mikhail Bahktin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* trans. Caryl Emerson and Micheal Holquist (San Antonio: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981).
40. Quoted from the *Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope,* vol. 4, *Imitations of Horace,* ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1939). Subsequent references to the poem will be cited parenthetically by line number from this edition.
41. On the form of the early eighteenth-century epistle and its combination of direct address with an implicit appeal to a general public, see William C. Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment: the Poetics of Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistles* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991). On the epistle form, see also David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century,* chapter 4, 60–78.
42. On the proliferation of "writing, reading, and print" (33) in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* as representative of the new commercial print culture, see Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998), 31–34.
43. Ingrassia and Thomas, *More Solid Learning,* 15.
44. *Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope,* vol. 5, *The Dunciad,* ed. James Sutherland (London: Methuen, 1943), 8. The "reader" is also

addressed as such on 39, 46, 47, 197, 200, and in the appendix heading "The Publisher to the Reader" on 201, to name a few instances. The 1743 version also begins with an "Advertisement to the Reader" (251). Subsequent references to the *Dunciad* will be cited parenthetically by page number (for the prose appendices) or book and line number (for the poetic text) from this edition, referring to the 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books* unless otherwise noted.

45. See Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, chapter 7, 217–77, for an extended discussion of Pope's authorial presence in the *Dunciad*. Griffin describes Pope as a "shadow hero" on 245.
46. Hence the poem represents the "dunces" as objecting only to Pope's attack on themselves personally and acquiescing in all his other satires: "Here we see our excellent Laureate allows the justice of the satyr on every man in it, but *himself*; as the great Mr. Dennis before him" (42). Similarly in the opening "Advertisement" the dunces are satirically made to draw each other's portraits: "In some Articles, it was thought sufficient barely to transcribe from Jacob, Curl, and other writers of their own rank, who were much better acquainted with them then any of the Authors of this Comment can pretend to be. Most of them had drawn each other's Characters on certain occasions; but the few here inserted, are all that could be saved from the general destruction of such Works" (9). In the same spirit, one of the Advertisements printed in the Appendix to the 1743 *Dunciad* mockingly promises to drop the charge that any dunce is "no *Wit*, or *Poet*, provided he procures a Certificate of his being really such, from any *three of his companions* in the Dunciad, or from Mr. *Dennis singly*, who is esteemed equal to any three of the number" (418), with the implication that no one could do so. Even the Goddess or Queen of "Dulness," around which so much of the poem's action centers, is in another sense only the Poet's own imaginative creation, disappearing into general formless anarchy at the end of book four when Pope's muse falls silent.
47. Emrys Jones describes the gross materiality of the world of "Dulness," contrasted against Pope and his genius in the familiar hierarchy of matter vs. spirit, in his essay "Pope and Dulness," in *Pope: Recent Essays by Several Hands*, eds. Maynard Mack and James A. Winn (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1980), 612–51, see esp. 632–34.
48. Pat Rogers' *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London: Methuen, 1972) culminates a scholarly tradition that has tended to accept Pope's characterization of the "dunces" at face value, as if this term expressed such writers' true merit or identity. Such a position does not register the fact that the "dunces" are only dunces because Pope constructed them as such, in the interests of his own aesthetic, social, and political self-positioning. For a more sophisticated understanding of the "dunces" in these terms—many of whom were quite able writers—see Brean Hammond, "'Guard the Sure Barrier': Pope and the Partitioning of Culture," in *Pope: New Contexts*, ed. David Fairer

(N.Y.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 225–38; and Hammond's *Professional Imaginative Writing in England*, 1–6, in which he engages with Rogers directly. See also Ingrassia and Thomas, *More Solid Learning*, especially their "Introduction," 13–32, and Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill. I will refer to the "dunces" in this spirit, always in quotation marks, in reference to the category Pope constructed and projected onto others.

49. For a revealing discussion of the evidence of labor in Pope's manuscripts, see Maynard Mack, "The Last and Greatest Art: Pope's Poetical Manuscripts," in *Collected in Himself: Essays Critical, Biographical, and Bibliographical on Pope and Some of His Contemporaries* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1982), 322–47. See also Ezell, 81, who claims that Pope's incessant revision of his work identifies him with manuscript culture.
50. See Rogers, *Grub Street*, chapter 2, 175–217, for a description of these themes.
51. For an extensive discussion of the theme of madness in Pope's poetry, especially the *Dunciad*, see David Morris, *Alexander Pope: The Genius of Sense* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), chapter 10, 270–95.
52. See for instance H.H. Erskine-Hill, "The 'New World' of Pope's *Dunciad*" in *Essential Articles: for the Study of Alexander Pope*, ed. Maynard Mack (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968), 803–24; Jones, esp. 634–47; Laura Brown, *Alexander Pope* (N.Y.: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 146–55; and Dustin Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, 218 and 231–32.
53. Ingrassia and Thomas, *More Solid Learning*, 148. David Fairer argues similarly in *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century* for the interpenetration of print and manuscript culture and of the public and the private, stating that much of the best poetry from 1700–1750 engages with "ideas of impurity, impoliteness, and indecorum" (21).
54. On this "country" position of opposition and its ideology, see the sources in note (98), below.
55. See Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 184, and Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill, 278, 289.
56. Brean S. Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning," *Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988): 108–24, see esp. 119.
57. McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, 94–95, describes Pope's role as a ventriloquist and a puppeteer in these terms.
58. Rogers, *Grub Street*, 176.
59. For the same reason, Pope carefully collected all the satires and libels he could find against himself and bound them in four volumes for his library: because this barrage of attention, even if abusive, established his pre-eminence by the mere extent of the attacks against him. See Deutsch, viii, and James

Anderson Winn, *A Window in the Bosom: The Letters of Alexander Pope* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), 128–29.

60. Quoted from *Imitations of Horace*, p. 123, note to line 375.
61. For an account of how Pope constructed this Horatian model of identity for himself at his Twickenham estate, see Maynard Mack's classic study *The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope, 1731–1743* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969).
62. Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill, 277.
63. i*Ibid.*, 288; and Ingrassia and Thomas, *More Solid Learning*, 19. Pat Rogers in *Grub Street* claims the most of the "dunces" were middle class, and many were lawyers (281).
64. Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill, 291–93.
65. On Pope's lumping the "dunces" together in this way, see Ingrassia and Thomas, *More Solid Learning*, 201–2.
66. On the nature of these attacks on Pope, see *ibid.* 121 and 126–27; Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill, 282–83; Wendy Jones, "The Self-Portrait in the Letters," in *Alexander Pope: Essays for the Tercentenary*, ed. Colin Nicholson (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1988), 236–52, esp. 239; Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 195, 218; and Hammond, *Pope*, 11–12.
67. On Pope's construction of these "anti-portraits," see Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, 172–90. From a slightly different perspective, Robert W. Rogers points out in *The Major Satires of Alexander Pope* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1955) that the three satirical anti-portraits in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*—Sporus [Hervey], Atticus [Addison] and Bufo [based on Bubb Doddington]—all reveal forms of literary power that Pope might have assumed but did not, or at least claimed not to (87). See also George Justice, *The Manufacturers of Literature: Writing and the Literary Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2002), 82.
68. On this projection of sexual anxieties onto Hervey, see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, 204–7, and Linda Zionkowski, *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784* (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2001), chapter 3, 97–128.
69. Pope satirizes Cibber at length, not only in the poem but in his prose appendix "Richard Aristarchus of the Hero of the Poem," added to the 1743 edition, which ridicules Cibber for his brazen self-promotion, in part by quoting directly out of his "Life" (i.e. the autobiographical *Apology*, published in 1740). On Cibber as a fitting hero for the *Dunciad in Four Books*, see Brean Hammond, *Pope*, 148–49.
70. *Ibid.*, 84–85. See also Justice, 86–87, who makes a similar point.
71. Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries," in *Cutting Edges*, ed. Gill, 284.

72. John Richardson identifies this tendency throughout Pope's later poems, calling it a "negative autobiography" in "Defending the Self: Pope and his Horatian Poems," *Modern Language Review* 95:3 (2000): 623–33 (629).
73. Justice, 95.
74. *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, vol. 1. ed. Norman Ault (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), 292. See *Cor.* i. 191, 330, and ii. 176, 209, 236 for Pope's characterization of his poetry as a horse jingling its bells.
75. For the terms of Pope's profits in relation to the contributions of his co-translators Broome and Fenton, see Foxon, 101. Pope earned about £5000 profit for translating 12 books and payed £200 to Fenton for four books and £400 to Broome for eight books (plus £100 for notes and indexing and £100 for the subscribers Broome enlisted). As Broome wrote to Fenton somewhat bitterly in Dec., 1725: "I fear we have hunted with the lion, who, like his predecessor in Phaedrus, will take the first share merely because he is a lion; the second because he is more brave; the third because he is of most importance; and if either of us shall presume to touch the fourth, woe be to us" (*Cor.* ii. 344).
76. For a full and very engaging account of Pope's machinations in tricking Edmund Curll into publishing his letters as a pretext to come out with his own "authorized" edition, see chapter 1 of Winn, *A Window in the Bosom*, 13–41.
77. On Pope's image in the letters, see Jones, together with Winn, *A Window in the Bosom*.
78. Pat Rogers, "Nameless Names: Pope, Curll, and the Uses of Anonymity," *New Literary History* 33:2 (2002): 233–45 (239).
79. James Winn, "On Pope, Printers, and Publishers," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 6:2–3 (1981): 93–102, quotes Pope's detailed and specific instructions for a newspaper advertisement for his *Odyssey* subscription, commenting on what it shows about his attention even to the details of self-presentation in advertisement (93–94).
80. On these various editions, see Foxon, 128–30. The octavo version was 3 s. for two volumes, as opposed to 18s or more for the quarto.
81. *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, vol. 2, 1725–1744, ed. Rosemary Cowler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 89.
82. David Foxon explicates the historical evidence for Pope essentially setting up his own printer and publisher in *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, 102–8, and discusses the obscure and complicated manipulations of the *Dunciad* copyright on 108–14 and 144–50. While it is not clear exactly who held the *Dunciad Variorum* copyright up to its October 1729 assignment to the Lords Burlington, Oxford and Bathurst and subsequently to Pope's publisher Gilliver (a transfer which provided protection from legal proceedings), the initial owner seems to have been Pope himself, and his personal involvement with the *Dunciad* copyright clearly marks a transitional

point in his career. Before, Pope had signed essentially traditional agreements transferring copyright to his publishers, but beginning with the *Dunciad Variorum* he would assert his own ownership over his literary property with increasing insistence, until in 1738 he finally began to enter his own name directly in the Stationers' Register. For a convenient summary of the copyright status of Pope's poems throughout his career, see Foxon's appendix A, 237–51. On Pope's defense of his copyright in the *Dunciad*, see also Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics*, 78.

83. This quotation comes from a note affixed to a January 29, 1739 letter, together with Pope's careful listing of the times when his various publications' copyright will revert back to him after a fourteen year term. See *Cor. iv.* 224.
84. See Foxon, 102–8, who identifies Pope's primary motivations in marketing his later works as "to extract the maximum profit from his publications and to keep the copyright of his works under his own control" (102).
85. See for instance Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), 16, and Thomas Bonnell, "Bookselling and Canon-Making: the Trade Rivalry Over the English Poets," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 19 (1989): 53–69. For a more comprehensive discussion of this issue of canon formation, see Richard Terry's essay "Literature, Aesthetics, and Canonicity in the Eighteenth Century" and the responses in two forums on the issue in *Eighteenth-Century Life* 21:1 (1987): 80–101 and 21:3 (1997): 82–99, together with studies by Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1998), and Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998).
86. See for instance Lee Lowenthal, *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), chapter three, 52–108; Brean Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning," 108–24; and Linda Zionkowski, "Territorial Disputes in the Republic of Letters: Canon Formation and the Literary Profession," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 31 (1990): 3–22. Samuel Johnson famously remarked in the *Adventurer 115* that his was the "Age of Authors," quipping that there would soon be so many people writing that there would no longer be anyone left to read (quoted from *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson,* vol. 2, *The Idler and The Adventurer*, eds. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullit, and L.F. Powell (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), 457–58). Recently scholars have argued that through the development of literary criticism, together with the creation of a canon and the institutionalization of Pope's distinctions between "classic" and "popular" writing, print culture in effect internally imposed order on itself, adding to the proliferation of writing

even in the process of this internal self-policing. See Siskin, *Work of Writing*, esp. 1–23, and John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993).

87. On Pope's construction of the "dunces" as such, see note (48) above. Pope was crucial in instituting this whole division between "classic" and "popular" in vernacular literature. See for instance Brean Hammond, *Pope*, 129–30, and his essays "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (esp. 113) and "'Guard the Sure Barrier'." See also Carole Fabricant, "Pope's Moral, Political, and Cultural Conflict," in *Critical Essays on Alexander Pope*, eds. Jackson and Young, 84–103, esp. 96.
88. See James McLaverty, "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: the Case of the *Dunciad Variorum*," *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984): 82–105, esp. 95–105, in which he discusses the textual apparatus of the *Variorum* in relation to Bentley's scholarly apparatus for his Horace translation and the apparatus to a 1716 Dutch edition of Boileau, which Pope owned and which the format of the *Variorum* imitates almost exactly. Bentley had also produced a well-known scholarly edition of Milton, which Pope satirizes in the *Dunciad* (as in the appendix "By the Author a Declaration") with his references to "hooks"—the brackets by which Bentley indicated passages whose authorship by Milton he doubted. "Tibbald," or Lewis Theobald, produced an annotated scholarly edition of Shakespeare rivalling Pope's in 1734. As McLaverty puts it, the *Dunciad Variorum* annotation "bites both ways: it ridicules the textual scholarship of Bentley and Theobald, but it also honours the poem" (101). Brean Hammond argues in *Pope* that Alexander Pope emphasized the separation between "classic" and popular literature more strongly than anyone else of his time (129).
89. On Pope's use of editors in *The Dunciad* and his use of notes in general to present his poetry, see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, chapters 4 and 9, 82–106 and 209–41. Chapter 9 focuses on his use of notes and formatting in the 1735–36 *Works*.
90. Frederick M. Keener in his *Essay on Pope* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974), 103–7, discusses Pope's ironic "preservation" of his poem in the textual apparatuses of the same dunces he satirizes, writing that "the very presentation of the poem in an elaborate frame of scholarship suggests that it is a classic work of some antiquity" and so should be accorded "classic" status (106). Pope also affirmed himself as a "classic," less comically, by adding notes to his own poems beginning in 1735 (see John Butt, "Pope's Poetical Manuscripts," in *Essential Articles*, ed. Mack, 545–65, esp. 545–46); by editing his own poems and letters (see Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, 34–36, and McLaverty, chapter 9, 209–41); and by finding an editor for his *Works* while still alive, William Warburton, with whom he produced his own "death-bed edition," and who continued to edit Pope's *Works* after his death (see Foxon, 144–52).

91. Shef Rogers makes this point in "Pope, Publishing, and Popular Interpretations of the *Dunciad Variorum*," *Philological Quarterly* 74 (1995): 279–95. Rogers argues that Pope's revisions of the *Dunciad* were largely if not primarily a money-making scheme, swelling the overall size of the poem.
92. Pope's initial publisher Gilliver, in the process of going bankrupt, had sold the *Dunciad* copyright to Lintot. In 1743 Pope took Lintot to court in order to claim the reversion of the copyright to him at the end of the first fourteen-year term. Significantly, Pope's edition of the *Dunciad in Four Books* appeared just after the fourteen-year term had expired, revealing his careful attention to and manipulation of the exact legal terms of copyright. See Foxon, 146–49 and 249–50.
93. Fabricant, 97.
94. See "What is an Author?," printed in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 113–28.
95. For other metaphors of this endless recirculation, see i. 241–42, which characterizes ephemeral writings as "Soon to that mass of Nonsense to return,/ Where things destroy'd are swept to things unborn"; and ii. 359–64, which uses the image of water recirculating as vapor from swamp into air and back to swamp.
96. Emrys Jones describes this region as a "vast dim hinterland of book-writing, book-reading, and book-learning, not so much a dream of learning as a nightmare of dead knowledge" (635), a kind of cultural unconscious of print culture (see "Pope and Dulness," 635–37).
97. See Rogers, "Nameless Names," 242, and Howard D. Weinbrot, "Annotating a Career: From Pope's *Homes* to *The Dunciad*: From Madame Dacier to Madame Dacier by Way of Swift," *Philological Quarterly* 79:4 (2000): 459–82 (469).
98. For a description of this Tory opposition to paper money and credit generally, see Nicholson; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), 448–59; and Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968). For an excellent summary of Pope's attitude towards credit and his representations of paper money in his poetry, see Morris, chapter 7, 179–213.
99. The phrase "temple of infamy" is quoted from the note to ii. 315 in the 1742 *Dunciad* (312). For a characterization of the poem as a monument or prison containing the dunces within its ordered structure, see Griffin, *The Poet in the Poems*, 266–68. In the same sense, Appendix I to the *Variorum* writes of the "inevitable removal of some Authors, and insertion of others, in their Niches" (205), and the Advertisement to the *Variorum* proclaims that "it is

only in this monument that [the dunces] must expect to survive" (8). For description of first Theobald and then Cibber in association with his works, see the *Variorum*, i. 108–216, and the *Dunciad in Four Books*, i. 116–260. It is significant that the poem names or alludes to the specific works of these two "arch-dunces" at especial length, thus claiming to establish their true identities through the proper attribution of their writings.

100. Harold Weber in "The 'Garbage Heap' of Memory" interestingly compares the proliferation of footnotes and names in the textual apparatuses with the proliferation of information in the modern archive or library, arguing that Pope's poem anticipates modern textual archives by in effect cataloging and preserving the same print culture he satirizes.
101. On the topsy-turvy "new world" of the *Dunciad*, see Erskine-Hill.
102. Ian Donaldson, "Concealing and Revealing: Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988): 181–99, esp. 187.
103. James McLaverty in *Pope, Print, and Meaning* explores how *The Rape of the Lock* was simultaneously addressed both to a coteries audience and to a general public, and interprets Pope's revision and expansion of the poem in relation to these dual publics. See chapter 2, 14–45.
104. See Dowling, *Epistolary Moment.*
105. See Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century,* chapter 4, 60–78, on the verse epistle, and 11–12 on the thin boundaries between manuscript and print culture at the time. See also Dowling.
106. Richardson, 630; see lines 135–42 of the poem for this catalog of elite supporters.
107. Quoted from Pope's *Imitations*, 327.
108. Dowling explores this sense of dissolution in *The Epistolary Moment.*
109. On Pope's construction of his identity in the *Imitations* in terms of Horace's traditional model, including the whole issue of self-construction through imitation, see Russo; Jabob Fuchs, *Reading Pope's Imitations of Horace* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1989); Wallace Jackson, *Vision and Re-Vision in Alexander Pope* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1983), 119–47; and Melinda Alliker Rabb, "Lost in a House of Mirrors: Pope's *Imitations of Horace*," in *Alexander Pope: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New Haven: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), 117–32.
110. Deutsch, 209–10.
111. Citing the ideal of civic republicanism, William Dowling argues that Pope associated such self-interest with solipsism as an absolute evil, leading to a kind of spiritual degeneration and paralysis: see *Epistolary Moment*, esp. 22–24, 99–100.
112. Pope continuously mocks the dunces for their ephemerality and interchangeability. Thus the first appendix claims that "those *Names* which are its chief ornaments, die off daily so fast, as must render [the poem] too soon unintelligible" (203), and describes the dunces as "clapp'd in as they rose, fresh and

fresh, and chang'd from day to day, in like manner as when the old boughs wither, we thrust new ones in the chimney" (206).

113. The first of the critical reviews, the *Monthly Review*, was founded in 1749, followed in 1756 by the *Critical Review*. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, which John Feather describes as the "first periodical to command a large and truly national audience," was founded in 1731 and became the model for a whole generation of imitators that sprang up in the expanding market. See Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 20–21.
114. Ingrassia and Thomas describe this expansion of the satire in *More Solid Learning*, 15–22.
115. On Pope's first entry of his own name into the Stationers' Register in 1738, see Foxon, 143. On his defense of his literary property in court, see note (35), above.
116. Keener, 101.
117. For a discussion of Pope's relationship of opposition as un-Horatian, see G.K. Hunter, "The 'Romanticism' of Pope's Horace," in *Essential Articles*, ed. Mack, 591–606.
118. Walter Jackson Bate explores this sense of belatedness and uncertainty in mid to late eighteenth-century poetry, which he claims is a result of anxiety of influence in the face of Milton, Pope, and other towering predecessors, in *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1970).

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. For the famous claim that Gray "never spoke out," see Matthew Arnold's essay, "Thomas Gray," in *English Literature and Irish Politics*, ed. R.H. Super, vol. ix of *The Complete Prose Works* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1977), 189. For the argument that Gray's poetry offers "two voices," one public and one private, see Francis Doherty, "The Two Voices of Gray," *Essays in Criticism* 13:3 (1963): 222–30; Roger Lonsdale, *The Poetry of Thomas Gray: Versions of the Self* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973); and Vincent Newey, "The Selving of Thomas Gray," in *Thomas Gray: Contemporary Essays*, eds. W.B. Hutchings and William Rudick, 13–38 (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1993). On the relationship between the *Elegy*, West's death, and Gray's disconnection from audience, see Dustin Griffin, "Gray's Audiences," *Essays in Criticism* 28:3 (1978): 208–15. Finally, on the relationship between Gray's poetic voice and his sexuality, see Robert Gleckner, *Gray Agonistes: Thomas Gray and Masculine Friendship* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), and Daniel White, "Autobiography and Elegy: The Early Romantic Poetics of Thomas Gray and Charlotte Smith," in *Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Woodman (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 57–69.

2. Although a number of critics over the past decade have begun to explore the *Elegy*'s relationship to print culture and its audience, none have explored the poem in terms of the author/ reader encounter or the dramatization of authorial self-representation and the emergence of the authorial self. For discussions of the *Elegy*'s relation to print culture, see Griffin, together with Suvir Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992); John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), chapter 2, 85–133; William Levine, "'Beyond the Limits of a Vulgar Fate': The Renegotiation of Public and Private Concerns in the Careers of Gray and Other Mid-Eighteenth Century Poets," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 24 (1995): 223–42; Michele Turner Sharp, "Elegy Unto Epitaph: Print Culture and Commemorative Practice in Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'," *Papers on Language and Literature* 38:1 (2002): 3–28; and Linda Zionkowski, "Bridging the Gulf Between: The Poet and the Audience in the Work of Gray," *ELH* 58:2 (1991): 331–50, expanded into chapter four of *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784* (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2001), 129–70.
3. Quoted from lines 96 and 115–16 of *The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, in *The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (London: Longman, 1969), subsequently cited as *The Poems of Thomas Gray*. Quotations from Gray's poetry will be cited parenthetically by line number from this edition. Quotations from Gray's letters will be cited parenthetically as *Cor.*, followed by volume and page number, from *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3 vols., eds. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, with corrections and additions by H.W. Starr (Oxford: Clarendon Press, rev. ed. 1971). Note that Gray's capitalization and punctuation in his letters is erratic, and he often does not capitalize the first word of a sentence.
4. For the text and history of the Eton manuscript draft, see *Thomas Gray, An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard: The Eton Manuscript & The First Edition, 1751*, ed. Alastair MacDonald (Ilkley, Yorkshire: The Scolar Press, 1976). Quoted from lines 77–78.
5. The Christian Stoicism reading of this ending originates in Ian Jack's essay, "Gray's *Elegy* Reconsidered," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), 139–69, see esp. 144–48. One other subsequently deleted stanza precedes the three I have quoted here.
6. Frank Ellis, "Gray's *Elegy*: The Biographical Problem in Literary History," *PMLA* 66 (1951): 971–1008. Ellis reads the final lines as the rustic stonecutter's epitaph rather than the narrator's. For a full discussion of this hypothesis and its problems, see Henry Weinfield, *The Poet Without a Name: Gray's Elegy and the Problem of History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press,

1991), 29–36. See also Frank Brady, "Structure and Meaning in Gray's *Elegy*," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Hilles and Bloom, 177–89, which argues against Ellis and remarks that "traditionally, the 'thee' has been identified with [. . .] the Narrator" (178).

7. On the representation of this ideal reader as a sympathetic "other" in Romantic poetry, allowing the author to construct his or her own individual identity, see my chapter 1, above. On Gray's representations of audience and poet/ reader relationships in his writing, see esp. Griffin and Zionkowski, *Men's Work*.
8. Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Johnson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), see esp. chapter 10, 312–51. Esther Schor and Lorna Clymer have also recently argued that the epitaph during the mid to late eighteenth century became a trope both of author-to-reader relationship and of general social cohesion. See Schor's *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994) and Clymer's "Graved in Tropes: The Figural Logic of Epitaphs and Elegies in Blair, Gray, Cowper, Wordsworth," *ELH* 62:2 (1995): 347–87.
9. See Guillory, chapter 2, esp. 94–95, on the connection between the model of distinct individual identity in the *Elegy* and increasing social mobility in eighteenth-century British society. Guillory argues in the chapter generally that the *Elegy's* historicity has been displaced by critics, who beginning with Samuel Johnson have tended to focus attention on the individual as a universal, transhistorical category and so have suppressed the connection between the *Elegy*'s model of individual identity and the specific socio-economic and cultural formations of eighteenth-century Britain.
10. Guillory, 112, makes this point.
11. On the development of British education, see Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1966), 125–55; Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), esp. 30–35 and 141–212; and Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). See also Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ., Press, 1983), on the general importance of literacy in constructing a new model of capitalist civil society. On the eighteenth century as a time of conscious repression in general education, see Altick, 30–34, and Williams, 135–36.
12. Charles Rzepka, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), 2–9. Rzepka calls attention to the way the "glimmering landscape" fades "on the sight," as the poem registers the internal experience of consciousness and perception—a perspective he calls unprecedented, and which he associates with an early version of the Romantic self.

13. On the emergence of authorship as a dignified profession and source of identity in its own right, see Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters & Samuel Johnson* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), in addition to my chapter one, above. Johnson's famous rejection of Lord Chesterfield's patronage of his dictionary, read by Kernan and many others as the major symbolic moment in this development of the author's independent dignity, took place in 1755, just four years after the publication of the *Elegy*. On the emergence of the literary life or "Life of the Poet" as a genre, see Kevin Pask, *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).
14. In addition to Gellner, see also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, rev. 1991); Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism* (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1987); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), esp. 40–41; and Kathleen Wilson, "Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720–1790," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29:1 (1995): 70–96, esp. 72–75. All these sources also cite the importance of print culture, and specifically the newspaper and other forms of popular journalism, in establishing a sense of a unified national society.
15. Letters quoted from Guillory, 99, and Kaul, 40, respectively.
16. For a full explication of Gray's activities as a scholar, see William Powell Jones, *Thomas Gray, Scholar: The True Tragedy of an Eighteenth-Century Gentleman* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1937), quoted from 13. Although Gray was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History in 1768, this appointment was not "professional" per se, since the professorship had no specific duties at the time of his appointment, making it essentially a patronage sinecure—see *Cor.* iii, Appendix S, 1253–59.
17. For summaries of the publication histories of Gray's poems and his interest (or more often lack of interest) in such publication, see the introductory headnotes to the various poems in *The Poems of Thomas Gray*. R.W. Ketton-Cremer also offers convenient summaries of Gray's publication history in *Thomas Gray: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955), see esp. 111–15, 150–57, and 222–26. Walpole seems to have urged and promoted the publication of *Six Poems*—see Cor. i 348 and 364—though Gray enthusiastically acquiesced. The 1768 editions appeared at the request of Dodsley and Gray's Scottish friend James Beattie, respectively (*Cor.* iii 982).
18. William Mason commented on Gray in a letter to Walpole: "I always thought Mr Gray blameable for letting the booksellers have his MSS gratis [. . .] I frequently had disputes with him on this matter, which generally ended in a laugh—he called me covetous and I called him proud." Quoted from *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with William Mason*, 2 vols., eds. W.S. Lewis, Grover Cronin, Jr., and Charles H. Bennett (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), i. 21. See *Cor.* i 371 and iii 982 on Gray declining financial compensation for

his poetry, and iii 1002 and 1071 for his interactions with the Foulis brothers over their finely printed edition. For a history of the *Elegy*'s various editions and reprintings, see Clark Sutherland Northup, *A Bibliography of Thomas Gray* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1917), 74–76, supplemented by Herbert Starr, *A Bibliography of Thomas Gray, 1917–1951* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1953) and F.G. Stokes' Introduction to his 1929 edition of the *Elegy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 36–42.

19. The series of letters in Gray's *Cor.* ii 506–38, written over the span of three months, almost all concern the *Odes* and their reception. Gray writes of little else in these letters, inquiring with only thinly disguised anxiety of the poems' reception and expatiating at length over what he had heard already of their reception via others. Roger Lonsdale argues that "For all his defiant awareness that the *Odes* would perplex many of his readers, G[ray] had never hitherto been so anxious to learn the opinions of his friends and the world at large" (*Poems*, 180). W. Powell Jones gives a detailed account of the *Odes*' mixed reception among various audiences in "The Contemporary Reception of Gray's *Odes*," *Modern Philology* 28:1 (1930): 61–82.
20. Zionkowski, "Bridging the Gulf Between," 346.
21. On Gray's decision to publish the *Odes* without notes, see *Cor.* ii 508 and 522; and on his later reversal of that decision, providing the notes himself in his correspondence, *Cor.* iii 999–1000. Gray's "Advertisement" reads: "When the Author first published this and the following Ode, he was advised, even by his Friends, to subjoin some few explanatory Notes; but had too much respect for the understanding of his Reader to take that liberty." Quoted from *The Poems of Thomas Gray*, 158.
22. Richard Hurd, for instance, wrote from Cambridge that "Every body here, that knows anything of such things, applauds the Odes" (*Cor.* ii 521), and the famous actor David Garrick celebrated them with a poem praising Gray's sublimity as beyond the weak capacities of the public (*Cor.* ii 535–36). Gray's correspondence during the period is full of (often comical) accounts of his readers' failure to understand the poems, together with animadversion on the general intellectual and critical capacities of the public.
23. On the emergence of the idea of "genius" during the eighteenth century in relation to the growth of commercial print culture, see esp. Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), and Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994).
24. For the somewhat fastidious terms in which Gray turned down the proffered laureateship, see *Cor.* ii 543–45. Lonsdale discusses Gray's discomfort with writing the "Ode for Music" to celebrate his "patron" Grafton in *The Poems of Thomas Gray*, on 254–57.
25. For a description of the incidents leading up to the composition of this poem and the history of the Manor House at Stoke Poges and its owners, see *The*

Poems of Thomas Gray, 142–44. The word "commoners" can also refer to a commoner scholar: as defined by the OED, "In some English colleges, such as Oxford and Winchester. One who pays for his commons, *i.e.* a student or undergraduate not on the foundation (called at Cambridge a *pensioner*)." Gray was himself a "Fellow-Commoner" at Cambridge at the time of the poem's composition (see Appendix E of *Cor.* iii 1203–4), and may have been punning on this meaning, but the use of the word in the poem also clearly refers to the more customary, general meaning, as it appears in Johnson's dictionary: "1. One of the common people; a man of low rank, of mean condition" and "2. A man not noble."

26. Linda Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 140–42.
27. Quoted from *The Poems of Thomas Gray*, 111; see also Kaul, 155–57, for fuller characterization of the *Magazine of Magazines* within its economic and cultural contexts.
28. These publications are cited in Stokes, 36–42. The poem's publication in the *Grand Magazine of Magazines*, which in Stokes' edition remains a matter of debate, has since been substantiated—see *The Poems of Thomas Gray*, 112.
29. See Northrup's and Starr's bibliographies. Other examples of the poem's publication in various miscellanies include the 1753 *The Union: or Select Scots and English Poems*, printed in Edinburgh for Archibald Monroe and David Murray; Dodsley's 1758 volume four of the *Collection of Poems*; the 1762 *Parnassium: or Beauties of English Poets*; the 1767 *Beauties of English Poetry*, selected by Oliver Goldsmith; a 1796 *Selections in Elegant Extracts: or, Useful and Entertaining pieces of poetry, selected for the improvement of young persons*; and Murray's 1799 *English Reader*, to name a few of many.
30. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), quoted from 33. In the Stationers Guild, the word for ownership of copy was "propriety"—a word etymologically linked with "property" but carrying the much wider sense of correct civil behaviour (see 222).
31. W.J. Temple for instance describes Gray's "affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors" (quoted from Howard Weinbrot, and Martin Price, *Context, Influence and Mid-Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Los Angeles: Clark Library, 1990)); and William Cole describes him as "of a most fastidious and recluse Distance of Carriage, rather averse to all Sociability [. . .]: nice and elegant in his Person, Dress, and Behaviour, even to a Degree of Finicalness and Effeminacy" (quoted from Ketton-Cremer, 259). See also Ketton-Cremer's account of Gray in his University quarters (116–17, 200–1), and the account in Appendix J of the *Correspondence* (iii 1216–20) of the incident that caused Gray to move from Peterhouse to Pembroke College, when some students played a prank on him by calling out "fire" to try to get him to clamber down his rope ladder, afterwards claiming that "had he descended [they] were

determined, they said, to have whipped the butterfly up again" (1220). Linda Zionkowski in *Men's Work* argues that Gray was perceived as effeminate in part because he did not fully engage the commercial marketplace, preferring instead to circulate his poems among an all-male manuscript coteries (22).

32. See *Cor.* iii 999–1001 for Gray's instructions to Dodsley and *Cor.* iii 1001–4 for his almost identical instructions to James Beattie, who was coordinating the Glasgow edition. This concern with format although not with literary property in its financial form is characteristic of Gray throughout his life: see also for instance his instructions for the printing of the *Elegy* in 1751 (*Cor.* i 341–42) and for the printing of the *Designs by Mr R. Bentley for Six Poems by Mr T. Gray* (*Cor.* i 371–72).
33. See Gray's remark to James Beattie, that "I rejoice to be in the hands of M[r] Foulis, who has the laudable ambition of surpassing his predecessors, the *Etiennes*, & the *Elzeviers* [famous fine print houses] as well in literature, as in the proper art of his profession" (*Cor.* iii 1002). On his sensitivity about printing errors, see his detailed letter to Horace Walpole about errors in the 1757 *Odes* (*Cor.* ii 513), his exact stipulation of errata in the *Elegy* (*Cor.* i 342, 344), and his complaints over publishing errors in Algarotti's works (*Cor.* iii 995), as well as his concern that Dodsley print his 1768 *Poems* without errata: "all I desire is, that the text be accurately printed" (*Cor.* iii 999–1000).
34. On the relation between claims of piracy and the stigma of print, see Rose, 21–22.
35. This remark to John Gregory during Gray's 1765 trip to Scotland is recorded in Sir William Forbes' *Life of James Beattie*, quoted in *The Poems of Thomas Gray*, 113. The poem's popular acclaim and Gray's reaction are also summarized in this introductory note.
36. Gray's marginal note is printed in MacDonald, 19.
37. See Zionkowski's chapter on Gray in *Men's Work*, 129–70, in relation to her overall argument in the book. Zionkowski specifically cites Gray's discomfort with an indiscriminate commercial audience, which would include women and unlearned men (22).
38. Levine, 230–31. Levine argues that the shift to a private voice by mid-century poets reflected a public political position, in opposition to these existing orders.
39. Johnson's "Essay Upon Epitaphs" is conveniently reprinted in D.D. Devlin, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Epitaphs*, 128–36 (London: MacMillan Press, 1980). Quoted from 129.
40. On the concept of gift exchange and its application to Romantic representations of author/ reader relationships, see Charles Rzepka, "A Gift that Complicates Employ: Poetry and Poverty in 'Resolution and Independence,'" *SiR* 28:2 (1989): 225–47; and Rzepka's book-length study

of Thomas De Quincey, *Sacramental Commodities: Gift, Text, and the Sublime in De Quincey* (Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1995).

41. On the connection between canonization and the emergence of professional authorial identity, see Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning," *Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988): 108–24; and Linda Zionkowski, "Territorial Disputes in the Republic of Letters: Canon Formation and the Literary Profession," *Eighteenth Century* 31 (1990): 3–22.
42. Quoted from Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, 3 vols., ed. George Birbeck Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 3:441.
43. Lonsdale, *Versions of the Self*, 15.
44. Robert Gleckner traces Gray's relation to West as an inspiration for much of his early poetry, both because West provided Gray's primary audience and because of a suspected homoerotic attachment, in *Gray Agonistes*. For readings of the "Sonnet to West" as an expression of Gray's poetic isolation, see also Lonsdale, *Versions of the Self*, 11; Newey, 24; and Griffin, 208–10, who speculates that *De Principiis Cogitandi* breaks off because Gray has lost
45. Griffin, 212. See the headnote to the *Elegy* in *The Poems of Thomas Gray* for discussion of this reading of the poem, together with the continued controversy over the dating of the poem's initial composition.
46. See Lonsdale, *Versions of the Self*, 16; Griffin, 213–14; and Kaul, 203–9 for other readings of "The Bard" in terms of Gray's poetic situation and relationship to audience.
47. Williams' discussion of the *Elegy*, from *Prophetic Strain: The Greater Lyric in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), is reprinted in *Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard: Modern Critical Interpretations*, ed. Harold Bloom, 101–17 (New Haven: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), see esp. 113–17. See also Brian Cosgrove, "'Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires': Privation and Affirmation in Gray's *Elegy*," *English* 29:134 (1980): 117–30, esp. 126–27, for a similar argument about the poem's ambiguously "personal" yet impersonal perspective.
48. For a discussion of the strategies through which Gray manages at the same time both to explore self-representation and to maintain decorum, see Bertrand Bronson, "On a Special Decorum in Gray's *Elegy*," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Hilles and Bloom, 171–76. The main strategy, of course, is the displacement of this authorial identity onto the narrator, who cannot be entirely identified with Gray (though readers tended to do so).
49. Linda Zionkowski also argues that the Odes express alienation from audience: see *Men's Work*, 152.
50. See *Cor.* iii 1000 and 1004 for Gray's detailed instructions to Dodsley and Beattie about the format and order of poems for both editions. Gray was very careful about his self-presentation in these volumes as a representation of his

final oeuvre, insisting for instance that "A Long Story" be omitted—a care which makes this positioning of the *Elegy* all the more significant.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Margaret Forbes, *Beattie and His Friends* (1904; rpt., Altrincham, England: J. Martin Strafford, 1990), 57.
2. *Ibid.,* 110; Everard King, *James Beattie* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1977), 25; and "James Beattie, William Wordsworth, and the Evolution of Romanticism," in *A Festschrift for Edgar Ronald Scary*, eds. A.A. Macdonald, A. O'Flaherty, and G.M. Story (St John's: Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, 1975), 116–29 (figures from 128).
3. Sir William Forbes, *An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D.*, 2 vols. (London: E. Roper, 1824), vol. 1, 186. Lady Montagu not only writes of how charmed she is by the *Minstrel*, but also how she has "circulated its fame" by recommending it to friends in her literary circles; and she wishes the second edition had arrived, as "I dare say many hundreds [of copies of the poem] would be sold, if people could have got them." Subsequent citations of Beattie's correspondence will be by page number to the first volume of this work, cited as *Life and Writings*, unless otherwise indicated.
4. King, *James Beattie*, 94. In a later book, *James Beattie's The Minstrel and the Origins of Romantic Autobiography* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 18–19, King fills out this list of trends and allusions considerably, arguing that the *Minstrel* echoes also Thomson, Pope, Young, Shenstone, Akenside, the Warton brothers, Blair, Green, Parnell and Collins, and expresses contemporary interest in "nature, imagination, genius, sympathy, sublimity and the association of ideas." King also characterizes the poem as a "commonplace book" from which later poets drew what became standard Romantic themes and images (4).
5. For a discussion of the range and prevalence of eighteenth-century didactic poetry, see Richard Feingold, *Moralized Song: The Character of Augustan Lyricism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989). Beattie's poem regularly breaks the narrative of Edwin and his life to engage in sustained didactic commentary: see for instance I, 268–79 and 433–50. The poem will be quoted and cited in the text by book and line number, as reprinted in Appendix A of King, *Origins of Romantic Autobiography*, 244–75.
6. Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth* (N.Y.: Norton, 1998), 85. King, *James Beattie,*107, quotes Thelwall and Rogers on Beattie's influence, together with Dorothy Wordsworth's remark in a letter that one passage of "Beattie's Minstrel always reminds me of [William], and indeed the whole character of Edwin resembles much what William was when I first knew him after my leaving Halifax." F.W. Bateson, *Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation* (N.Y.: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), 63–64, claims that "Beattie's *The*

Minstrel was probably the poem that exerted the greatest influence on the young Wordsworth," to the extent that "it is not impossible that William at this time [youth] was to some extent consciously modeling himself on Beattie's hero." See also Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Early Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 60–61, which cites Beattie as "the strongest contemporary influence on the young Wordsworth," as the *Minstrel* "became and remained one of Wordsworth's favorite poems" (60). For a full account of Wordsworth's early contact with *The Minstrel*, see Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading, 1770–1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 10–12.

7. *Op cit.*
8. Quoted from *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 6 vols., ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd ed., rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967–69), vol. 1, *The Early Years*, 518. Although not Wordsworth's own phrase, "the Growth of a Poet's Mind" eventually appeared as the subtitle for the 1850 publication of the *Prelude*.
9. On Beattie's participation in the Philosophical Society, also known as the "Wise Club," see King, *James Beattie*, 15–16, and Margaret Forbes, 21. As King straightforwardly asserts: "Since all of Beattie's published essays were derived from his college lectures, he probably would not have written any of them had he not been a teacher" (*James Beattie*, 30).
10. See Evander King, "James Beattie's Essay on Truth (1770): An Eighteenth-Century 'Best-Seller'," *Dalhousie Review* 51 (1971): 390–403, for an account of the *Essay's* initial publication history (esp. 391). King, *James Beattie*, 25, gives the total number of editions up to the time of Beattie's death, and the *Essay* continued to be republished frequently throughout the nineteenth century and even the early years of the twentieth. "James Beattie's Essay on Truth" also gives an account of the book's influence on Kant, whose final verdict is quoted on 401. For Beattie's influence on Kant, see also Robert Paul Wolff, "Kant's Debt to Hume Via Beattie," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960): 117–23.
11. On the general public reception of the *Essay*, see King, *James Beattie*, 44–48. See also 20 and 22, on Johnson's expressions of admiration for Beattie; and *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 5 vols., eds. James King and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979–86), 2:76–77, 228, 231, 237, and 241, for Cowper's appreciation of Beattie's writing and thinking. King in *James Beattie* concurs with Kant that the *Essay* "cannot be regarded as a legitimate philosophical work" in that it "deliberately avoided the intricacies of pure [philosophical] thought"—an assessment with which it would be hard for a modern reader to disagree (47).
12. *James Beattie's London Diary, 1773*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1946). The diary records his progress from reception to reception, listing his honors and recognition in lavish detail.

13. Everything that Beattie published beginning with the *Essay on Truth* enjoyed remarkable sales—his *Essays: on Poetry and Music* went through eight editions by the time of his death; his *Dissertations Moral and Critical* went through four; his *Evidences of the Christian Religion* seven; and even his two-volume *Elements of Moral Science* ran through three editions in the decade after its publication. For these figures, see King, *James Beattie*, 25.
14. See Margaret Forbes, 8–10, 14, 28, 127–28, 141–42. In his "Advertisement" to the 1777 edition Beattie writes:
"Having lately seen in print some poems ascribed to me which I never wrote, and some of my own inaccurately copied, I thought it would not be improper to publish, in this little volume, all the verses of which I am willing to be considered the author. Many others I did indeed write in the early part of my life; but they were in general so incorrect, that I would not rescue them from oblivion, even if a wish could do it."
Beattie later added two more poems to his authorized oeuvre. In addition to the publication in Creech and Dilly's edition, Beattie also published his own edition in 1777. The 'Advertisement' is quoted from *The Poetical Works of James Beattie.* (London: William Pickering, 1831), 1.
15. See *James Beattie's Day-Book, 1773–1798*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (Aberdeen: Third Spalding Club, 1948), 209–10; and Margaret Forbes, 171, 210.
16. Margaret Forbes, 15–16. For an account of Francis Garden's (later Lord Gardenstown's) patronage in introducing Beattie to society while he was still a schoolmaster in the rural village of Fordoun, see 10.
17. See Margaret Forbes, 38 and 145–46, for an account of this naming and the favorable reactions of Beattie's patrons.
18. Originally in the first edition Beattie left a blank in this space, meaning to fill it in with the name of his friend "Arbuthnot," but he later filled in "Montagu" instead after he became close with her. See Margaret Forbes, 59.
19. *Ibid.,* 83–84 and 91–95.
20. *Ibid.,* 82–83 and 112–15. See also William Forbes, 350–57, for an account in Beattie's correspondence of the offer of one of these livings and his reasons for turning it down.
21. For an account of the subscription, see Margaret Forbes, 95–96, 126, and 129–30, including n. 4. 800 copies of the two volumes were printed in quarto for nearly 500 subscribers (see William Forbes, 396), as well as copies in octavo for the booksellers to market to the general public. Beattie had copies specially bound for presentation to the King and Queen. See also Beattie's justification of his subscription in his 2 Jan. 1774 letter to Lady Mayne (in William Forbes, 320–21).
22. In justifying his decision to turn down the Edinburgh chair of Natural and Moral Philosophy, Beattie specifically cites the opinions of the king, Elizabeth Montagu, the Archbishop of York, and Lord Kinnoul as supporting his decision (Margaret Forbes, 108). Beattie commonly justified his deci-

sions, once made, by citing the authority of his elite friends and patrons, as when he answers Lord Hailes' imputation that he is shirking his public responsibility in not accepting the Edinburgh professorship: "most certain it is, that by all my English friends to whom I have had occasion to explain the affair in question, and by many respectable friends in Scotland, this conduct of mine, and the reasons for it, have been highly approved" (William Forbes, 305–6).

23. William Forbes, 80.
24. *Ibid.,* 147; *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3 vols., eds. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, rev. H.W. Starr (Oxford: Clarendon Press, rev. ed. 1971), 3:1083–84.
25. Margaret Forbes, 127–28.
26. Quoted from James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 6 vols., ed. G.B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), vol. 2, 148.
27. Quoted from Beattie's 12 Oct. 1772 letter to Dorothea Dale, the dowager Lady Forbes, in William Forbes, 198–99.
28. On the construction of the bard and minstrel as eighteenth-century figures of poetic identity, see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997); Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's 'Reliques'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); Kathyrn Sutherland, "The Native Poet: The Influence of Percy's Minstrel from Beattie to Wordsworth," *Review of English Studies* 33:132 (1982): 414–33; Susan Stewart, "Scandals of the Ballad," *Representations* 32 (1990):134–56; Maureen McLane, "The Figure Minstrelsy Makes: Poetry and Historicity," *Critical Inquiry* 29:3 (2003): 429–52; Laura Bandiera, "'In Days of Yore How Fortunately Fared the Minstrel': Towards a Genealogy of Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*," *European Journal of English Studies* 6:2 (2002): 189–206; Anne Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass. : Blackwell, 1990), 65–77; and Gary Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1994), chapter four, 113–38.
29. Preface quoted from King, *Origins of Romantic Autobiography*, 244.
30. *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3:1084. See also Beattie's 20 May 1767 letter to Thomas Blacklock, which also acknowledges the poem's inspiration by Percy's introductory essay on the minstrels: "The subject was suggested by a dissertation on the old minstrels, which is prefixed to a collection of ballads lately published by Dodsley in three volumes" [i.e. Percy's *Reliques*] (William Forbes, 92). Everard King discusses Beattie's influence by Percy's "Essay" and his idea of "making himself a modern Scottish minstrel" in *The Minstrel and the Origins of Romantic Autobiography*, 16.
31. Kathyrn Sutherland presents an overview of this controversy between Percy and the scholar Joseph Ritson over the social standing of the Medieval minstrel, in "The Native Poet." See also Groom and McLane.

32. Sutherland, 421. See also Groom, 23–27, who explores minstrels' association with urban popular culture, vulgarity, and political protest before Percy identified them with a romanticized Medievalism.
33. Quoted from *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 2 vols., ed. Ernest Rhys (N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1906), 1:9. Subsequent quotations from Percy's essay will be cited parenthetically by page number from this edition and volume.
34. Stewart, 142; see also Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 71.
35. David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1789* (N.Y.: Longman, 2003), 169.
36. See also 10, where Percy mentions the "profession of oral itinerant Poet," and 25.
37. See for instance Trumpener, 6, on these dual roles.
38. Bandiera, 204.
39. See Trumpener, 6–7, and Groom, 99.
40. McLane, 434. On the Percy/ Ritson debate, see also Sutherland, 414–21.
41. Quoted and cited by line number from "An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Blacklock," in *The Poetical Works of James Beattie*. Subsequent references to Beattie's poems other than the *Minstrel* will be quoted and cited parenthetically by line number from this edition.
42. Letter quoted from William Forbes, 79.
43. See Margaret Forbes, 27 and 35–36, and King, *James Beattie*, 23–24.
44. Roger Robinson, "The Origins and Composition of James Beattie's *Minstrel*," *Romanticism* 4:2 (1998): 224–40 (236).
45. *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 2:895–96.
46. William Forbes, 80. For other letters by Beattie criticizing public taste, see *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 2:1011, 1083.
47. Gray's *Elegy* quoted from lines 75, 79, and 51–52 in *The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (London: Longman, 1969). Subsequent quotations from the poem will be cited parenthetically by line number from this edition.
48. See Margaret Forbes, 7–8.
49. The poetic narrator appears in Book I, 19–20, 29, 90, 95, 100, 145, 325, 354–60, 373–78, 513, 532–40; and II, 14–24, 541–67.
50. Quoted from *A Defence of Poetry*, in *The Complete Works of Shelley*, eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. (N.Y.: Gordian Press, 1965), 7:116.
51. This address to the "stranger" became a general way of addressing the unknown reader in eighteenth-century epitaphs and subsequently in Romantic poetry, associated with the Classical trope of the *Siste Viator* or address from the tomb to the unknown individual passer-by. See Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), chapter 10 in general and esp. 316, 320–21, and 328–30; and Geoffrey Hartman, "Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry," in *From Sensibility to*

Romanticism, eds. Frederick W. Hill and Harold Bloom (N.Y.: Humanities Press, 1982), 389–413, esp. 393–94. For discussion of Romantic hermeneutics, see my chapter one, above.

52. Everard King usefully summarizes Beattie's critical positions in *James Beattie*, 134–57.
53. Quoted from Beattie's *Essays: on Poetry and Music* (Edinburgh, 1778), 57; and *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (Edinburgh, 1783), 181. In addition to presenting the individual author-to-reader hermeneutic relationship, Beattie also expresses the idea of genius as fundamental to works of art; defines taste in terms of sensibility and imagination as well as judgment; and differentiates between imagination as active invention and fancy as mere combinatory wit—all in ways that suggest some of the central developments of Romantic aesthetics (though these ideas were also current among Scottish aesthetic thinkers at the time, such as Duff and Gerard). See esp. *Dissertations* 72–76 and 146–84 and *Essays* 52–57 and 70 (quotations from *Dissertations*, 166, and *Essays*, 57). Beattie includes an entire essay entitled "On Sympathy" among the *Essays*, defining and elaborating on this power, which for him as for many theorists of the time serves to bind people together in mutual social identification (194–205). See also William Forbes, 196–97, in which Beattie writes in a letter that "in sentimental poetry [. . .] there is no external standard. By it the heart of the reader must be touched at once, or it cannot be touched at all [. . .] sensibility, and a lively imagination, are the qualities which alone constitute a true taste for sentimental poetry."
54. *Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 2:231, 237; 3:27. Cowper also writes that reading Beattie is like "conversing with an old friend" (2:237).
55. First the "muse of history unrolls her pages" (II, 290), followed by the turn to "sacred Polity, by Freedom rear'd" (II, 388), "Philosophy" (primarily denoting moral philosophy) which banishes "Indolence and moping Fancy" (II, 401–2), then "Reason [. . .] thro' number, time, and space" which "learns, from facts compar'd, the laws to trace,/ Whose long progression leads to Deity" (II, 415, 417–18), and finally a catalog of the improvements knowledge can effect in the human condition, including agricultural cultivation, landscaping, and medicine (II, 433–68), all wrapped up with a final appeal to moral philosophy (II, 469–77). King, *Origins of Romantic Autobiography*, 23–24, gives a general reading of the Hermit's literary precedents, as well as his autobiographical significance in relation to Beattie.
56. See King, *James Beattie*, for discussion of the significant attention that Beattie gave to aesthetics in his curriculum (34–37) and a general summary of Beattie's teaching career (26–47).
57. *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3:1084.
58. William Forbes, 92–93.
59. Robinson, 232.

60. *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3:1140.
61. On Beattie's exhaustion from his intense intellectual work in writing the *Essay on Truth*, see his 26 Nov. 1769 letter to Capt. Mercer in William Forbes, 142–43. On his sense of public duty in composing the *Essay*, see also his letter to Thomas Gray, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray,* 3:1130–31.
62. William Forbes, 84.
63. William Forbes, 281.
64. King, *Origins of Romantic Autobiography*, 16; William Forbes, 79.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. For an account of the reviews for both Cowper's volumes of original verse, see Lodwick Hartley, "'The Stricken Deer' and his Contemporary Reputation," *Studies in Philology* 36:4 (1939): 637–50; and James King, *William Cowper: a Biography* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1986), 115–17 and 154–55. After rapidly selling out in its initial edition, the *Task* was reprinted in a two-volume edition together with the 1782 *Poems* in 1786, then again in 1787 and 1788. The fifth printing appeared in 1793 and the sixth in 1794–95, before the appearance of a new edition also published by Johnson in 1798. See *The Poems of William Cowper*, 3 vols., eds. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 1995), vol. 3, xl-xli. All references to Cowper's poetry will be cited parenthetically from this edition. *The Task* will be cited parenthetically by book and line number from vol. 2.
2. The details of these various writers' responses to Cowper, together with the responses of others such as Burns, Blake, and Coleridge (on the positive side) and Byron, Hazlitt, Keats, and Shelley (on the negative) are reviewed in Lodwick Hartley, *William Cowper: The Continuing Revaluation* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1960), chapter 1, 3–15, which also discusses Cowper's general popularity and shifting reputation with critics and with the book-buying public. See Vincent Newey, *Cowper's Poetry: a Critical Study and Reassessment* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1982), 1–2, for another account of Cowper's special popularity with the growing Evangelical and middle-class reading public, through which he established his poetic pre-eminence. The opening chapter of Newey's book gives a detailed account of the rise and eventual twentieth-century fall of Cowper's literary reputation.
3. On Cowper's mortification against appearing in public, see his own account in *Adelphi*, in *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 5 vols., eds. James King and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979–86), 1:15. Subsequent references to Cowper's letters and prose will be cited parenthetically by volume and page number from this edition. Vincent Newey writes of Cowper's essential personal conservatism in *Cowper's Poetry*, 46; and Morris Golden of his fear of exposure through prominence or pre-eminence in *In Search of Stability: The Poetry of William Cowper* (New Haven: College

& University Press, 1960), 38–39, a point also explored by Martin Priestman in *Cowper's Task: Structure and Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 32–33.

4. Newey, 46.
5. In a dream, Cowper heard the words "Actum est de te, periisti" ("It is all over with thee, thou hast perished"), which he interpreted as a sign of his irrevocable exclusion from God's grace. Though his life and poetry continued to be dominated by religious themes, Cowper never again attended public worship and felt uncomfortable even entering the Vicarage. See King, 87–89.
6. As Cowper writes in *Adelphi*, his memoir of his own spiritual life and conversion, "There is that in the nature of salvation by grace when it is truly and experimentally [i.e. experientially] known which prompts every person to think himself the most extraordinary instance of its power" (*Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 1:59). On the conversion narrative as life writing, following generic conventions but also emphasizing singular individual experience within those conventions, see Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591–1791* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), chapters 4 and 5, 71–131.
7. For extensive discussion of the "Nonsense Club" within the contexts of mid eighteenth-century British culture and politics, see Lance Bertelsen, *The Nonsense Club: Literature and Popular Culture, 1749–1764* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). Poets Robert Lloyd and Charles Churchill were part of this "Club," which played a prominent role in late eighteenth-century poetics. On the success of the Olney hymns and Cowper's role in contributing to them, see *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xiv-xix; and King, 83–86.
8. See *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xxii-xxiii, and King, 96.
9. See *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 2, xi-xix for an account of the genesis of the poem from Lady Austen's suggestion, as well as some of the specific topical events which the *Task* addresses. The endnotes to the poem in this edition offer a much fuller account of these contemporary events, many of which would have come to Cowper's awareness through his reading the daily newspaper.
10. *Ibid.*, xi.
11. King, 189.
12. Given the scope of Cowper's efforts in translating the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, promoting subscriptions, and rivaling Pope, and given his clear desire for fame and profits as a translator, I find King's argument somewhat persuasive. Cowper, however, never identifies poetry specifically as a vocation and thus never makes writing central to his sense of identity. Though he certainly manifested strong literary ambitions in his rivalry with Pope, and though as W.B. Hutchings rightly points out Cowper was "less of a shrinking violet where poetic honour was concerned than his general reputation would sug-

gest" ("William Cowper and 1789," *Yearbook of English Studies* 19 (1989): 71–93 (72)), there is no indication that he founded his identity on writing in a "professional" sense, such as writers like Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, and Richard Savage, who supported themselves through their writing. Cowper's literary professionalism thus remained covert and secondary rather than overt and primary in constituting his poetic activity and identity.

13. See for instance his 3 March 1793 letter, in which he writes that "I have made a second bargain with Johnson, still keeping the copy-right in my own hands. The second edition is to be a small one, 750 copies only, of which he agrees to give me 400£ clear of all deductions. This indeed was a measure of his own proposing, and I acceded to it the rather because by the sales of this edition I shall learn with more precision what price to ask for the copy-right, should I chuse to sell it hereafter" (4:300).
14. Quoted from *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xxii. For Cowper's description of the Homer project in his habitual term of "amusement," see his letters to John Newton on 3 Dec. 1785 and 13 Jan. 1787 (2:411 and 3:10), and to Robert Glynn on 25 Dec. 1790 (3:447–48). These are only a few examples of Cowper's pervasive use of the word, sometimes to cover up the darker side of his mental suffering and instability. At the end of his "Preface" to the first edition of Homer, Cowper similarly writes of his "pleasant work" and of the "smooth and easy flight of many thousand hours" during his translation, publicly taking the pose of the gentleman author (5:69).
15. See *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xxiii-xxv, on Cowper's shift to writing for a public audience and on the publication of his 1782 *Poems* at Newton's suggestion.
16. For an account of these publications in various periodicals and an assessment of Cowper's role in submitting them, see *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xxxv-xl.
17. For a description of the poem's intended purpose, which also included the possibility of attracting subscribers to Cowper's Homer translation, see the endnotes to the poem in *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 3, 289.
18. For Cowper's use of the phrase, see his 19 May 1788 letter to Lady Hesketh (3:162). The poem appeared with this same identifying phrase in the June issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and Baird and Ryskamp in their introduction claim, without citing evidence, that Cowper submitted the poem with this identification (see *Cowper's Poetry*, vol. 3, xxxvii). Failing any more substantial evidence, it is impossible to know for certain whether Cowper himself actually used this phrase in submitting the poem, and he may in his letter have been referring to or even joking about this customary way of identifying a well-known author in magazines. In any case, his use of and evident comfort with the phrase in his letter is significant. Cowper's name was pub-

lished with *The Task* and widely known, so the designation did not attempt to preserve anonymity.

19. For Cowper's claim that "while I lived in the Temple, [I] produced several halfpenny ballads [topical political polemics], 2 or three of which had the honor to be popular," see his 4 Dec. 1781 letter to John Newton (1:551). A summary of the other occasional poems Cowper wrote for print appears in King, 183–84. For more specific information about publication of these and other of Cowper's poems in print periodicals, see *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 3, xxxv-xl, together with the endnotes, vol. 3, 278–79, 283–85, 294–96 and 300.
20. See Cowper's 14 Apr. 1789 letter to Lady Hesketh (3:275).
21. On Cowper's identification of himself as a poet beginning from 1782, see *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 3, xxxii-iii.
22. Julie Ellison, "News, Blues, and Cowper's Busy World," *Modern Language Quarterly* 62:3 (2001): 219–37.
23. See John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985).
24. Ellison, 229–30.
25. *Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1, xxxvi.
26. See Cowper's 27 Dec. 1785 letter to George Coleman, in which he writes: "Hitherto I have given away my Copies, but having indulged myself in that frolic twice, I now mean to try whether it may not prove equally agreeable to get something by the bargain" (2:436); and his 3 March 1793 letter to John Johnson about negotiating a contract for a second edition (4:300), quoted in note (13), above.
27. See Cowper's letters for details (3:538 and 3:542). Henry Crabb Robinson estimated that Johnson made £10,000 all told from the sales of Cowper's poetry—an immense figure at the time, equal to the entire fortune Pope realized from his Homer translations (see Hartley, 7). But even if this estimate is exaggerated (there's no indication how Robinson arrived at it), Johnson clearly made huge profits from the frequent reprints of Cowper's editions during and after the poet's lifetime, especially as he paid the author nothing for copyright.
28. James King explores this literary rivalry with Pope in *William Cowper*, see esp. 108–9, 192–99, and 225. This sense of rivalry is amply born out in Cowper's letters, which return obsessively to comparisons with Pope. In this way, Pope provided the primary figure against whom Cowper defined his own literary style and identity.
29. King, 225, gives these subscription statistics.
30. For an account of the financial terms of Pope's contracts for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations and his activities and success in securing subscriptions, see David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), chapter 2, 51–101,

and Pat Rogers, *Essays on Pope* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), chapter 12, 190–227, together with my own chapter two, above.

31. See Cowper's letter of 10 Jan. 1786 to Lady Hesketh for the terms of the subscription publication (2:448).
32. On Cowper's attempt to renew old friendships in the subscription campaign, see King, 196–97.
33. For an account of Cowper's financial situation during his time at Olney and Weston Underwood, see King, 58–59. According to King, Cowper spent roughly £100 per year from 1768 to 1786, with his limited sources of personal income largely supplemented by the generosity of others, such as Joseph Hill and Mrs. Unwin. King writes that Cowper "thought he had an inalienable right to the largesse of others. Cowper always lived as a gentleman, and he expected others to assist him in maintaining the style to which he had become accustomed" (59).
34. *Ibid.*, 155.
35. *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 2, xiii-xiv.
36. The other significant competitor in this regard is Byron.
37. Golden, 13; Norman Nicholson, *William Cowper* (London: John Lehman, 1951), 57. Lodwick Hartley writes in *The Continuing Revaluation* that "any discussion of Cowper's poetry, it should now be plain, will very likely reflect what is usually the initial assumption about it: namely, that of all English poetry his is among the most difficult to separate from the life of the poet" (33).
38. For an account of biographies through 1960, see Hartley, 16–32. Post–1960 biographies include King's biography (cited above) and George Melryn Ella, *William Cowper: Poet of Paradise* (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1993), yet another study from the religious perspective.
39. See I, 109–43 and VI, 6–56 for undeveloped beginnings of an autobiographical narrative; and III, 371 and V, 464, for veiled, oblique hints at Cowper's own psychic illness and depression, always however leaving the exact nature of his afflictions unspecified. Patricia Spacks Meyer comments on Cowper's tendency to keep his inner life hidden in *The Task* in her engaging discussion of Cowper in *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 217.
40. *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 2, 13.
41. *Ibid.*, 115.
42. See for instance the long passage near the end of book six describing the exemplary man, one of the many versions of the Horatian *beatus vir* with which the poem is filled, finally transforming into the first person almost a hundred lines later with the transition, "So glide my life away" (VI, 906–1000). See also VI, 23–56 for another notable example of this autobiographical use of the third person in the *Task*. For the most notable extended

instance of this third-person self-representation in the Moral Essays, see "Hope," lines 674–709, in *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 1.

43. *The Task* was censured by Samuel Badcock in *The Monthly Review* for its lack of unity: "The great defect of the present poem is a want of unity of design. It is composed of reflections that seem independent of one another; and there is no *particular* subject either discussed or aimed at" (quoted from King, 155). For a balanced recent assessment of this issue of the poem's unity, see Bill Hutchings, *The Poetry of William Cowper* (London: Croon Helm, 1984), 190–94.
44. See also Marshall Brown, *Preromanticism* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991), who writes that the poem, like the mind of the narrator, is "congenitally restless" and "formless by intent" (60). See 59–70 on the poem's construction of consciousness in relation to its form.
45. Wordsworth borrowed the *Task* from his Hawkshead schoolmaster William Taylor shortly after it came out in 1785 and likely read it several times over the course of his life, as he later continued to number Cowper as one of his favorite authors (see Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 29; Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Early Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 100; and Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Later Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 382). The *Task*'s role in providing a precedent and model for the *Prelude* has been generally accepted by critics. For an in-depth comparison of the structural parallels between the two poems, together with an argument for the direct and significant influence of the *Task* on the *Prelude's* themes and poetic voice, see Priestman, chapter 9, 162–98.
46. John Dolan, *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2000), situates Cowper within his larger narrative of poets' shift from writing about outside occasions to taking the mental events of the poet's own mind as a kind of internal occasion. See 148–61, on Cowper in particular, with a focus on "The Cast-Away."
47. Hutchings, *The Poetry of William Cowper*, 196–97.
48. David Paxman, "Failure as Authority: Poetic Vision and the Muse of Grace in William Cowper's *The Task*," in *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, vol. 5, ed. Kevin Cope (N.Y.: AMS Press, 2000), 203–42 (217, 242).
49. Mary Jacobus in *Tradition and Experiment in the Lyrical Ballads* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 47, describes Cowper's *Task* as a "one-sided conversation with the reader of over 5000 lines."
50. Priestman, 21.
51. Paxman, 224.
52. David Boyd, "Satire and Pastoral in *The Task*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 10:4 (1974): 363–77 (366).

53. See for instance I, 103–8, where, after a long playful passage about the derivation of the sofa from earlier types of seats (also a mock-heroic narrative of Britain's overall moral and cultural development), Cowper invokes the "Sofa" both as the resting place of "libertine excess" and as a repose for his own more active middle-class virtue. As David Boyd remarks in "Satire and Pastoral in *The Task*," Cowper's "satiric aggression is wholly defensive in nature," a way of calling attention away from his own situation and authority, and therefore "his real targets almost inevitably prove to be those elements of his own character which inspired satiric action in the first place" (367). For other appearances of the "sofa" in the poem, see also III, 12, 32; and VI, 107, 1007. The sofa becomes emblematic of the domestic and the feminine as well as of "libertine excess," providing a sheltered space of domestic retreat as a kind of staging base between Cowper's more strenuous masculine rambles, both into the surrounding countryside and into the genre of satire.
54. *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 2, 379. See Ellison on Cowper's newspaper subscriptions and reading practices. On the "advertiser" newspaper format, see Stephen Botein, Jack R. Censer, and Harriet Ritvo, "The Periodical Press in English and French Society: a Cross-Cultural Approach," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23:3 (July, 1991): 464–90.
55. For an explication of these references, see *The Poems of William Cowper*, vol. 2, 383–84.
56. Spacks, *Privacy*, 208.
57. Richard Feingold, *Nature and Society: Later Eighteenth-Century Uses of the Pastoral and Georgic* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press), offers a book-length discussion of the eighteenth-century evolution of georgic and pastoral, including two chapters on Cowper's transformation of the genres. John Barrell offers an account of the decline of the hilltop prospect poem as a metaphor for a unifying social vision and the related decline of the idea of the gentleman of letters, in *English Literature in History, 1730–1780: An Equal Wide Survey* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 104–9.
58. Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996). Fulford writes extensively on the social and political landscape in Cowper's poetry, in chapter 1, 38–72 (see esp. 38–39). See also David Boyd, 367, who comments: "Cowper's version of pastoral, then, is essentially a retreat, an escape, a self-seeking quest for personal security."
59. Fulford, 38.
60. Spacks, *Privacy*, 207.
61. For arguments about Cowper's lack of a political ideal, see for instance Feingold, 142–53; and Newey, *Cowper's Poetry*, chapter 6, 165–207. In a more recent essay, "William Cowper and the Condition of England," Vincent Newey argues that Cowper does maintain a consistent political position: the classic Whig position of the balance of power (in *Literature and*

Nationalism, eds. Newey and Ann Thompson (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1991), 120–39). This argument does not contradict the fact that Cowper lacks any realistic political model, however, as Newey remarks that Cowper's vision of the garden as an ideal social order remains a "utopian vision against which the real world can only be found wanting" (132). See also Hutchings, "William Cowper and 1789," for a similar position.

62. Patricia Meyer Spacks, "The Poetry of Sensibility," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. John Sitter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 249–69.
63. See Ellison, 226–33, for another version of how reading brings to life the news and discursively constitutes the nation.
64. See also Cowper's 8 Feb. 1783 letter to John Newton (2:105).
65. See especially III, 657–74, in which the garden is represented in explicitly social metaphors.
66. Martin Priestman in *Cowper's Task* (103) and Patricia Meyer Spacks in *Privacy* (210–11) both offer brief readings of the cucumber passage in connection with Cowper's poetic composition, but neither reads the passage in relation to consumerism or print culture.
67. Thus he writes to Joseph Hill on 9 May 1781: "the Season of the Year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine such as they are, and crowns me with a Winter garland. In this respect therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightfull [sic] Influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk Motion of the Animal Spirits, make poetry almost the Language of Nature; and I, when Icecles [sic] descend from all the Leaves of the Parnassian Laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in Verse, as to hear a Blackbird Whistle" (1:470–71). See also Priestman, 101. There is a suggestive passage in Cowper's 8 Feb. 1783 letter to John Newton that may also equate cucumbers and poetry, in which he writes that "You will suppose me a politician [. . ., but] I feel myself more interested in the success of my early Cucumbers, than in any part of this great and important subject. If I see them droop a little, I forget that we have been many years at war, that we have made an humiliating peace, that we are deeply in debt and unable to pay, all these reflections are absorbed at once in the anxiety I feel for a plant the fruit of which I cannot eat when I have procured it" (2:105). Since his *Poems* were published in 1782 and Cowper began to write *The Task* the following year, it is interesting to speculate that these "early cucumbers" may refer covertly to his own poetry—both the success of his preceding volume with the public and the success of his new poetic efforts—as well as more overtly to the actual cucumbers he raised. His mention of cucumbers again in a 13 Feb. 1783 letter to Joseph Hill, proximate to a long meditation on his role as a poet, also suggests this identification: "I raise Cucumbers which I cannot eat, merely because it is difficult to raise them" (2:106).

68. Priestman, 103, comments on such critical readings.
69. Spacks, *Privacy*, 209–10, 217.
70. Newey, 44; see also 43–47 and 193–96, which explore similar formulations. Newey's entire book continuously skirts this issue of the relation between Cowper's sense of a dissolving society and the emergence of the individual as the basis of poetic form and value in his poetry.
71. *Ibid.*, 193. Newey goes on to write: "Rather than the expression of an idealism based in hopes for the larger community, the poetry is a poetry of personality and private ideals" (194). See also Brown, esp. 64, 69.
72. For another lesser-known poem on this same theme, see "To Dr. Newton on his Return from Ramsgate." Cowper often uses images of the sea to express mental suffering or the feeling of being overwhelmed without any harbor or anchor to stabilize him. For two such instances see the letter to Newton, quoted above (3:11), and the unexpected incident of the mariner suddenly diving headlong to his death into the ocean in the *Task* (I, 445–54).

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. Cited by book and line number from *The Thirteen-Book Prelude*, vol. 1, ed. Mark L. Reed (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991). Subsequent quotations from the *Prelude* will be cited in this same format, from the 1805 version. All quotations from Wordsworth's poetry will be from the Cornell edition volumes, cited in the bibliography at the end of the volume. The only exception is *The Excursion*, which will be cited by book and line number from vol. 2 of *William Wordsworth: the Poems*, ed. John O. Hayden, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981).
2. In a similar sense, Kenneth Johnston argues in *The Hidden Wordsworth* (N.Y.: Norton, 1998) that "Wordsworth's self-creation project was largely finished after 1807," as his subsequent (re-)construction of his own poetic identity took place mainly in revising the completed *Prelude* manuscript (11).
3. Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998), 112. See chapter 4 generally, 104–29.
4. Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 5.
5. Mark Schoenfield, *The Professional Wordsworth: Law, Labor and the Poet's Contract* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996).
6. Brian Goldberg, "'Ministry More Palpable': William Wordsworth and the Making of Romantic Professionalism," *SiR* 36:3 (1997): 327–47; Richard Swartz, "Wordsworth's Politics of Ambition," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 13:1 (1989): 91–120.
7. Magali S. Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: a Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1977), x.

8. William Prest, ed., *The Professions in Early Modern England* (N.Y.: Croon Helm, 1987), see the Introduction, 1–24. See also Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society, 1680–1730* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), esp x. Holmes argues that professions existed in recognizably modern forms before urbanization and industrialization.
9. Rosemarie O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2000), see esp. 33–37, 266–67. See also Holmes, 8; Larson, xiii; and Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Early Modern England, 1700–1850* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1995), 201–5.
10. O'Day, 272; Larson, 57–63.
11. O'Day, 268; Larson, 4, 88–89.
12. Corfield, 212, 223–42; Prest, 8–9; Larson, 51, 91–92.
13. Corfield, 176; Holmes, 9.
14. Larson, xii-xiii.
15. Prest 14–15.
16. O'Day, 268.
17. Corfield, 26.
18. See Corfield, 26, who claims that the boundaries of social status were not clearly defined during the period, and "a professional was anyone who had public acceptance as such." See also Holmes, 4–5, and Larson, xi.
19. See Homes, chapters 1 and 2, 3–42.
20. Holmes, 28–34.
21. Claudia Thomas, "Pope and his *Dunciad* Adversaries: Skirmishes on the Borders of Gentility," in *Cutting Edges: Postmodern Critical Essays on Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. James E. Gill (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1995), 275–300. For a fuller discussion of this professional skirmish and how Pope used it to construct his own identity as a poet, see my chapter two, above.
22. See for instance Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 276–79. Schoenfield also comments on this connection to other forms of professionalism, on 76.
23. Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: the Anxieties of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 92. See chapter 3 on Wordsworth generally, 91–133.
24. See *The Work of Writing*, cited above; and Siskin's essay "Wordsworth's Prescription: Romanticism and Professional Power," in *The Romantics and Us*, ed. Gene Ruoff (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990), 303–27.
25. Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 147. See 137–50 on the connection between Wordsworth's poetics and his construction of audience. See also especially Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760–1830* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), 59–68; and Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and*

the Public Sphere (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 241–44. Charles Rzepka writes on Wordsworth's construction of his audience as a means of self-construction in *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), esp. 69–71, as does Tim Fulford in *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), chapter 4, 157–213.

26. Quoted from *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., eds. W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Univ. Press, 1974), 1:116. Subsequent quotations from Wordsworth's prose works will be cited parenthetically from this addition, by volume and page number.
27. This phrase occurs on 1:119, then again with minor variations on 1:123, twice on 1:131, and again on 1:137. For the sake of convenience, I will quote the 1802 version of the "Preface" throughout, which expands on the 1800 version.
28. Quoted from *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 6 vols., ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd ed., rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967–69), vol. 1, *The Early Years*. Subsequent citations from the letters will be from this edition by page number, abbreviated for volume name and number (as in *MY1* for the first part of *Middle Years* and *LY2* for the second part of *Later Years*).
29. *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 46.
30. Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 147.
31. Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 763–67.
32. On the establishment of literature as the basis of a liberal arts education, the general training in human nature through which all other professions were required to pass, see Clifford Siskin, "Working the *Prelude*: Foucault and the New History," in *The Prelude: New Critical Approaches*, ed. Nigel Smith (Buckingham: Open Univ. Press, 1993), 78–124, esp. 115–16.
33. Richard Swartz, "Wordsworth, Copyright, and the Commodification of Genius," *Modern Philology* 89:4 (1992): 482–509 (490). This position is in some ways the central argument of Pfau's book, but see esp. 7–15, 270–71, and 302–6.
34. This theme of the imagined redemptive power of reading is central to Klancher's assessment of Romantic poetics in *The Making of English Reading Audiences*—see chapter 5,135–71, esp. 135.
35. See also 3:62, where he insists that poetry "must be a study," not just a pastime.
36. Fulford, 166. See also David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), 151–56, and Don Bialostosky, *Wordsworth, Dialogics, and the Practice of Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 26–27, for similar claims. On Wordsworth's construction of his own authority in relation to these rustic readers, see

Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 24–29; Scott McEathron, "Stuck at Grasmere: Wordsworth and the Limits of Native Authority," in *Romantic Generations: Essays in Honor of Robert F. Gleckner*, eds. Ghislaine McDayter, Guinn Batten, and Barry Milligan (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2001), 203–20 (217); and John Lucas, *England and Englishness: Ideas of Nationhood in English Poetry, 1688–1800* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1990), 6.

37. Quoted from the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes,* 207–8 and 216–17, and *Lyrical Ballads*, 247. For other poems that put the poet in a place of transcendent height exposed to the upward gaze of all, see Wordsworth's reference to the "star-like virtue" of his song in line 147 of the "Prospectus" to the *Recluse* (3:8); the moon in his poem "Gypsies," which David Simpson explicates as representing the poet in *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination* (N.Y.: Methuen, 1987), 34–35; and the "awful sovereignty" of Age, but also by implication of the famous and established Poet, in the final book of the *Excursion* (9.48–92).
38. Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 741.
39. Eugene Stelzig, "'The Happy Few': Notes on Romanticism and the Aristocracy of Consciousness," in *Recent Perspectives on European Romanticism*, ed. Larry Peer (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellon Press, 2002), 33–45 (39–41). See also Simpson, 129, and the sources listed in note (36), above, for similar claims.
40. Goldberg, 327–28.
41. *Fenwick Notes*, 23. Mary Moorman also speculates from evidence in the letters that Wordsworth must have read his poetry to local villagers as well as to friends from his own class: see *William Wordsworth: The Early Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 544.
42. *Fenwick Notes*, 43. On Wordsworth's "booing" and his relation to local people, see Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, *Reminiscences of Wordsworth among the Peasantry of Westmoreland* (Glasgow: Jackson Son, 1968), esp. 11, 13, 17, 30–31. For discussion of Wordsworth's relation to the laboring rural population around him, see D.D. Devlin, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Epitaphs* (London: MacMillan, 1980), 1–4; F.W. Bateson, *Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation* (N.Y.: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), 189–91; and Fulford, esp. 159, 165, 181.
43. Rawnsley, esp. 11–12, 22–23.
44. *Ibid.,* 16, 33.
45. Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996), chapter 2, 49–69, gives an account of Wordsworth's publication history and negotiations with publishers, provocatively entitled "The Egoism of Authorship: Wordsworth's Poetic Career." Wordsworth, as Erickson argues, never had any interest in publishing "really cheap books" (69). On

Wordsworth ambivalent relationship to the "common" reader, see also Annette Wheeler Cafarelli, "The Common Reader: Social Class in Romantic Poetics," *JEGP* 96:2 (1997): 222–46, esp. 230–34 and 244–45. For the argument about *Lyrical Ballads* and its price and intended audience, see William Rowland, Jr., *Literature and the Marketplace: Romantic Writers and Their Audiences in Great Britain and the United States* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1996), 23, 39.

46. See *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 2:42, 46, 54–56; and reviews in *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, Part A, vols. 1 & 2, ed. Donald Reiman (N.Y.: Garland, 1972), 15, 417, 431, and 846 for various points about the connection between education, class, and language, all contending (reasonably enough) that language varies according to one's upbringing and situation and that the language of uneducated rustics is in fact more regionalized and less universal, on the whole, than that of the educated classes.
47. Cafarelli, 244. Cafarelli explores the similarly uneasy fusion of high and low culture in Wordsworth's poetics, claiming that despite its emphasis on rustic subjects and common language, he sought primarily "an elite, conventionally educated audience" (234). See 230–34 and 244–45 generally.
48. Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, 135–50, esp. 139–43.
49. On Wordsworth's contestation with the reviews, see my forthcoming essay "Wordsworth's 'System,' the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority," in *European Romantic Review*; Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, esp. chapters 3 and 5, 91–133 and 173–223; and John Mahoney, *Wordsworth and the Critics* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2001), 1–30. On reviews in general, see Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996); Klancher, *Reading Audiences*, together with his essay on "Prose" in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, ed. Iain McCalman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 279–86; and the entry on "reviewing" by William Christie in the same volume, 674–75.
50. For other claims that he ignores the reviews, see EY:433 and MY1:174.
51. See also the editorial introduction to Wordsworth's "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" of his 1815 *Poems*, 3:55–60, which quotes numerous other instances of Wordsworth's angry responses to the reviews and to Jeffrey in particular. See especially *MY*2:190–91, where Wordsworth also attacks Jeffrey; and *MY*2:542–43, where he attacks the "witlings" and "small critics, who have been warring with me for more than 20 years."
52. Lucy Newlyn, "How Wordsworth Kept His Audience Fit," in *Placing and Displacing Romanticism*, ed. Peter Kitson (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2001), 60–72, develops material also covered in her *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*. See also Kurt Heinzelman, *The Economics of the Imagination*

(Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1980), 200–5, and John R. Nabholtz, '*My reader my fellow labourer': a Study of English Romantic Prose* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1986), chapter 4, 67–96, on Wordsworth's demand for the reader's active, cooperative labor.

53. See *EY*:315–16 and 366–67, *MY*1:147–49, and MY2:187–92 respectively. See also Wordsworth's comments to Lamb on *The White Doe of Rylestone* (EY:322–23); his instructions to John Wilson on how to read "The Idiot Boy" (*EY*:355); and his response to some criticisms that Sir George Beaumont relayed from a friend (*MY*1:194–95).
54. Newlyn, "How Wordsworth Kept His Audience Fit," 64–67.
55. Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 105.
56. See Keen, chapter 2, esp. 77–115.
57. *Ibid.,* 86.
58. For a characterization of symbolic gift exchange in Wordsworth's poetry, see Charles Rzepka, "A Gift that Complicates Employ: Poetry and Poverty in 'Resolution and Independence,'" *SiR* 28:2 (1989): 225–47. See also Rzepka's extended study of gift exchange in relation to De Quincey, *Sacramental Commodities: Gift, Text, and the Sublime in De Quincey* (Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1995), which gives a more complete background for the term and its significance in Romantic literary studies.
59. Keen, 9–10.
60. On Wordsworth's campaign for the extension of copyright, see John Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: an Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (N.Y.: Mansell, 1994), 124–46; Erickson, esp. 60–64, who discusses Wordsworth's uncharacteristic insistence in retaining his own copyrights; and the introduction to Wordsworth's *Law of Copyright* in 3:303–6. See also Wordsworth's letters in MY2:535 and LY3:572–75.
61. Stephen Gill, "'Affinities Preserved': Poetic Self-Reference in Wordsworth," *SiR* 24:4 (1985), 531–34 (532).
62. There is some ambiguity about the exact status of the initial copyright. Faced with the initial poor sales of the volume and his own impending financial failure as a publisher, Cottle seems to have sold his remainders at a loss to the London bookseller Arch while making a gift of the copyright back to Wordsworth, since its value was "reckoned as nothing" (see *Lyrical Ballads*, 14–15, 23). Wordsworth, however, later claimed that the copyright would have reverted back to him anyway (EY:310).
63. On Wordsworth's active revision of *Lyrical Ballads* to increase sales, together with his active marketing of the edition, see Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 676, 722–24, 751.
64. Erickson, 58–59.
65. *Ibid.,* 49.
66. See also LY1:692–93, in which Wordsworth associates his verses with riches and maintains his rights to print published poems in new editions of his

works. Peter Manning's essay "Wordsworth in the Keepsake, 1829," in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, eds. John Jordan and Robert Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 44–73, gives a full account of Wordsworth's interactions with the editors of the *Keepsake* and the status of the annuals generally.

67. *Ibid.,* 61.
68. Lee Erickson in *The Economy of Literary Form*, 69, argues for Wordsworth's crucial role in this new identification of authorial identity with the author's total published oeuvre.
69. Susan Eilenberg, *Strange Powers of Speech: Wordsworth, Coleridge and Literary Possession* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), see chapter 6, esp. 205–9.
70. Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 93–94 (94).
71. On the connection between Romantic ideas of genius, copyright, and the marketplace, see also Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994), and Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), together with my discussion in chapter one, above. See also Swartz, "Wordsworth, Copyright, and the Commodification of Genius," who connects these issues specifically to Wordsworth.
72. Wordsworth also uses the word "class" to define a class of authors in his 1838 letter to the M.P. Thomas Wyse (LY3:575–76) and in his 1819 letter to J. Forbes Mitchell (MY2:533–34). It was in this sense, as a representative of this general class of authors, that he aided Talfourd in his public advocacy of the copyright bills.
73. Quoted from *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols., eds. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940–49), 1:5. *Fenwick Notes* quoted from 59; see also 32 for description of his "intellectual labor," and *MY*2:144 and *LY*3:691 for other references to this hard labor in his letters. On Wordsworth's exhausting dedication to the work of revision, see also Zachary Leader, *Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 20–24. Dorothy's letters and journals are full of frequent accounts of William exhausting himself with writing and revision: see for instance the *Grasmere Journal* entries collected in *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), 24–25. See also Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, chapter 1, 19–77, on the importance of diligent revision for Wordsworth's sense of poetic identity.
74. Brian Goldberg makes this point on 327–34, claiming that "Wordsworth's idealized poet would have to put in long, tough hours of preparation before he would be worthy of his title" (333–34).
75. *Fenwick Notes*, 66. The quotation on *Lyrical Ballads* comes from James A. Butler, "Wordsworth, Cottle, and the *Lyrical Ballads*: Five Letters, 1797–1800," *JEGP* 75 (1976): 139–53 (145). On Wordsworth's commer-

cial involvements generally, see Wallace Douglas, "Wordsworth as Businessman," *PMLA* 63 (1948): 625–41.

76. See R.S. Woof, "Wordsworth's Poetry and Stuart's Newspapers," *Studies in Bibliography* 15 (1962): 149–89. Woof documents Wordsworth's extensive publication of poetry in the *Morning Post* in 1803. For an account of the wide republication of Wordsworth's poetry and its significance in increasing his reputation, see Robert Mayo, "The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*," *PMLA* 69 (1954): 486–522, 487–88 and 519–20.
77. On this "enfranchisement," see Kurt Heinzelman, "Poetry and Real Estate: Wordsworth as Developer," *Southwest Review* 84:4 (1999): 573–88. For a full description of the many kinds of patronage the Beaumonts accorded to Wordsworth and the hesitation and delicacy with which he accepted such patronage, as a potential threat to his independence, see Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 218–20, 267, 277, and 302.
78. On Wordsworth's assertion of his independence through mystification of the Calvert bequest, see Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1989), 336, and David Haney, "The Emergence of the Autobiographical Figure in the Prelude," *SiR* 20 (1981): 33–63 (37). The sonnet "To the Memory of Raisley Calvert," first printed in the 1807 *Poems*, acknowledges Calvert more directly, but emphasizes the poet's independence and "freedom" as much as it does Calvert's enabling gift.
79. Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 4. J. Douglas Kneale in *Monumental Writing*, 87–88, also calls the seventh book a "book of signs" (and quoting David Simpson, a "semiotic inferno"), in which "written signs, letters, characters, and symbols" are everywhere (87–88). See also Sheila Kearns, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography: Reading Strategies of Self-Representation* (Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1995), 72–80, for discussion of book seven in terms of authorship and reading.
80. Ross King, "Wordsworth, Panoramas, and the Prospect of London," *SiR* 32:7 (1993): 57–73, discusses how London's thronging crowds and welter of detail create this destabilizing effect.
81. Critics who have commented on the passage as a representation of the author's relation to print culture and/ or the autobiographical project include Charles Rzepka, *The Self as Mind*, 41–43 and 49; Kearns, 76; Martin Danahay, *A Community of One: Masculine Autobiography and Autonomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993), 55–59; Paul Jay, *Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Barthes* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), 90–91; and Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), 138–46. The poem also records a similar, though less emotionally

charged encounter with a crippled sailor, with "written characters" chalked on the stones (7.220–23).

82. Kearns, 78.
83. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White interpret the passage this way in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), 120–22, as an attempt to rise above the seeming breakdown of discursive boundaries into a prospect position that reasserts the claims of the author's transcendental ego and re-establishes a form of hierarchy.
84. For description of this pirated Paris edition, selling at 1/3 to 1/4 the price of Wordsworth's authorized *Works*, see Erickson, 57.
85. Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 98–99.
86. Ashton Nichols, *The Revolutionary 'I': Wordsworth and the Politics of Self-Presentation* (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1998), 23–24.
87. See Willard Spiegelman, *Wordsworth's Heroes* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 112, which describes Wordsworth as the would-be epic hero of the *Prelude*. It is perhaps more accurate to make this claim in relation to the *Recluse*, since Wordsworth did not conceive of the *Prelude* as epic.
88. Alan Liu refers to Wordsworth's May 1794 letter to William Mathews (EY:118–20) in this sense as his attempt to "engage fully in the life of Grub St. by mail," a possibility only opened to Wordsworth by the existence of these national print market networks (334). On the expansion of provincial networks of print culture, see my chapter one, above.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. References to Wordsworth's poetry, prose works, and letters in this chapter will be the same as for the previous chapter (see earlier notes (1) and (26)). See *Prose* 1:112 on the timing of Wordsworth's composition of the "What is a Poet" section for the 1802 "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads, likely between January and April 1802. Evidence of Wordsworth's work in expanding the Pedlar's biography into a separate poem is conveniently collected in *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), 24–30, especially the evidence from Dorothy's *Grasmere Journal*, 24–25. For other critics' assessment of Wordsworth's developing sense of poetic vocation around this time, see Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth* (N.Y.: Norton, 1998), 772; John Mahoney, *William Wordsworth: a Poetic Life* (N.Y.: Fordham Univ. Press, 1997), 63; Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 45; David Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory: Wordsworth's Poetry of the 1790s* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), 145; and Brian Goldberg, "'Ministry More Palpable': William Wordsworth and the Making of Romantic Professionalism," SiR 36:3 (1997): 327–47, esp. 332.

2. See Jared Curtis, *Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition: the Lyric Poems of 1802* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1971), on Wordsworth's composition of 1802.
3. See the introduction to *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, 7–8, and the introduction to *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), xxiii and 6–7, for information on the manuscript and dating of composition.
4. On Wordsworth's engagements with the literary mode of sensibility, see James Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980).
5. See the introduction to *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, 14–22, on the expansion of the *Ruined Cottage* manuscript.
6. Kenneth Johnston argues that the Pedlar begins to eclipse Margaret as the poem's main subject in *The Hidden Wordsworth*, 772.
7. Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour*, 45.
8. On the larger *Recluse* project and its relation to these short lyrics Wordsworth was writing in 1802, see Kenneth Johnston, *Wordsworth and the Recluse* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984).
9. See *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, 17. Transposed into the *Prelude*, these passages become, in the 1805 manuscript, 2.416–34 and 3.82, 122–27, 141–47, and 156–67.
10. *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 79.
11. For further description of the trope of the *Siste Viator* in relation to Wordsworth's poetry, see Geoffrey Hartman's "Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Frederick W. Hill and Harold Bloom (N.Y.: Humanities Press, 1982), 389–413, esp. 393–94. For Wordsworth's specific reference to this trope in his "Essays Upon Epitaphs," see 2:54. This mode of epitaphic address is central to the poetics he develops in these "Essays."
12. See my essay "The Wedding Guest as Reader: 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' as a Dramatization of Print Circulation and the Construction of the Authorial Self," *Nineteenth Century Studies* 15 (2001): 19–36.
13. On Charles Lamb's identification of the poem as an inscription, see Hartman, "Inscriptions," 390. See my chapter three, above, on Gray's *Elegy*.
14. In the "Essay Upon Epitaphs," he discusses such extended epitaphs an "epitomized biography" (2:89).
15. See esp. *The Excursion* 6.650–51 and 7.610–15, in which the Pastor is asked to pronounce and then speculates on the oral epitaph.
16. James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), 141. For other readings of the poem in terms of an encounter between author and individual reader, see Anne Williams, *Prophetic Strain: The Greater Lyric in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago:

Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), chapter 8, 123–39; Willard Spiegelman, *Wordsworth's Heroes* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 41–48; Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Music of Humanity* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), esp. 87–101; John Rieder, *Wordsworth's Counter-Revolutionary Turn: Community, Virtue and Vision in the 1790s* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1997), 174–76; and Evan Radcliffe, "In Dreams Begins Responsibility: Wordsworth's Ruined Cottage Story," *SiR* 23:1 (1984): 101–19.

17. The poem will be quoted by line number from MS. D as printed in *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*. I will work with MS. D both because it is the most frequently discussed and best-known manuscript draft of the poem, and because the narrative frame of the encounter between Pedlar and narrator is much more fully developed in MS. D than in MS. B.
18. For two other versions of how sympathy creates communal identification between readers in Wordsworth's poetry and in *The Ruined Cottage* in particular, see Rieder, esp. chapters 1 and 6, 13–31 and 146–84; and Bromwich, esp. 139–55. Neither comments on the epitaph or on print culture specifically.
19. *The Pedlar* will be quoted by line number out of Duncan Wu, ed., *Romanticism: an Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998).
20. See for instance the reviews of the poem in the *Edinburgh Review*, *Quarterly Review*, *Monthly Review*, and *British Critic*, all of which comment on this threat to decorum (though some make more allowances than others). *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, Part A, vols. 1 & 2, ed. Donald Reiman (N.Y.: Garland, 1972), 142, 453, 727–29, 831.
21. Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1989), 346–47.
22. Wordsworth declares his debt to Percy's *Reliques* directly (see 3:78), so he was almost surely fully conversant with Percy's definition of bardic identity in the collection's introductory "Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England." On the significance of the bardic figure during the late eighteenth century and Romantic period, in relation to Wordsworth in particular, see Gary Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1994), chapter 4, 113–38. For Beattie's influence on Wordsworth, see Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 85; and Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Early Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 60–61, which cites Beattie as "the strongest contemporary influence on the young Wordsworth" as the *Minstrel* "became and remained one of Wordsworth's favorite poems" (60). F.W. Bateson in *Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation* (N.Y.: Longman, Green and Co., 1954) similarly claims that "Beattie's *The Minstrel* was probably the poem that exerted the greatest influence on the young Wordsworth," to the extent that "it is not impossible that William at this time was to some extent consciously modelling himself on

Beattie's hero" (63–64). See also Dorothy and William's references to Beattie in EY:100–1 and 154.

23. On the bard as representative of national voice and tradition, see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), esp. the Introduction, 3–34; and Anne Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), 65–77.
24. On representation of an oral author-to-reader relationship as a way to compensate for the author's alienation from a print market public, see my essay, "The Wedding Guest as Reader." On Wordsworth's preference for a known, oral audience as opposed to the unknown audience of print culture, see David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), 143–49; and Bateson, 187.
25. See EY:364, 454, 459, 634, 664; MY1:118, 326; and Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*, ed. Pamela Woof (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), 31, 72, for some examples of Wordsworth reading his poems aloud. See also Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: the Anxieties of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), chapter 9, 333–71, "Reading Aloud: an 'Ambiguous Accomplishment,'" on the relation between Romantic oral reading and print culture.
26. See Margaret Spufford, "The Pedlar, the Historian and the Folklorist: Seventeenth Century Communications," *Folklore* 105 (1994): 13–24, esp. 17–20. For more detailed historical information on pedlars, see Laurence Fontaine, *The History of Pedlars in Europe*, trans. Vicki Whittaker (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1996), esp. 184–202 on pedlars in England; and Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon, 1984).
27. Fontaine, 84, Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, 89.
28. Spufford, "Pedlar, Historian and Folklorist," 15–16. Maureen McLane, "Bards and Ballads: British Romantic Orality," *Modern Philology* 98:3 (2001): 423–43 discusses how the figure of the bard also mediated between these two spheres. See esp. 441, on how Wordsworth's poetry straddled this oral/ print divide.
29. See Harrison, esp. chapter four, "Minstrels and Marginals," 113–38, on the link between the minstrel's "spirit of independence" and the print market poet. Quoted from 153.
30. For a description of this same habitual education of sensibility in the "Preface," see 1:126.
31. Alex Dick, "Poverty, Charity, Poetry: The Unproductive Labors of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar,'" *SiR* 39:3 (2000): 365–96. For Wordsworth's opposition to reform of the charity laws as dehumanizing, see the introduction and relevant parts of his "Postscript, 1835," in 3:233–44 and 239–48, together with Harrison, chapter 5, 139–71.

32. Robert Essick, "Wordsworth and Leech Lore," *The Wordsworth Circle* 12:2 (1981), 100–2; Cheryl Wanko, "Leechcraft: Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence'," *English Language Notes* 26:4 (1989): 58–62.
33. Quoted from the draft of the poem in *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800–7*, p. 323; and from the note, on p. 126. For a composition history of the poem, including a reconstructed reading text of the "Leech-gatherer" draft, see Curtis, chapter 6 and appendix. Dorothy's journal entry is for October 3, 1800, nearly two years before the time of the poem's composition: see *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), 56–57.
34. See Harrison, 137, on the suppression of this less dignified and more dependent activity.
35. Charles Rzepka, "A Gift that Complicates Employ: Poetry and Poverty in 'Resolution and Independence,'" *SiR* 28:2 (1989): 225–47.
36. *Ibid.*, see esp. 244.
37. Harrison, 136–37.
38. Neil Freistat in *The Poem and the Book* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1983), 33–34, and Bromwich, 1, comment on the collection of drifters and alienated figures that populate *Lyrical Ballads*.
39. See Harrison, esp. 126. For other instances of such wandering in the *Prelude*, often specifically linked with poetry and/or individual solitude, see 1.1–115, 4.109–20 and 363–68, 5.581–90, and 12.137–42. On Wordsworth's tendency to compose while out walking, see *The Fenwick Notes*, 43. Other critics have also identified Wordsworth's poetic identity with wandering: see David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination* (N.Y.: Methuen, 1987), 48 and 125–26; John Lucas, *England and Englishness: Ideas of Nationhood in English Poetry, 1688–1800* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1990), 89; and David Collings, "A Vocation of Error: Authorship as Deviance in the 1799 Prelude," *Papers on Language and Literature* 29:2 (1993): 215–35.
40. *Fenwick Notes*, 79.
41. David Bromwich points out this tendency in *Disowned by Memory*, 15.
42. Brooke Hopkins, "Wordsworth's Voices: Ideology and Self-Critique in The Prelude," *SiR* 33:2 (1994): 279–99, 296–99.
43. Simpson, 113–21.
44. *Ibid.*, chapter 1, 22–55.
45. Neither the name of the poem nor the subtitle was determined by Wordsworth himself, but by his literary executors after his death: the poem during his life had no official title, but was generally known as "The Poem to Coleridge." See the introduction to *William Wordsworth: the Prelude*, ed. J.C. Maxwell (N.Y.: Penguin, 1971), 17.
46. Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998), 112; M.H. Abrams," The Prelude as a Portrait of the Artist," in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca: Cornell

Univ. Press, 1970), 180–237; Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, 811, and *Wordsworth and the Recluse*. See also Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 5, 240, 243.

47. Ashton Nichols, *The Revolutionary 'I': Wordsworth and the Politics of Self-Presentation* (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1998), 24. See also Johnston, *Wordsworth and the Recluse*, 98–99, on how the *Prelude* and *Recluse* projects tended to blur into one another.
48. See Sheila Kearns, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography: Reading Strategies of Self-Representation* (Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1995), chapter 4, 81–107, on how Wordsworth constructed his relationship to Coleridge in the poem. Nichols' *Revolutionary 'I'* explores how Wordsworth constructs his sense of autonomy out of a collection of various voices and discourses. Leon Waldoff, *Wordsworth in His Major Lyrics: the Art and Psychology of Self-Representation* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2001), focuses on Wordsworth's self-dramatization in his poems from a psychological and rhetorical rather than historical perspective. I will discuss Wordsworth's overall construction of "self" in his at more length in the following Epilogue.
49. See Kearns, chapters 2 and 3, 37–80; quoted from 21.
50. Charles Rzepka. *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986).
51. Kearns, 43–44. See also Mary Jacobus, *Romanticism, Writing, and Sexual Difference* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), who also calls attention to this echo (169) and discusses it in relation to the poem's (and poet's) role as an "echo chamber" for multiple poetic voices. Ashton Nichols, 56–57, similarly argues that Wordsworth's self in the *Prelude* is constructed out of multiple dialogic echoes even when the speaking voice claims to be unified.
52. On this temporal overlapping of the poem's multiple time frames, which many critics have pointed out, see for instance Kearns, 62–67; Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), chapters 5 and 6, 131–204; and Paul Jay, *Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Barthes* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), chapters 1 and 2, esp. 64–84.
53. See Mark Reed, "The Speaker of the Prelude," in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies*, ed. Wordsworth, 276–93. For another extended passage which uses the stream metaphor specifically to characterize the poem, see 7.1–13. For use of the metaphor to characterize the mind or self, see 1.274–77, 2.214–15, 5.180–84, 6.672–74, and 7.174–78. See also 10.908–15, where Wordsworth characterizes Dorothy as a companion brook. Passages with an ambiguous, dual sense include 4.110–11 and 13.365–66. Many of the passage cited above are ambiguous to some degree in their use of the metaphor, but this association emerges cumulatively. J. Douglas Kneale remarks on Wordsworth's tendency to represent voice and often poetic voice in particu-

lar in terms of stream imagery in *Monumental Writing: Aspects of Rhetoric in Wordsworth's Writing* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1988), 82. See for instance 4.110–11 in the *Prelude*, in which Wordsworth describes himself as reciting poetry during his walks as "like a river murmuring/ And talking to itself"; the Leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence," whose "voice is like a stream" (114); the River Duddon, "Attended but by thy own voice" (in 1807 *Poems*, 143); the stream in "The Seven Sisters" that "Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone/ For those seven lovely Campbells" (*Ibid.*, 99, lines 58–59); and the "delicious stream" of the poet's thoughts in another sonnet from the 1807 *Poems* (137). See also Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), 59–69, for an extended discussion of water imagery in the *Prelude*.

54. Wordsworth climbed Mount Snowdon in 1791, while the narrative of the poem goes up to the time he meets Coleridge and settles into a household with Dorothy in 1795 (the events in France run through about 1793).
55. Coleridge develops this account of the divine "I AM" as God's creative agency perpetually taking itself as its own Object in his ten "Theses" in the *Biographia Literaria*, eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), chapter 12, 1:264–94. He also mentions the divine "I AM" in his famous paragraph on the imagination, chapter 13, 1:304. Sheila Kearns comments on the analogy between Coleridge's theories and autobiographical self-production in chapter 7 of *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography*, 156–67, provocatively entitled "Perpetual Self-duplication." More generally, M.H. Abrams discusses the analogy between the author's presence in the text and God's presence in the created universe in *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), 272–85, and specifically in relation to the commercialization of the arts in *Doing Things With Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (N.Y.: Norton, 1989), esp. 153–57.
56. For other significant assertions in the *Prelude* of the necessity for individual autonomy, see 3.94–107, 184–89, 11.269–73, and 6.547 (where the mind is described as "strong in itself"). Lines 63–203 of book 13 are essentially a long fugue on the importance of this autonomy.
57. On the significance of revision for Wordsworth, including his obsessive revision of the *Prelude* as a way to retain control of his poetic identity, see Zachary Leader, *Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), chapter 1, 19–77; and Stephen Gill, "'Affinities Preserved': Poetic Self-Reference in Wordsworth," *SiR* 24:4 (1985): 531–49.
58. See Kearns, chapter 7, 156–67; Jay, esp. 87; and Lindenberger, esp. 156, 188.
59. See Kneale, esp. chapter 3; Ferguson, esp. chapter 5, 155–72; and Jacobus, esp. chapters 1 and 6, 3–32 and 159–83.

60. Susan Eilenberg, *Strange Powers of Speech: Wordsworth, Coleridge and Literary Possession* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), see chapter 6, esp. 205–9. See also my discussion of Wordsworth's relation to copyright in the previous chapter.
61. Rzepka, *Self as Mind*, 49 (see also 41–43), and Jay, 90–91. For other critics who have commented on the passage in relation to Wordsworth's autobiographical project, see the previous chapter, note (81).
62. Geoffrey Hartman, "Reading and Representation: Wordsworth's 'Boy of Winander'," *European Romantic Review* 5:1 (1994): 90–100; and Nichols, 2–21. See also Ferguson, 167–70.
63. Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, 120–21.
64. Probably the most rewarding satire is Lewis Carroll's comic poem, "The White-Knight's Song," from *Through the Looking-glass*.
65. Alan Grob uses the term "doppelgänger" in *The Philosophic Mind: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought and Poetry* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1973), 226. See also Peter Manning, "'My former thoughts returned': Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence,'" *The Wordsworth Circle* 9:4 (1978): 398–405, esp. 401–2; Dennis Grune, "Wordsworth's Wandering in 'Resolution and Independence,'" *CLA Journal* 35:3 (1992): 339–52, esp. 349–50; and G.S. Fraser, "Common Speech and Poetic Diction in Wordsworth," in *Tribute to Wordsworth*, eds. Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford (N.Y.: Wingate, 1950), 174. Geoffrey Hartman describes the poem in similar but less psychoanalytic terms as a "self-confrontation" in *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1814* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, rprt. 1987), 272.
66. Rzepka, "Gift that Complicates Employ"; Harrison, esp. 132–37; Kurt Heinzelman, *The Economics of the Imagination* (Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1980), 212–15.
67. *Ibid.*, 212.
68. Don Bialostosky, *Wordsworth, Dialogics, and the Practice of Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), chapter 5, 134–51; Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, chapter 1, 3–18.

NOTES TO EPILOGUE

1. Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), 79–85, explores the motif of the island in the *Prelude* as a metaphor for isolation. Other famous stranded mariners or islanded figures during the period include Cowper's "Alexander Selkirk," the deserted captain of Wordsworth's *Borderers*, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, the narrators of Shelley's *Alastor* and *Epipsychidion*, and Byron's Childe Harold, to name a few.
2. Shelley quoted from *The Complete Works of Shelley*, eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (N.Y.: Gordian Press, 1965), vol. 7, 116; Mill quoted from *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 1, *Autobiography and Literary Essays*,

eds. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1981), 349.

3. Raymond Williams anticipates this argument in *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), chapter 2, writing that a new attitude of "scorn" for the public first began to appear in poetry around this time (33).
4. Quoted from *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, eds. Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris Allott (N.Y.: Longman, 1979), "To Marguerite—Continued," lines 1, 4, and "The Buried Life," lines 36, 38–40.
5. Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), explores these testimonies, see esp. chapter 2, 40–80 (Mill quoted on 47).
6. *Ibid.* See esp. 20, on the new understanding of Wordsworth's isolation as a model of the inspired individual poet; and 92, on Wordsworth's relation to the streams of visitors who came to Rydal Mount.
7. On Wordsworth's literary portraits and the distribution of his image through engravings and other media, see Frances Blanchard, *Portraits of Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1959).
8. On the widespread anthologization of Wordsworth's poetry, see Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians*, 102–9. On Wordsworth's use in schools and incorporation into standard educational anthologies and curricula during the nineteenth century, see Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 261–68.
9. For these figures, see Clifford Siskin, "Wordsworth's Prescription: Romanticism and Professional Power," in *The Romantics and Us*, ed. Gene Ruoff (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990), 308. On nineteenth-century authorship, see also Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985).
10. See for instance Joshua Wilner, "'I speak of one from many singled out': Individuation, Singularity, and Agrammaticality in Wordsworth," in *Inventing the Individual,* ed. Larry Peer (Provo, Ut.: International Conference on Romanticism, 2002), 193–203, esp. 194–195. Other critics who make this point include Charles Rzepka, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), 68; Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 241; and Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 45–46.
11. On reviewers' responses, see my essay on "Wordsworth's 'System,' the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority," forthcoming in *European Romantic Review*.

12. Marilyn Butler in *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981) convincingly argues that even the later Romantics remained centrally occupied with political concerns (see esp. 85 and 143–54).
13. Quoted from *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978).
14. On this "long revolution" of modernity and its gradual transformation of British society, see for instance Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1966); Karl Polyani, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990); and Norbert Elias, *The Society of Individuals*, ed. Michael Schröter, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
15. J. Paul Hunter discusses the novel's association with individuality and its appeal to solitary readers in "'The Young, the Ignorant, and the Idle': Some Notes on Readers and the Beginnings of the English Novel," in *Anticipations of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany*, eds. Alan Charles Kors and Paul Korshin (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 259–82, and in *Before Novels: the Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (N.Y.: Norton, 1990). Deidre Shauna Lynch explores the novel's construction of "round" or "deep" characters as a model for identity in *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), arguing the Romantic era characters were the first that seemed to their readers to have a life and identity of their own beyond the text. For other perspectives on the construction of individual identity in the novel, see Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976); G. Gabrielle Starr, *Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004); and John Mullan, "Feelings and Novels," in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (N.Y.: Routledge, 1997), 119–31.
16. Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997).
17. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), for a wide-ranging discussion of many of the philosophical and ideological strands that have gone into the making of the modern self.

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