

ANCESTRAL VOICES: PHILOLOGICAL NATIONALISM IN THE BRITISH ROMANTIC
PERIOD

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The central goal of this project is to explore the intersection of thinking on language and nationalism in the British Romantic period. This exploration prompts a reevaluation of the intellectual heritage of the Romantic period, and also a reevaluation of the rise of philological nationalism in Britain, which has traditionally been assigned to the Victorian period. One of the great shifts brought by philology in the eighteenth century was to situate language in human history. The Enlightenment reduced long-enshrined institutions such as monarchy, religion, and language to human constructions subject to change. The language theory emerging from this framework was concerned with exploring the human origins and progress of language, and it suggested to the Romantics interest in native language in Britain. This new paradigm fostered the imagination of national identity based upon shared cultural history, in the particular form of language.

This study draws upon primary philological texts from the eighteenth century, and considers their influence on writers in the British Romantic period. This consideration finds William Wordsworth using early philology as a framework within which to negotiate his senses of homelessness and failed revolutionary hopes. I also trace Walter Scott's concern with distinguishing between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon roots in Scotland's cultural and linguistic heritage, and find him attempting to reify Scottish history through what we may call philological reconstruction. Looking at another novelist, I argue that Mary Shelley, with *Frankenstein*, offers a sharp critique of how the manipulation of meaning creates chaos in societal institutions in the age of nationalism. Turning back to poetry, I suggest that John Keats engages -- over the course of several poems and letters -- in a critical negotiation of different modes of cultural

identification, from religion, to Hellenism, to what he considers 'pure English.'

Underlying a shift in cultural concepts of identification is the premise that such concepts are subject to being shifted. This premise of a malleability of cultural identification in general becomes a persistent feature of philological nationalism in British Romantic period writing. While emphasis on mutability brought the possibility of meaningful cultural redefinition, it also meant that meaning could be manipulated, or could prove elusive. In the writing of the British Romantic period that this study explores, the negotiation of cultural identity through language, while valued and valuable, is often tenuous, and the resultant form of nationalism is highly malleable.

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While my journey in British Romanticism began at Saint Martin's University, my journey

in college began two years before Saint Martin's, at Lassen Community College. I went to Lassen to play baseball, and the coaching staff there – especially Glen Yonan, John Deal, and Carl Johnson – shaped a homesick kid into a man who could face any challenge. Completing a dissertation is a lonely and daunting task, before which many brilliant people quail. I could never have done this without what I learned in the Lassen baseball program.

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Introduction

I. “antient opinions”

In the Advertisement to his 1816 novel *The Antiquary*, Walter Scott says that in the present work, as in *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*, he has “sought my principal personages in the class of society who are the last to feel the influence of that general polish which assimilates to each other the manners of different nations” (3). Scott does this because “the lower orders are less restrained by the habit of suppressing their feelings, and because I agree with Mr Wordsworth, that they seldom fail to express them in the strongest and most powerful language” (3). Scott’s reference is to Wordsworth’s thoughts on language in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – to Wordsworth’s repeated conviction in the vigorous, natural quality of the language of rustics. This reference is a gesture toward the specific antiquarian field of philology, which we soon learn is central to *The Antiquary*. Scott also says, speaking of the peasantry of Scotland, “The antique force and simplicity of their language often tinged with the oriental eloquence of Scripture, in the mouths of those of an elevated understanding, give pathos to their grief, and dignity to their resentment” (3). When we consider these thoughts on language along with the chronological setting of the novel – 1794 – something of a puzzle emerges; why, we might ask, does a novel written on the heels of Waterloo (1816) and set amidst fears of French invasion (1794), take interest in the assimilation of manners of different nations, and speak of language’s power to somehow negotiate grief and resentment? In short, what is philology doing at this crucial point near the beginning of the Romantic period?

These questions suggest that philology was closely associated with nationalism in the period, and that the phenomenon would be integrally associated with the sort of peril Britons felt in 1794. The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century is the time during which modern philology emerges, and scholars have also typically located the rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century. However, philology's influence on literature of the Romantic period has received little critical attention, and thus scholars have typically not recognized an intersection of philology and nationalism in British literature until the Victorian period. The Victorian period did witness the undertaking of the Oxford English Dictionary, and the prevailing attitude about English was perhaps best expressed by Richard Chenevix Trench: "It would be difficult not to believe...that great things are in store for the one language of Europe which thus serves as connecting link between the North and South, between the languages spoken by the Teutonic nations of the North and by the Romance nations of the South" (37); or, in the words of Thomas Watts, Victorians envisioned "the world...circled by the accents of Shakespeare and Milton" (212). Language imagined thus was a manifestation of imperialism – one more means to further the empire's march.¹

Philology and nationalism in Britain looked much different in the eighteenth century – both were just beginning, and the ways in which they intersected manifest this difference. As the frame to *The Antiquary* suggests, philology had more to do with negotiating a time of upheaval than it did with growing the empire. As I will be demonstrating in the pages and chapters that follow, the language theory available to the Romantics brought to the fore interest in native

1. For a more extensive discussion of Victorian philology, see Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780-1860*, or Franklin Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750-1900*.

language in Britain and was concerned with exploring the human origins and progress of language, and this collective mode of reconstructing the past was just coming to serve the purpose of defining the present. Understanding philology and nationalism as closely-related discourses emerging from the Enlightenment and making great landfall in Romantic period thought allows us to recognize how early philology offered an alternative to traditional ways of defining identity and community that had recently come under pressure from the Enlightenment. In the wake of that pressure, for William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, Mary Shelley, and John Keats, interest in philology became a way to help define national identity and community.

When scholarship on Romanticism overlooks the prevailing language theory of the period, it is overlooking the period in the study of language during which the discipline evolves into the science as which we know it today. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* drastically eroded traditional notions of a divine origin of language. Following Locke, the philology of Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hugh Blair, and Johann Gottfried Herder, among others, further theorized about the human origin and progress of language. In 1786, John Horne Tooke published the first volume of his vastly influential *Diversions of Purley*. By 1819, we had Grimm's Law.

Though Jacob Grimm published his landmark *German Grammar* in 1819, Tooke's *Diversions* remained the most authoritative philological work during the Romantic period, and this philology was notable for, among other things, its interest in Anglo-Saxon. Tooke included in the *Diversions*, particularly in Part One, a wealth of Anglo-Saxon etymologies. In Part Two, he produced Anglo-Saxon and Meso-Gothic alphabets, based upon the conviction that

Englishmen ought to be steeped in their mother-tongue. “I presume,” Tooke says, “my readers to be acquainted with French, Latin, Italian, and Greek: which are unfortunately the usual boundaries of an English scholar’s acquisition” (1: 99). But including the parent alphabets, Tooke hopes, will “thus lead the way to [my readers’] better acquaintance with the parent language, which ought long ago to have made a part of the education of our youth” (1: 99).

Tooke’s sentiments about Anglo-Saxon were explicitly picked up by the influential intellectual William Hazlitt. Hazlitt’s *New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue* (1809) is profoundly indebted to Tooke, with Hazlitt’s section on etymology borrowed almost entirely from *The Diversions of Purley*. And Hazlitt was not ambiguous about his borrowings and indebtedness, saying in the Preface that *The Diversions* represented to him “a very important change in the theory of language” (5), particularly in the area of Anglo-Saxon, and footnoting Tooke extensively in the Preface and throughout the *Grammar*. Hazlitt’s own reason for producing his *Grammar* was out of a love of his mother-tongue, as he says in the Preface that “there has hitherto been no such thing as a real English Grammar. Those which we have are little else than translations of the Latin Grammar into English...The following is an attempt to explain the principles of the English language, such as it really is” (5). Hazlitt also laments the state of attention to his native tongue in *The Spirit of the Age*, saying that “[Lindley Murray] very formally translates the Latin Grammar into English (as so many had done before him) and fancies he has written an English Grammar; and divines applaud, and schoolmasters usher him into the polite world, and English scholars carry on the jest, while Horne Tooke’s genuine anatomy of our native tongue is laid on the shelf” (128).

Also an explicit follower of Tooke, Maria Edgeworth relied upon his authority in the

Glossary to her novel *Castle Rackrent*, writing in the second entry of the Glossary,

The phrase, *let alone*, which is now used as the imperative of a verb, may in time become a conjunction, and may exercise the ingenuity of some future etymologist. The celebrated Horne Tooke has proved most satisfactorily, that the conjunction *but* comes from the imperative of the Anglo-Saxon verb (*bouant*) *to be out*; also that *if* comes from *gift*, the imperative of the Anglo-Saxon verb which signifies *to give* &c. (123)

Edgeworth's interest in Tooke and Anglo-Saxon may seem somewhat ironic, since she wrote the Glossary to *Castle Rackrent* to help readers with the prominent Irish idiom in a novel that explores Irish nationalism and English imperialism. But Marilyn Butler suggests, in her Introduction to the novel, that Edgeworth's political interests are, in principle, the same as Tooke's, saying about the debate over the legitimacy of low-brow language and culture:

A novel published in dialect in 1800 enters this debate, inevitably on the popular side. Popular rhetorical positions already familiar to contemporaries include a taste for vulgar domestic history - of the kind declared by the Preface from its opening sentence, and borne out in the Glossary, again virtually from the outset, when the second note declares its unabashed reliance on Tooke as an authority. (27)

The Irish Edgeworth's interest in Tooke is significant because, as Butler suggests, the philosophical underpinnings of Tooke's work -- not just the Anglo-Saxon, in specific -- had nationalistic valence that was more broadly radical valence. These radically potent philosophical underpinnings that foregrounded "vulgar domestic history" were built upon the espousal of two common (and closely-related) tenets of early philology, both of which challenged traditional concepts of linguistic authority: arbitrary signification, and language decline.

Arbitrary signification is essentially Locke's theory of the relationship between things, thoughts (or ideas), and words. This theory, espoused also by Condillac, Rousseau, Herder, and Blair, holds that there is not, in modern language, any inherent connection between words and

things – between the word ‘tree,’ and an actual tree, for instance. Beyond the handful of words in a language that are imitative, ideas are motivated by empirical perception, but words are the signs of ideas, not of things. For Tooke specifically, “The business of the mind, as far as it concerns Language, appears to me to be very simple. It extends no further than to receive impressions, that is, to have Sensations or Feelings. What are called its operations, are merely the operations of Language” (1: 49). Tooke believed that Locke came to perceive that language and understanding were inseparable, and that if Locke had sooner come to this perception, he, in Tooke’s words, “would not have talked of the *composition of ideas*; but would have seen it merely as a contrivance of Language: and that the only composition was in *terms*” (1: 35-36). Similarly, Herder’s formulation, in his prize-winning *Essay on the Origin of Language* (1772), runs thus: “Given that the human understanding could not operate without employing a word-symbol - as we were anxious to prove - it must follow that the first moment of conscious awareness also occasioned the first internal emergence of language” (154); and, a few pages later, “Hence all processes of the mind of which we are consciously aware involve the use of language. The former is indeed inconceivable without the latter” (157). What we see here from Tooke and Herder is a philological expression of Enlightenment materialism. Thought is rooted in sensation, and the operation of thought is inherently linguistic. As I explore in the pages that follow, the tenet of arbitrary signification means that language is shaped by -- and therefore belongs to -- people -- specifically, diverse cultural groups of people.

A closely related tenet of early philology -- that of language decline -- holds that primitive language would have possessed more vitality than modern language. For instance, Condillac, in his *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1746), argues that language would

have begun with the perception of a physical need (by an anonymous hypothetical couple of primitive humans), hunger being the example that he gives. Upon perceiving a tree laden with fruit, a natural cry would have resulted. In time, “the cries of the passions contributed to the development of the operations of the mind by naturally originating the language of action, a language which in its early stages, conforming to the level of this couple’s limited intelligence, consisted of mere contortions and agitated bodily movements. Nevertheless, when they had acquired the habit of connecting some ideas to arbitrary signs, the natural cries served as a model for them to make a new language” (115-116). We see the same conviction of primitive language being rooted in empirical perception and physical sensation in Blair, and Blair carries the principle a step further, in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), asserting, “Poetry, however, in its ancient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion, it owed its birth. Prompted and inspired by objects, which to him seemed great, by events which interested his country or his friends, the early Bard arose and sung” (322). Similarly, Jean-Jacques Rousseau says, in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (1781) that “by a natural progress all lettered languages must change character and lose vigor as they gain in clarity” (258). All of these figures point to ancient or primitive poetry and language being more lively, and being so by virtue of being more rooted in sensation.

It is worth pausing at this point to note the relationship between early philology and other more widely-discussed eighteenth-century primitivist phenomena. Rousseau's work on language origins is closely related to his Natural Man philosophy, both exploring human origins, and both

relevant to *Frankenstein*, as I will later discuss. Blair links us to the Ballad Revival. The year 1765 witnesses the publication both of MacPherson's *Ossian* poems and of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The discourse of primitivism encompassing MacPherson and Percy goes hand in hand, as ways to imagine cultural pasts, with early philology. Percy is a key interlocutor in the Pictish Question, the philological debate concerning Scotland's ethnic and linguistic heritage, which, I will later argue, is central to *The Antiquary*. The leading Ossian apologist of the day, whose *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* appeared in the 1765 edition of the poems, was none other than Hugh Blair. This broader perspective helps shed light on how, for Blair, looking into a language's history to a time of greater linguistic vitality could generate nationalistic imaginings, with his example of the naturally impassioned "early Bard" arising to sing of matters that concerned his country.

Herder's philology moves in a similar theoretical direction. Herder posits that "we associate the strongest sentiments with our native language" (163). Similarly, when talking about the sensory connections that lie at the roots of words, Herder says, "these connections are so intensely national, engendered according to the peculiar disposition and viewpoint of a people and conditioned by the time and circumstances of a country" (148). To the prospect of putting together an etymological dictionary, Herder says, "How much learning and adaptability of mind are necessary to enter into the primitive intellect, the daring imagination, the national feelings of distant ages, and to render them in our own idiom. Such an undertaking would light a torch and illuminate not only the history, the mode of thought and the literature of the country, but also those dark regions of the human mind where ideas cross and intermingle, where the most diverse feelings generate one another, where times of need rouse all the powers of the mind and test its

inventive ability to the full” (148). And just as boldly, Herder later says, “By means of language [a child] is able to enter into communion with the way of thinking and feeling of his progenitors, to take part, as it were, in the workings of the ancestral mind” (163). Seeking the roots of the native tongue, for Herder, is a way to “enter into the primitive intellect...the national feelings of distant ages.”

This tendency to respond to the doctrine of language decline with nationalistic imaginings is manifested in a contemporaneously radical way in Tooke. Tooke greatly expands on Rousseau’s notion of language gaining in clarity, as the most salient conviction of the *Diversions* is that language’s purpose is to communicate thoughts with dispatch, thus the full title of the work: *Epea Ptereonta*, meaning winged words, referring to the swift messenger Hermes. But Tooke still holds that language becomes dangerously abstract in the process of becoming thrifty. Tooke thus aptly demonstrates the point of connection between the tenets of arbitrary signification and language decline. If the closest language gets to ‘things’ is the fact that ideas are motivated by empirical perception, and words are the signs of ideas, what we have is a process toward abstraction. The less sense-bound language is, the more abstract it is. Interest in primitive language follows from the conviction that if primitive language is more sensuous, it is less abstract.

Abstraction, for Tooke, was a great source of societal discord. In Part One of the *Diversions*, Tooke says that “mankind in general are not sufficiently aware that words without meaning, or of equivocal meaning, are the everlasting engines of fraud and injustice” (1: 75). And getting more specific in Part Two, he says about abstractions, “These words, the Participles and Adjectives, not understood as such, have caused a metaphysical jargon and a false morality,

which can only be examined by etymology” (2: 18). Attention to etymology – which for his audience means interest in Anglo-Saxon – is necessary to brook the perils of abstract modern language. Thinking becomes dangerously empty without attention to the roots of one’s native tongue.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that we ought to wonder why Scott views language as a locus for the negotiation of national conflict in the tumultuous 1790s. We have seen Blair, Herder, and Tooke begin to speak to this question with their philological theories. In particular, with his assertions about the importance of etymology, Tooke brings two key tenets of early philology -- arbitrary signification, and language decline -- to a socially radical point that resonates strongly with some of the ways that scholars have defined the rise of nationalism in general. Eric Hobsbawm has succinctly said, "Nationalism, like so many other characteristics of the modern world, is the child of the dual revolution" (145), speaking of the era framed by the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. I have already suggested that there is a substantial amount of agreement that nationalism as we know it today emerges in the eighteenth century. Different scholars have pointed to various factors, from the spread of capitalism, to industrialization, to seemingly perpetual war between Britain and France. My suggestion in thinking about the specific phenomenon of philological nationalism is that the Enlightenment is particularly relevant. In surveying some early philology, we might already be asking why Herder, and Blair, and Tooke would build upon the work of Locke with a nationalistic bent. Scholarship on nationalism in general is especially useful here.

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge that the eighteenth century is not the first time that British people consider themselves Britons. There is an appreciable difference, though,

between what we call nationalism and other sorts of identification via a political body prior to the age of nationalism. As Ernest Gellner explains in *Nations and Nationalism*, "The great, but valid, paradox is this: nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way around. It is not the case that the 'age of nationalism' is a mere summation of the awakening and political self-assertion of this, that, or the other nation" (55). Gellner's theory is important because it makes the movement of nationalism more than a mere symptom observable at any time in any place. In contrast to what we see in the age of nationalism, we may find, in seventeenth-century Britain, say, professed loyalty to the crown, but this is an entirely different concept than that which develops in the eighteenth century, and both Gellner and Benedict Anderson point to the significance of the changes brought by the Enlightenment.

Elaborating upon Hobsbawm's assertion that nationalism is "the child of the dual revolution," Anderson says that "the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" (7). Specifically, Anderson points to two institutions that came under extreme pressure in the eighteenth century: religion and monarchy. As Anderson proceeds to say, "fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds" (36). Among these conceptions were "the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth," and "the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres -- monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation" (36). Anderson pointing to the eighteenth-century pressure exerted on these

institutions -- religion and monarchy (and, in the case of the British aristocracy, oligarchy) -- calls Edmund Burke to mind.

In *Reflections on the Revolutions in France*, Burke laments that, according to the Enlightenment thought responsible for the Revolution – what he calls “this new conquering empire of light and reason” (126) – “a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman...Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity” (126). Further elaborating what is at stake, Burke continues, “Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion” (127). Burke identifies the very two pillars that I highlight in Benedict Anderson’s theory – monarchy and religion – as the key institutions imperiled by the Revolution. Burke’s pairings of regicide and sacrilege, and of “the spirit of the gentleman” and “the spirit of religion,” evince his conviction that both have been forces for organizing society heretofore.

“When antient opinions and rules of life are taken away,” Burke says, “the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer” (127). Burke’s prognostication formulated as a question would run thus: in light of some of the changes of Enlightenment and Revolution -- in particular, secularization and democratization -- what, henceforth, will Britain’s concept of community be? The answer will be the concept of nation, based upon shared culture.

When we proceed to consider the bases of shared culture, Gellner offers a succinct primer when he suggests, “an at least provisionally acceptable criterion of culture might be language”

(42). Concerning the secularization brought by the Enlightenment, the link between secularization and language has been summed up by Anderson thus: “if the sacred silent languages were the media through which the great global communities of the past were imagined, the reality of such apparitions depended on an idea largely foreign to the contemporary Western mind: the non-arbitrariness of the sign” (14). Of course, the successor to the concept of a language of divine origin, with non-arbitrary signs, is early philology, with its doctrine of arbitrary signification. The reality growing in the eighteenth century was that “the old sacred languages – Latin, Greek, and Hebrew – were forced to mingle on equal ontological footing with a motley plebeian crowd of vernacular rivals” (70). The significance of this was that if “all languages now shared a common (intra-)mundane status, then all were in principle equally worthy of study and admiration. But by who? Logically, since now none belonged to God, by their new owners: each language’s native speakers” (70-71). When talking about Enlightenment secularization in general, it is worth noting Emile Durkheim's maxim that, from the very beginning, “religion [was] something eminently social” (11); or, in Gellner's words: “Durkheim taught that in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image. In a nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage” (55). If religion had always been a tool for societal organization (if not self-adoration), then it is not as if the need satisfied by religion disappears with Enlightenment secularization.² It is thus perhaps easier to understand how language rooted in human history would quickly be appropriated nationalistically.

2. Jose Casanova has also argued that just as the division between the sacred and the profane was never as absolute as Durkheim believed it to be in primitive cultures, Enlightenment secularization was not absolute and uncomplicated. See *Public Religions in the Modern World*.

The shift described generally by Anderson has been characterized specifically by Linda Dowling, in *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siecle*, as "the relocation of the divine Logos within the boundaries of human history" (15). Dowling argues that Herder's philology is manifested in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's philosophical writings, but she does little more accounting of this philological phenomenon in Romantic literature, tracing, instead, the manifestations of the phenomenon in Victorian literature. In scholarship that does focus on early philology's impact on Romantic literature, early philology's relationship to nationalism has remained underexplored. William Keach, in *Arbitrary Power: Romanticism, Language, Politics*, has offered the valuable general argument that "Romantic theories of linguistic agency, practice, and institution...[were] deeply implicated...in defining social changes and conflicts" (ix). Other arguments tend to focus on class. For instance, Olivia Smith, in *The Politics of Language 1791-1819*, argues "that late eighteenth-century theories of language were centrally and explicitly concerned with class division" (viii), and, similarly, in *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature*, Richard Marggraf Turley is primarily interested in class warfare in the form of "a national debate over literary taste, propriety, and cultural agency" (xi). Coming from another direction, Katie Trumpener, in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, focuses on "the literary and intellectual history of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Britain's overseas colonies during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to redraw our picture of the origins of cultural nationalism" (xi). But specifically, Trumpener's argument is that "in Scotland and Ireland, a nationalist and traditionalist worldview takes shape from antiquarian reactions to Enlightenment programs for economic improvement, read as a form of political and cultural imperialism" (xi). With Trumpener's focus being on the relationship between the center

of the British empire and its peripheral elements, antiquarian movements become less the impetus for nationalism than a response to other components of the Enlightenment.³

Scholarship's tendency to miss the development of philological nationalism in British literature as early as the Romantic period, or to focus an argument about nationalism primarily on elements of the Enlightenment other than early philology, is understandable. The reception of comparative philology in Britain was significantly delayed. The Victorian period – where philological nationalism is traditionally placed – witnesses the landfall of Rask, Grimm, and Bopp, and then the landmark undertaking of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁴ Though Rask and

3. Another interesting perspective on nationalism and empire is Yoon Sun Lee's, in *Nationalism and Irony: Burke, Scott, Carlyle*. Lee argues that "One of Romantic nationalism's achievements...was the rediscovery of irony's civic potential" (5). Inflected by class disparity and imperial expansion, Lee continues, "Irony could acknowledge the anomalies of Britain's identity, structure, and relation to its own past. Most significantly, it could at this moment not only inflect the expression but also license the experience of particular types of feeling beneficial to the state. A nationalism allied with irony could speak to those left unmoved by ideologies that took for granted spontaneous, deep attachment to a whole that was unproblematically given" (5). While works like *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* are certainly tasked with somehow negotiating a civic whole, with the British empire looming over everything, the ostensible enemy in *The Antiquary* is France.

4. Arguments about periodization itself also offer an interesting perspective on philological nationalism's traditional assignment in the Victorian period. Ted Underwood has pointed out, in *Why Literary Periods Mattered: Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies*, "In the late 1820s, when colleges began to hire the first professors of English Language and Literature, the rationale for studying literature was still primarily that it made students better writers" (86). And in order for students to write well, Underwood continues, "the notion had taken root that students needed to understand the progressive development of language and literature" (86). Underwood suggests that this notion was founded in large part on the prominence of the early philology revolving primarily around Tooke. By the 1830s, as Franklin Court puts it in *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750-1900*, "Literature came to be taken as a symbolic index to history. It served the need to find in the past traditional precedents that made current conceptions of progress and politics congruent with growing ideals of English nationalism" (87). So, by the 1830s, early philology was, through its role in the institutionalization of the periodized chronological study of literature, strongly nationalistic. My suggestion is that since this quality becomes pronounced in universities in the 1830s -- not in the first two decades of the century -- it is perhaps another component of the

Grimm are published in the heart of the second generation of the Romantic period – Rask’s *Grammar of the Icelandic or Old Norse Tongue* in 1811, Grimm’s *German Grammar* in 1819 – they are not reviewed in English and known with any prevalence in Britain until after 1830. Hans Aarsleff has argued that John Horne Tooke’s reputation in Britain is what delays the reception of Grimm and company.

Richard Turley has also discussed the delayed reception of Grimm, arguing that a sort of xenophobia is largely responsible: “theories of history amounted to ways of asserting ownership over – or at least of negotiating an agreeable relationship with – the past. Few wanted a German to determine this for them, particularly given that by the 1830’s, the study of language and linguistic history had become powerfully intertwined with the nineteenth century’s sense of itself” (132). Turley goes on to argue that, ironically, this attitude toward Grimm’s work shifts in the 1830’s to the point where Grimm’s work has “one important quality to recommend it to British scholars. Read in a certain way, it seemed to offer a means of navigating the *impasse* of traditional linguistic genealogies that had favoured Latin and Greek over English” (133). Grimm’s work “allowed for the dismantling of myths of Latin and Greek as linguistic patriarchs, while simultaneously adhering to the terms of the older, pre-morphological study in order to reappraise northern tongues such as English more favourably” (134). This (sound) reasoning moves Turley to relate Grimm to “a fundamental shift that occurred in popular and scholarly perceptions of language in Britain in the 1830’s and early 1840’s, when the status of English – a fundamental Romantic dilemma – changed unambiguously from that of poor cousin to Latin and

explanation for why philological nationalism is not traditionally recognized in the Romantic period.

Greek, to equal sibling with the classical tongues” (132). Turley is quite right that some sort of elevation of Germanic tongues to equal status with Greek and Latin is requisite for the fundamental shift toward linguistic nationalism to begin, but it is my contention that such an elevation begins before the 1830’s; such a shift, I suggest, is initiated in large part by the man whom Aarsleff credits with delaying Grimm’s reception in Britain: John Horne Tooke.

II. “Ancestral voices”

Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" provides an interesting example of what this Romantic period shift could look like. I subtitle the first part of this chapter "antient opinions" because Edmund Burke's fears were representative and accurate. The eighteenth century did witness a shift away from cultural concepts of identification that had been enshrined as inherently valid and necessary institutions for centuries. One thing that the Enlightenment did was reduce these institutions to things more like matters of opinion, subject to challenge and change. My argument is that a then emergent basis for cultural identification was something also historical: the findings of early philology, or what Coleridge would characterize as "ancestral voices."

To begin with, we can find Coleridge being interested not only in a Herderian shift of "the divine Logos" to human history; Coleridge was keenly interested in Tooke’s *Diversions*, wrestling with the tenet of arbitrary signification. In a now oft-quoted letter to William Godwin in September 1800, Coleridge takes on Tooke’s *Diversions*, saying,

I wish you to write a book on the power of words, and the processes by which human feelings form affinities with them – in short, I wish you to *philosophize* Horn Tooke’s System, and to solve the great Questions – whether there be reason to hold, that an action bearing all the *semblance* of predesigning Consciousness

may yet be simply organic, & whether a *series* of such actions are possible – and close on the heels of this question would follow the old ‘Is Logic the *Essence* of Thinking?’ in other words – Is *Thinking* impossible without arbitrary signs? & -- how far is the word ‘arbitrary’ a misnomer? Are not words &c parts & germinations of the Plant? And what is the Law of their growth? – In something of this order I would endeavor to destroy the old antithesis of *Words & Things*, elevating, as it were, words into Things, & living Things Too. (1: 625-6)

Though Coleridge is clearly dismayed by the arbitrariness suggested by Tooke, his objection does not consist of an insistence on a divine origin of language. James McKusick, in *Coleridge's Philosophy of Language*, characterizes Coleridge's position thus: “if, as Coleridge suggests, words are themselves things – elements, that is, of an organized structure that imposes mental categories on the external world – then the received notion of linguistic arbitrariness is in error. Words may be arbitrary in the Lockean sense while still retaining, by virtue of their participation in a synchronic system, a correspondence with nature (conceived as an objective order)” (42). McKusick also falls back upon a notebook entry in which Coleridge says about a proposed essay in defense of punning, “any harmony in the things symbolized will perforce be presented to us more easily as well as with additional beauty by a correspondent harmony of the Symbols with each other” (3: #3762). I would strongly echo McKusick's point that “Coleridge's doctrine of harmony is not very fully worked out” (42), but the developing – as opposed to developed – nature of Coleridge's philology is in keeping with Romantic philology in general. What is most important to take away from Coleridge's thoughts is the impulse to try to create something that would in some way reproduce a less arbitrary and more vital linguistic register, like that theorized to exist in the primitive state of one's native tongue.

McKusick points out how familiar Coleridge is with historical philology, and with Herder's work in particular, asserting that “the more closely Coleridge read Herder, the less he

liked him” (57). McKusick argues that, put off by Herder’s criticism of Kant, Coleridge opted to espouse a transcendental perspective rather than an historical one. While much of Coleridge’s work recommends itself to this summation, some very prominent work of his – the poem “Kubla Khan” in particular – reads as something much more like a mingling of his Tooke-motivated theory of philological harmony and Herderian formulation for which Linda Dowling argues.

Coleridge frames “Kubla Khan” with an authorial note that bears traces of his Tooke-inspired philology:

The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. (439)

Coleridge speaking of “things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions,” sounds much like his philological theory of harmony in which correspondent words (or expressions) become things. The overall issue, of course, is the desire to avoid a modern state of linguistic fragmentedness, and the man come on business from Porlock – representing civilized, which is to say relatively unnatural, modern society – creates disruption.

In spite of the spatial and chronological complexities in the poem itself, we can, from the outset, discern at least two distinct, salient forces: relatively modern construction, and natural vitality. We have modern construction in the form of Kubla himself decreeing a “stately pleasure-dome” (2), and with the girdling of the fertile ground with walls and towers. And we have natural vitality in the “deep romantic chasm” (12), “A savage place” (14) from which the “sacred river” (24) is forced in the form of a “mighty fountain” (19). In the first stanza of the poem, the modern construction and the natural vitality seem to be antithetical, as the towered

walls are built to enclose the fecund natural landscape. And the constructs have a philological overtone, as it is a “decree” that incites the construction.

Matching the stately decreeing described in the first stanza is the meter in which it is described. The first four lines are perfectly measured in iambs, tightly controlled – indeed, “stately.” This controlled stateliness sets up a sharp contrast with the driving trochaic meter of the “chasm,” and “ceaseless, turmoil seething” (17). The meter is further unleashed in the following line when we are told that it is if the earth in “fast, thick, pants were breathing” (18). “Pants” completes a trifecta of stresses, being the first foot of two concluding trochees that follow a spondee.

The entire poem is conspicuously sensuous, loaded with alliteration. In the first stanza, we have “Kubla Khan” (1), the “pleasure-dome decree” (2), the “river, ran” (3), the “caverns measureless to man” (4), a “sunless sea” (5), “twice five miles of fertile ground” (6), and “sunny spots of greenery” (11). In the second stanza, we are told of the “woman wailing” (16), “ceaseless turmoil seething” (17), a “mighty fountain...momently forced” (19), and the sacred river “Five miles meandering with a mazy motion” (27). In the third stanza, there is the “mingled measure” of the fountain and caves (33), the “damsel with a dulcimer” (37), “her symphony and song” (43), “deep delight” (44), “music loud and long” (45), and finally the poet’s “flashing eyes [and] floating hair” (50). Besides the all the alliteration, there is assonance in abundance throughout the poem. We have “Xanadu did Kubla” highlighting the ‘u’ sounds in the first line, the ‘a’ sounds of “ran / through caverns measureless to man” (3-4), “twice five miles” (6), the ‘a’ sounds in “chasm which slanted” (12), “ceaseless...seething” (17), “fast...pants” (18), the ‘i’ sounds of “Amid whose swift half-intermitted” (20), and “midway on the waves”

(32).

The unleashing of metrical stress and sensuousness in language is in sync with the thematic thrust of the poem. There is a “deep romantic chasm” that lies beneath the modern construction of Kubla Khan – a holy force of natural vitality that flings up the sacred river. And once the sacred river is flung up, in its tumult of sound, Kubla hears “Ancestral voices prophesying war!” (30). On the whole, we have a poem attempting to both discuss and linguistically enact tapping into holy natural vitality accompanied by “Ancestral voices,” which beg to be read as Tookean or Herderian native language. Coleridge suggests a breaking free of the decreeing of a Khan, which calls to mind monarchical rule. The “Ancestral voices prophesying war” sound like a (violent) revolution that will give way to a new concept of community rooted in native language. And we see punctuating this movement, throughout the entire poem, and particularly in the final stanza – with its vision of the damsel with the dulcimer, and Coleridge’s idea that reviving within him her symphony and song would amount to feeding on honey-dew and drinking the milk of paradise – the continuation of a philological engagement with notions of sacredness or holiness. This engagement is not a simple espousal of pre-Enlightenment religious community; Coleridge seems to be confronting the erosion of the non-arbitrary sign by Lockean materialism. The solution is not a divine origin of language; the solution, rather, is a view of language that embraces as tightly as possible a rootedness in natural vitality. Coleridge seems to wish to avoid modern fragmentation with the right kind of expression. He seems to have been attuned to the etymology of the word ‘holiness’: ‘wholeness.’

In this brief reading, "Kubla Khan" seems to enact a resistance to traditional political

organization in society, based upon epistemological fragmentation in that model of organization. As an alternative, Coleridge seems to suggest native language as a carrier for a new (and more meaningful) sense of cultural identity. Underlying a shift in cultural concepts of identification is the premise that such concepts are subject to being shifted. In the chapters that follow, this premise of a malleability of cultural identification in general also becomes a persistent feature of philological nationalism in specific. To William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, Mary Shelley, and John Keats, early philology appealed as a new mode of cultural identification. In this philological nationalism, though, one of the things consistently at issue is how meaning and identity could be manipulated, or could prove elusive.

In Chapter One, I extensively survey reviews of Wordsworth's work alongside his own writings on language. I suggest that this collective discourse, which borrows heavily from early philology, serves as a framework for understanding Wordsworth's senses of homelessness and failed revolutionary hopes. Emerging in some of his wartime sonnets and in passages late in *The Prelude*, I argue, is a highly intellectualized sense of national identity: a philological nationalism. In so doing, I challenge traditional prominent readings of radicalism, resignation, and sublimation in Wordsworth.

In Chapter Two, I shift focus to a periphery of the British empire. I call attention to Walter Scott's keen interest in the philological discourse known as the Pictish Question, which was unabashedly concerned with distinguishing between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon roots in Scotland's cultural and linguistic heritage. Engagement with the Pictish Question is ubiquitous in Scott's novel *The Antiquary*, and I argue that the novel is simultaneously concerned with repelling what amounts to Germanic linguistic invasion, and with reifying Scottish history

through what we may call philological reconstruction. In this process, Scott subtly wrestles with the viability of such historical inquiry.

In Chapter Three, while acknowledging the influence that Jean-Jacques Rousseau has on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, I demonstrate how profoundly the novel is shaped by the philology of John Horne Tooke. Dramatizing the new ontological and epistemological models brought by the Enlightenment -- and specifically dramatizing the doctrine arbitrary signification -- *Frankenstein* offers a sharp critique of how the manipulation of meaning creates societal chaos. With this chaos following the Creature over much of western Europe, I argue that Shelley offers a unique general commentary on the definition of social institutions in the age of nationalism.

In Chapter Four, I argue that John Keats's letters and poetry are significantly influenced by early philology. In this framework, Keats engages -- over the course of several poems and letters -- in a critical negotiation of different modes of cultural identification, from religion, to Elizabethanism, to Hellenism. Challenging traditional readings of "To Autumn," I argue that Keats casts off what he comes to view as affectation in earlier (Hellenistic) odes in favor of what he considers 'pure English.' In so doing, Keats engages in a nationalistic philological shift much like that which I have traced in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan."

In the cases of Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley, and Keats, we see early philology serving as a means for negotiating cultural identification and meaning. This negotiation is often tenuous, and the resultant form of nationalism is highly malleable. In these ways, philological nationalism looks different in the Romantic period than it does in the Victorian period. A point worth emphasizing is William Hazlitt's characterization of John Horne Tooke, in *The Spirit of the Age*, as "one of those who may be considered connecting links between a former period and the

existing generation” (105). This study suggests that Tooke and other key figures in early philology force us to continue to reevaluate the intellectual heritage of the Romantic period, as they constitute a powerful link to some of the Enlightenment thinking of earlier in the eighteenth century. At the same time, the Romantics’ engagement with this early philology also prompts a reassessment of the rise of a phenomenon – philological nationalism – that has traditionally been assigned to beyond the other boundary of the period.

Chapter One: William Wordsworth and the Characterization of English, the English, and England

I. Wordsworth's *Volksstimme*: "a new reign of taste"

Much of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* is about language, and early reviews, at both ends of the spectrum of opinion, found in Wordsworth's philosophy of language an attempt to define Englishness. What would come to be characterized by positive reviews as simplified, purified, vigorous, and national, was viewed as affected and disturbingly anti-establishment by negative reviews. That the same philosophy of language could to one reviewer be patriotic and to another be unpatriotic is a testament to the slippery nature of the nationalism engendered by philology in the period. It is this chapter's ultimate contention that Wordsworth's appropriation of early philology enabled him to imagine a sense of national identity in the aftermath of crushed revolutionary hopes of the 1790s. At the end of the 1790s, the language theory that Wordsworth laid out in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* was so crucial to reviewers that through 1807, and all the way through William Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* in 1825, criticism of his work tended to evaluate the work collectively, through the lens of the language theory begun in the Preface. This chapter also examines Wordsworth's language theory collectively, approaching it through the perspectives of several contemporary reviews, through some of his prose works, through some of the 1807 *Poems*, and through parts of the 1805 *Prelude*.

Reviews of Wordsworth's work were not, of course, the work itself, and the political context of 1807 was not the political context of the 1790s. In spite of these facts, reviews spanning several years, and poetry and prose from Wordsworth spanning those same years, seem

to enter the same philological discourse, though they enter it on various sides. Again, these varied standpoints across decades actually exemplify the distinctive feature philological nationalism in the Romantic period: its malleability. In the case of the reviews, even some immediately contemporaneous ones were polarized on the question of Wordsworth's philosophy of language. In October 1799, in a review in *The British Critic*, the reviewer says, "It is not by pomp of words, but by energy of thought, that sublimity is most successfully achieved; and we infinitely prefer the simplicity, even of the most unadorned tale in this volume, to all the meretricious frippery of the Darwinian taste" (365). Pomp and adornment, to this reviewer, threaten to become an act of affectedly prostituting oneself. Wordsworth, in the reviewer's estimation, is more preferable and more sublime because of his simplicity and energy. The same reviewer similarly praises Wordsworth in February 1801 by saying, "he has adopted a purity of expression, which, to the fastidious ear, may sometimes perhaps sound poor and low, but which is infinitely more correspondent with true feeling than what, by the courtesy of the day, is usually called poetic language" (125).

Charles Burney appraised Wordsworth's language theory rather differently. In the June 1799 *Monthly Review*, Burney writes, "we cannot regard [these pieces] as *poetry*, of a class to be cultivated at the expence of a higher species of versification, unknown in our language at the time when our elder writers, whom this author condescends to imitate, wrote their ballads.-- Would it not be degrading to poetry, as well as the English language, to go back to the barbarous and uncouth numbers of Chaucer?" (202-203). Wordsworth's language is not fit for poetry, and at stake is the degradation not only of poetic taste but of English in general. Furthermore, as Burney continues, "to give artificial rust to modern poetry, in order to render it similar to that of

three or four hundred years ago, can have no better title to merit and admiration than may be claimed by any ingenious forgery" (203). Paradoxically, while tapping into the ballad tradition is 'pure' to one reviewer, it is 'artificial' to another.

As the years went on, the reviews continued to argue both sides of this most basic question – energetic purity versus transgressive artificiality – concerning Wordsworth's language. In April 1808, a review in *The Cabinet* says, "his fancy frequently degenerates into conceit, his feeling into puerile affectation, his sublimity into bombast, and his originality of expression into hardness and obscurity" (249). *The Critical Review*, in August 1807, says that Wordsworth is so sentimental as to fall into the "poor and wretched affectation of singularity" (400). "Affectation" is also a repeated charge by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* in October 1807. On the other side of the fence, *The Eclectic Review* in August 1809 calls Wordsworth's language "genuine," *The British Review* in November 1815 calls it "simplified, purified, and invigorated" (371), and Hazlitt, in his *Lectures* of 1819 and in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) characterizes Wordsworth's language as "pure," "vernacular," and "inartificial." It is entirely fitting that the question of whether Wordsworth's language was 'pure' or 'affected', considered over many works and many years, received so much attention, because the question of purity was a crux of early philology, as we see Wordsworth exploring in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

Early in the 1800 Preface, Wordsworth says that the poetry focuses on common, rustic life in order to trace the following:

the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity (122-124)

Wordsworth's idea is that contemporary rustic English culture and language represents a more primitive phase of English culture and language. The value of this simplicity is that passion and emphatic feeling are heightened. This belief concerning primitive language is derived directly from the tenet of language decline found throughout much early philology. As we have seen it articulated by Hugh Blair, in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, "Poetry...in its ancient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion, it owed its birth" (322); or as articulated thus by Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "by a natural progress all lettered languages must change character and lose vigor as they gain in clarity" (258).

John Horne Tooke also believed, as we have seen, that in gaining thrift, language became increasingly abstract and decreasingly rooted in sensation. Speculatively touching upon language origins in Part One of the *Diversions*, Tooke says, "Language, it is true, is an Art, and a glorious one...But an art springing from necessity, and originally invented by artless men" (1: 317). In *The Politics of Language, 1791-1819*, discussing the Tookean underscoring of Wordsworth's interest in rustic language, Olivia Smith cites this passage from the *Diversions* and says about it,

At this point, Horne Tooke's work has vast repercussions. His etymologies ignore many of the fundamental points of conservative theorists: the distinction between refined and vulgar language, the alleged limitations of primitive language, and the vernacular's lack of intellectual potential...His method does away with the concept of a refined language by demonstrating that all words originate in the material, transitory world...In effect, Tooke invalidated the eighteenth-century dichotomies of civilization and barbarism, abstract and experiential modes of thought, and learning and vulgarity. (123-4)

The language of Tookean "artless men" is precisely what Wordsworth is interested in. What contemporary conservative theorists would call refined language was what the radical Tooke would consider artificial language manipulated by a cultural elite to maintain unjust power. As Smith argues, Tooke's work elevated the 'vulgar' and 'primitive.' The artless rustic whose interest in language was to communicate thoughts efficiently spoke a language far more interesting to Tooke, and to Wordsworth, as well.

Motivated by the believed drawbacks of language decline, the next step typically taken by early philologists was a national one. In wishing to guard against the dangers of modern abstraction, Tooke gave unprecedented attention to Anglo-Saxon etymology. As Olivia Smith implies, Tooke substantially elevated the intellectual potential of the vernacular. Blair was keenly interested in the Bardic tradition, writing in defense of the validity of the *Ossian* poems, which, as we have observed, emerged in the same year as Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, to which the *Lyrical Ballads* were obviously indebted. And after Blair asserts that primitive poetry spoke the primitive language of passion, he posits that "the early Bard arose and sung" inspired by "events which interested his *country* or his friends" (322, my italics). Perhaps the most extensive theorization of the national dimension of primitive language, though, comes from Johann Gottfried Herder. As we saw in conjunction with "Kubla Khan," Herder's *Essay on the Origin of Language* assigns the vigor of primitive language specifically to native language, or the mother-tongue. Before getting to Herder's nationalistic conclusions, though, it is important to see just how extensively his premises are paralleled by Wordsworth's Preface.

Herder theorizes that the genesis of primitive language is preceded by a highly empirical stage of expression. Herder opens his *Essay* by saying, "Even as an animal man has a

language. All strong sensations of body or mind, especially the most violent, those of pain as well as those of the passions, are spontaneously expressed by cries, sounds, and by wild inarticulate noises” (117). He then goes on to say, “*A sentient being cannot confine any vivid sensation within itself; it must give utterance to it at the first moment of surprise, without deliberation or intention...*These utterances are a form of language, the language of emotions, expressive of an original force of nature” (118). Language-proper is generated by adding the human capacity for reflection to the spontaneous expression of strong sensations. Herder describes this thus: “*Man, endowed with mind...has by his very first act of spontaneous reflection invented language*” (135); and, a short space later, Herder formulates his thesis again, thus: “The first indication of this conscious activity of the mind was a *word*. With it, human language was invented!” (135). For Herder, the origin of language is “*spontaneous reflection*.” This very idea of spontaneous reflection giving expression of strong sensations appealed to Wordsworth, who in the Preface wrote, famously, that “all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (358). Wordsworth quickly adds that “Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply” (358); or, in Wordsworth's more famous formulation, later in the Preface, “[poetry] takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility” (365). For Wordsworth, a desirable register of poetry is, “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” “recollected in tranquility,” or, 'spontaneous recollection,' truncated. Any direct verbal echo between the German Herder and the English Wordsworth of course relies upon translation, but the conceptual echo between Wordsworth's 'spontaneous recollection' theory about poetry and Herder's 'spontaneous reflection' theory about the genesis of language is

nevertheless striking. Recognizing this striking similarity suggests that Wordsworth is drawn to a mode of expression that draws heavily from a Herderian theorization of primitive language.

Like Blair and Rousseau, Herder believed that primitive language was more vigorous than modern language. Also like Blair and Rousseau, this belief has a nationalistic bent. Further from Herder, "we associate the strongest sentiments with our native language" (163). When theorizing about empirical connections at the roots of words, Herder says, "these connections are...intensely national, engendered according to the peculiar disposition and viewpoint of a people and conditioned by the time and circumstances of a country" (148). What Herder is driving at, here, is his concept of *Volksstimme*. Herder's part of the project of building a German nation was, of course, to cultivate a folk tradition based upon language and poetry: *Volksstimme* ('the people's voice'). For Herder, *Volksstimme* is the foundation of the nation. As Michael Baron has pointed out when discussing Herder's influence in *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing*, "The *Volk* ('people') in Herder is specifically a language community *and* a nation" (131). *Volksstimme* is precisely the sort of thing that Ernest Gellner refers to when he says that "nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth...Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored" (56). *Volksstimme*, for Herder, created authority for the construction of the abstract nation; for Wordsworth, attempting to claim authority in suggesting a new poetic diction, we can hear a falling back on a sort of *Volksstimme* in his interest in unrefined English and his repeated deferral to "the real language of men," "language really spoken by men," etc. Repeatedly calling it "real" seems to emphasize the desired empirical grounding, as part of the authority of the register lies in its grounding in sensation and passion. Again, too, it is a register

that, as described by Wordsworth, is very much like primitive language, or language that has not gone through as much decline into abstraction as modern language. Thus rejecting the language sanctioned by the conventional institutions of power in England, Wordsworth seeks to elevate the culturally traditional 'voice of the people.'⁵

This connection that I am suggesting Wordsworth made – the Herderian valence of interest in rustic English – was not lost on reviewers of Wordsworth's work. In a November 1815 *British Review* piece on "The White Doe of Rylstone," the reviewer begins by characterizing the movement of poetry at the center of which has stood Wordsworth's work. The reviewer describes Wordsworth as "attempting to interest mankind in a species of poetry composed of mere simple elements" (372). In so doing, Wordsworth has been combating "the refined language of Pope" and the French School (372). Fortunately, in the estimation of this reviewer, "the French rules of criticism...which threatened to reduce all English poetry to a polished and featureless mannerism, has gradually been superseded by one more vigorous and more national" (371). In rejecting "a symbolical diction as unlike as possible to the language immemorially spoken by men and women and children," poetic taste has been "simplified, purified, and invigorated" (371). This reviewer identifies the philological virtues espoused by Wordsworth: simplicity and vigor, as opposed to "symbolic diction" and "refined language." The poetic mode being rejected is that sanctioned by "the French rules;" just as early philology

5. In *British State Romanticism: Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), Anne Frey argues, "Trusting the state to form individuals, these writers begin a trajectory that culminates in Matthew Arnold and that defines the state as the administrator of 'culture, charged with cultivating and representing the populace" (3). As this study aims to demonstrate, the engagement that the Romantics had with early philology suggested a basis for nationalistic sentiment opposite that which Frey describes.

theorized, the simple, pure, vigorous alternative is "more national." Finally, true to Herder's concept of *Volksstimme* and to Wordsworth's "language really spoken by men," the alternative to excessively symbolic diction praised here by the reviewer is "language immemorially spoken by men and women and children."

Linguistic authority is viewed oppositely by *The Eclectic Review* in January 1808. In what is a review of the 1807 *Poems*, the reviewer ends up talking at length about *Lyrical Ballads*, saying

Were these volumes (the *Lyrical Ballads*, &c.) now before us for criticism...we would certainly protest against the unqualified rejection of those embellishments of diction, suited to the elevation of enthusiastic thoughts equally above ordinary discourse and ordinary capacities, which essentially distinguish Poetry from Prose, and have been sanctioned by the successful usage of Bards in every age and nation, civilized or barbarous, on which the light of Song has shed its quickening, ennobling, and ameliorating beams. (36)

This reviewer does not believe that rustic diction is fit for poetry, speaking specifically against "ordinary discourse" and "ordinary capacities." This position is diametrically opposite belief in "language immemorially spoken by men and women and children." Authority does not come from the *Volk*, it comes from sanctioned usage of poets. This reviewer in the *Eclectic* believes that poetry should not lower itself to the discourse of unrefined folk, it should instead ennoble and ameliorate.

This 1808 review from the *Eclectic* also explicitly appropriates the idea of the 'mother-tongue' opposite the Herderian construction, saying, "in narrative, descriptive, and ethic poetry, we know no law of nature, and we will acknowledge none of art, that forbids Genius to speak his mother-tongue, – a language which, in sound and structure, as well as in character and sentiment, exalts itself far above the models of common speech" (36). Wordsworth's model of rustic

language is explicitly denounced. In place of rustic English is the 'mother-tongue of Genius.' This formulation directly controverts the idea of a primitivist-inflected native language in favor of a general language of refinement.

We can see that, approaching and well into the second decade of the century, Wordsworth continued to incite retrospective appraisals of *Lyrical Ballads* and of his 'system' in general. He also found his work punctuating current consideration of an English poetic canon. In October 1814, the *Quarterly* reviewed a recently published anthology of English poetry, and the review closes with reference to the emergence of *Lyrical Ballads* and the Lake School, saying, "there has been a *great revival* in our days – a pouring out of the spirit" (90). After noting that "The publication of Percy's Reliques led the way" to this revival by the "New School," the reviewer says that "the Aristarchs who for twelve years past with equal pertinacity and pertness have directed their censures against the founders (as they are pleased to style them) of that school, have by this time probably found reason to suspect that they have not been more fortunate in poetical criticism than in political prophecy" (90). From 1814, "twelve years past" would be 1802, the year of the third edition of *Lyrical Ballads* and the final version of the Preface. This revival, incited by Percy's antiquarian ballad revival, had been an affront to the English political establishment as much as it had been to the poetic canon, as the reviewer implies that poetic tastes tended to follow political persuasions.

Indeed, as we go back to the beginning of this 1814 review, we see that sanctioning a canon of English poetry, of which the school of 1802 was the culmination for this reviewer, was overtly nationalistic, offering a purified version of literary history, and doing so consistently via language. The reviewer begins by saying that "In [English poetry], as in our laws and

institutions, however it may have been occasionally modified by the effect of foreign models, a distinct national character has predominated" (60). This "national character," the reviewer contends, is due in large part to the English language: "Little reflection is required to perceive how much the poetry of every country must be influenced by its language" (61). Acknowledging that "some savage tongues" will not accommodate good poetry, also "the process of refining may be carried too far; and there are civilized nations who have rendered their tongue incapable of the highest species of poetry, by subjecting it to capricious rules" (61). We see again, here, the charge of capricious refinement, as we have seen in Wordsworth and in other reviews.

Among those tongues so constrained, the reviewer believes, are French and Spanish. "If our poets are not also in shackles it is not owing to our critics, who have been, and who continue to be, the worst in Europe; -- the most shallow, the most contradictory, and the most presumptuous" (61). The critical establishment is put up again, here, as a hindrance. Where the reviewer proceeds from this belief is most interesting, because the hindrance of the critical establishment is identified as ineffectual against a natural democratic force: "Happily for us our verse beginning among the people, necessarily assumed from its birth a popular character; and when the English minstrel was admitted into castles and courts, the language of life and passion was the language of English poetry" (62). English poetry comes from "the people," from "a popular character" – from a sort of *Volksstimme*, according to this reviewer. And again, this language is characterized by "passion," following the characterization we have seen in Wordsworth and Herder.

The reviewer proceeds through the centuries evaluating the quality of the poetry by its degree of linguistic purity. For instance, "Chaucer drew much from the French and Italian poets,

but more from observation and the stores of his own wealthy and prolific mind. Strong English sense, and strong English humour characterize his original works" (65). About the century following Chaucer, the critic says, "the poetry of this age was stuffed with sesquipedalian Latinisms, like the worst of Dr. Johnson's prose. The southern nations of Europe dilute their sounds into polysyllables; we, contrariwise, at some occasional expense of euphony, purchase condensation and strength; in this respect our national character and our language have acted upon each other, and the fashion of the style ornate was an attempt in direct contradiction of both" (66). While Chaucer's strong English sense and humor effectually staved off French and Italian influences, his immediate successors succumbed to Mediterranean linguistic compromise. Again, we see the reviewer explicitly equating "national character and language".

"The fashion did not long maintain its ground in England," the reviewer goes on to say about the transgressions of Chaucer's successors (66). Spenser represented a great improvement, even finding a fit application for the couplet, "an example of terseness, which Pope has never excelled," says the reviewer (73). With reference to Pope, repeated is the indictment (seen earlier in the reference to Johnson's Latinisms) of the school of poetry opposed by *Lyrical Ballads*. As for Sidney's experiment of "introducing Latin measures into English verse" (73), the *Volk* again prevailed, according to the *Quarterly* reviewer: "in Elizabeth's age there was too much poetry in the mouths of the people. The language had become a written and cultivated tongue, and so violent an innovation must have appeared as ridiculous then as it does now" (73). Emphasizing "poetry in the mouths of the people," we see a concept like *Volksstimme* again, as the strong democratic character of English again staves off outside influence.

So the reviewer goes through the English canon until he closes with praise of the "*great*

revival" centered by *Lyrical Ballads*. The review is strange and biased, but so was much of the discourse on Wordsworth's language theory, following the slippery nature of philological nationalism at the time. It is telling that Wordsworth's work motivated constant retrospection on his prior work, as well as assessments of the English canon. While it generally took longer for the more favorable reviews to register the full scope of nationalistic implications of Wordsworth's language theory, the harsh reviews – fairly or not, accurately or not – seized upon them right from the start. Though Wordsworth himself and his admirers believed that he was tapping into an authentically English register, some early criticism regarded *Lyrical Ballads* xenophobically. In October 1798, *The Critical Review* says about *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, "It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit" (201). *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was, in 1798, generally known to be the work of Coleridge, and his time spent in Germany seems to have been unsettling for some reviewers. *The Analytical Review* levels similar censure in December 1798, saying, "[*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*] has more of the extravagance of a mad german poet, than of the simplicity of our ancient ballad writers" (583). The philosophy perceived by the reviewers seems as much at issue as the diction, as they perhaps feared continental sentimentality. This charge of 'Gothic-ness' also came to be leveled at Wordsworth's work. The October 1798 *Critical Review* also says about "The Idiot Boy," "No tale less deserved the labour that appears to have been bestowed upon this. It resembles a Flemish picture in the worthlessness of its design and the excellence of its execution" (200).

The significance of this sort of 'Gothic-ness' is perhaps best captured in a much later review. In July 1819, *The Eclectic Review* takes up Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* and "The

Waggoner," and the reviewer falls into a general discussion of Wordsworth's 'system' of poetic taste. The reviewer says, "Mr. Wordsworth's system pours contempt on all those finer rules which his predecessors have worked by: he is for bringing in a Gothic horde of potters and pedlars and waggoners upon the classic regions of poetry: he has attempted to set up a new reign of taste, and he has sacrificed his genius in the adventure" (74). The logic of this review is fascinating. We hear in it the same issue that we have heard disputed since 1798: the 'system' or 'rules' of the poetic establishment. The ostensible fear of a poetic invasion is really pretty clearly a sort of xenophobia – fear of Gothic sentiment for potters, pedlars, waggoners, and the like. This fear produces a metaphor of poetry as a classic (or, probably more properly, a neoclassical) geo-political entity. Thus, according to the reviewer, Wordsworth is attempting to set up a new ruling regime – his 'system.'

This metaphor – "a new reign of taste" – registers very concisely a yet further implication in this philology-underscored discourse. Richard Turley's argument in *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature* is that Wordsworth's language theory was a deliberate attempt to redirect literary taste. More interesting to me is how literary taste became a metaphor for the nation, or a nationalistic battleground. We have seen how the question of pure simplicity versus affectation is underscored by the philological doctrine of language decline. We have also seen how the desire to work against language decline becomes national. We are now seeing how questions of nationalism, in the Romantic period in Britain, had much to do with radically inflected poetics infiltrating from abroad. To *The Eclectic Review*, even in 1819, Wordsworth's 'system' is seen as disturbingly revolutionary, in a way.

Though not quite so explicit as this 1819 review, we can also see the early reviews up in

arms over perceived revolutionary characteristics in Wordsworth's philological 'system.' In January 1799, *The London Review* has little interest in ancient English ballads and sympathy for the rustic class. Believing that Wordsworth has mistaken simplicity for "a *simple* style," the reviewer considers Wordsworth's "colloquial diction" to be "debased by inelegance and gross by familiarity" (34). The reviewer much prefers Pope to Percy, preferring the "lovely nudity of a GRACE" to the "squalid nakedness of a BEGGAR." The reviewer also, when quoting Wordsworth from the Advertisement to the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, italicizes 'experiments' and 'conversation.' Richard Turley has suggested that this emphasis highlights the radical valence of 'experiments' and 'conversation' in the 1790s. On the whole, Wordsworth's diction is seen by this reviewer as not only coarse but disturbingly sympathetic to figures that posed a perceived threat to the establishment.

Charles Burney, in *The Monthly Review* in June 1799, also italicizes 'experiments' in quoting from the Advertisement. In this review, Burney, as we have seen, considers Wordsworth's diction artificial and unfit for poetry. Burney also goes further, though, and attacks the radical social valence of Wordsworth's diction and stanza choice, saying, "None but savages have submitted to eat acorns after corn was found" (203). What to Wordsworth is authentic Englishness is to Burney ignorant savageness. This metaphor by Burney hints at his opinion of schemes for revolutionary elevation of the lower classes; he goes on, though, to get more explicit about the politics of Wordsworth's poetry in his criticism of "The Female Vagrant":

As it seems to stamp a general stigma on all military transactions, which were never more important in free countries than at the present period, it will perhaps be asked whether the hardships described never happen during revolution, or in a nation subdued? The sufferings of individuals during war are dreadful; but is it not better to try to prevent them from becoming general, or to render them transient by heroic and patriotic efforts, than to fly to them for ever? (206)

Burney complains similarly about revolutionary sympathies in his critique of "The Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman," saying, "The want of humanity here falls not on wicked Europeans, but on the innocent Indian savages, who enjoy unlimited freedom and liberty, unbridled by Kings, magistrates, or laws" (209). Burney calls "The Yew-Tree" "a seat for Jean Jacques," while actually reading "The Dramatic Fragment" as being critical of what he characterizes as "the savage liberty preached by some modern *philosophes*" (204). Burney grants that "Tintern Abbey" contains some beautiful reflections, but is disturbed by "unsociable ideas of seclusion from the commerce of the world: as if men were born to live in woods and wilds, unconnected with each other!" (210). Going on to tout educated urban society, Burney says, "The savage sees none of the beauties which this author describes" (210). It is important to note the matrix of ideas that Burney lays out: individual seclusion is savage and ignorant, the liberty preached by some modern *philosophes* is "savage," actual 'savages' who enjoy liberty exhibit a want of humanity, war in defense of 'free' countries is favorable to the hardships of revolution, and only 'savages' would transgress to appreciate the diction that Wordsworth proposes to use. What Burney's progression from diction to "patriotic efforts" shows is just how significantly underscored by philology were questions of radicalism and nationalism in Wordsworth.

In his *Lectures on the English Poets*, William Hazlitt provides an unabashed gloss on the suggestions of Wordsworth's 'new reign of taste' as being revolutionary. "This school of poetry," Hazlitt says, "had its origin in the French revolution, or rather in those sentiments and opinions which produced that revolution; and which sentiments and opinions were indirectly imported into this country in translations from the German about that period" (311). Hazlitt couldn't be

more clear about the source that he identifies for Wordsworth's philosophy. We see in Hazlitt's assertion both the feared Gallic and the feared Gothic infiltration that we have seen in the reviews.

Attacking the canonical poseurs that had been attacked in the *Quarterly Review* in 1814, Hazlitt says, "Our poetical literature had, towards the close of the last century, degenerated into the most trite, insipid, and mechanical of all things, in the hands of the followers of Pope and the old French school of poetry. It wanted something to stir it up, and it found that something in the principles and events of the French revolution" (311). Hazlitt proceeds to conflate the new school of poetry and the revolution so that Wordsworth's system becomes a metaphor, just as it has for the *Eclectic* reviewer who called it a "new reign of taste": "kings and queens were dethroned from their rank and station in legitimate tragedy or epic poetry, as they were decapitated elsewhere; rhyme was looked upon as a relic of the feudal system, and regular metre was abolished along with regular government" (312). What is for an antagonistic reviewer "a new reign of taste" is for Hazlitt a "republic of letters" (314).

Hazlitt even works back, in this particular Lecture, to echo the same underpinnings of the revolution that we find in the early philology that influenced Wordsworth. "They founded the new school," Hazlitt says, "on a principle of sheer humanity, on pure nature void of art...They were for bringing poetry back to its primitive simplicity and state of nature, as [Rousseau] was for bringing society back to the savage state" (314-315). Here in Hazlitt, we see the emphasis on pure, simple, primitive culture that we have seen in the philology of Blair, Rousseau, Tooke, and Herder. It is thus not surprising that Hazlitt names the political philosophy of Rousseau. Hazlitt's opinion of Wordsworth is thus important not only because it explicitly registers the

revolutionary valence of his system of poetry, but also because it recognizes the origin of that system in the underpinnings of early philology.

The August 1807 *Critical Review* was as disturbed with the revolutionary new school as was Charles Burney in 1799, saying, "[Wordsworth] is only one of a tribe who keep each other in countenance by mutual applause and flattery, and who having dubbed themselves by the name of poets, imagine they have a right to direct the taste of the nation, and thus...abuse the good sense and weary out the patience of mankind with their fantastic mummeries" (400). In 'mummery' we see the familiar charge of artificiality and in "tribe" we see the familiar metaphor of savageness. And again, these characteristics are unsettling enough to the reviewer that directing the "taste of the nation" is at stake.

This August 1807 piece from *The Critical Review* also goes a step further in suggesting that Wordsworth "must undergo a certain term of rigid penance and inward mortification; before he can become what he once promised to be, the poet of the heart: and not the capricious minion of a debasing affectation" (401). The reviewer imagines a spiritual punishment for Wordsworth, for the sin of his affected diction. The same *Review*, later in the same August issue, similarly says that while, because Wordsworth does possess talent, it takes no delight in wounding him, "still it would be an injustice both to ourselves and to the public if we were to suffer any inferior consideration to warp the impartial morality of criticism. It is our duty...mildly to reprove where reproof is merited by negligence or affectation" (536). The charges against Wordsworth subtly grow more serious, here, as does the role of reviewer. Wordsworth is essentially charged with being deliberately mischievous. Criticism, out of duty, becomes the arbiter of morality.

The trend exhibited here, begun, really by Burney in 1799, is to view Wordsworth as

representing such threatening revolutionary ideas as to be an enemy to decent society, or the establishment. In Francis Jeffrey's extreme censures in *The Edinburgh Review*, Wordsworth indeed becomes a figurative enemy of the state in need of figurative trial. Reviewing the 1807 *Poems* for the October 1807 issue, Jeffrey begins, as many reviewers did, by hearkening back to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth's perceived general philosophy of poetry, and the 'new school' of poetry being established. Jeffrey levels the typical charges of vulgarity and affectation repeatedly. He then sets up an archipelago of group identifications. He expresses his fear of the 'new school' "gaining ground among *us*" (215, my italics); he refers to the new style's "feebler admirers" (215); he says that "it belongs to the *public*, and not to us, to decide" upon the merit of the 'new school' (215, my italics); he says, "Putting ourselves thus upon our *country*, we certainly look for a verdict against this publication" (216, my italics). "Us" would seem to be apologists for the establishment, or intellectual elites; the "feebler admirers" would seem to be the folk with whom Wordsworth's language theory resonates. The "public" begins to get complicated, because it is clearly an entity larger than Jeffrey and what he is confident that he represents; his "country" is technically analogous to the "public," with patriotic sentiment implied for appeal. More than anything, Jeffrey is trying to either mold or commandeer an identifiable group to set against Wordsworth. On the whole, this activity by Jeffrey operates in the same discourse as, but is a sharp contrast to, Wordsworth's appropriation of a *Volksstimme*.

What clearly belies Jeffrey's activity is fear of what we might call a swinish discourse of a 'feeble' multitude, recalling Edmund Burke's description of the French Revolution. Jeffrey speaks of being motivated to censure Wordsworth out of a sense of "public duty" (215), but his true motivation seems to be something closer to protecting the established order from the will of

the 'public.' After professing that it is for the public to decide the merits of the new school, and saying that he is putting himself upon his country, he expects "a verdict against this publication" (216), and he nevertheless decides that "To accelerate that result, and to give a general view of the evidence, to those into whose hands the record may not have already fallen, we must now make a few observations and extracts" (216). Jeffrey's mode is thus much more dictatorial than it is democratic.

So Jeffrey proceeds as judge, lawyer, and jury, with the preponderance of evidence being the impropriety of Wordsworth's diction. When Jeffrey explains the faults of this diction, he deals with philology in a subtle but important way. Jeffrey believes that proper poetic diction has intrinsic qualities perceptible by all readers. He says that "Every one knows that there are low and mean expressions, as well as lofty and grave ones; and that some words bear the impression of coarseness and vulgarity, as clearly as others do of refinement and affection" (217). This theory is crystallized when Jeffrey says about Wordsworth's diction, "His diction has no where any pretensions to elegance or dignity; and he has scarcely ever condescended to give the grace of correctness or melody to his versification" (217). "Correctness" and "melody" are incongruous associates, as one is objective and the other subjective. Blurring the line between objective and subjective is, in a sense, what Jeffrey's theory hinges on, and it flies decidedly in the face of early philology's doctrine of arbitrary signification. As we have seen, Olivia Smith has rightly argued that Wordsworth's interest in rustic language derives in part from John Horne Tooke's breaking down of such absolutes: "His etymologies ignore many of the fundamental points of conservative theorists: the distinction between refined and vulgar language...His method does away with the concept of a refined language by demonstrating that all words

originate in the material, transitory world" (123). In arguing against subjectivity and malleability in language, Jeffrey comes from precisely the sort of conservative angle to which Smith refers.

About the new school's source of authority, Jeffrey believes that "instead of borrowing from the more popular passages of their illustrious predecessors, they have preferred furnishing themselves from vulgar ballads and plebeian nurseries" (218). The question here, again, is a question of authoritative source for cultural identification. Wordsworth's source is a *Volksstimme*, Jeffrey's source is "the finest passages in Virgil and Pope" (217). Lest it seem an overstatement that what is at stake rises above poetic taste to the level of revolution and defining the nation, we observe Jeffrey's suggestion that Wordsworth "really seems anxious to court this literary martyrdom" (218), and his closing statement:

Many a generous rebel, it is said, has been reclaimed to his allegiance by the spectacle of lawless outrage and excess presented in the conduct of the insurgents; and we think there is every reason to hope, that the lamentable consequences which have resulted from Mr Wordsworth's open violation of the established laws of poetry, will operate as a wholesome warning to those who might otherwise have been seduced by his example, and be the means of restoring to that ancient and venerable code its due honour and authority. (231)

The implication is that Wordsworth himself is rebel who has cast off allegiance to the establishment that Jeffrey represents. Jeffrey's diction is overwhelming in its shaping of Wordsworth's philology into a metaphor, or indeed vehicle, for the revolutionary formation of a new concept of Englishness, with this talk of 'rebels' and "allegiance," as well as "lawless outrage," "insurgents," and "established laws."

II. "the tongue / That Shakespeare spake"

In the "Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815," Wordsworth lashes back at some of the reviews and further elucidates the nationalistic dimension that attended his philosophy of language. Critics on both ends of the spectrum of opinion more explicitly registered the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' rejection of Pope and the 'French School' than Wordsworth himself did, but Wordsworth makes his disdain abundantly clear in the "Essay Supplementary," saying, "[Pope] bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success" (72). If Pope "had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity" and "had confided more in his native genius," he could have averted this lamentable fate, according to Wordsworth (72). The terms upon and in which Wordsworth criticizes Pope echo the terms upon and in which Wordsworth himself was censured by some reviews. Wordsworth was one of a tribe that presumed to "direct the taste of the nation," and here Pope is described as having "bewitched the nation" linguistically. While "native genius" would seem to ostensibly refer to something like 'the talent naturally possessed by Pope,' the formulation's proximity to Pope's 'bewitching of the nation' sounds tantalizingly like an inversion of the sort of formulation touted by the 1808 *Eclectic* reviewer who suggested that "Genius speak its native tongue." I have argued that the *Eclectic* reviewer's formulation is itself an inversion of the Herderian belief in native language. The "Essay Supplementary" inverting that inversion would fall in line with Wordsworth's conviction, in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, that genius lies in attention to the native.

Wordsworth goes on, in the "Essay Supplementary," to praise Percy's *Reliques* and to

observe the battle over taste that it engendered: "The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt" (75). Wordsworth identifies the hegemony of elite 'city society' against, implicitly, rusticity – the conflict we have seen from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* through the reviews of much of Wordsworth's work. Wordsworth also imagines a metaphorical government to which laws are dictated, adopting the rhetoric of reviewers like Burney and Jeffrey, attributing to Johnson the type of dictatorial position that we have seen Jeffrey take.

The 1814 *Quarterly* review that gives lengthy consideration to the English canon had been equally hard on Pope and Johnson, with its reference to Spenser's use of the couplet as “an example of terseness, which Pope has never excelled” and its reference to “sesquipedalian Latinisms like the worst of Dr. Johnson's prose.” The "Essay Supplementary's" praise of Percy's *Reliques* and criticism of Pope and Johnson also comes amidst an extensive consideration of the definition of an English canon. The issue of public opinion – seen in Pope's being "seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity" – is one that Wordsworth also raises earlier in his canon consideration, when talking about Shakespeare. "At all events," Wordsworth says, "that Shakespeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from some advantage over him in public estimation" (68). Powerful as Shakespeare was, and though it is crucial that he was able to “accommodate himself to the People” by turning to “glorious

purpose” the “prepossessions of the age,” he may not have been the most *popular* playwright of his own day. In this observation concerning Shakespeare, we encounter the same implicit question embedded in Wordsworth's discussion of Pope and Johnson: whence comes the authority to define worthy canonical English poetry? Specifically, is it by dictation, as he characterizes Johnson's mode? Is it through linguistic bewitchment, as he characterizes Pope's mode? Or can "omnipotent genius," which he deems that Shakespeare possessed, turn to "glorious purpose" the "prepossessions" of "the People?"

What the "Essay Supplementary" thus undertakes is the same issue undertaken by explicitly by Francis Jeffrey and by the 1814 *Quarterly* review. Jeffrey speaks of submitting to the verdict of public opinion, but he ultimately becomes dictatorial, and his professed concern for his nation becomes elitist hegemony; the 1814 *Quarterly* contends for a truly democratic character of English poetry. In the final pages of the "Essay Supplementary," Wordsworth sets out to expound the prospect of turning to "glorious purpose" the "prepossessions" of "the People." Wordsworth says, "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" (80). Since "taste" would seem to reside with the consumers of poetry, Wordsworth proceeds to explain how and why it is instead created by the producers of poetry. "TASTE," he says, "...is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive, – to intellectual *acts* and *operations*" (81). What should rightly be an active intellectual undertaking has been reduced to a passive function, and this reduction has not been arbitrary. As Wordsworth continues, it is owed to "the prevalence of dispositions at once

injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy, – which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging" (81). In question is the state of creativity in the nation, the vitality of which has been reduced out of apathetic selfishness on the part of "injurious and discreditable" dispositions. These dispositions maintain power in a declined nation based upon presumption of rectitude in judgment. In other words, when critics like Jeffrey and Burney fall back on 'taste,' by stressing the existence of a passive thing that must be adhered to, they ensure the preeminence of their judgment. It is a deliberate ploy, Wordsworth insinuates, that hinges upon a linguistic ruse.

While Wordsworth seems bent on breaking down the type of "presumed refinement of judging" that we have seen in several reviews of his work, he nevertheless wishes to "direct the taste of the nation," as one of those very reviews put it. While this goal stated thus may not have been so palpable in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth has here unequivocally begun to theorize the need for "*creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed."

In the beginning of this theorization, Wordsworth does not imagine himself as quite so dictatorial as, say, Johnson, as insidious as those possessed of "injurious and discreditable" dispositions, or as linguistically bewitching as Pope. The deceit of passive taste, Wordsworth goes on to explain, is antithetical to engaging with the pathetic and the sublime, because necessary for engagement with the pathetic and the sublime is "the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader" (81). But Wordsworth again proceeds to imagine the poet being a producer of this power, saying that he "has to call forth and to communicate *power*" (82). "Therefore," he goes on to say, "to create taste is to call forth and bestow power" (82). Put even

more transparently: "What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet?" (82).

There are two reasons, Wordsworth goes on to posit, that the burden of creating taste falls on the poet. One is that "there are emotions of the pathetic...that are complex and revolutionary...against which [the heart] struggles with pride" (82). The characterization "revolutionary" seems carefully chosen, as we have already encountered characterizations of Wordsworth's poetic project as 'revolutionary.' It is fitting here as it comes in a discussion of creating an English readership. The other reason that the poet must create taste is that "the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected, is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations" (82). This is a very Tookean reasoning from Wordsworth, and he has already identified it in action with the manipulation of the metaphor of 'taste.' This is a stark contrast to part of the premise of Jeffrey's opinion of Wordsworth's system, which, I have suggested, is an un-Tookean stance against subjectivity and fluidity in language. Made explicit by Wordsworth in the "Essay Supplementary," faced with the malleability of language's associations, "The genius of the poet melts these down for his purposes" (82). These are bleak prospects for trusting general readers to exert the energy to engage with the pathetic; about the prospect of readers engaging with the sublime, Wordsworth believes that "there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend [the sublime's] kingdom" (83). Again Wordsworth speaks of his poetic project as a matter of defining a political body, and again he sees the responsibility to create this definition as residing with him.

Wordsworth proceeds toward the end of the essay with a philosophic crescendo. "Away, then," he says, "with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*" (83). Wordsworth seems to

view popularity as he does taste: a sham embodied in a word that has far outrun its just application. After all, great poetry is difficult for most people to comprehend. As Wordsworth puts it: "wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers" (83). Having temporarily limited popularity is the price to pay for producing great poetry. The definition here given for great poetry is an interesting one. Wordsworth envisions his poetry coupling the "meditative wisdom of later ages" with the "instinctive wisdom of antiquity, an "accord" of history and prophecy. We have seen emphasis on Wordsworth drawing poetic authority from English literary and cultural history throughout the discourse surrounding the language theory of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. What has become explicitly complicated in the "Essay Supplementary," though, is what Wordsworth has done with his own version of the Herderian *Volksstimme* we witnessed earlier. While wanting to draw from a historical 'voice of the people,' he seems to depart from Herder, as the present English people make unreliable readers, or "few and scattered hearers."

Wordsworth submits a resolution to this tension in the final paragraph of the essay. "Is it the result of the whole," he begins, "that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious" (84). Wordsworth opposes himself to any sentiment "injurious" to "the People," "injurious" being the very characterization he has given the disposition behind the mongering of passive 'taste.' In the "judgment of the People" we recall Francis Jeffrey's request for public 'judgment' in his case against Wordsworth. Here at the end of

the essay, Wordsworth recognizes that the judgment of 'the People' is at stake, and he does not wish to deny it. He instead proceeds to distinguish it from the censure of reviewers: "Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE" (84). The 'Public' – the clamoring portion of the community professing to speak for 'the People' – is quite obviously Jeffrey and his ilk. Toward the censure of reviews, Wordsworth has "as much deference as it is entitled to" (84).

What Wordsworth is interested in elevating is the voice of 'the People.' He quotes what would become the 1850 *Prelude*, saying, "'–Past and future, are the wings / On whose support, harmoniously conjoined, / Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge–'", and extrapolates that "The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry -- transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation" (84). We see again, here, an expression existing at the nexus of the past and future; a page earlier, it was Wordsworth's poetry, now it is "the great Spirit of human knowledge," from which issues the "Vox Populi," the 'voice of the People.' Obviously recalling what I have suggested is Wordsworth's formulation of a *Volksstimme*, this formulation in the "Essay Supplementary" is the authority upon which the poet draws in the face of harsh reviews. The "Vox Populi" of the Essay, though, is not exactly a Herderian *Volksstimme*. Wordsworth goes on to elaborate, "to the People, philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, [the Writer's] devout respect, his reverence, is due" (84). The key phrase used by Wordsworth is "philosophically characterized." Just as

Wordsworth believes that it is incumbent upon him to "create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed," 'the People' seems to be an abstraction that he has constructed, or a philosophized characterization.

As I discuss in the Introduction to this study, abstract construction is an important feature of nationalism in what Ernest Gellner refers to as the age of nationalism. According to Benedict Anderson, the nation is an imagined community. Gellner strikes yet closer to the valence that Herder seems to have had for Wordsworth when he says, "nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth...Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored" (56). Here there is a key difference between Herder and Wordsworth. Herder was interested in drawing upon an actual tradition to cultivate an actual German nation. Herder's ideas, though, seem to have been appropriated by Wordsworth along lines like those described by Gellner. In spite of Coleridge's criticism of the vulgarity seemingly espoused by Wordsworth's philosophy of language, critics have argued that neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth were truly interested in actually re-creating primitive language. As Richard Turley has argued, Wordsworth is less interested in restoring actual idioms than he is in carving out discursive space for political reform. Susan Manly goes further, saying, "Wordsworth's frequent references to 'selection' and 'purification', and his arrogation to the figure of the poet of a special capacity for feeling, reveal a profound ambivalence about common language" (98-99). Manly's contention is that Wordsworth ultimately divests "the identity of 'the people'...of...radical potential" (99). Manly's argument moves closer than Turley's does toward James Chandler's argument, in *Wordsworth's Second Nature*, that Wordsworth becomes a Burkean conservative by the end of the 1805 *Prelude*.

While I later explore Chandler's argument further, I do, at present, agree that Wordsworth, like Coleridge, is more interested in the idea of primitive language than in the actual re-creation of it. In the "Essay Supplementary," Herder's *Volksstimme* seems to give way to something more like the ability of a literary tradition to manipulate a fickle and unsophisticated national voice.

Traces of the long discourse that I have sketched on Wordsworth's language philosophy show up in some of the wartime sonnets of the 1807 *Poems*, and also in the *Prelude*. In these poems, Wordsworth seems to be exploring ways to imagine a national identity in a way that owes to the type of thinking that would emerge in 1815's "Essay Supplementary:" imagination fostered by the discursive space afforded by early philology. In the prose, Wordsworth is interested in Shakespeare's ability to connect with 'the People.' What we will see in the wartime sonnets is that 'the tongue that Shakespeare spake' is connected to the revolutionary ideal of liberty, now allied in the Napoleonic era to nationalistic concern. It is useful at this point to recall my discussion of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," in the introduction to this study. In the tumult of the sacred river, Kubla hears "Ancestral voices prophesying war!" (30), which I have argued suggests a revolutionary war intent on producing a concept of community based on native language. We have seen how Wordsworth's interest in a native tradition was viewed – by both his opponents and proponents – as allied with the revolutionary cause of the 1790s. Both the English canon and the conflict between Britain and France surface repeatedly in the 1807 *Poems*, and, not coincidentally, it seems, via a recurrent use of water as a metaphor similar to what we see in "Kubla Khan." Several of the wartime sonnets in the 1807 *Poems* straddle the English channel, so to speak, some being written around Dover, some being written around Calais. These particular sonnets reflect on a nation that is consistently imperiled, and they seek to

identify an Englishness in a particularly intellectual medium.

In “London, 1802,” Wordsworth appeals to Milton because England has become a “fen of stagnant waters” (2-3). In contrast to the fen that England has become, Milton had “a voice whose sound was like the sea” (10). Milton's voice was also “Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free” (11), and Wordsworth wishes that Milton could restore to England “manners, virtue, freedom, power” (8). So, in this sonnet, we see liberty – the cause of the revolution – which Wordsworth proposes be restored to England through its literary tradition. And water is the operative metaphor, as Wordsworth wants to move England from “fen” to “sea.” Pure and free, and like the sea, is Milton's voice.

Milton surfaces again in “It is Not to Be Thought of,” and again Wordsworth hopes for his faith and morals to be preserved in England. Also recurring is the metaphor of waters, in this case a direct metaphor for freedom. The sonnet begins:

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost forever. (1-9)

Like the stagnation into a fen in “London, 1802,” the “Flood / of British freedom” perishing in “bogs and sands” is what Wordsworth fears and hopes can be averted. Deepening the parallel, in “London, 1802,” it is an “ancient English dower” that has been “forfeited” to precipitate stagnation, and in “It is Not to Be Thought of,” British freedom flows “from dark antiquity”; in both cases, current British identity is founded upon ancient, or antique, Englishness. Near the

end of the sonnet, Wordsworth boldly states, “We must be free or die, who speak the tongue / That Shakespeare spake” (11-12). In the "Essay Supplementary," Wordsworth marvels at Shakespeare's ability to turn to “glorious purpose” the *Vox Populi*. In this earlier sonnet, Wordsworth founds cultural identification as a free nation on Shakespeare, and, in specific, his language.

“Near Dover,” also written in 1802 and published in the 1807 *Poems*, engages the same issues as “London, 1802” and “It is Not to Be Thought of,” but it does so in a strikingly – and revealingly – different tone. Looking over the English Channel in “Near Dover,” the coast of France is “drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood” (4). There is a sense of imminent collision between the two nations. “I shrunk,” Wordsworth responds, and he calls the water “the barrier flood” (5). In “London, 1802” and “It is Not to Be Thought of,” water is either a carrier for liberty or a dry or stagnant lack thereof; in “Near Dover,” water divides the locus of the cause of liberty Wordsworth once championed from Wordsworth's imperiled native soil. Though there is a difference, in all cases, water becomes, in a sense, the arbiter of liberty.

What becomes more explicit in “Near Dover” than in the other two sonnets is the fluid nature of liberty and nationalism. The sovereignty of England is precarious, as Wordsworth shrinks at the prospect of France's proximity. Furthermore, the “barrier flood” holds power for both “evil and for good” (8). “Winds blow, and waters roll, / Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity; / Yet in themselves are nothing” (10-12). As the Channel can bear power for either evil or good, water has no inherent meaning. It follows, then, that “One decree / Spake laws to them, and said that by the soul / Only, the Nations shall be great and free” (12-14). To “speak the tongue / That Shakespeare spake” brings the mandate to be free or die. In “Near Dover,” we do

not hear “the tongue / That Shakespeare spake,” but we do hear a decree, and of law, no less. In light of the conflict between England and France, the decree Wordsworth records is that only by the soul will the nations achieve liberty. This is a highly abstract, intellectualized form of national identity. But then we recall that in “London, 1802,” what England has forfeited to become a “fen of stagnant waters” is an “ancient English dower / Of *inward* happiness” (my italics). The state of the nation's soul, or inner Englishness, is perhaps most at stake in all of these sonnets. Shakespeare's tongue, the English canon, the intellect of Wordsworth, these are the things that create nationalism. The soul is fluid, just as language is fluid, as Wordsworth asserts in the "Essay Supplementary." Both are to be shaped by the poet. As Wordsworth theorizes in the "Essay Supplementary," he speaks the the consciousness of the past and future English 'People,' and the *Volksstimme*, or *Vox Populi*, that issues from the spirit of the knowledge of 'the People' will, in time, vindicate him. Water, literally a fluid, becomes the perfect metaphor for the fluidity of the process of forming national identity that Wordsworth is developing.

III. The “homeless voice” of Snowdon

Earl Wasserman once observed an “eighteenth-century tendency to translate all ontologies into psychologies” (172). What we have been seeing in Wordsworth is different discourses – language tradition, literary tradition, and cultural history – coalescing into a broad ontology. And we have seen this broad coalescence appropriated radically by Wordsworth's apologists and detractors alike. This ontological process in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, the "Essay Supplementary," and the wartime sonnets can also be seen in a couple of important

passages of the 1805 *Prelude*: the climactic ascent of Mount Snowdon, and the Spots of Time.

Like in the wartime sonnets, water is an important presence in Wordsworth's epiphany on Mount Snowdon. Wordsworth ascends Snowdon at night, through a dense fog (literally water vapor). Eventually breaking up through the fog, the moonlight suddenly illuminates all around him, and he says,

...on the shore
I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
Which meek and silent rested at my feet.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean, and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed
To dwindle and give up its majesty,
Usurped upon as far as sight could reach. (13: 42-51)

Snowdon itself is full of symbolic potential, being the highest point of elevation in England. Moreover, being situated in Wales places Snowdon in a geographical vestige of British antiquity. On this quintessentially English summit, Wordsworth sees a figurative sea that recalls his straddling of the English Channel in some of the wartime sonnets. In those wartime sonnets, Wordsworth imagines England as a “fen / Of stagnant waters,” he imagines British freedom as a flood that has flowed to the open sea but is in danger of running out in “bogs and sands,” and he imagines the Channel itself as a “barrier flood” that is full of latent power, but which is nevertheless “calm.” Similarly, the sea of mist on the shore of which Wordsworth stands on Snowdon is “meek and silent,” and “still.” Still, silent water and the imperiled Englishness it represents has been the great threat in the wartime sonnets – from the the “fen of stagnant waters” in lieu of the voice of Milton, to the dried up flood in lieu of “the tongue / That Shakespeare spake,” to the “calm” Channel dividing England and France that makes Wordsworth

shrink.

The wartime sonnets represent a problem that Wordsworth is facing – imperiled Englishness – and imply a resolution to that problem: formation of national identity through Milton's voice, Shakespeare's tongue – formation of national identity through a sort of amalgam of language-based cultural elements. Whereas the wartime sonnets imply this resolution, the climactic episode of *The Prelude* actually represents the resolution. The “meek and silent” water, in the form of the sea of mist, is something that Wordsworth (literally) rises above on Snowdon. Also, crucially, the sea upon whose shore Wordsworth stands at the end of *The Prelude* is a figurative sea of Wordsworth's creation. This sea of mist usurps the actual sea. The result is that Wordsworth is not terrified of the sea as he is in “Near Dover.” In “Near Dover,” Wordsworth seems to feel his identity as an Englishman imperiled. On Mount Snowdon, something quite different is at work. Wordsworth seems to, in effect, create his own England. The key is that his “mind is lord and master,” as he earlier puts it in the Spots of Time episode; this is the very type of operation that the reviews of Wordsworth's work termed setting up a “new reign of taste”; this operation is also analogous to Wordsworth's formulation in the Essay Supplementary that creating taste is a “conquest, made by the soul of the poet.” The actual England – in “Near Dover,” for instance – is an island. At the end of *The Prelude*, Snowdon itself becomes an island with a sea of mist lapping at its shore. Snowdon thus seems to become a figurative England for Wordsworth.

On Snowdon, England is delineated according to Wordsworth's imagination. Where the idea represented by 'Milton's voice' and 'Shakespeare's tongue' enters is subtle. The fact that the shore of the figurative island is delineated by “headlands, *tongues*, and promontory shapes” (my

italics) seems to be a punning nod to the role that Wordsworth's philosophy of language has played in the formation of this England. What Wordsworth proceeds to note after his visual apprehension seems to follow in this vein:

...and 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, through 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 deep dark thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
The soul, the imagination of the whole. (13: 54-65)

I argued in the Introduction to this study that Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" explores the philology of Herder with its "deep romantic chasm" (12) from which flows a "sacred river" (24) carrying the sound of "Ancestral voices" (30). We can hear distinct echoes of these parts of "Kubla Khan" in the above passage from Wordsworth's ascent of Snowdon. There is a "chasm" in the sea of mist, and Wordsworth calls it a "deep and gloomy breathing-place," similar to how Coleridge describes the activity of the "deep romantic chasm" in "Kubla Khan" by saying that it is "As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing" (18). Just as the "chasm" in "Kubla Khan" becomes the source of the "sacred river," on Snowdon, the chasm produces "the roar of waters, torrents, streams." Most importantly, as the "sacred river" in "Kubla Khan" bears the sound of "Ancestral voices," the "waters, torrents, streams" that Wordsworth hears on Snowdon roar "with one *voice*" (my italics). Wordsworth emphasizes the metaphor of voice, as well, recapitulating the sound as "the homeless *voice* of waters" (my italics).

So, my suggestion is that Wordsworth on Snowdon is deliberately entering the same

philological discourse that Coleridge was in “Kubla Khan.” But as strikingly as Wordsworth seems to echo “Kubla Khan,” he also differs significantly. Naturally rising from the depths of a chasm on the slopes of Mount Snowdon, breaking through a sea of mist that Wordsworth has had to rise above to surmount the anxiety of the wartime sonnets, the waters that Wordsworth hears are in prime position to be the *Volksstimme*, or *Vox Populi*, or 'Ancestral voice' that he has been striving after. But whereas Kubla hears “Ancestral voices,” Wordsworth hears a “homeless voice.” Clearly at issue in Wordsworth is the ancestry of the voice. The semi-vagrant traveller throughout *The Prelude* has ascended the quintessentially English Snowdon and seemingly engaged with the national anxieties present in the sonnets from 1802, but though he seems to delineate a figurative England with which he is comfortable, he calls the voice serving as undercurrent to the scene “homeless.” Vagrancy in Wordsworth's poetry has consistently been recognized as part of a broader discourse for Wordsworth, linked with 1790s radicalism and the war with France. In *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, and Power*, for instance, Gary Harrison argues that vagrancy is part of a discourse “linked inextricably with the politics of reform, the war with France, and the steady industrial transformation of English social and cultural practices” (16). Similarly, Toby Benis, in *Romanticism on the Road: the Marginal Gains of Wordsworth's Homeless*, argues that “Vagrancy law was designed to arrest the wanderer on the road, but also the more general mobility of mind, the openness to new, unsettling ideas that he or she embodied” (2). Managing the socially ambiguous and making transparent the socially obscure was “a goal that acquired new urgency amid the political, social, and economic turmoil of the 1790s,” according to Benis (2). For Wordsworth, once an expatriate deeply invested in the ideals of the French Revolution, defining a sense of home has been a tenuous undertaking; for

his contemporary critics, it has been a polarizing issue.⁶ In the same way that vagrancy was unsettling to the establishment in the 1790s, many of the contemporary reviews of Wordsworth linked his philosophy of language with radicalism and sought to rein it in. As I earlier noted, Olivia Smith has argued that the radical philology of John Horne Tooke elevated 'vulgar' and 'primitive' linguistic registers; in addition, Smith points out that “The war against France and the passage of repressive legislation evoked much of the 'false morality and metaphysical jargon' which Tooke describes as justifying political abuse” (139). Both the opponents and allies of Wordsworth seemed also to early and often make a similar connection between the new discipline of philology and radical sympathies.

Thus, in light of the anti-establishment radicalism of the philology that Wordsworth has embraced, the “homeless voice” serving as undercurrent to the metaphorical England that Wordsworth has delineated on Snowdon is fitting. Homelessness highlights the tenuous nature of the national voice that we have seen in the discourse surrounding Wordsworth's philosophy of language and poetry. He has been as much a citizen of the ideals of the French Revolution as he has been a loyal subject of England. The voice that Wordsworth has been seeking to articulate is rooted in linguistic and literary heritage, but is nevertheless anti-establishment and unwelcome in the England of his day, as he recognizes in the "Essay Supplementary" and as the negative contemporary reviews attest. The voice, like the waters Wordsworth hears on Snowdon, has a

6. For yet another view of vagrancy in Wordsworth, see David Simpson, *Wordsworth, Commodification and Social Concern: The Poetics of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Simpson argues that Wordsworth's encounters with wanderers during his own wanderings constitute a "solidarity of dispossession and displacement" (56). Outrunning Wordsworth's own attempts to mitigate social difference through the language of rustics were realities of "leveling forces deriving from machine labor and commodification and producing a sameness not at all to be desired" (55).

native source, but it has a hard time finding a present home.

Wordsworth then proceeds into an effusion that begins with identifying the scene on Snowdon as the “perfect image of a mighty mind” and goes on to tout the ability of such a mind to both perceive and create – being “Willing to work and to be wrought upon” (100) – “By sensible impressions not enthralled, / But quickened, roused, and made thereby more fit / To hold communion with the invisible world” (103-105). Wordsworth says that such a mind enjoys “sovereignty within and peace at will” (114). “Oh, who is he,” Wordsworth concludes, “that hath his whole life long / Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself? – / For this alone is genuine liberty” (120-122). It is crucial that Wordsworth sums up his description of this type of mind as preserving and enlarging freedom, saying that “this alone is genuine liberty.” If we don't see it in the middle of the passage, we see now that “sovereignty” is indeed politically charged.

Wordsworth has been talking about creating for himself the only viable Englishness possible – one that is founded upon a tradition in language and literature that he values, but one that can also hold on to the radical values of the revolution across the Channel: a purely abstract, or imagined, Englishness.

In a sense, this is another way of recognizing a challenge familiar to criticism of Wordsworth: determining what sort of sublimation Wordsworth enacts as resolution to the tensions in his work. M. H. Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism* finds that millennial zeal fostered by the French Revolution leads to “the spiritual crisis not of himself only, but of his generation: that shattering of the fierce loyalties and inordinate hopes for mankind which the liberal English – and European – intellectuals had invested in the French Revolution” (77). Wordsworth's spiritual redemption, according to Abrams, comes as a “theodicy of the private life...which

translates the painful process of self-formation, crisis, and self-recognition, which culminates in a stage of self-coherence, self-awareness, and assured power that is its own reward” (96).

Another major argument on the subject, James Chandler's *Wordsworth's Second Nature*, sees *The Prelude* as “Wordsworth's fullest attempt to deal with the French Revolution” (32), highlighting “Wordsworth's claim that being turned against his country was the very heart of his moral crisis” (199). Chandler's argument is that Wordsworth's resolution is “thoroughly Burkean” (32).

Chandler focuses a great deal on the Spots of Time episode of *The Prelude*, saying that Wordsworth falls back on “the ancient English tradition of equality, handed down from father to son – not the egalitarianism generated out of cosmopolitan discussion of the abstract rights of men” (51). The Spots of Time, Chandler argues, “must be understood as representing the triumph not only of mental discipline, but also of discipline-as-tradition” (199). This “discipline-as-tradition” is “a psychological manifestation of a national character and a native tradition” (187).

These two prominent readings do well to highlight the radical and national dimensions to Wordsworth's crisis. I would disagree, however, that Wordsworth has converted to outright Burkean conservatism as a way of resolution in *The Prelude*. To look at Chandler's main area of focus, the Spots of Time, the basic formula is this: occasions in life when the mind is forced to become lord and master possess a renovating virtue for later in life, giving the mind strength in later times of trial. Just such an occasion was when the young Wordsworth became temporarily lost on a horseback excursion, came upon the site of an execution, read a pertinent inscription, became scared, and noted the overall dreariness of the scene, which also included a barren pool, a girl struggling to walk against the wind, and the Penrith beacon. This episode clearly

represents a psychological trial for Wordsworth; there is also a subtle national character to the episode, as Chandler suggests; whether or not Wordsworth embraces Burkean 'discipline-as-national-tradition,' though, seems more questionable.

The beacon in the scene, for instance, seems radically charged. The Penrith beacon had been built in 1719 to guard against Scottish invasion. When young Wordsworth came to it, however, its valence was different. In *Technologies of the Picturesque: British Art, Poetry, and Instruments, 1750-1830*, Ron Broglio says, “In the latter half of the eighteenth century, as the danger of invasion subsided, the former military site became a tourist site based upon political surveillance. Looking to the north from this singular vantage point, the tourist could consider the rising power of the British nation” (63-64). We can imagine how a symbol of the rising power of the British nation – of Britain's stance in the Napoleonic era – would have troubled the radical sympathies in Wordsworth.

The gibbet would be an equally troubling symbol. Wordsworth's radical attitude about legal punishment excited the ire of many of his contemporaries, including Charles Burney, who said, “We do not comprehend the drift of lavishing...tenderness and compassion on a criminal” (210). Beyond questions about the justness of capital punishment, Wordsworth may have been most troubled by the inscription at the scene. The gibbet, after all, had mouldered, but an inscription was kept perennially fresh. The deceased are normally commemorated by an epitaph, and the young Wordsworth does find what seems to be presented as a version of an epitaph at the scene:

...on the turf
Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,
Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.
The monumental writing was engraven

In times long past, and still from year to year
By superstition of the neighbourhood
The grass is cleared away; and to this hour
The letters are all fresh and visible. (11: 291-298)

Wordsworth's *Essays Upon Epitaphs* are particularly illuminating to this passage, an epitaph presupposing, as Wordsworth says in the first of the *Essays* (verbally echoing the Spots of Time passage), “a Monument, upon which it is to engraven” (49). Such monuments, Wordsworth argues throughout the *Essays*, are intensely national. In the second of the *Essays*, Wordsworth treads familiar ground, criticizing Alexander Pope's epitaphs, saying that Pope's “sparkling and tuneful manner had bewitched the men of letters his Contemporaries, and corrupted the judgment of the Nation through all ranks of society” (75). To open the third of the *Essays*, Wordsworth similarly says, “I VINDICATE the rights and dignity of Nature; and...I cannot suffer any individual, however highly or deservedly honoured by my Countrymen, to stand in my way. If my notions are right, the Epitaphs of Pope cannot well be too severely condemned” (80).

Opening the *Essay* as one would open a tract dealing with vital matters of state, Wordsworth sees denouncing Pope's epitaphs as vital to his vindication of “the rights and dignity of Nature.”

Getting explicit about language, and evincing a strong Tookean bent, Wordsworth also says,

Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with: they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift...Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. (84-85)

Distinguishing between language as incarnation of thought versus language as mere clothing for

thought is engaging the doctrine of arbitrary signification.⁷ Granting such power to language – the power to be an awful instrument, “to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve” – is to view language the way that Tooke the statesman did, finding it to be an instrument for maintaining arbitrary, unjust social power. This is the view that, in a sense, motivates so many of the reviews of Wordsworth's work to regard his philosophy of language as a threat to the established order. As Wordsworth aptly sums it up in the third *Essay Upon Epitaphs*, “the taste, intellectual Power, and morals of a Country are inseparably linked in mutual dependence” (85).

It is on such grounds that Wordsworth feels he must denounce Pope and his epitaphs. The expression of epitaphs should be genuine and grown from local tradition. As Wordsworth points out, sepulchers that record only names and dates nevertheless often record many names within one family, and this is “a prolonged companionship, however shadowy; even a Tomb like this is a shrine to which the fancies of a scattered family may repair in pilgrimage...Such a frail memorial then is not without its tendency to keep families together; it feeds also local attachment, which is the tap-root of the tree of Patriotism” (93). So the monumental writing of an epitaph, for Wordsworth, fosters companionship to the past, building local attachment, upon which patriotism is built. Going back, now, to the Spots of Time episode, to which James Chandler refers when arguing that Wordsworth leaves off all radicalism and forges the resolution

7. Frances Ferguson's *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), approximately recognizes the doctrine of arbitrary signification being questioned in Wordsworth's writing about language, arguing that "linguistic incarnation" is not "a fixed form which can be arrived at and sustained" (xvi). Ferguson concludes that "Reading neither reconstitutes the self as a whole nor gives words any full or stable meaning, but reading does figure the temporary illusion of doing so" (250).

of a Burkean conservative, it is difficult to read the episode without some irony. As I have suggested, the Penrith beacon seems to speak more of England's defense and expansion of her borders than it does of humble local tradition. Also, it was characteristic of Wordsworth to view such things as gibbets radically. In this light, the fact that the community is bound by the perennial freshening of an inscription commemorating an executed murderer seems loaded with irony. Far from maintaining an effectual family shrine, the monumental writing that the young Wordsworth faces in the Spots of Time episode is a perpetual reminder of capital crime and capital punishment. Recalling the precise sequence of the episode, Wordsworth is first scared by the inscription, and then notes the Penrith beacon and the generally dreary scene, as if a troubling local element leads him to the realization of a troubling national element. On the whole, while the Spots of Time unquestionably represent the mind necessarily becoming lord and master over fear, it seems that the mind is confronted specifically with a troubling foundation for definition of community.

If in the Spots of Time there are still prevailing radical sympathies in Wordsworth, and he is troubled by the Penrith beacon, the gibbet, and what amounts to a bastardized epitaph, we can more readily see why he would in the climactic episode of *The Prelude* proclaim a state of mind as possessing “sovereignty within and peace at will,” and being “alone...genuine liberty.” As I have argued throughout this chapter – as the reviews of Wordsworth's work attest, and as Wordsworth's own work attests – definition of what is national is often at stake in Wordsworth. Imperiled from the very start as anti-establishment, the radical Wordsworth seems to opt for establishing a 'reign of taste,' or for delineating an imagined nation atop Snowdon. In this sense, I would generally agree with Chandler that Wordsworth's resolution is “a psychological

manifestation of a national character and a native tradition,” but I am less convinced that it is thoroughly Burkean. I would generally agree with M. H. Abrams's argument that Wordsworth's spiritual crisis is resolved by a theodicy of the individual mind; in this sense, we can again lean on Earl Wasserman's observation of an “eighteenth-century tendency to translate all ontologies into psychologies” (172). It seems, though, that this translation, in Wordsworth's case, is more nationally invested than Abrams allows, and in a different way than Chandler argues. As I have suggested, the Spots of Time episode in *The Prelude* seems to retain radical undertones.

Similarly, Wordsworth's vision on Mount Snowdon seems to include the delineation of an imaginary England fed by an undercurrent of philological tradition that is tangibly homeless.

If we question whether or not Wordsworth really wishes to retain his radicalism at the conclusion of the 1805 *Prelude*, we can look at the very conclusion. He speculates that his exaltation of the mind retains its validity even if

...too weak to tread the ways of truth,
This age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
By nations sink together (13: 431-435)

“Servitude” and “old idolatry” were two of the very things that the French Revolution sought to break down, and Wordsworth here continues to resist them. Even if actual “nations sink together” “to ignominy and shame,” Wordsworth maintains that “the mind of man becomes / A thousand times more beautiful than the earth / On which he dwells” (446-448). Wordsworth seems to concede defeat in actual revolution and in the status of his actual nation, but he maintains that what he can forge in his mind – fed by the undercurrent of the “homeless voice” – is far more important. Again, this conclusion does not generally differ from traditional readings

such as M. H. Abrams's or James Chandler's, insofar as it recognizes Wordsworth's exaltation of the power of the mind. But it is important to recognize the continued espousal of radicalism – as opposed to resignation to Burkean conservatism, or to spiritual concern divested of politics, and it is equally crucial to recognize how this continued espousal is engendered by the broad philological thinking developed throughout the prose and recognized in the reviews.

Perhaps the best synthesis of the philological concerns of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and the climactic episode on Snowdon comes from the third of the *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, where Wordsworth says,

...it is not only no fault but a primary requisite in an Epitaph that it shall contain thoughts and feelings which are in the substance common-place, and even trite. It is grounded upon the universal intellectual property of man; – sensations which all men have felt and feel in some degree daily and hourly; – truths whose very interest and importance have caused them to be unattended to, as things which could take care of themselves. But it is required that these truths should be instinctively ejaculated, or should rise irresistibly from circumstances; in a word that they should be uttered in such connection as shall make it felt that they are not adopted – not spoken by rote, but perceived in their whole compass with the freshness and clearness of an original intuition. The Writer must introduce the truth with such accompaniment as shall imply that he has mounted to the sources of things – penetrated the dark cavern from which the River that murmurs in every one's ear has flowed from generation to generation. (78-79)

The belief in “freshness and clearness,” and the idea that “these truths should be instinctively ejaculated,” are much like the idea of the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” from the Preface. This conviction in genuineness and purity is also figured in the “common-place” thoughts and feelings, and the “sensations which all men have felt and feel in some degree daily and hourly,” which echo the Preface's maxims about rustic English. This nod toward a democratic cultural foundation for language is interestingly deepened by the notion of “universal intellectual property of man,” which, while highly abstract, seems to reference a broad cultural

basis. In that sense, Wordsworth seems to be talking about something much like the *Vox Populi* of the "Essay Supplementary." Upon this point, we recall also two of the more sympathetic reviews of Wordsworth's work: the 1815 *British Review*, which lauded "language immemorially spoken by men and women and children," and the 1814 *Quarterly*, which attributed the resiliency of English to the fact that there was "too much poetry in the mouths of the people." Perhaps most interesting in this passage from the *Essays Upon Epitaphs* is the final idea: that of mounting "to the sources of things" – to the "dark cavern from which the River that murmurs in every one's ear has flowed from generation to generation." The metaphor given by Wordsworth, here, is the very same that is given by Coleridge in "Kubla Khan," and which Wordsworth himself gives for the "homeless voice" on Snowdon. A one-time expatriate, literally marginalized by much contemporary criticism, Wordsworth seems to be seeking discursive space via a *Volksstimme* "philosophically characterized," as he puts it near the end of the "Essay Supplementary." Again recalling the "Essay Supplementary," articulating the *Vox Populi* of the past and future English people, Wordsworth must create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed by an untrustworthy present English people.

For Wordsworth, the mind of man *must* become "A thousand times more beautiful than the earth / On which he dwells," because his own actual native land has been inhospitable. The Preface's maxims about language, the debates in contemporary reviews over language and radicalism, such ideas as a *Vox Populi* and "People, philosophically characterized," imperiled Englishness in the wartime sonnets, and intellectual delineation on Mount Snowdon all have a strong philological underscoring. Recognizing this underscoring allows us to observe the subtle clearing of discursive space for a sort of nationalism in Wordsworth that may not otherwise be

readily visible.

Chapter Two: A Massy Circlet of Reconstruction: Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*

I. Scott's Historicism and the Pictish Question

I began this study by considering the Advertisement to Walter Scott's 1816 novel *The Antiquary*, in which Scott says that he has "sought my principle personages in the class of society who are the last to feel the influence of that general polish which assimilates to each other the manners of different nations" (3). When Scott justifies this thinking with the rationale that "the lower orders are less restrained by the habit of suppressing their feelings, and because I agree with Mr Wordsworth, that they seldom fail to express them in the strongest and most powerful language" (3), he is directly referring to the philological concerns that we have observed in the previous chapter. I have suggested that Scott's Advertisement should make us wonder why a novel written on the heels of Waterloo (1816) and set amidst fears of French invasion (1794) takes interest in the assimilation of manners of different nations and asserts language's power to "give pathos to...grief, and dignity to...resentment" (3). If the answer holds in Scott as it does in Wordsworth – that early philology was a way to imagine national identity in a time of upheaval – then we are adding a significant layer to our understanding of Scott's historicism. Specifically, Scott was drawn to philology as a way to reconstruct Scottish history.

Much criticism has characterized Scott's historicism as a dialog between past and future, arguing for varying degrees of compromise. There is the classic reading of the middling hero – Alexander Welsh's *The Hero of the Waverley Novels* – focusing on pragmatic compromise. There is Marilyn Butler's argument, in *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries*, that when Scott begins writing novels, he has been readied by the changing times "to turn his mind to

reconstruction and compromise” (109); “Scott’s point,” Butler argues, “...is that a stiff-necked adherence to the ideals of the past, deriving as they do from a more primitive society, becomes a deadly self-indulgence, anachronistic, and as pointless as it is cruel” (110). More recently, where a reading such as Marlon B. Ross’s “Romancing the Nation-State: The Poetics of Romantic Nationalism” allows the past more importance, moving forward is still dominant theme, as Ross suggests that Scott, in the same vein as Edmund Burke, desires “formal resolution of social disruptions and historical change into the harmonies of organic growth based on traditional values” (67). As is implied, Ross reads Scott as being focused on seeing the growth of a modern *British* nation.

Critics have also suggested that Scott's work is more than a mere recording of this dialog between past and future -- that the work itself participates in that dialog. For instance, L. M. Findlay’s “‘Perilous Linguists’: Scots, Wha Hae their Foucault Read” argues that in Scott’s story “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror,” for example, national poetry and music are a “locus of contestation of political change, and a locus of consolation once that change is deemed irreversible” (37). Taking this sort of argument a step further, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism*, by Anne Rigney, suggests that Scott is drawn to the historical novel as a hybrid – that Scott “calls into question an easy separation of fictional narrative and historical fact” (16). Scott’s mode, according to Rigney, is “paradigmatic for the fact that imperfection and chronic dissatisfaction are an endemic part of all historical writing, indeed of representation *tout court*” (58). Rigney’s argument suggests that Scott was drawn to a way of engaging with Scottish history in a malleable way. Findlay and Rigney suggest that, in addition to practical political compromise, there is in Scott intellectual consolation and indeed preservation through intellectual reconstruction. For Rigney, recreating a past is a way of coping

with dissatisfaction with outcome.

The general argument of this study is that in the Romantic period, early philology was beginning to be looked to as a way of reconstructing the past in order to define the present. Because of the history of Scotland, Walter Scott presents a fascinating manifestation of this sort of nationalism. *The Antiquary* is particularly relevant to consideration of philological nationalism because philology figures prominently in the novel. Katie Trumpener's *Bardic Nationalism* argues that in the Scottish community of *The Antiquary*, there is a "common longing for a lost past that they remember, mourn, and re-create in very different ways" (123). Though Trumpener highlights the importance of Bardic tradition, the dimension of *The Antiquary* that continues to be underplayed in criticism is, curiously, the antiquarian field of philology.

Recognizing Scott's interest in philology is, though closely related, distinct from talking about the presence of Scots in the novels. Representing Scots speech is important, for as David Murison has pointed out, Scott to a great extent introduced English readers to Scottishness in prose. Scott's goal is, as Murison puts it, "to paint Scottish 'manners', to show the impact of Scottish history on the Scottish people individually and severally, and to interpret Scotland and the Scottish way of life to the world at large" (209). As Murison further argues, one of Scott's chief means was Scots speech. It is telling that Scott added almost 200 words to the English language, and of them, Murison demonstrates, few of them are actual neologisms; they are mostly Scots, and Scott got them into the dictionary "merely by reviving or introducing them from some out-of-the-way original and by his use making them acceptable to a generation that had gone all romantic" (218). This sort of activity is undoubtedly part of representing what Scott has in mind when he talks about the power of language in the Advertisement to *The Antiquary*, but what makes *The Antiquary* distinct from his other novels that also represent Scots speech is

its theoretical engagement with philology.

Philology enters *The Antiquary* in the form of what was called 'the Pictish Question.' As alluded to by Sir Arthur Wardour and Jonathan Oldbuck, during their heated debate in the first volume of the novel, the Picts were viewed as the founders of the medieval Kingdom of Scotland. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, a hot debate raged over the origin of the Picts – whether they were a Celtic or a Gothic people. While it should have been a purely academic anthropological issue, the Pictish Question was strongly inflected by nationalism and centered on language, with the major interlocutors employing the methodology of the emerging discipline of philology. Scott was deeply interested in the Pictish Question, writing impassioned reviews of major pieces in the debate and corresponding about it. Nevertheless, Scott criticism has paid very little attention to the Pictish Question. In 1951, Roland M. Smith wrote a brief article in *Modern Language Notes* titled “Sir Walter Scott and the Pictish Question.”⁸ In the intervening years, a handful of studies have been written about Scott’s interest in linguistics, and almost nothing has been written about Scott and the Pictish Question. These facts are surprising when we note that there has been substantial critical attention given to Scott’s interest in Scottish history, and that the Pictish question was central to Scottish history.

In exploring questions of Scottish history and Celtic pride in Scott's writing, we are perhaps more apt to think of the Ballad Revival and the controversy surrounding the Ossian poems. Being related primitivist discourses, we find some of the same people dealing with both the Pictish Question and the Ossian poems. John Pinkerton and Joseph Ritson were arguably the two most prominent combatants over the Pictish Question. Pinkerton received substantial

8. Smith's article is limited to a sketch of the debate, Scott's opinion on the matter, and brief acknowledgment of the debate arising in *The Antiquary*.

material aid and collegial correspondence from none other than Thomas Percy (famous for the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*) while researching and writing *An Inquiry into the History of Scotland Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III*. When Scott was making his own significant contribution to the Ballad Revival, with his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, he was keenly interested in the opinion of Ritson, saying in a letter to George Ellis,

Upon my return I was agreeably surprized by receiving a visit from no less a Man than Ritson himself who spent two days at my little Cottage. You will readily believe it gave me great pleasure to have an opportunity of consulting the most rigid of our British Antiquaries upon the publications with which I am threatening the world. I was particularly desirous to give him every information in my power concerning the authenticity of my Border Ballads & I believe I succeeded perfectly in removing every doubt from his mind. (194-195)

Hugh Blair, a Scotsman who, though not figuring into the debate over the Picts, was one of the more prominent philologists of the day, was also arguably the leading Ossian apologist, writing a critical dissertation that appeared in most editions of *Ossian* from 1765 on. The Ossian controversy does surface in *The Antiquary*, when, late in the novel, Scott tells us of Hector MacIntyre, “like many a sturdy Celt, he imagined the honour of his country and native language connected with the authenticity of these popular poems, and would have fought knee-deep, or forfeited life and land, rather than have given up a line of them” (243). We can understand Scott's interest in the “rigid” authority of Ritson on the authenticity of his own poetic relics when we see, in this passage from *The Antiquary*, the explicit connection that Scott makes between language and national pride in the controversy over the poems.

This same connection is repeatedly made in the fascinating discourse on the Picts. Pinkerton, joined most notably by Thomas Innes, took the position that the Picts were Gothic, and Ritson, along with George Chalmers (among others), argued that the Picts were Celtic. Alluding to his own motives in a letter to Thomas Percy, Pinkerton says, “So far as I have gone I

find that it is to the most violent and pitiful national prejudices alone that we are indebted for the obscurity of our early history” (57). While Pinkerton suggests that he desired only to illuminate the past, the sort of current prejudice that inflected the issue became even clearer after Pinkerton published his *An Inquiry into the History of Scotland Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III*.

George Chalmers, in his *Caledonia*, which responded to Pinkerton, posits that “The Celts enjoyed, from their earliest progenitors, an invincible attachment to their own language which naturally produced a strong antipathy to innovations, in their ancient tongue, or adoptions, from the speech of those, whom their hatred viewed, as invaders, or oppressors” (220). Chalmers goes on to suggest that this quality has been handed down through the centuries, saying,

Neither the lapse of time, nor the change of circumstances, have at all diminished the strong attachment of the Celtic people to their own language, or their aversion from the intrusion of hostile tongues. These passions form a striking feature, in the character of their undoubted descendants, in the present age. It was one of the fundamental maxims of the Celtic Bards, to preserve their own language. Actuated by this principle, the ancient Britons, in Wales, and the Scoto-Irish, in North-Britain, tenaciously maintained their own speech, and obstinately resist the adoption of the English language, whatever may be its improvements, or its use(s). (220)

As if possessed by the very stubborn linguistic nationalism of which he speaks, Chalmers considers Gothic tribes and their linguistic morals much differently than he does Celts. He argues that wherever Gothic tribes spread, conquering, in Celtic lands, “the Gothic intruders not only adopted the names of the rivers, mountains, and other places, that the more lively genius of the Celts had imposed, from a more energetic, and descriptive speech; but, the Gothic colonists borrowed many terms from the more opulent language of their Celtic predecessors” (221).

Chalmers continues a short space later, “The Saxons, who settled in Britain, were prompted, by their poverty of speech, to follow the example of their Gothic fathers” (221), and “It was owing to that barrenness of speech, and dullness of apprehension, that we see so little description, or

variety, in the names of places, in the countries, which were settled by the Gothic colonists” (222). Chalmers could hardly evince more “national prejudice” in assessing the history of linguistic interactions between Celts and Goths.

When Scott waded into the actual Pictish Question, while not sounding so jingoistic as Chalmers, he clearly felt that Pinkerton's side of the question had wounded his sense of identity.

In 1801, Scott wrote to George Ellis,

The history of the Scottish language is involved in great difficultie[s]. If we suppose with Pinkerton the Picts to have spoken a dialect of the Teutonic that no doubt would give us the ground work of lowland Scottish but not to mention other difficulties attending this opinion I think it is impossible to show that there are any Teutonick words in our dialect which may not be traced to the Anglo Saxon, whereas such must unquestionably have occurred had the Scottish been founded upon the language spoken by a separate Gothic tribe. The introduction of the French I take to have been coeval with the feudal system the terms of which are chiefly Norman. (188-9)

Scott adds later in 1801, in another letter to Ellis,

These vile pictis still disturb my slumbers. I admit the weight of Pinkerton's arguments – but still – Galloway was you know a distinct tributary province during the reign of David Ist. Its inhabitants are generally averred to have been of Pictish origin – now if that fact be well authenticated down falls the whole system of Pinkerton for the Galwegians from their names, customs, & in short from every distinguishing mark which we can observe regarding them, were most unquestionably Celts. It is true Pinkerton talks of an Irish colony of Scots settled in Galloway but I think this falls short of a satisfactory solution. (191)

Scott does not explicitly admit it, the Pictish question is for him a matter of national pride, and one that he was losing sleep over. Scott hints at the problem in contending that any Teutonic words in their dialect are come from Anglo-Saxon, and in pointing specifically to the Norman conquest. If the Picts were a Gothic tribe, then the identity of contemporaneous Scotsmen is no longer as distinct from Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Englishmen.

Joseph Ritson's theory, in his *Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots*, is that “[the Picts] must...have emigrated from Celtica or Gaul, and, most probably, too, have been a maritime

people” (85). This, of course, makes them originally geographically very near any Gothic tribes. The most stark root distinction is language – Celtic as opposed to Gothic. And, indeed, with so little Pictish residue left, like Pinkerton, Chalmers, and Scott, Ritson seeks to reconstruct the existence of the Picts through philology. He posits that, “Their occupation of the northernmost parts of Scotland is further manifested by the name of the *Petland*, *Pightland*, or *Pictland*, now *Pentland*, *firth*, a narrow sea between Caithness and the Orkneys, and of the *Pentland skerries*, certain rocks in the same sea” (104-105). By Ritson's etymology, *Pentland* simply borrows the name of the people. The etymology of the name itself was also debated, with Ritson rejecting the claim that Pict comes from the Latin word *Pictus* (referring to the Picts' reputed penchant for tattooing themselves); Ritson maintains that “With respect to the name of *Picts*, or *Picti*, it is most probably that which they gave themselves” (92). So, barring *Pict* itself, which was, Ritson claimed, made into a place name, only one word generally agreed upon to be Pictish survived to nineteenth-century Britain, *Peanfahel*, and Ritson goes to great lengths to establish its etymology. He writes,

The Roman wall, [Bede] says, (meaning that of Antoninus) began at almost two miles distance from the monastery of *AEbercurnig*, now Abercorn, on the west, at a place which, in the Pictish language (*sermone Pictorum*), was called *Peanfahel*, but, in the English or Saxon language, *Peneltun*. Now this identical place Nennius, a Briton, calls *Pengaul*, (the wall, which he erroneously confounds with that of Severus, being, he says, in the British tongue called *Gual*,) which town was called in Scottish *Cenail*, but in the English *Peneltun*. It is, therefore, evident that the word *Pean* in Pictish, as *Pen* in British, and *Cean* in Scottish or Irish, signified *head*, and *fahel* in the first of those languages, as *gaul* in the second, (both indeed, borrowing corruptly from the Latin *vallum*,) a *wall*: meaning, like *Cenail*, the head of the wall: and, consequently, that there was some analogy between the British language and that of the Picts, each being a branch from the Celtic stem (121-123)

This from Ritson is comparative linguistics, thought out and written in the same tone as Jones, Tooke, Schlegel, Rask, Grimm, and, later, Bopp. What have seen from Chalmers, too, employs

the tone and methodology of comparative linguistics in arguing for the Celtic autonomy of the Picts. After saying that the indigenous southern Britons, the Caledonians, and the Picts did not at all systematically adopt Latin from the Romans, he says of the few nouns that they borrowed, “Such words, in the British, and Pictish language, as seem to the eye of cursory observation to exhibit some analogy, in their form, and meaning, owe such appearances to their formation from roots, which sprung originally from a common source. It cannot, then, be said, with truth, or propriety, that the Celts borrowed, from the Latins, or the Latins, from the Celts” (220). And the philological bent to the Pictish question is perhaps expressed most succinctly when Chalmers says that “language is the true genealogy of nations” (214). Similarly, it again seems that Walter Scott feels his own national genealogy in peril when he writes, with a hint of stubborn pride, in a review of his friend Ellis's *Specimens of the Early English Poets*,

The English and Scottish languages are in earlier times exactly similar; and yet, from the circumstances of the two countries, they must necessarily have had a separate origin...there must have been some other source from which the Scoto-Teutonic is derived, than the Anglo-Saxon spoken in Lothian. This grand source we conceive to have been the language of the ancient Picts; nor would it be easy to alter our opinion. (157)

Along with his professed reluctance to deviate from his opinion, we must note Scott's philological method of tracing sources and of speculating about unknown languages behind language. Speculation about unknown languages becomes, in early philology, a mode of reconstructing the past.

II. Philological Reconstruction

In *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature*, Richard Turley discusses something called 'asterisk-reality.' This philological method is a key phenomenon to bear in mind when considering the Pictish Question and Walter Scott's interest in it. Turley's chief source is the linguist Tom Shippey, who defines and discusses asterisk-reality with some fascinating examples – examples that really illuminate what is going on in the debate over the Picts. Shippey points out that

the characteristic activity of the philologist came, in the end, to be 'reconstruction.' This might be no more than verbal. From the circumstance that English and German both change the vowel of 'man' in the plural to 'men' or *Manner*, you could infer that Primitive Germanic, of which not one word has ever been recorded, would have said **manniz*, producing as usual 'i-mutation.' The * is the sign of the reconstructed form, proposed by August Schleicher in the 1860s and used widely ever since. (20)

Further on this point, Shippey says about philologists, “The whole of their science conditioned them to the acceptance of what one might call '*-' or 'asterisk-reality,' that which no longer existed but could with 100 per cent certainty be inferred” (22). And for philologists, beyond the reconstruction of language, there lay also the reconstruction of history. As Shippey says, “The thousands of pages of 'dry as dust' theorems about language-change, sound-shifts and ablaut-gradations were...an essential and natural basis for the far more exciting speculations about the wide plains of 'Gothia' and the hidden, secret trade routes across the primitive forests of the North” (21). Shippey gives one such compelling example of how history could be reconstructed, revolving around Attila the Hun. He notes that

Attila, though a Hun, an enemy of the Goths under Theodrid and a byword for bloody ferocity, nevertheless does not appear to bear a barbarian name. 'Attila' is the diminutive form of the Gothic word for 'father,' *atta*: it means 'little father,' or even 'dad,' and it suggests very strongly the presence of many Goths in Attila's

conquering armies who found loot and success much more attractive than any questions of saving the West, Rome, or civilisation!...Atta, Attila: what's in a name? One answer is, a total revaluation of history. (16)

The type of thing that Shippey recounts as having gone on with philological examination of Gothic history is precisely what we see going on in the Pictish Question: linguistic vestiges become clues to reconstructing the history of a people. National prejudices obscure history in general and linguistic history in particular, then national pride armed with the new weapons of philology seeks to reconstruct history through language. Indeed, the Pictish Question centers on a fascinating nexus of philology and history embodied in *Peanfahel*, the one linguistic vestige of Pictish, which we have seen discussed at length by Ritson. A wall of defense preserves a people, as does, in the ethics of philological reconstruction, a word. *Peanfahel* was (presumably) a construction by the Picts to preserve themselves, and, over a thousand years later, it was a means of reconstructing Pictish history for the preservers of Scottishness.

As I have suggested, Scott's fascination with philologically pervaded reconstruction of history is nowhere in his corpus so prevalent as in *The Antiquary*. Scott plunges explicitly into the Pictish Question in Chapter Six, as Sir Arthur Wardour and Jonathan Oldbuck engage in a heated exchange on the subject in the presence of Mr. Lovel. Lovel, and we as readers, are introduced to the debate by the following dialogue:

“Why, man, there was once a people called the Piks.”

“More properly *Picts*,” interrupted the baronet.

“I say the *Pikar*, *Pihar*, *Piochtar*, *Piaghter*, or *Peughtar*,” vociferated Oldbuck; “they spoke a Gothic dialect.”

“Genuine Celtic,” again asseverated the knight.

“Gothic! Gothic, I'll go to death upon it!” counter-asseverated the squire.

“Why, gentlemen, I conceive that is a dispute which may be easily settled by philologists, if there are any remains of the language.” (48)

It is a matter, indeed, of philology, as Lovel points out in his first assertion in the debate.

Wardour and Oldbuck proceed to each name the respective philologists - highlighted by Ritson, Chalmers, and Pinkerton - with whom they side on the question of the one surviving word. And the knight and squire simultaneously inform Lovel of the one surviving word: *Penval*. The two combatants then briefly sketch the debate over the word (which we have seen extensively in Ritson). Lovel expresses doubts about the task reconstruction from one word, saying, “It is a rather narrow foundation to build a hypothesis upon,” (48), and further saying, after Wardour and Oldbuck debate which half of the word was borrowed from another language, and from which other language it was borrowed, “The Piks, or Picts...must have been singularly poor in dialect, since in the only remaining word of their vocabulary, and that consisting of only two syllables, they have been confessedly obliged to borrow one of them from another language...But what strikes me most, is the poverty of the language which has left so slight vestiges behind it” (49). Lovel, here, is picking up the question with which Chalmers deals when Chalmers speaks of what he claims to be the proportionally sparse and uncouth remnants of Gothic dialects left behind by conquering Gothic tribes. Linguistic residue implies cultural value, and Wardour is keenly aware of this implication, quickly remonstrating Lovel, saying, “You are in error...it was a copious language, and they were a great and powerful people – built two steeples; one at Brechin, one at Abernethy. The Pictish maidens of the blood-royal were kept at Edinburgh Castle, thence called *Castrum Puellarum*” (49). Wardour insists that the Picts were a significant part of Scottish history, and he suggests that this fact goes hand in hand with their having had a copious language. And, again, it is through philology that the reconstruction of Pictish history

takes place, as Wardour implies that the common name – The Maiden Castle – for Edinburgh Castle indicates something about Pictish sovereignty.

After Oldbuck sarcastically attempts to refute Wardour's claim about Edinburgh Castle, Wardour goes on to point to the list of Pictish kings, which appears in Henry Maule's *The History of the Picts* (1706). Wardour observes, “Half of them have the Celtic patronymic *Mac* prefixed” (49). In response to this last bit of philological evidence, Oldbuck mocks the throat-rattling phonology of the Celtic names, and then he insinuates that the history of Pictish kings was dreamed up by crazy Highlanders. The debate then quickly deteriorates when Oldbuck says that he little esteems Henry Maule, and when Wardour replies that Oldbuck is being irreverent of ancestry and social rank; Oldbuck retorts that he is prouder of himself being the descendant of Aldobrand Oldenbuck than he would be if he were the descendant of Wardour's ancestors, “not one of whom, I suppose, could write their own name” (50). When Wardour informs Oldbuck that the name of one of his distinguished ancestors “is written fairly with his own hand in the earliest copy of the Ragman-roll” (50), Oldbuck snaps back that the fact “only serves to shew that he was one of the earliest who set the mean example of submitting to Edward I. What have you to say for the stainless loyalty of your family, Sir Arthur, after such a backsliding as that?” (50) At this, Wardour goes off in a huff. This exchange shows the subtle connections in the minds of the characters of the novel and the academics of Scott's day between philology, history, and nationalism. Though the steps in between Celtic patronymics and Scottish submission to Edward I make little sense, it is no coincidence that Scottish submission is where Scott brings the reader by the end of a passage that is initially about philology.

As Chalmers, Ritson, and Pinkerton engage in the Pictish Question in the context of a larger consideration of the early history of Scotland, so does Oldbuck. When Lovel and Oldbuck

first meet, riding together in a coach in Chapter One, Oldbuck threatens the coachman with legal punishment if he does not get one of the horses reshod, but Oldbuck's motive is likely, according to Scott, "his desire of shewing his companion a Pict's camp...about a hundred yards distant from the place where this interruption took place" (10). This interruption comes shortly after Lovel inquires as to the subject of the folio that Oldbuck is carrying in the coach, which we learn is "a book illustrative of the Roman remains in Scotland" (10). As Lovel will soon find out, Oldbuck is keenly interested in the Roman conquest of the Caledonians. Once in Fairport, Oldbuck takes Lovel to a piece of property that he owns, the Kaim of Kinprunes, points out to Lovel an earthen wall and ditch, and then proceeds to elaborate his claim that it was the site of the final conflict between Agricola and the Caledonians. Oldbuck's strongest piece of tangible evidence of his claim is a stone bearing "a sacrificing vessel, and the letters A. D. L. L. which may stand, without much violence, for *Agricola Dicavit Libens Lubens* [Agricola willingly and happily dedicated this]" (29). That a linguistic vestige such as this could be used for such a drastic reconstruction of history is justified, according to Oldbuck, by the fact that "the Dutch antiquaries claim Caligula as the founder of a light-house, on the sole authority of the letters C. C. P. F., which they interpret *Caius Caligula Pharum Fecit* [Gaius Caligula built the lighthouse]" (29). As he claims the Dutch antiquaries do, Oldbuck reconstructs Agricola's history from scant linguistic evidence. This reconstruction is of such importance to Oldbuck that the parsimonious antiquary paid a steep price for the property; as he tells Lovel, "...it was a national concern" (29).

Oldbuck's interest in Agricola's conquest of Caledonia is further elucidated some chapters later when he fondly believes Lovel to have aspirations as a belletristic author and therefore suggests to him that he write an epic poem on the subject of "The battle between the

Caledonians and the Romans – The Caledoniad; or, Invasion Repelled – Let that be the title – It will suit the present taste, and you may throw in a touch of the times” (107). When Lovel points out that the Roman invasion was not repelled, Oldbuck says, “No; but you are a poet – free of the corporation, and as little bound down to truth or probability as Virgil himself – You may defeat the Romans in spite of Tacitus” (107). The series of passages concerning Oldbuck's archeological endeavors lays bare what is at stake in the discourse: nationalism – 'the present taste,' 'the times' – calling to mind the rhetoric of Pinkerton, Chalmers, and Ritson. We must note at that if, as Ann Rigney suggests, the historical novel appeals to Walter Scott because it is a sort of hybrid, allowing Scott to question “an easy separation of fictional narrative and historical fact” (16), then here in Volume One of *The Antiquary*, Oldbuck suggests a model that takes philological reconstruction to its most extreme end, appropriating it as *revision*.

Oldbuck's devotion to philological reconstruction is perhaps most starkly manifest when he, his nephew Hector, and Edie Ochiltree visit the Meicklebackit house to obtain Elspeth's story of the fate of Eveline Neville. Upon entering the household, Oldbuck hears Elspeth “chanting forth an old ballad in a wild and doleful recitative” (310). There on urgent business, Oldbuck says, “It's a historical ballad...a genuine and undoubted fragment of minstrelsy! – Percy would admire its simplicity – Ritson could not impugn its authenticity” (310). We hear of the same players – Percy and Ritson – as in the philological discourse over the Picts, and the stakes in Oldbuck hearing this ballad seem to be the same, as Oldbuck says, after noting that the Ballad dealt with Glenallan's Earl meeting opposition on the way to the Battle of Harlaw, “I wish...she would resume that canticle, or legendary fragment – I always suspected there was a skirmish of cavalry before the main battle of the Harlaw” (312). Oldbuck clearly implies that such antiquarian work has the power to confirm desired reconstructions of history.

That such work is of paramount value to Oldbuck is clear in his myopic attention to Elspeth's chanting. After Oldbuck rashly determines that Ritson could not impugn the ballad's authenticity, Ochiltree says, "Aye, but it is a sad thing...to see human nature sae far owerta'en as to be skirling at auld sangs on the back of a loss like her's" (310-311), but Oldbuck's response is, "Hush, hush!... – she has gotten the thread of the story again" (311). Ochiltree evidently already knows (on probably better evidence than Oldbuck does) that the ballad is authentic, but his concern is more with Elspeth's dotage in the face of the loss of her grandson; Oldbuck is enthralled by antiquarian interest. Whereas we come to find out that the fate of Eveline Neville – which Oldbuck has come to Elspeth to find out – is worth a fortune, Oldbuck says upon hearing part of Elspeth's singing, "Chafron!...equivalent, perhaps, to cheveron – the word's worth a dollar" (311).

Ochiltree finally manages to get Oldbuck back on track by saying, "If your honor pleases...had ye not better proceed to the business that brought us a' here? I'se engage to get ye the sang ony time" (312). At this, Oldbuck submits, but he never does get the ballad from Ochiltree. Delivery of the ballad by Ochiltree would render Oldbuck far less an agent in the discourse – it would minimize his role as historicist. Elspeth is so senile as to be less a human than she is an old text (indeed, it is fitting that Elspeth dies in this scene) for Oldbuck to discover, interpret, and appropriate.

III. Philological Invasion

It is entirely fitting that Oldbuck suggest to Lovel that 'The Caledoniad' would 'suit the present taste,' and that he 'may throw in a touch of the times,' because, as I have suggested, there is a clear and likely nationalistic backdrop to *The Antiquary*. Set in 1794, when fear of French invasion was rampant in Britain, we find the characters in the novel motivated by and alluding to fear of French invasion in several places in the novel. In Chapter Six, Oldbuck reports to the Wardours that “The worst sort of frenzy, a military frenzy, hath possessed man, woman, and child” (45), and Isabella's response is, “And high time, I think...when we are threatened with invasion from abroad, and insurrection at home” (45-46). The gentry's fears are even shared by the beggar Ochiltree, as he tries to diffuse the duel between Hector and Lovel by saying, “Gang hame, gang hame, like gude lads – the French will be ower to herry us ane o' thae days, and ye'll hae fighting aneugh” (162). And the fear clearly sweeps the entire community at the end of the novel, as the beacons are (mistakenly) lit. In spite of the fear of martial invasion, interest in philology and history consistently takes the place of interest in current politics.

In spite of the ancient Scottish title being extended in Lovel at the end of the novel, *The Antiquary* ultimately makes no gesture toward future political changes; it is, rather, all about antiquarianism. During the day trip to St. Ruth's, Isabella Wardour sets the stage for a thematic epiphany by noting that while “The meanest tower of a freebooting baron, or squire, who lived by his lance and broad-sword, is consecrated by its appropriate legend,” the monks who served as historians for the nation are little remembered (133). Lovel's answer is that quiet learning does not make a drastic enough impression on people: “The eras, by which the vulgar compute time, have always reference to some period of fear and tribulation, and they date by a tempest, an

earthquake, or burst of civil commotion” (133). Set up, here, are alternative ways of defining the Scottish nation in 1794. As we have seen already, military frenzy is gripping the nation, but *The Antiquary* consistently shifts the actual battleground to antiquarianism in general, and philology in particular. Lovel is a soldier, but his real purpose in the novel is the unearthing of Scottish history; he is truly, as Arthur Wardour mistakenly calls him early in the novel, “Mr...Shovel” (51).

The other characters, too, are consistently used to paint a picture of abstract nationalism, as opposed to a nationalism manifested in political contest. While Wardour's zeal concerning the notion of Scottish sovereignty is clear enough in his debate with Oldbuck, over the Picts, he has no real aspiration to affect the current political lot of Scotland – to tear down the Hanoverian rule in favor of the Stuart, for instance. Scott says about Wardour, “His father, Sir Anthony, had been a Jacobite, and had displayed all the enthusiasm of that party, while it could be served with words only...upon the approach of the Highland army in 1745, it would appear that the worthy baronet's zeal became a little more moderate just when its warmth was of most consequence” (37). The result, Scott continues, was that while Sir Anthony Wardour blustered yet delayed, the then-provost of Fairport – none other than Jonathan Oldbuck's father – seized Knockwinnock in the name of George II, and Sir Anthony and young Arthur were sent off to the Tower of London, only to be later released upon discovery that they had done nothing more than pay lip-service to Bonnie Prince Charlie. Completing the picture, Scott says that Sir Arthur, “in his more advanced years, as he became too lazy or unwieldy for field-sports, he supplied them by now and then reading Scotch history; and, having gradually acquired a taste for antiquities, though neither very deep nor very correct, he became a crony of his neighbor, Mr Oldbuck of Monkbarns, and a joint labourer with him in his antiquarian pursuits” (38). What emerges, here, is the picture of an

historicist – a Scotsman interested in a purely abstract sort of nationalism. Wardour has no real interest in effecting present change; he is interesting in reconstructing histories that suit his sensibilities.

Of how Oldbuck's antiquarianism compares to Wardour's, Scott tells us, early in the novel, “The faith of Sir Arthur, as an antiquary, was boundless, and Mr Oldbuck (notwithstanding the affair of the Praetorium at the Kaim of Kinprunes) was much more scrupulous in receiving legends as current and authentic coin” (38). But while more shrewd an antiquarian than Wardour, Oldbuck is perhaps every bit as zealous and as myopic in his zeal. When Isabella Wardour wonders why martial history is remembered more than quiet learning, before Lovel offers his answer, Oldbuck is befuddled. This befuddlement rises from his myopic zeal for intellectual nationalism, which is explicitly manifest in the day-trip to St. Ruth's. About the comparative disregard for quiet learning, he laments to Lovel, “to put our ancient chronicles, our noble histories, our learned commentaries, and national muniments, to such offices of contempt and subjection, has greatly degraded our nation” (131). For Oldbuck, the nation is significantly defined by attention to its history.

When Wardour accuses Oldbuck of falling into grumbling about current affairs, Oldbuck says that he is “a tame grumbler...I neither make nor mar king...but pray heartily for our own sovereign, pay scot and lot, and grumble at the exciseman” (47). Oldbuck is a loyalist, but wishes for no part in impacting current political arrangements. Oldbuck is unequivocally a Scotsman, in spite of his German ancestry, his pride in which ancestry owing entirely to Aldobrand Oldenbuck's status as a typographer. When debating Wardour about the Picts, Oldbuck's criticism of Wardour's ancestor's submission to Edward II follows his conviction that “my descent from that great restorer of learning is more creditable to me as a man of letters, than

if I had numbered in my genealogy all the brawling, bullet-headed, iron-fisted, old Gothic barons since the days of Crenthemnach-cryme – not one of whom, I suppose, could write their own name” (50). What consistently emerges in Oldbuck's character is that a devotion to intellectualism is far more important than political allegiance and martial manifestations of nationalism.

As sketching salient characteristics of Lovel, Wardour, and Oldbuck suggests, the real battleground in the novel is antiquarian. Even before the end of the novel makes clear that there is no French invasion actually underway, we can see a different invasion consistently highlighted by Scott. At the heart of the Pictish Question is the desire on the part of the Celtic apologists to deny Germanic linguistic invasion. At the heart of *The Antiquary* is an attempted invasion, much of it occurring linguistically, by the German charlatan Dousterswivel.

There is a hint of Dousterwivel's status in the novel as early as the Chapter Six dialogue just quoted between Oldbuck and Isabella. After Isabella suggests that it is high time for military frenzy, Oldbuck says, “But what says Sir Arthur, whose dreams are of standing armies and German oppression?” (46). Sir Arthur does indeed find himself under German oppression in the novel, having yielded himself to the knavery of Dousterswivel. We have already seen how important antiquarian excavation - both literal and figurative - is in the novel, and Dousterswivel continues this theme, albeit antithetically. The etymology of his name begins to suggest as much, coming from 'dowse,' which is to use a divining rod in search of water or minerals, and 'swivel,' meaning to twist. A very concrete manifestation of this etymology comes in the first scene in which we see Dousterswivel: “Holding the forked ends of the wand each between a finger and thumb, and thus keeping the rod upright, he proceeded to pace the ruined aisles and cloisters, followed by the rest of the company...the assistants observed the rod to turn in his

fingers, although he pretended to hold it very tight” (135). Dousterswivel practices and represents false or twisted literal and figurative searching or digging into the ground.

Though his archeological enterprises are phony, Dousterswivel does succeed in digging into the pockets of Sir Arthur Wardour. At the same time, though, and even more pervasively, Dousterswivel invades the novel linguistically. Scott is consistently at pains to write Dousterswivel's German butchery of the language of the Scottish characters. One of the first things that Dousterswivel says in the novel is, “If you pleashe, gentlemans and ladies, and ashking pardonsh of Sir Arthur and Miss Wardour, and this worthy clergymansh, and my goot friend Mr Oldenbuck, who is my countrymansh, and of goot young Mr Lofel also, I think it is all owing to de hand of glory” (133). In addition to his phonetic massacre, Dousterswivel alters Oldbuck's name to its German form, seemingly deliberately, for Dousterswivel calls Oldbuck his countryman.

In a further affront to the Antiquary, Dousterswivel reduces the fate of Scottish history to an absurd German ritual. When Dousterswivel interrupts to suggest that “it is all owing to de hand of glory,” he is invading a discussion between Wardour, Oldbuck, Isabella, and Lovel about the fate of “our ancient chronicles, our noble histories, our learned commentaries, and national muniments” (131), as Oldbuck says, which were once preserved by monks. When Isabella wonders why so little is left known of the work of monks while martial histories of barons are so well remembered, Lovel replies that people are generally more impressed with tribulations – the things of martial histories – than with quiet learning. It is in response to this that Dousterswivel posits that the monks concealed their treasures, in the face of the Reformation, with the aid of a German ritual in which a hanged murderer's hand is cut off, smoked with juniper and yew, then has a candle of bear, badger, boar, and piglet fat placed into it and lit at the right time and with

the right ceremony to put a hex on any future seeking of treasure. Dousterswivel here invades Scottish history and effectively mocks any antiquarian attempts to recover it.

When Dousterswivel and Sir Arthur Wardour are on a midnight expedition at the ruins, it is the German's language that identifies him. Lovel and Ochiltree watch from a concealed position as two others enter part of the ruins. Lovel is initially unable to figure out who the others are, but then, as Scott writes, "After conversing together some time in whispers, the two figures advanced into the midst of the chancel, and a voice which Lovel at once recognized, from its tone and dialect, to be that of Dousterswivel, pronounced in a louder but still a smothered tone, 'Indeed, mine goot sir, dere cannot be one finer hour nor season for dis great purpose'" (169-170). Dousterswivel's twisting of 'D's' into 'T's' and 'Th's' into 'D's' highlights his idiocy, and this linguistic highlighting is his calling card when he is otherwise unidentifiable.

Dousterswivel's linguistic and archaeological knavery is most exposed in his midnight adventure with Edie Ochiltree. While Dousterswivel assaults the Scots with many a "mine goot sir" and "by mine goot wort," and while he butchers several pronouns and even Oldbuck's proper name, none of his peers return the favor. But Edie Ochiltree – whom Dousterswivel is wont to call Edies Ochiltrees – engages in a telling linguistic tit-for-tat with the German, and he completely pulls the wool over the German's eyes, archaeologically speaking, as well.

When Edie first begins to call out the German, he says, "And do you really believe the like o' that, Mr Dusterdivel" (196). He calls him "Dusterdivel" twice more in the space of the next page, and then, when he begins the story of Malcolm Misticot, he addresses him as "Maister Dustandsnivel" (198), mocking Dousterswivel's phony ceremonial use of incense the night before, which incited a sneezing fit from Edie that Dousterswivel took for the ghost of Misticot. The linguistic response by Dousterswivel is another series of accidental blunders that paints the

German as even more of an absurd linguistic invader. After Edie finishes the story of Malcolm Misticot, Dousterswivel asks, “And so you do tink dat dis golds and silvers belonged to goot Mr Malcolm Mishdigoat?” (200), and, the space of half a page later, he refers to “goot Maister Mistygoat's grave” (201).

Already working to bring about the financial ruin of the ancient estate of Knockwinnock, and already invading the novel linguistically, Dousterswivel will proceed to assault Scottish history by seeking the treasure of Misticot. The story of Malcolm Misticot, threaded throughout the novel, is about a fight for a certain version of Scottish history.

Told most fully by Edie Ochiltree, the story goes that Sir Richard Wardour, a Norman, married Sybil Knockwinnock, who was heir to the Knockwinnock estate. Sybil, however, had been in love with a cousin, and just four months after marrying Sir Richard Wardour, she gave birth to a bastard son. The son, Malcolm, was sent off to be raised in the Highlands, while Sir Richard Wardour produced a legitimate heir. When Sir Richard died, Malcolm, with Highland warriors in entourage, claimed the estate of Knockwinnock, held it for a long time, and built the tower that came to bear his name. Ultimately, Sir Richard's son challenged Malcolm in the lists and won, banishing Malcolm to monastic life, restoring Knockwinnock to the Wardours.

This story is rife with implications for the identity of the two central Norman-rooted Scotsmen in the novel. The story of Misticot has direct bearing on Sir Arthur Wardour, as he is the current Lord of Knockwinnock. Misticot was the rival of Sir Arthur's ancestors, and Sir Arthur has earlier in the novel engaged in some agenda-driven philological reconstruction to theorize that 'Misticot' is merely a corruption of 'Misbegot.' In spite of the issue of Highland Scot versus half-Norman Scot, Sir Arthur seeks the supposed treasure of Misticot to bail him out of financial ruin that he has brought on by subjecting himself to the knavery of Dousterswivel; in

this way, Sir Arthur desires to reach into the Scottish past, in spite of its imperfection, to save himself from ruin at the hands of the German invader.

The story of *Misticot* also, of course, is strikingly parallel to the story of Lovel's ancestry. Lovel's ancestry is slowly unraveled, chiefly through the account by Elspeth of the fate of Eveline Neville. We ultimately come to learn that Lovel is the love-child of the Earl of Glenallan and Eveline Neville. After the child had already been conceived, the Earl and Eveline were deceived into believing that they were too closely related to be married, and this believed disgrace was the reason for Eveline's suicide. The truth, Elspeth tells the Earl, is that Eveline and he were second-cousins, and Eveline was simply despised by the Countess of Glenallan in accordance with her dislike for everyone from her husband's extended family. In the background of antiquarian debates and the knavery of Dousterswivel for the first two volumes of the novel, the task of determining Lovel's roots rises to prominence in Volume Three, and the culmination is the discovery that he is heir to the Earldom of Glenallan. Like *Misticot*, Lovel is a love-child reared in exile who returns to claim an ancient Scottish title. To boot, it is Lovel's money – in the 'Search 1' coffer – that is passed off as the lost treasure of *Misticot*; in this way, in addition to preserving the Earldom of Glenallan, Lovel begins the financial rescue of the estate of Knockwinnock.

After this discovery of some of *Misticot*'s supposed treasure, when Ochiltree and Dousterswivel go on a midnight quest after the non-existent 'Search 2' coffer, the philological battle between the two continues. Ochiltree calls the German “Mr Dustanshovel” (203), mocking the adept's bogus archaeology. The archaeology for Dousterswivel to undertake in this chapter, though, is of Ochiltree's design, designed to expose Dousterswivel's idiocy. Ochiltree quickly feigns fatigue after starting in to dig for 'Search 2,' turning the digging over to the

German, who has been made eager by greed. Edie proceeds to mockingly suggest that Dousterswivel might as well be a common laborer, not any sort of an antiquary, saying, “My certie! few ever wrought for siccan a day's wage...Odd, ye work as if ye had been bred to pick and shool - ye could win your round half-crown ilka day” (204). What Ochiltree brings out in the German is, not coincidentally, more linguistic knavery: “Thus exhorted by the mendicant, Dousterswivel struggled and laboured among the stones and stiff clay, toiling like a horse, and internally blaspheming in German. When such an unhallowed syllable escaped his lips, Edie changed his battery upon him” (204). Edie proceeds to suggest that he sees a ghastly shape flit by, saying, “when the moon was on it, it looked unco like a dead man's arm wi' a taper in it; I thought it was Misticot himsel” (204). Pressed by Ochiltree, Dousterswivel falls into transgressions in German, which Ochiltree will not abide. And after censuring the German for his language, Ochiltree mocks the German ritual of “de hand of glory” while simultaneously tapping into Dousterswivel's fear of the deceased Scot Misticot. When Dousterswivel seeks the treasure of Misticot, not only is he invading Scottish history, he is foregrounding a web of events that all dramatize assaults upon and restorations of Scottish history. Accordingly, this final of Dousterswivel's assaults is met with reprisal that leads to his ousting. After a few more strokes and a broken mattock, Dousterswivel begins to realize that he is being played for a fool, but the German still gets the worst of the conclusion to the archaeological excursion, as he is beaten to the punch of physical battery by the hiding Steenie Meicklebackit. Edie landing in jail for the beating of Dousterswivel puts him in just the right place to disclose what he knows of Dousterswivel's knavery to a person with the power to send the German on the run under the auspices of the Aliens Act and the Traitorous Correspondences Act.

IV. 'Invasion Repelled' – or, the Footnotes of History

With military frenzy gripping the nation, the climax of the novel commences with the lighting of the area's alarm beacons. The resultant fervor reveals much nationalistic vigor. On the morning of the alarm, Oldbuck is sleeping late, as is his wont, but when his kinswomen wake him, his response is, “The French?...get out of the room womankind that you are, till I get my things on – And, hark ye, bring me my sword” (349). Though Oldbuck has been on the Gothic side of the Pictish Question, he springs immediately to Scotland's defense. The women's response highlights Oldbuck's novel-long character as antiquarian:

“Whilk o' them, Monkbarns?” cried his sister, offering a Roman faulchion of brass with the one hand, with the other an Andrea Ferara without a handle.

“The langest, the langest,” cried Jenny Rintherout, dragging in a two-handed sword of the twelfth century. (349)

The chief function that Oldbuck has taken upon himself in life is to compile an eclectic mass of artefacts. However, faced with invasion from abroad, Oldbuck says, “Give me...the sword which my father wore in the year forty-five – it hath no belt or baldrick – but we'll make shift” (349). Requesting his father's sword from 1745 further represents a transformation. Oldbuck's father had worn the sword to put down Scottish insurrection against Britain, but now the Antiquary aims to wield it to defend Scotland from invasion.

The alarm also has dramatic effect on Sir Arthur Wardour. Wardour has been besieged by the German Dousterswivel through most of the novel and had resigned himself to the inevitable loss of his estate in Volume Three. Accordingly, Oldbuck says to his nephew Hector upon seeing Wardour approach, “But here comes Sir Arthur Wardour, who, between ourselves, is not fit to accomplish much [with his head or with his hand]” (349). But Scott tells us, “Sir Arthur was

probably of a different opinion; for, dressed in his lieutenancy uniform, he was also on the road to Fairport” (349). Harkening back again to the '45, we recall that Wardour's father had blustered a great deal in support of the Scottish cause, but that he had also wavered when the time came for him to take action in support of the cause, himself and the young Arthur being meekly submitting to be dragged off to the Tower of London for what was later discovered to be no good reason. Faced with invasion in 1794, Sir Arthur appears resolutely prepared to fight for his country.

Perhaps most changed by the alarm is the Earl of Glenallan, whose entrance at the muster is described thus:

At length the bugles of the Glenallan yeomanry were heard, and the Earl himself, to the surprise of all who knew his habits and state of health, appeared at their head in uniform...The clean and serviceable appearance of [the Earl's] band of feudal dependants called forth the admiration of Captain MacIntyre; his uncle was still more struck by the manner in which, upon this crisis, the ancient military spirit of his house seemed to animate and invigorate the decayed frame of the Earl, their leader. He claimed, and obtained for himself and his followers, the post most likely to be that of danger, displayed great alacrity in making the necessary dispositions, and shewed equal acuteness in discussing their propriety. (351)

Described earlier in the novel as “cadaverous” (228) and inhabiting a house more like a mausoleum than the seat of a living Highland Earl, the Earl appears in Fairport, after the alarm, having been revitalized by “the ancient military spirit of his house.”

The spirit, however, extends beyond the Earl's house, as we have already seen, moving the entire community, and is perhaps best summed up by Edie Ochiltree in the chapter before the alarm. When Ochiltree and Oldbuck are speculating about a French invasion, Oldbuck is surprised at Ochiltree's nationalistic spirit and questions what Ochiltree has to fight for. Ochiltree's response is, “Me no mickle to fight for, sir? – is na there the kintra to fight for” (346). Edie goes on to suggest there are *also* different houses at which he goes begging to fight

for, but the first thing he lists is “the kintra.” Putting such a sentiment in the mouth of Ochiltree is crucial, because he is a mere beggar, with no title or estate to fight for. The 'country' for which Ochiltree would fight is largely an abstraction, falling in line with the theme throughout the novel to define the nation abstractly.

Ochiltree's gesture toward abstract nationalism also punctuates the ambivalent nature of his character throughout the novel. He has been characterized by Katie Trumpener, in *Bardic Nationalism*, as the “last survival of bardic functions, as [his] ceaseless circulation and news bearing connect locality to locality, fish hut to manor. Apparently a parasite on the community, Ochiltree actually binds it together” (123). Trumpener is right that Ochiltree is a key mover of practically all of the major events in the novel. He is instrumental in saving Sir Arthur and Isabella when they get trapped by the tide; he hides, and possibly saves, Lovel, after Lovel's duel with Hector MacIntyre; he buries the 'treasure' that eventually saves Wardour and Knockwinnock; he carries Elspeth's message to the Earl of Glenallan, and he extracts Elspeth's tale of the fate of Eveline Neville; and his testimony to Oldbuck, albeit in self-defense, officially confirms Dousterswivel's knavery and clears the way for Dousterswivel's expulsion from Scotland. For all of this, though, a function – arguably the key function – that we would expect from a bard is glaringly absent; in a sense, as Trumpener points out, Ochiltree represents the Scottish past – he is the “genial representative of an uncontaminated and unconstrained folk tradition” (122); however, we never really see that folk tradition. While Ochiltree promises to give Oldbuck the ballad that Elspeth chants, he never does. Oldbuck recognizes Ochiltree's valence, saying to Lovel at the Kaim of Kinprunes that Ochiltree is “one of the last specimens of the old-fashioned Scottish mendicant, who kept his rounds within a particular space, and was the news-carrier, the minstrel, and sometimes the historian of the district. That rascal, now, knows

more old ballads and traditions than any other man in this and the four next parishes” (33-34). However, we never hear any old ballads from Ochiltree. Ochiltree intervenes to prove Oldbuck wrong at the Kaim of Kinprunes, but the effect is conspicuously un-bardic: he reveals that there is no ancient tradition at the site, there was merely a wedding there twenty years prior. If Ochiltree is the Scottish past, it is a past with no *tangible* present. Just as Oldbuck is seemingly uninterested in obtaining Elspeth's ancient ballad from Ochiltree, so is the novel as a whole. The nationalism stressed and manifested repeatedly in *The Antiquary* is not a tangible thing carried in a living source, it is an abstraction.

In the vein of abstract nationalism, the most significant revelation to come from the alarm is that which Lovel consciously rides to the muster to deliver: the true source of the alarm. He has ridden up as Major Neville to notify the patriots that the beacons were lit in false alarm, the watchman at Halket-head having mistaken the bonfire made out of the recently repelled Dousterswivel's machinery for another beacon. As it turns out, the surge of Scottish nationalism has all, ostensibly by accident, been in response to the German. But the accident on the part of the characters is no thematic accident. After laying the groundwork in Volume One by highlighting Oldbuck's interest in the Picts and Caledonians, Scott foregrounds the issue of philological nationalism in Volume Two with Dousterswivel's archaeological and linguistic assaults. In the excursions with Ochiltree, with Wardour, and with the larger group, he is a linguistic outsider and corrupter of Scottish history. Oldbuck is, therefore, willing to oust the charlatan under any possible pretenses, and the pretenses seized are no thematic accident, as the the German is ousted by wartime legislation aimed at putting down insurrection and warding off invasion. Upon the revelation of the the mistaken beacon, Oldbuck complains, “[Dousterswivel] has bequeathed us a legacy of blunders and mischief, as if he had lighted some train of fireworks

at his departure – I wonder what cracker will go off next among our shins” (352). The next cracker, though, is the revelation of Lovel's identity, which is officially reconstructed by Oldbuck and which preserves the Earldom of Glenallan.

Oldbuck may complain about the literal cause of the muster, but through the reconstruction of Lovel's identity, revitalization of the Earl, and the transformation of Wardour and Oldbuck, the muster serves as “a positive assurance to all present, that the courage and zeal which they had displayed were entirely thrown away, unless in so far as they afforded an acceptable proof of their spirit and promptitude,” as Lovel and Captain Wardour tell the assembled group (351-2). The spirit of the community – and the novel – has indeed been proved, and the dynamics of Lovel's first words at the muster and of Oldbuck's complaint attest to Dousterswivel's functioning at a level that the characters don't fully comprehend – a highly figurative level. In the end, all of the main characters – including the eclectic, Pinkerton-supporting Oldbuck – have united to repel a presumed invasion in order to confirm that Dousterswivel's philological invasion has engendered the true battle of the novel.

In accordance with the paramount importance given to the repelling of Dousterswivel, Scott seems to find no fault with such facts as the Norman-rooted Wardours occupying Knockwinnock or the Norman-rooted Nevilles preserving the Earldom Glenallan; Lovel has never faced a dilemma wherein he must choose between women who respectively represent radical and moderate political positions. *The Antiquary* seems to be about reconstructing a Scottish past more than it is about the futurity of Scotland in the modern world, figured through a middling hero, so the current loyalty of Scotland to the British crown seems to be a moot point. But so firmly is the novel rooted in the Pictish Question that Scott will not abide the German invasion of Dousterswivel, for it assaults the very potential for an intellectualized nationalism, by

corrupting the text linguistically.

While antiquarianism is obviously central to *The Antiquary*, Scott had also dealt with it in *Waverley*, just two years earlier, via the middling titular hero. In a chapter titled “Scottish law and *Waverley's* museum of property,” Wolfram Schmidgen argues that “*Waverley's* meticulous reconstruction turns Tully-Veolan into a visual artifact” (210), for Baron Bradwardine “a representation of its former existence” (211). Moreover, with the painting that *Waverley* has added to the décor of the house, a painting “by an Englishman on the behalf of another Englishman” (211), according to Schmidgen, Scott emphasizes that “Scottish things pass through English hands transformed, clearly visible and stripped of their native power” (211). Schmidgen's argument is founded upon the premise that “the decline of landed property as a communal paradigm was the base of new forms of personal, political, and national identity” (213). This paradigm shift, in Schmidgen's estimation, means, for Scott, a departure from “Burkean traditionalism” toward “the epistemology of Bentham and Paine” (213), turning from the “ancient combination of things” (213), to the “antiquarian gaze of the bourgeois” (212). Scott has again taken up the question of reconstruction in *The Antiquary*, but there seems to be a different paradigm framing it. We see an ancient estate – Knockwinnock – repeatedly in peril, but it is rescued before its Lord is ruined and before it must pass through the real estate market. Furthermore, *The Antiquary* most glaringly differs from *Waverley* in that there is no political contest. The 1745 uprising, of course, is a story of martial defeat. In *The Antiquary*, time and time again, Scott is at pains to figuratively – and often literally – dismiss martial contest as being beside the point. This difference keeps the issue of nationalism, in *The Antiquary*, highly abstract. Perhaps in *Waverley*, as Schmidgen suggests, “the museumizing activities of the English” (210) are the unfortunate consequence of the disembedding of traditional Scottish social

structure, but in *The Antiquary*, antiquarianism is the hope for formation of national identity all along, as the real disembedding throughout the novel is philological. In this sense, *The Antiquary* seems to consciously pick up where *Waverley* leaves off, reopening the question of reconstruction through antiquarian activity. This reopening becomes a difference that seems to make a difference, as, on the battleground of philology, *The Antiquary* suggests the theoretical possibility of victory for Scottishness.⁹

Part of the conclusion of *The Antiquary* is that Lovel and Isabella Wardour are wed, and for their wedding, the Antiquary gives as a present “the wedding ring, a massy circlet of antique chasing, bearing the motto of Aldobrand Oldenbuck, *Kunst macht gunst*” (355). This motto, German for 'Art wins favor,' harkens back to Volume One of the novel, when Lovel has the seemingly prophetic dream in which he sees Oldbuck's ancestor point to the motto written on the page of a book. The story behind the motto is a story of conviction in the power of intellectualism. Told by Oldbuck, his great ancestor, Aldobrand Oldenbuck, had to win the hand of his beloved by proving that he could work her father's press – a gauntlet set up by the young lady to cull out unworthy suitors. Oldenbuck successfully worked the press where the suitors failed, recognizing that skill, or art, had won him the favor that he desired. The art relied upon by Aldobrand Oldenbuck – skill as a printer – was the same art responsible for fostering a more intellectual culture, as Jonathan Oldbuck points out repeatedly in the novel, referring to his ancestor's printing of the Augsburg Confession. About the motto, Oldbuck says, “Each printer in these days...had his device...in the same manner as the doughty chivalry of the age...My ancestor boasted as much in his, as if he had displayed it over a conquered field of battle, though it

9. In *Why Literary Periods Mattered: Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies*, Ted Underwood classifies *The Antiquary* as a work that “dramatize[s] history as an occluded memory that needs to be revived before the protagonist can claim the authority of the past” (42).

betokened the diffusion of knowledge, not the effusion of blood” (85-6). The contrast set up by Oldbuck calls to mind a metaphor that we have seen throughout the novel: intellectualism – often philology, in particular – is the chief battleground for the characters. This same contrast is what we see with the climax of the novel. There is the suggestion of martial contest – of French military invasion – but this suggestion is swept aside, and it is really the German linguistic invasion with which the characters have been doing battle and which they must repel.

The presence of the Antiquary's family motto on the wedding ring affirms what Lovel has had to do to win the hand of Isabella Wardour. Although there is a suggestion of some importance in martial prowess in Lovel's duel with Hector (a rival for Isabella), the duel does not win Lovel the favor he desires; it sends Lovel into hiding – far from joining him with Isabella – and dueling Hector is a defense of his right to temporarily hide behind the false name of Lovel, rather than establishing his Scottish roots. The satisfaction that Isabella's father explicitly demands for the grace of his daughter's company is a legitimate pedigree. As we have seen, Lovel's legitimate pedigree is only realized when he and his father meet at the muster, and the muster has all been for an alarm caused by the ousting of Dousterswivel. In addition, Lovel's greater labor for the favor of Isabella has really been his initiation of the financial rescue of her father from ruin by the German invader. In both cases, it is opposing what Dousterswivel represents that wins favor Lovel. As Aldobrand Oldenbuck fosters intellectualism to win favor, Lovel must repel a philological invasion of Scotland to win favor.

For all of this, though, the wedding ring is problematic. Scott describes the ring as a “massy circlet,” which is also an apt description for much of the antiquarian activity that we have witnessed in the novel. In the real-life debate over the Picts, we recall the massive etymological web that Ritson traces in order to divine the true meaning of *Peanfahel*. The quagmire that is

Peanfahel, of course, appears in *The Antiquary*, as do other hefty etymologies, such as the one that Oldbuck heaves upon the Earl of Glenallan, late in the novel. To determine the roots of the place-name 'Quickens-bog,' Oldbuck takes nearly an entire page of text, leading the Earl from English, to Latin, to Saxon, to Celtic, and back to Saxon, through the words *triticum repens*, *palus*, *burgh*, *burrow*, *brough*, *bruff*, *buff*, *boff*, *bogh*, *borgh*, *elisa hij*, *whilkens*, *whichens*, and *whackens*; Oldbuck's "massy circlet" of philology, as it were, is only cut off by Scott stepping in and saying, "I will be more merciful to my readers than Oldbuck was to his guest" (283-4).

As we have seen, Scott was decidedly on the Celtic side of the Pictish Question, so we may wonder why he assigns the Gothic side of the Question to the titular hero of the novel and the Celtic side to the much less scrupulous Sir Arthur Wardour. In addition, we may wonder why Scott, as I am arguing, chose to represent the repelling of the Gothic side figuratively, through the character of Dousterswivel. Roland M. Smith suggests that respect for his "particular dear friend [George] Ellis" kept Scott from coming down too decisively on the Celtic side of the Question until after Ellis's death. As much as by respect for his intellectual friend, Scott seems to have been made reluctant by the rhetoric of the debate. The Pictish Question was an open question in 1816, when *The Antiquary* was published, which Scott recognized in spite of his belief in the Celtic side. Even in his 1829 review of the esteemed Ritson, Scott characterized the discourse as "the very slough of despond, whereon much learning has been thrown without mending the path; or rather, a Serbonian bog, capable of swamping whole armies of commentators" (130). It is fitting that the Serbonian bog-like etymology miring down the Earl and Oldbuck concerns the word 'Quickens-bog.' The philological battleground of the Pictish Question had been made a mess by the warring armies, and Scott doesn't seem to have been willing to starkly declare in his fiction a victory for that cause. In that fiction, as well as being a

“massy circlet,” the symbolic wedding ring is “of *antique chasing*” (my italics). While “antique chasing” literally means ancient ornamentation, we needn't strain to hear a pun referring to the literal and figurative pursuit of antique things that we have witnessed throughout the novel. In *The Antiquary*, the antique things being pursued are often elusive. In the real-life debate over the Picts, the truth seemed, through most of Scott's lifetime, equally elusive, as the “armies of commentators” had to pursue it on an unmended path through a “Serbonian bog.”

In the few years following the publication of Ritson's *Annals*, which Scott said administered “a death-blow to the hypothesis of Pinkerton, called the Gothic system” (152), Scott nevertheless continued to carefully hedge his bets on the Celtic side. Though he agrees with Ritson that “the Picts, being the ancient Caledonians, must have spoken a dialect of the Celtic” (152), he also says, in his *History of Scotland*, that Pictish “was probably Celtic, with a strong tinge of Gothic” (1: 12). While in arguing that “language is the true genealogy of nations,” George Chalmers believes that Celts strongly resisted any adoption of inferior Gothic language; Scott is ultimately not so absolute. Scott's careful acknowledgment of the possibility of a “strong tinge of Gothic” is a fair characterization of the presence of the German “Kunst Macht Gunst” on the polyvalent wedding ring at the conclusion of *The Antiquary*. Scott's position in the Pictish Question and in *The Antiquary* ultimately becomes an objective microcosm of the philological discourse as a whole: it was an important and promising quagmire.

The final paragraph of the novel contains a crucial final testament to this thematic leaning, as Scott tells us that Oldbuck

regularly enquires whether the Lord Geraldin has commenced the Caledoniad, and shakes his head at the answer he receives. En attendant, however, he has completed his notes, which, we believe, will be at service of any one who chuses to make them public, without risk or expence to THE ANTIQUARY. (356)

The notes without and independent of the poem are a perfect representation of the desirable but imperfect philological reconstruction of history that pervades both the Pictish Question and *The Antiquary*. Actually depicting a victory for the Caledonians – whom Scott viewed as the same race as the Picts – never clearly materializes. What we ultimately have are the footnotes of national history.

A prevalent conviction that attended early philology was that the discourse had the potential to engender nationalism through reconstruction of national history. Scott was intrigued by this potential, and as the chronological frame and Advertisement to *The Antiquary* suggest, Scott wished to view language as having the power to theoretically mitigate the sort of identity peril that Britons felt in 1794 and in 1815. We see this desire dramatized in *The Antiquary*, but Scott also recognizes the tenuous nature of such a construction, as the discourse producing it was fraught with complexity. Philological nationalism thus ultimately remains more a footnoting of history than a present reconstruction.

Chapter Three: *Frankenstein* and the Need for Social Etymology

I. "apparent connexion with visible objects"

In very basic terms, the plot of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* could be summed up thus: Victor creates and then rejects a Creature, prompting the Creature to wander from community to community causing chaos, sometimes accidentally, sometimes deliberately. Where this chaos occurs in Western Europe, the polities in the respective communities – most prominently the legal systems – attempt to identify and rein in the source of the chaos. At the heart of this process, during Justine's trial, Elizabeth sums up their legal system by saying,

'...when one creature is murdered, another is immediately deprived of life in a slow torturing manner; then the executioners, their hands yet reeking with the blood of innocence, believe that they have done a great deed. They call this *retribution*. Hateful name! When that word is pronounced, I know greater and more horrid punishments are going to be inflicted than the gloomiest tyrant has ever invented to satiate his utmost revenge.' (83)

The linguistic 'pronunciation' of the concept of retribution, here, to borrow Elizabeth's characterization, echoes the radical philology of John Horne Tooke. As I have discussed, Tooke believed that politics and law were based upon “metaphysical jargon and false morality, which can only be dissipated by etymology” (1: 18), and that such concepts as right, wrong, and justice “are all merely Participles poetically embodied, and substantiated by those who use them” (1: 19). In short, Tooke believed that the polities binding his society manipulated language to control the people of the society. Elizabeth's analysis of Geneva's legal system seems to suggest that *Frankenstein* is informed by this Tookean principle.

Parts of *Frankenstein* are literally about the Creature's language acquisition, and criticism

has typically linked the Creature's linguistic development with his attempted integration in society. Nevertheless, a pronounced Tookean strain in *Frankenstein* seems to escape notice. We traditionally recognize Mary Shelley as a second-generation radical, wife of a second-generation radical, and daughter of first generation-radicals, but we seem to be missing the influence of a crucial first-generation radical in Tooke. While the Creature is in some respects clearly derived from Rousseau's Natural Man, such readings, it seems to me, become problematic when broadening in scope to also account both for the geopolitical scope of the action in the novel and the geopolitical context in which the novel was written. This chapter will argue that both the Creature's intellectual development and his inability to integrate in society are best understood through the radical philology of John Horne Tooke. Such an understanding, I suggest, opens up to us what nationalism seems to have meant to Mary Shelley, and it provides a unique example of what I have been calling philological nationalism.

We can quickly recognize Rousseau's influence on *Frankenstein*. As Paul A. Cantor puts it in *Creature and Creator: Myth-Making and English Romanticism*, “One could undertake a fairly simple interpretation of the monster's story in Rousseauian terms. The monster as originally created corresponds to natural man; his fall is his fatal attraction to civil society; and his attempt to join the ranks of social men leads to his misery” (120). And specifically, as Cantor also points out, the Creature's intellectual development “resembles Rousseau's speculations on the origins of speech and reasoning” (122). Similarly, Anne K. Mellor has said, in *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, “[Mary Shelley's] creature is Rousseau's natural man” (47). In broad enough strokes, the Rousseauian depiction is fair enough. But while attempting to integrate in society is certainly the general cause of the Creature's misery, the precise reason for

this relationship seems a bit more slippery. Mellor herself suggests that while Shelley “depicts Frankenstein's creature as Rousseau's natural man...she does not endorse Rousseau's view that the simple gratification of human passions will lead to virtuous behavior” (48). Mellor goes on to argue that Mary Shelley's thoughts on pedagogy were “derived in large part from her father's espousal of Locke, and [emphasized] the role of the affections in the education of young children” (50). However, Mellor points out that Victor's education had been couched in copious parental affection, and yet “his father's indulgence only encouraged his son's egotistical dreams of omnipotence” (50). So, even guided by Lockean pedagogy, Shelley “registered a pervasive maternal anxiety: *even if I love and nurture my child, even if I provide the best education of which I am capable, I may still produce a monster – and who is responsible for that?*” (50). The ultimate problem, according to Mellor, is that movement away from a Rousseauian natural state into civilization “entails a loss of freedom, a frustration of desire, and an enclosure within the prisonhouse of language or what Lacan has called the symbolic order” (50).

The tendency to proceed from recognizing a basic level of Rousseauian influence to reading the Creature's developmental and social difficulties as Lacanian is a prevalent one in criticism of *Frankenstein*. Margaret Homans presents, in *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing*, a thorough Lacanian argument that, in *Frankenstein*, “Shelley knew she was writing a criticism, not only of women's self-contradictory role in androcentric ontology, but also of the gendered myth of language that is part of that ontology” (110). Shelley is taught this androcentric ontology, Homans argues, by her husband (and, to a lesser extent, Byron), and the male influence on her work, exerted overbearingly in the story-writing contest out of which *Frankenstein* grows, is so strong that she

feels as though she is forced to bear the male word as she would bear a child. Homans concludes by arguing that the fate of the creature tells us that “It is only when both childbirth and a woman’s invention of stories are subordinated to the Law of the Father that they become monstrous” (118).

Peter Brooks, in his essay “‘Godlike Science / Unhallowed Arts’: Language, Nature, and Monstrosity” (1979), also gives a Lacanian reading of *Frankenstein*, arguing that the Creature is “a kind of accursed signifier” (218), and that the creature “uncovers the larger question of the arbitrariness, or immotivation, of the linguistic sign” (209). On these points, Brooks points out how the creature “is in many respects an Enlightenment natural man, or noble savage; his first ideas demonstrate the processes of Lockean sensationalism and Hartleyan associationism” (208-9). This latter point by Brooks also represents an important trend, for Mellor, too, argues that the epistemological theories of Locke and Hartley bear on *Frankenstein*, suggesting that Mary Shelley adopts a “referential theory of language, in which sounds or words are conceived as pointing to objects or mental states,” (49). It is crucial to note, though, that reference does not mean substantive connection. Brooks's characterization of the Creature himself revealing “the arbitrariness, or immotivation, of the linguistic sign” is an apt description of what the Creature learns about actual language, in the process of acquiring it. When observing and listening to the De Lacy family, the Creature quickly realizes that the words they use have no “apparent connexion with visible objects” (107).

What we are generally observing is a broad critical acknowledgment of disconnection as a central problem for the Creature, whether ontologically or epistemologically. The critical problem for us as readers of *Frankenstein* is identifying which ontological and epistemological

models seem to bear the greatest influence on the novel. The readings of the 1970s and 80s lean heavily toward the anachronistic psychoanalytic model of Lacan. In much more recent work, William Keach suggests more of a return to the social context in which *Frankenstein* was conceived. In *Arbitrary Power*, looking broadly at Romanticism's socio-political inheritance from the Enlightenment, Keach begins by pointing out that while William Blake “relentlessly repudiates the Lockean division of words from things, [Percy] Shelley – except in a few self-consciously utopian moments – either accepts and confirms it, or finds its collapse cause for dismay” (36). Keach argues that for Percy, “language never fully coincides with the mind’s perceptions of the world or of itself” (36), citing Percy’s declaration, in *On Life*, “How vain is it to think that words can penetrate the mystery of our being” (506). As Keach further argues, Percy is probably most explicitly engaged with “the Lockean division of words from things” when he says in *A Defence of Poetry*, “language is arbitrarily produced by the Imagination and has relation to thoughts alone” (513). It is Keach's suggestion that Percy’s adoption of this tenet – succinctly, the tenet of arbitrary signification – bears crucial influence on Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

Locke of course remained highly relevant in English intellectual life in the Romantic period, but the preeminent contemporary English thinker who championed the principle of arbitrariness in language was John Horne Tooke. As I have discussed, the full title of the *Diversions* – including *Epea Pterea*, or 'Winged Words' – evinces Tooke's belief that language's purpose is to communicate thoughts with the utmost thrift. Tooke agreed with Locke – and thus also with Rousseau, Condillac, and Blair – that thoughts are motivated by empirical perception of things, and that words, in turn, signify only these thoughts, not things. A degree of

arbitrariness, therefore, is inherent in language. Augmenting this inherent truth, though, in Tooke's estimation, was the need for thrift. Tooke believed that thrift lead to progressive abstractness in modern languages, which, in turn, lead to increasingly (and dangerously) arbitrary meanings.

The Creature's process of epistemological growth – and specifically of language acquisition – dramatizes these principles of early philology. The Creature recounts how, in his first days after rejection by Victor, he is pushed from attempted natural and solitary models of language to a social model of language. The Creature recalls to Victor, “Sometimes I tried to imitate the pleasant songs of the birds, but was unable” (99). The Creature resolves instead “to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again” (99). Imitative language is quickly ruled out. After that, solitary language fails as well. The Creature being frightened by the sound of his own voice is a tidy metaphor for the principle that language is inherently social. Pointing out Tooke's belief that language's purpose was to communicate thoughts with dispatch takes as a foregone conclusion the principle that language's purpose is to *communicate*. With no one else to hear the Creature speak, there can be no purpose in uttering words.

The Creature moves into language-proper when he observes society, in the form of the De Lacy family. When observing the cottagers communicating, the Creature quickly discovers that the words they are using have no “apparent connexion with visible objects” (107). Within this explicit framework of arbitrary signification, the first words the Creature learns are fire, milk, bread, and wood, and then the names of the cottagers. At this early stage of his acquisition of language, the creature adds, “I distinguished several other words, without being able as yet to

understand or apply them; such as *good, dearest, unhappy*” (108). This progression not only literalizes Tooke's philology, it is similar to Rousseau's theorization that “substantives were at first only so many proper nouns; the present infinitive was the sole tense of verbs; and the notion of adjectives must have developed only with great difficulty, because every adjective is an abstract word and abstractions are difficult and not very natural operations” (123). Nouns come first, for the Creature, and adjectives are initially an inscrutable prospect, abstractions that they are.

So, my general suggestion is that we needn't turn to Lacan, that there was a philological discourse contemporary to Mary Shelley that makes a good deal of sense as a lens through which to read the parts of *Frankenstein* that are explicitly about language. It is indeed strange that Tooke has been so overlooked as an influence on *Frankenstein*. He was generally well known and respected in the period, but especially so in the radical circle in which Mary Shelley grew up. We can readily see what allied Godwin and Tooke as thinkers. The main foci of Godwin's *Caleb Williams* – published in the same year (1794) that Tooke found himself in the Tower of London on charges of high treason – are injustices perpetrated due to social stratification and the injustice of the legal system in England. Godwin even explicitly weighed in on Tooke's treason trial, in “Cursory Strictures on the Charge Delivered by Lord Chief Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury, October 2, 1794.” Furthermore, let us remember that *Frankenstein* is set in the 1790s and inscribed “To William Godwin, Author of Political Justice, Caleb Williams, &c.” My suggestion is that surrounding *Frankenstein's* dramatization of the philological principle of arbitrary signification, in the Creature's language acquisition, is a highly Tookean review of society and law. Arbitrariness in language had profound socio-political implications in Shelley's day, and the

political climate in which Mary Shelley lived, it seems to me, is the very thing that is most lost in ontological and epistemological readings of *Frankenstein* that progress from Rousseau to Lacan.

Marilyn Butler's *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* recognizes this type of loss. Contrasting *Frankenstein* with Ann Radcliffe's highly psychological Gothic fiction, Butler calls Shelley's work "a non-realistic, non-behavioural general intellectual argument" (159). Butler goes on, "It is of course open to any of us to claim that Mary Shelley's story is really about the unconscious, and ultimately her own. This sort of assertion cannot easily be disproved; nor, using rigorous standards, can it be proved" (159). Butler reads *Frankenstein*, however, as social, not psychological: "However the story may have rooted itself in the popular consciousness, as a study in the frightfulness of what may be within, it seems clearly designed to convey a social message" (159). I am suggesting that no small part of this social message draws heavily upon the philology of Tooke. *Frankenstein* seems to take interest in the arbitrariness that emerged in epistemology and ontology following some of the sweeping changes that the Enlightenment brought. The general erosion of religion as a stabilizing force in society, the specific philological dismantling of the theory of divine language origins, and the therefore malleable and thus dangerous nature of language in society all appear in a Tookean light in *Frankenstein*.

II. Metaphysical Dissection

As I have begun to suggest, one of the institutions in the crosshairs of Tooke's radical philology was religion. To reiterate, Tooke says in *The Diversions* that the purpose of etymology is to “Lead us to the clear understanding of the words we use in discourse...But the importance rises higher, when we reflect upon the application of words to Metaphysics. And when I say Metaphysics; you will be pleased to remember, that all general reasoning, all Politics, Law, Morality, and Divinity, are merely Metaphysic” (2: 121). Tooke believed that morality and religion were pervaded by corruptions of language that amounted to “metaphysical jargon and false morality, which can only be dissipated by etymology” (2: 18). The way that Tooke defines metaphysics suggests a profaning of morality and divinity. In this sense, what Tooke is doing with philology, which is his foray into metaphysics, is one of the nationalism-attendant activities of the Enlightenment described by Benedict Anderson. As I point out in my Introduction, Anderson argues that nationalism as a concept of community develops just as monarchical governmental systems are toppled and religious faith wanes. And again, according to Anderson, language is central to both religious and national concepts of community: “if the sacred silent languages were the media through which the great global communities of the past were imagined, the reality of such apparitions depended on an idea largely foreign to the contemporary Western mind: the non-arbitrariness of the sign” (14). As we have seen, the most fundamental tenet of the movement at the center of which Tooke stands is the arbitrariness of the sign.

The ‘Winged Words’ of the title of Tooke's work derives from his use of Mercury as a metaphor for language. As Tooke believes that the purpose of language is to communicate

thoughts with dispatch, he sees the swift messenger Mercury as an apt embodiment of language. As “B” says at the end of the Introduction, "You mean to say that the errors of grammarians have arisen from supposing all words to be immediately either the signs of things or the signs of ideas: whereas in fact many words are merely abbreviations employed for dispatch, and are the signs of other words. And that these are the artificial wings of mercury, by means of which the Argus eyes of philosophy have been cheated" (1: 21). “H” agrees, and “B” then says,

Well. We can only judge of your opinion after we have heard how you maintain it. Proceed, and strip him of his wings. They seem easy enough to be taken off: for it strikes me now, after what you have said, that they are indeed put on in a peculiar manner, and do not, like those of other winged deities, make a part of his body. You have only to loose the strings from his feet, and take off his cap. Come – let us see what sort of figure he will make without them. (1: 21-22)

As we can see, the 'Winged Words' of Tooke's title is not only a reference to thrift in language, it is an ironicization of Mercury's divinity. To strip him of his wings would be to render him unfit for his pantheon office as messenger of the gods. The figurative suggestion for Tooke seems to be an affirmation of the doctrine of human language origins, which is of course congruent with the position maintained by the whole of *The Diversions*.

Attendant upon the prospect of stripping Mercury of his divinity is the emphasis on the construction of those deifying wings. They are “put on in a peculiar manner,” and of course not actually part of his body, but rather an artificial apparatus. Insofar as Mercury's hallmark of divinity is “put on in a peculiar manner,” his composition is rather arbitrary. Mercury's divinity is not inherent, but rather contingent upon a construction that can be very easily removed: “You have only to loose the strings from his feet, and take off his cap.” The way Tooke interpreted – or appropriated – the allegorical classical god seems in this sense aimed at embodying his own adherence to the doctrine of arbitrary signification.

We can find more explicit evidence elsewhere in *The Diversions* for Tooke's espousal of the doctrines of human language origins and arbitrary signification, but his allocation of the metaphorical Mercury should be interesting for readers of *Frankenstein*. The idea of dissecting Hermes (from whom we derive 'hermeneutics') suggests the study of language as an undertaking of scientific materialism and appropriates the body as a metaphor for his branch of epistemology. This was not lost on William Hazlitt, who, in *The Spirit of the Age*, described Tooke's philology by saying, "Mr. Tooke, in fact, treated words as the chemists do substances" (55). Hazlitt also calls the *Diversions* "Horne Tooke's genuine *anatomy* of our native tongue" (128, my italics).

In describing *Caleb Williams* (1794), William Godwin used a similar metaphor: "the thing in which my imagination revelled the most freely, was the analysis of the private and internal operations of the mind, employing my metaphysical dissecting knife in tracing and laying bare the involutions of motive, and recording the gradually accumulating impulses, which led the personages I had to describe primarily to adopt the particular way of proceeding in which they afterwards embarked." William Brewer has said about this, "in Godwin's view, literary works can serve as thought-experiments in the 'science' of mental anatomy. They are imaginary laboratories in which writers can conduct psychological experiments on their characters, laboratories in which they can control the variables of environment, education, and situation, and attempt to determine their effects on a given personality" (19-20). Godwin is interested in performing 'metaphysical dissection': observing how various stimuli to the mind influence action. As Brewer notes, it is a psycho-social project, befitting the radical Godwin. Tooke's work on Hermes is metaphysical dissection: the analysis of language to lay bare corruption in "Politics, Law, Morality, and Divinity."

My suggestion is that in *Frankenstein* – a novel set in the 1790's and inscribed "To William Godwin, Author of Political Justice, Caleb Williams, &c." – something similar is going on surrounding the scientific work of Victor on the Creature. The Creature himself and the action surrounding him seem to dramatize the epistemological and ontological changes of Shelley's day. Viewed through the lens of an intellectual context that bore heavily on Mary Shelley, the scientific experiment that is the Creature seems like an occasion for metaphysical dissection in the Tookean-Godwinian sense. As we look at the creation of the Creature, and some of the basic challenges that he faces -- and in turn creates for Victor -- *Frankenstein* seems at pains to dramatize a human and imperfect model of epistemology, and specifically language.

To begin with, Victor's intellectual progression toward creation figuratively follows the path of early philology's genesis and growth, specifically emphasizing the importance of material science. To a great extent, Victor's initial frustration at Ingolstadt comes from a resistance to Enlightenment thinking. He sums it up best himself when he says,

...I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different, when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand: but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth. (41)

Victor's sentiment here is a prime example of the type of impulse traditionally deemed quintessentially Romantic: he possesses ambition for possibilities in defiance with crude materialism. Waldman successfully captures his attention, though, and tells him to focus on the material, saying, "If your wish is to become really a man of science, and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics" (43).

Victor of course proceeds to apply himself to material science, artificially constructing a Creature. Victor's initial description of the Creature is a description by a student of anatomy, standing over a dissection (or construction, if there were such a thing) table:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips. (52)

Most striking to me here is the fact that the Creature is functional, scientifically speaking – “His limbs were in proportion,” he has all the components of a living human, and of course we know that he goes on to be physically hearty and mentally highly educable; he is just not superficially beautiful. In *The Spirit of the Age*, Hazlitt said that Tooke saw "language stripped of the clothing of habit or sentiment, or the disguises of doting pedantry, naked in its cradle, in its primitive state" (54). The Creature is very much like this. We do not see a thing handed down from heaven, made in a divine image. We see, rather, a crude, blank slate, shaped (and to be further shaped) by human hands. The Creature is a man-made thing that, in truth, is very ugly in its composition, but is very functional, and very malleable -- neither inherently good nor inherently bad. This all amounts to an effectual dramatization of Tooke's appropriation of Mercury.

In some ways, Victor's response to the living Creature he has just created is the crux of the entire novel. After beholding the imperfect appearance of the Creature, Victor flees in horror. The creature persists, as, lying in bed mortified, Victor again sees the creature, saying, “He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might

have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs” (53). Without the persuasive linguistic ability he will later possess, the Creature lacks the ability to detain Victor. We see, here, why the metaphor of Mercury, the metaphor of metaphysical dissection, and the artificial construction of the Creature is so important -- why dramatizing language not as a divine but as a human institution is so important: without a providential Creator giving the gift of infallible language, communication is subject to insufficiency and arbitrary judgment, which we see in Victor's flight from the Creature.

The most obvious way in which *Frankenstein* gestures toward an erosion of religion is with Victor usurping the position of God as autonomous Creator of life. We needn't trace all of the material in the novel dealing with the Creature as a forsaken Adam (or as a vengeful Satan), lost without a nurturing God-figure. What is significant for us, though, is how the Creature explicitly makes the connection between religion and language. When he begins to observe the De Lacy family using language to express themselves to one another, he ironically characterizes language as “godlike science” (107). This characterization encapsulates the usurpation that Victor has accomplished, and it dramatizes the epistemological shift in the 18th century. As the Creature soon discovers, though, language is scientific, *not* godlike; it is an imperfect human construction, subject to arbitrary meanings assigned it by human society, and anything but providential. For this reason, we see a society prone to linguistic dysfunction, and this linguistic dysfunction has powerful social ramifications. At several crucial points in the novel, downturn -- or downright catastrophe -- follows from the absence of linguistic articulation.

The first of these catastrophes for the Creature we have seen: his rejection by his Creator. After that rejection, without the social construct of language, the Creature is in the 'savage' pre-

social state that Rousseau describes thus: "Man's first language, the...only language he needed before it was necessary to persuade assembled men, is the cry of nature. As this cry was elicited only by a kind of instinct in pressing emergencies...it was not of much use in the ordinary course of life, when more moderate sentiments prevail" (122). Of the first night that he can recall, the Creature says, "I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept" (98). The Creature lacks the ability to comprehend the world around him, and he likewise lacks the ability to articulate his feelings and needs in any kind of productive way. This ineffectual weeping will return to the Creature later at a crucial point.

Similarly, when the Creature begins to wonder about his own origins relative to the society that he observes, he follows his summary question of "What was I?" by saying, "The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans" (117). The connection increasingly being dramatized by the Creature is between socialization and linguistic articulation, exemplified here in the negative.

The Creature actually goes on to make this connection explicitly. Facing his hideous appearance and void of ancestry, the Creature says, "although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language; which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure" (109). The Creature conjectures that societal integration hinges on linguistic proficiency.

Accordingly, when the Creature tries to build upon De Lacy's pledge to help him by revealing his true identity, the outcome of the situation hinges on language. As the Creature recounts to Victor, "This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of, or bestow

happiness on me for ever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair, and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors” (131). When the Creature has a chance to speak his revelation to the old man, he instead falls mute, and then begins to cry. This constitutes a reversion to the pre-social linguistic state in which the Creature found himself when alone in the woods on the first night of his existence that he can recall – the ineffectual state that the Creature has sought to develop beyond. The immediate result is the entrance of persons who perceive his hideous appearance and arbitrarily judge him.

When Felix attacks the Creature, the Creature retreats to his hovel, and then, “When night came, I quitted my retreat, and wandered in the wood; and now, no longer restrained by the fear of discovery, I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils” (132). The Creature here seems to confirm the social importance of language by responding to society's denial by reverting to an animalistic state, responding only instinctively to a sensation of grief, expressing himself only in ineffectual cries.

Interestingly enough, Victor at several points dramatizes a similar connection – between linguistic articulation and societal order. When returning to Geneva following the murder of his brother, Victor reflects on the prospect of discovering the existence of the Creature to the authorities, saying, “I remembered also the nervous fever with which I had been seized just at the time that I dated my creation, and which would give an air of delirium to a tale otherwise so utterly improbable. I well knew that if any other had communicated such a relation to me, I should have looked upon it as the ravings of insanity” (72). Victor is pushed further in this direction after Justine's trial. When Elizabeth and Victor are visiting Justine's cell, Victor hides in the corner of

the cell during the ladies' conversation. Victor has already refused to utter revelation of the actual murderer's identity, and his only response to hearing the conversation of Justine and Elizabeth is, "I gnashed my teeth, and ground them together, uttering a groan that came from my inmost soul" (83). This catches Justine's attention, and she then beseeches him not to believe her guilty, but instead of responding to her, Victor simply narrates, "I could not answer" (83). The anguished groan and the inability to communicate in language are an unmistakable plunging of Victor into the status of a pre-social 'savage,' reminiscent of the Creature before the accidental tutelage of the De Lacy family. And literally, of course, Victor's inability to articulate the true cause of the destruction that has been visited upon Geneva means that further injustice will be perpetrated.

Victor falls into a similar state of linguistic dysfunction after the murder of Clerval. While Victor mentions vaguely that he knows the murderer of William and internally accuses himself of that crime around the time of Justine's trial, he openly raves upon seeing Clerval's body, "Have my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life? Two I have already destroyed" (174); and he continues, in his unconscious fever, to call "[himself] the murderer of William, Justine, and of Clerval" (174). Ironically, the magistrate hears this but, astute as he is with physical criminal evidence, does not ultimately assign any meaning to the ravings. All of Victor's ravings are of course inaccurate, so they move the magistrate no closer to the true identity of the murderer and thus to justice. Victor continues to despair and rave to his father after his acquittal, but he never explicitly reveals the existence of the Creature.

The Creature's mode of perpetrating injustice draws the instances of linguistic dysfunction together in a very potent symbolic way. When arguing with his first victim, William, the Creature says to the boy, "I do not intend to hurt you; listen to me" (139). The Creature is

still operating on the hope that he can use language to overcome his hideousness. On a conscious level, the Creature is most motivated to his next action by the revelation that the boy is associated with Victor, and so he kills the boy. But about the murder, the Creature says, “The child struggled, and loaded me with epithets which carried despair to my heart: I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet” (139). The Creature stresses the pain that he feels from having inaccurate language applied to identify him (the “epithets”), and he characterizes his purpose in that moment as the desire to “silence” the boy's words.

This spontaneous response becomes the Creature's *modus operandi*. After the Creature murders Elizabeth, Victor is forced to gaze upon the “murderous mark of the fiend's grasp...on her neck” (193), just as there has been the “black mark of fingers” on Clerval's neck (172), just as William has been strangled. The Creature's choice of strangulation as the method of killing each of his victims continues to metaphorically assault conduits (the victims' throats) of linguistic expression. We have seen the Creature go from hoping to gain societal acceptance by becoming “master of their language,” to strangling innocent people to death. This movement seems almost to have been inevitable, though, given the philological underpinnings that slowly became evident to the Creature. After his own creation, he could only mutter to his Creator, and was rejected. In a crucial moment of hoped societal integration, the Creature reverted to natural cries. At several points, the Creator himself digressed into linguistic dysfunction. Language has appeared as anything but “godlike;” it has rather been an ugly human creation arbitrary in construction and use, and thus prone to engendering disorder. The language-inflected catastrophes that seem to follow both the Creature and Victor seem to dramatize the Tookean principle that the polities binding their society were founded upon the use -- or misuse -- of language.

III. "the sanguinary laws of man"

The social disorder attendant upon the linguistic dysfunction we have traced so far has taken place on a relatively microcosmic level. Nevertheless, we are seeing larger legal systems repeatedly drawn into this action. If religion was an institution that looked different with a new paradigm of language as a human institution, so was law, to just as great an extent. Of course, the general social backdrop of *Frankenstein* was a tense one. Far from ending all societal upheaval, the ending of the war in 1815 may actually have heightened social turmoil at home. Marilyn Butler calls 1816 “a year when the stability of society seemed in question” (119). Increasing mechanization in agriculture was already displacing droves of laborers when the militia disbanded and saturated the labor market with countless more men looking for work. This led to machine-breaking and radical calls for reform. We of course think forward to the Peterloo Massacre in 1819, but Peterloo is in some ways the culmination of a trend. Unsettling sentiment had grown enough through 1816 that Habeas Corpus was repealed in early 1817, to suppress opposition to the establishment. Yet this was not the first time in the period that Habeas Corpus had been repealed. Few intellectuals had felt the repeal of Habeas Corpus – which Butler calls “that safeguard against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and most resonant of statutes [to writers]” (146) – like Tooke did in the 1790s.

The lot of English radicals in the 1790s was a fight against governmental suppression of revolutionary ideas. Vehemently questioning the authority and justness of the institutions that ordered society, thinkers like Godwin and Tooke found themselves subject to reprisals from those very institutions, by means of what they believed to be empty rhetoric. This manipulation

of law reverberated Tooke's analysis of the very word 'Law.' In the *Diversions*, Tooke traces the etymology of 'Law' as Anglo-Saxon, and as a root verb meaning “*Laid down*” or “*Ordered*” (2: 8). As Olivia Smith reads the significance of this, in *The Politics of Language: 1791-1819*, law “is a human activity susceptible to discussion and change...If ‘law’ is a verb, then actions can alter it” (132). Such a belief – which I agree was the undergirding to Tooke's etymology – is a double-edged sword. If 'Law' can be altered by human actions, then revolutionary movement is justifiable and can be effectual. By the same token, though, 'Law' is subject to manipulation by those holding positions of power in society. This latter edge of the sword was of course the one that Tooke and his ilk found themselves rubbing up against.

Indeed, Tooke believed that his own trial “afforded a very striking instance of the importance of the meaning of words; not only (as has been too lightly supposed) to Metaphysicians and Schoolmen, but to the rights and happiness of mankind in their dearest concerns – the decisions of Courts of Justice” (1: 79). This very line of thinking was used by William Godwin in Tooke's defense. In "Cursory Strictures on the Charge Delivered by Lord Chief Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury, October 2, 1794," Godwin says, "Let us understand the ground on which we stand. Are we to understand that...[legal]...reasonings are to be adduced from the axioms and dictums of moralists and metaphysicians, and that men are to convicted, sentenced, and executed, upon these?" (13). The peril, Godwin understood (as Tooke did), was that "the man most deeply read in the laws of his country, and most assiduously conforming his actions to them, shall be liable to be arraigned and capitally punished for a crime, that no law describes...at the arbitrary pleasure of the administration" (13). We hear some explicit echoes in *Frankenstein* of such manipulation. In the history of Safie, the Creature says about Safie's father

that, "for some reason I could not learn, he became obnoxious to the government. He was seized and cast into prison" (118). We also hear of the De Lacy family having to await trial for five months, recalling Tooke's six-month stay in the Tower of London with Habeas Corpus suspended. Shunning Habeas Corpus was one manifestation of the general manipulation by those in power in the 1790s. The root issue was the suppression of any decentralizing political movement. Prejudicial wielding of power is a tidy means of such suppression. We find in *Frankenstein* a long series of experiences for the Creature in which society is arbitrarily cruel to him in what are described as adjudicatory processes. There is a profusion of such adjudicatory processes in the novel, all of them dramatizing what Tooke both theorized and experienced. The Creature suffers repeatedly at the hands of what Godwin succinctly described as "fiction, hypothesis, and prejudication" (32).

In laying out his theory of the 'noble savage,' Rousseau maintains that the root of evil in society is private property and competition. In *Frankenstein*, the Creature consciously fears that he will not be accepted in society because he has no property and wealth. Nevertheless, the communal goodwill that he extends to the De Lacy family is ineffectual for the Creature. He is still rejected by them on completely arbitrary grounds: his appearance. The specific wording of this rejection seems to break down the Rousseauvian paradigm yet further and take a decidedly Tookean view of 'Morality' and 'Law.' When the creature first tells De Lacy that he is afraid of being rejected by the friends to whom he is going, De Lacy responds to the creature, "the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity" (130). The creature responds to De Lacy recognizing the crux that the old man highlights, saying, "They are kind...but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my

life has been hitherto harmless, and, in some degree, beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster” (130). In the next paragraph, the creature says to De Lacy, ““they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome”” (130). To again assuage the creature, De Lacy says, ““I am blind, and cannot judge your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere”” (130); and, a short space later, De Lacy adds, ““I and my family have been condemned, although innocent: judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes”” (131). And when Felix, Agatha, and Safie unexpectedly return, the creature says to the old man, in desperation, ““Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!”” (131). What the creature seeks from De Lacy is, to employ a cliché, blind justice. The issue at hand is ‘prejudice,’ in the repeated words of both men, versus sound judgment – judgment based upon misleading signs versus judgment based upon actual things. And the creature even goes so far as to explicitly liken the exchange to a trial. The verdict of the Creature’s pseudo-trial, of course, is exile based upon prejudice.

After the Creature leaves the De Lacy family, we continue to see encounters that dramatize Tookean arbitrary injustice. While traveling toward Geneva to commence his campaign of vengeance against Victor, the Creature inadvertently reverts to instinctive good will. While walking through a forest, he is instinctively, uncontrollably cheered by the sensations of a beautiful spring day, and then hears the sound of voices nearby. He hides from view, then witnesses a young girl fall into the swift river nearby. Without thinking, the Creature rushes out of hiding and rescues the girl from the water. As he is attempting to revive her, someone (probably the girl’s father) finds them, snatches the girl from him in horror, and flees. The Creature instinctively follows them, and, in fear, the man shoots the creature. As the Creature puts it, ““This was then the reward of my

benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and, as a recompence, I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound, which shattered the flesh and bone” (137-8).

Learning better and better how arbitrarily cruel society is, the Creature checks his instinctive good will. However, after reaching the vicinity of Geneva, the Creature calculates an opportunity to gain acceptance in some sort of society. He says about being approached by a child, “Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me, that this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him, and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth” (138). However, the boy (who turns out to be William Frankenstein) is horrified by the Creature’s appearance, and says to him, ““My papa is a Syndic – he is M. Frankenstein – he would punish you”” (139). The answer to the Creature’s hope to overcome prejudice is the threat of the criminal justice system.

After murdering young William, the Creature's narrative verbally echoes Godwin's characterization of Tooke's trial. The Creature takes the picture of Elizabeth, then proceeds to plant it on Justine Moritz in a deliberate attempt to frame her, saying, “thanks to the lessons of Felix, and the *sanguinary* laws of man, I have learned how to work mischief” (140, my italics). Godwin characterized Tooke's trial as a process of "wild conjecture," "premature presumption," and "dreams...full of *sanguinary* and tremendous prophecy" (18, my italics). The Creature has learned to regard the institution of law much as Godwin did (and as Tooke does in the *Diversions*): *sanguinary* -- a system subject to manipulation, being more often the cause of bloodshed than of justice.

The actual workings of the legal system that we do see in the novel suggest the system as

a model of injustice inflected by highly fallible interpretation. In the false conviction of Justine, there is physical evidence produced against Justine, in the form of the picture from her pocket. There is witness testimony against her. There are circumstantial facts presented to establish that she was logistically capable of being the murderer. Justine's body language is presented as evidence – her mood around the time of the crime, her reaction to being shown the body, and even her countenance during the trial are all examined as pieces of evidence. Further emphasizing the trial as a play of heuristics is Justine's appeal that “I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to a favourable *interpretation*, where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious” (78, my italics).

After the court reaching a verdict on Justine, Victor is told by an officer of the court “that Justine had already confessed her guilt. ‘That evidence,’ he observed, ‘was hardly required in so glaring a case, but I am glad of it; and, indeed, none of our judges like to condemn a criminal upon circumstantial evidence, be it ever so decisive’” (81). If a defendant persists with a plea of innocence, a court condemnation would technically be a matter of the court's interpretation, alone. If, conversely, a defendant ultimately confesses, the court may say that instead of deducing a verdict based upon interpretation, truth has revealed itself, leaving no room for doubt. This seems to be the court's logic in having a clear conscience over the conviction of Justine.

We learn, however, that the court has been highly manipulative to secure itself a clear conscience. In arguably the most stark dramatization of Tooke's characterization of institutions of power in society, we come to learn that Justine's confession had been coerced. She tells Elizabeth, “I did confess; but I confessed a lie. I confessed, that I might obtain absolution... Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me... He threatened excommunication and hell fire in my

last moments, if I continued obdurate” (82). Justine’s confession again calls into question the validity of religion as a polity. In the *Diversions*, Tooke asserts that Church is nothing more than an adjective, and that Fate, Heaven, Hell, Providence, Prudence, Fiend, Angel, Spirit, True, False, Just, Right, and Wrong, likewise, “are all merely Participles poetically embodied, and substantiated by those who use them” (2: 19). The powerful institution that is the Church, in *Frankenstein*, has colluded with the legal system and used its power to coerce a confession from Justine. Does a confessor really have the power to subject Justine to Hell? The Tookean model suggests that because it is an abstraction, Hell can be effectively substantiated by a man of power wielding it; indeed this seems to have been the case with Justine. Likewise, another huge abstraction is wielded by the confessor: Excommunication. Excommunication is, of course, nothing tangible; it is, technically, an institution’s regard for an individual. This is a slippery concept, and, again, it is seemingly substantiated by the man using the word. Justine wishes not to be excluded from one abstraction – the Church – because exclusion from that abstraction would mean inclusion in another even more important abstraction – Hell – and this league is threatened via another abstraction – Excommunication.

Elizabeth seems to recognize what is at play in this scene. After hearing Justine’s account of the coerced confession, Elizabeth indicts the society in which they live, saying,

‘when one creature is murdered, another is immediately deprived of life in a slow torturing manner; then the executioners, their hands yet reeking with the blood of innocence, believe that they have done a great deed. They call this *retribution*. Hateful name! When that word is pronounced, I know greater and more horrid punishments are going to be inflicted than the gloomiest tyrant has ever invented to satiate his utmost revenge.’ (83)

Elizabeth perceives that a ‘hateful name’ – an italicized ‘word that is pronounced’ – is the vehicle of woe, here. The abstraction Retribution is employed to justify action, vindicated by virtue of

being wielded by men of power, wielded to order society in a proper hierarchy of power. A few pages later, Elizabeth explicitly sums up the social implications of the manipulation in Justine's trial: "Alas! Victor, when falsehood can look so like truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness?" (88). Again, according to Tooke, such things as 'falsehood' and 'truth' are not absolute things at all – they "are all merely Participles poetically embodied, and substantiated by those who use them." When such substantiation is not "dissipated by etymology," as Tooke put it – or, challenged intellectually – the result is a justice system that amounts to "dreams...full of *sanguinary* and tremendous prophecy," as Godwin put it, and as the Creature learns.

Elizabeth again explicitly summarizes what seems to be the novel's position on the legal proceedings and their societal import when she says, "When I reflect, my dear cousin," said she, 'on the miserable death of Justine Moritz, I no longer see the world and its works as they before appeared to me. Before, I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice, that I read in books or heard from others, as tales of ancient days, or imaginary evils; at least they were remote, and more familiar to reason than to the imagination; but now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood'" (88). This powerful statement from Elizabeth suggests a transhistorical paradigm shift, in her perception. A demystification has occurred for Elizabeth; her "world and its works" are man-made and sanguinary, rife with injustice. Furthermore, the metaphor that Shelley puts in Elizabeth's mouth -- the metaphor of the people of her society being "monsters thirsting for each other's blood" -- clearly points to the Creature as a vehicle for literalizing and critiquing what Mary Shelley believes is latent (or patent) in society.

IV. Deserts of a New World

Let us reiterate Elizabeth's question to Victor, prompted by Justine's trial: "when falsehood can look so like truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness?" (88). We have seen where meaning -- whether it be ontological meaning, or the epistemological search for meanings -- has become very unstable in a very Tookean way in *Frankenstein*. I have suggested that we find the legal systems in the novel fraught with philological manipulation, that the Creature's murderous modus operandi is a potent philological metaphor, that general social dysfunction is often attended by linguistic dysfunction for both the Creature and for his creator, and that language as a fallible human -- not divine -- institution is foregrounded in the novel. I have also suggested that the Creature himself, as a utilitarian but artificial construction, embodies Tooke's philology, recalling the dissection of Mercury early in *The Diversions*. The Creature acting as this sort of embodiment perhaps becomes clearer as the plot of the novel moves toward conclusion.

I have suggested that the Creature's creation by Victor dramatizes that when language is not a divine but a human institution, there is no providential Creator giving the gift of perfect and stable language; meaning is thus subject to dangerous instability. If the Creature literalizes this sort of paradigm, some of his messages to his Creator toward the conclusion of the plot extend this dangerous instability to an extreme degree. When pressuring Victor to create for him a female companion, he says, "You are my creator, but I am your master; -- obey!" (165). When leading Victor toward the North pole, the Creature leaves him a message that reads, "My reign is not yet over;...you live, and my power is complete" (202). Following Victor's death the Creature says to Walton about his own murdering spree, "Evil thenceforth became my good" (218). Similar to

when Elizabeth laments over the fate of Justine, "when falsehood can look so like truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness?", the Creature sets up for his Creator and for Walton some profound inversions, both ontological and epistemological.

The enabling force behind the propensity for these inversions is again figured at Victor's death. With Victor lying in a coffin, Walton walks into his cabin to find the following scene: "Over [Victor] hung a form which I cannot find words to describe; gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy" (216). The scene is reminiscent of the scene following the Creature's creation, in which the Creature looks on Victor lying in bed, mutters inarticulately, and reaches a hand out toward Victor unsuccessfully. Walton describing the Creature as "a form" suggests metaphorical significance in the Creature, and "distorted" is an apt descriptor for epistemological and ontological meaning in the novel. The distinctly philological character to these distortions even seems to come out in the fact that the Creature strikes Walton as a thing that eludes conventional linguistic signification, thus a "form which I cannot find words to describe". The Creature himself sums up why he is repeatedly rejected by society when he says to Victor, "the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union" (141).

Given the insurmountable barriers that the human senses are, the Creature demands from Victor "a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself" (142). After some vacillation, Victor is moved by both the pathos and logos of the Creature's argument, and he consents to create a partner as requested. However, later, during the process of creation, Victor reflects on the potential dangers of creating a female for the Creature:

He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man, and hide himself in deserts; but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. . . Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. (163)

Ultimately, Victor fears that two creatures united might become a sanguinary race, threatening to humanity. The irony of this fear, after the sanguinary depiction that European society has been given in the novel, is clear enough. Be that as it may, the reference that this passage makes to the Creature's desire to form a harmonious new society in a new world explicitly frames the Creature's fate in terms of the revolutionary bent of the 1790s, a time, for radicals, of hopes for "human nature seeming born again," and renovated societies replacing old tyrannies.

This revolutionary bent is magnified by the actual narrative framing of the novel. Robert Walton's epistolary narrative, which frames the novel, is primarily concerned with a quest for a new land. What Walton expects to find is curiously resonant with some of the Tookean concerns in the novel. Walton writes home to England,

I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is constantly visible for more than half the year; its broad disk just skirting the horizon, and diffusing perpetual splendour. There... snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country ruled by different laws and in which numerous circumstances enforce a belief that the aspect of nature differs essentially from anything of which we have any experience. I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle; and may regulate a thousand celestial observations, that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent for ever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. (9-10)

In the first half of this passage, Walton emphasizes natural harmony, with fair weather and calm seas. Walton defines such an empirical realm as “a country ruled by different laws”. Speaking literally of laws of nature, Walton's diction carries strong social connotations. As we have seen, much of the material framed by this quest of Walton's has been concerned with the laws by which countries are ruled, depicting sanguinary institutions that produce discord rather than natural harmony. This sense in Walton's imagination is further augmented by the idea of treading "a land never before imprinted by the foot of man." In the narratives framed by Walton, we see society's footprint marring the Creature's natural goodness. It is thus fitting that, like the Creature explicitly desires to retreat to an untouched land in order to find social harmony, Walton imagines something like a natural utopia at the undiscovered North pole.

Perhaps the most symbolically potent of Walton's motives to reach the North pole is the most obvious: to "discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle". In the simplest literal terms, Walton's quest is to find the referent of the sign 'N' on a compass. Considered thus, we needn't strain to see the parallel between this endeavor and Tookean etymology. Walton's undertaking is one of geographical etymology. Moreover, it is upon reaching the geographical referent that Walton imagines finding "a country ruled by different laws" -- laws of natural harmony. Throughout the novel, we have seen language manipulated -- etymology disregarded -- to create social discord. In hoping to find a utopian society at a sort of geographical root logos, Walton's quest figuratively makes the Tookean connection between philology and societal order.

Walton never actually reaches this natural ideal. The Creature says that he is leaving Walton's cabin to kindle a funeral pyre under himself at the North pole, but we never actually see the Creature reach that point, as he ebbs away into obscurity, exiting much as he entered society

in the novel: "He sprung from the cabin-window...upon the ice-raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance" (221). The geographical referent of the 'N' of the compass remains an obscurity located somewhere in a veritable 'desert of a new world.' This new world has proven an inhospitable arctic wasteland. Instead of colonizing the Americas with a bride, the Creature has come to an undiscovered land to confirm an ultimate meaninglessness, figured in the mutual destruction of himself and his creator. Walton's quest for a sort of natural utopia and the Creature's fleeting desire find a pristine settling land are manifestations of a desire we see elsewhere in the novel. Early in his narration to Walton, Victor says, "how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world" (48). To console Victor after Justine's trial, Elizabeth tells him, "We surely shall be happy: quiet in our native country, and not mingling in the world, what can disturb our tranquility?" (89). When Victor is in final northward pursuit of the Creature, he says, "During the day I was sustained and inspirited by the hope of night; for in sleep I saw my friends, my wife, and my beloved country" (202). When the Creature begins to realize that he does not fit in the society he desires to join, he thinks, "Oh, that I had for ever remained in my native wood, nor known or felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat!" (116). As we later see, unable to return to the simplicity of his native wood, the Creature hopes at least to form some new society. But for Victor, for Walton, and for the Creature, natural simplicity, native tranquility, and utopian idealism all remain distant.

Further interesting is the apparent reason for this conclusive reality in Frankenstein. Native simplicity proves fleeting in the end of the novel, but it has been highly malleable all along. When Victor returns to Geneva, he says, "I wept like a child: 'Dear mountains! My own beautiful lake! How do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid.

Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?" (71). Similarly, he later says, "My first resolution was to quit Geneva for ever; my country, which, when I was happy and beloved, was dear to me, now, in my adversity, became hateful" (199). One's native home seems to hold the potential to either welcome or mock; a welcoming sense of identification seems anything but stable and concrete. Another of Victor's apostrophes late in the novel, as he is mentally unraveling, also reveals this abstract nature of nativity: "Those were the last moments of my life during which I enjoyed the feeling of happiness...sometimes coasting the opposite banks, we saw the mighty Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost insurmountable barrier to the invader who should wish to enslave it" (190). Victor still wants to think of his native home in terms of physical boundaries and actual invasion from abroad. The plot centered on him has proven this mindset false. The desire to return to native simplicity is not frustrated by physical, political invasion; native tranquility is not conquered from abroad. These ideals are subverted from within by intellectual corruption, or relinquished by the natives themselves, through intellectual misguidedness.

I have suggested throughout this study that we see a very abstract and malleable sort of nationalism figured by philology in the period. In *Frankenstein*, social dysfunction spreads outward from its epicenter on the main two characters in Geneva and Ingostadt, it does not invade physically from abroad. If there is any sort of destructive, invasive force, it is an intellectual one that heeds no political boundaries. Let us step back and consider the geographical scope of the novel. It closes in tantalizing proximity to a source of (philologically-inflected) geographical reference. This comes at the close of a novel that has, in a sense, been a geographical mass of chaos. The novel takes into view Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey, the Americas,

Russia, Ireland, Scotland, England, and the North pole. This kind of setting for such exploration of the philological version of 1790s radicalism is particularly interesting when we remember that by the time Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, the Romantic period had witnessed the ideas of revolutionary France morph grotesquely into an empire engaging all of Europe. What began as a desire to renovate French society became an international power struggle. *Frankenstein* seems to represent this kind of distortion. What begins as a Genevese's philologically-inflected project of creation becomes an unhinged, globe-trotting monster.

For all of the narrative and geographic diffusion, though, the narratives and travels funnel toward Walton. The movement of all first-person narrators is bound for one place: the source of magnetic pull; in spite of the narrative complexity, all narratives are bound for England, refracted through one Englishman near the North pole. In short, we see great effort to point a tremendous amount of material to England. By the end of the novel, what we have come to, truncated, is this: an Englishman's quest for a natural utopia at a potent metaphor for etymological roots colliding with a story of socially disastrous arbitrary signification; or, an Englishman's quest for a new society colliding with a tale suggesting the dire necessity to reform society. And, again, this tale is all mailed home to England. This movement is very similar to the movement of revolutionary ideas in the 1790s, from the Continent to England. The suggestion seems to be that Mary Shelley, an Englishwoman, had a distinct message to mail home to second-generation Romantic England: to mind the lesson of the radical philology of the 1790s. When a modern nation becomes so far removed from its roots as an organically developing society, the institutions that organize the nation can come to rest entirely upon arbitrary signification. Without attention to etymology to preserve meaning, a human institution like language, seeming to be "godlike science," can become

a false god, creating neither out of society nor ex deo, but ex nihil, like Victor constructing the Creature. From this philological nothingness comes chaos and destruction -- a dystopian society.

The way that Shelley accomplishes sending this message to England -- through the complex narrative framing and geographic movement -- also reveals the importance of recognizing philology as a carrier for nationalism in the period. If we believe that nationalism was generated in England in the 18th century primarily by war with France, we don't properly allow for the nationalism-forming effects of revolutionary ideas going across political boundaries, as they clearly did in the 1790s. Some of the collision of narrative complexity and geographical diffusion in *Frankenstein* comes across as nearly absurd, seeming to deliberately dispel patriotic xenophobia as a version of nationalism. For instance, at one point, we have an Englishman hearing the narration of a Genevese recounting the narration of a creature created in a laboratory in Germany that recounts hearing a narration recounting the involvement of a French family in the lives of two Turks. This diffusion ultimately seems aimed less at delineating different nations than it seems aimed at illustrating the abstract nature of nationalism. Setting up the Creature as a metaphor for an epistemological and ontological paradigm shift, turning that metaphor loose over much of the known world, and seeing how, everywhere it goes, arbitrary signification leads to injustice, we can see that, for Shelley, what generates nationalism is less about political boundaries than it is about ideas. For 1790s English radicals, nationalism was more about the people of England opposing their own government than it was about England opposing France. In *Frankenstein*, philology is less about defining Englishness in opposition to other nations' concepts of themselves than it is about defining social institutions in general in the age of nationalism.

Chapter Four: John Keats Keeping English Up

I. Echo and Some Wight

In the letter framing arguably his finest and most famous poem, “To Autumn,” John Keats expresses the conviction that “English ought to be kept up,” and he lauds Thomas Chatterton as “the purest writer in the English Language” (2: 167). Along with Percy’s *Reliques*, Chatterton’s Rowley poems formed a core of antiquarian poetry that appealed to the Romantics. As Keats’s letter comments suggest, and as we have seen in the preceding chapters, this antiquarian interest went hand in hand with interest in native language. However, while the past thirty years of critical discourse on John Keats have witnessed several valuable studies contextualizing Keats, consideration of Keats’s interest in early philology has remained underexplored. In fact, Richard Turley says, in *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature*, that Keats is “the Romantic author no critical study, so far as I am aware, has sought to associate with philological debates in any concerted sense” (xxi). Turley later acknowledges seeing how it “is difficult, somehow, to imagine Keats being interested in such an ostensibly ‘un-Keatsian’ pursuit as historical linguistics” (111). I would suggest the opposite, though: as Keats has been long-revered as a master stylistic craftsman, to whose verse subtle turnings of language are crucial, there are few things that should seem more ostensibly Keatsian than interest in linguistics.

This chapter ultimately argues that Keats crafts “To Autumn” as a philologically inflected version of ‘pure English,’ offering a reading of the poem and its genesis substantially distinct from other major readings. It is my contention, though, that this formulation by Keats comes

after a complex negotiation spanning several poems and letters. This negotiation involves different modes of cultural identification, including religion, Hellenism, and Elizabethan-Medieval-Hellenistic amalgams, and the malleability of these modes of identification is a testament to the tenuous nature of nationalism in the period. As I have been moved to argue in the cases of William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, and Mary Shelley, early philology is an integral part of this tenuous negotiation.

In establishing how Keats had access to the philological discourse of his day, Richard Turley posits that “the poet was a close reader of [Condillac], moreover that he came across Condillac’s work at some point towards the end of 1817 (possibly during a stay with his friend Benjamin Bailey at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, between 3 September and 5 October 1817)” (112). Turley also mentions that Richard Woodhouse, friend and intellectual correspondent of Keats and legal and literary adviser to John Taylor, Keats’s publisher, was a polyglot. This representation is an understatement, though. While it seems to have consistently escaped the notice of contextual studies of Keats, Tim Chilcott mentions, in *A Publisher and his Circle: the Life and Work of John Taylor, Keats's Publisher*, that Woodhouse and Taylor formed a philological society just a few years before getting to know Keats. The “Philological Society,” as they called it, appears to have been formed in 1812 and to have lasted only a little over a year, but Taylor’s interest in and dissemination of philology did not cease. As Chilcott says about Taylor’s influence on another of the authors he published in the 1820s, “The range and fluency of their talk, as Richard Woodhouse noted, was remarkable. Taylor would lead De Quincey into political economy, the origin and analogies of language, Roman roads, the pronunciation of Greek and Latin, old castles, the works of Shakespeare, the poetry of Spenser -- upon all these, De Quincey was

informed ‘to considerable minuteness’” (138-139). It is difficult to imagine that such a range of discourse as that described by Woodhouse as being laid out by Taylor to De Quincey would not have been keenly interesting to Keats, and we know from the letters that Keats’s intellectual engagement with Taylor was close and regular. Keats was in even closer contact with Leigh Hunt, whose Preface to *The Story of Rimini* has strong philological underpinnings. And further filling the Cockney circle was William Hazlitt, whose philological interests I have highlighted throughout this study.

So, Keats had no shortage of access to early philology. The early sonnet "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition" seems to evince a particular strain of Tooke’s thinking. It is important that we recall Tooke’s bold assertion about the presence of abstractions in English, early in Part Two of *The Diversions*, that, “These words, the Participles and Adjectives, not understood as such, have caused a metaphysical jargon and a false morality, which can only be examined by etymology” (2: 18). Fate, Heaven, Hell, Providence, Prudence, Fiend, Angel, Spirit, True, False, Just, Right, and Wrong, among others, Tooke tells us, “are all merely Participles poetically embodied, and substantiated by those who use them,” and that Church is an adjective, produced the same way and to the same effect (2: 19). This general hollowness that Tooke imputes to the religion of the day seems strikingly resonant with Keats's early sonnet "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition":

The church bells toll a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More heark’ning to the sermon’s horrid sound.
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell; seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
And converse high of those with glory crown'd.

Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they go
Into oblivion; - that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.

Keats seems to be stressing, here, that the Anglican Church operates with false signifiers. The bell tolling is a conspicuous sign – an auditory way for the institution to communicate to its flock, to indicate that it is time to pray and be preached to, time to be holy. But Keats believes that the church bells are actually “melancholy,” prayers “gloominess,” such ecclesiastical cares “dreadful,” and the sermon’s sound “horrid.” In Keats’s assessment, this all indicates that the mind of man is bound in a black spell, the black spell being religion, or “superstition.” Where Tooke holds that religion becomes a false morality that can only be eradicated by the intellectual discourse of philology, religion also seems to be an intellectual issue for Keats, as he presents religion as an unenlightened discourse – as a “black spell.” Furthermore, binding itself in this spell, the mind of man lamentably tears itself away from “Lydian airs.” Keats has set up a contrast between devotion to ancient Greek culture – “Lydian airs” – and Anglicanism. By the end of the sonnet, Keats has suggested that the tolling of the bells is actually wailing that precedes religion’s departure to oblivion, implying that the unenlightened discourse – the “black spell” – will give way to “many glories of immortal stamp.” Keats imagines that a different discourse providing glory and immortality – conventional provisions of religion – will supersede religion.

Conceiving of religion as an ‘unenlightened discourse’ is particularly interesting because the Enlightenment produced, among many other things, philology and nationalism. “Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition” comes across as explicitly identifying an intellectual problem for

Keats, and this problem is a condensed manifestation of the development of nationalism theorized by Benedict Anderson. Anderson, we recall, argues that the rise of nationalism occurred alongside the Enlightenment's challenge to religion as a mode of cultural identification. Viewing religion as a waning, intellectually insufficient mode of cultural identification, Keats looks for a new abstract construction to foster identity. With his lament over the abandonment of "Lydian airs," Keats suggests this alternate mode of identification – the form that often in his poetry and letters takes the place of what he views as hollow Christianity: pagan Greek culture.

Stepping back from Keats for a moment, Hellenistic paganism did not only serve, in Keats's day, as an alternative to Christianity; it often served double-duty as a way to imagine Englishness. In *Classics Transformed: Schools, University, and Society in England, 1830-1960*, Christopher Stray argues that Greek was a carrier for Romantic nationalism -- that, "If Rome claimed respect because of its universality, in an age of romantic particularism Greece asserted a superior status because it symbolized the power of the individual as a unique source of original value" (15). Similarly, Linda Colley has suggested, in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, that around the turn of the 19th century "patriotism of a kind was embedded in the classical curriculum" (167). Colley goes on to argue that because so much classical literature celebrated patriotic achievement, it served as model for Britons, and could do so better than any other model because, since the societies they centered on were part of the antique past, they were not an actual threat to imperial Britain. Locating Keats in this discourse, it is important to make the distinction that Stray goes on to make between Greece and Rome. While Greece as a political entity could be viewed as antique, Rome, as Stray points out, was still a huge political force in 18th and 19th century Europe, in the form of Christianity: "Greece stood beyond the existing

European structures, and particularly beyond the French and Catholic traditions associated with Latin: it offered an older, alternative legitimating source of value" (15). In addition to specifying how Hellenism could function as a carrier for, not a threat to, English nationalism, this point by Stray also brings us back to the point of religion for Keats. My suggestion is that we can see in Keats that not only did Greek stand beyond "the French and Catholic traditions associated with Latin," it offered an alternative to Christianity.

Additionally, as Byron would ultimately attest with his life, Greece was a symbol of marginality for the second-generation Romantics. This way of thinking would contribute to engagement in what Jeffrey Cox has called "a Cockney project of wresting the control of the definition of the classical from the conservative defenders of a deadening, urnlike tradition" (186). To this argument about class, Ernest Gellner's discussion of economic factors contributing to the rise of nationalism is particularly relevant. Increasing industrialization brought a model of economic organization that demanded and prized both division of labor and mobility of laborers. In such a model, according to Gellner, "Work, in the main, is no longer the manipulation of things, but of meanings" (32). In a society so modeled, "The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence" (33). Like Jeffrey Cox, Marjorie Levinson is right to suggest the possibility of Keats's Cockney background informing his poetics. Given what we know about the economic underpinnings of nationalism in general, it is possible that a sense of limited access to cultural legitimacy contributed to Keats's desire to challenge and experiment with different modes of cultural identification. I ponder Levinson's argument, and the possible implications of class, at greater length later in this chapter; for the time being, early verse such as "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition" begins to

suggest Hellenistic paganism as an alternative to the conventional Christianity of Keats's day. Also emerging in other early verse from Keats seems to be a certain type of nationalistic imagining, manifesting part of the function of classical education described by Christopher Stray and Linda Colley.

We can see this intellectual matrix – of nationalism and religion, of English Hellenism – at work in *Endymion*, “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern,” and “Robin Hood.” I do not offer comprehensive readings of these poems, I rather move through them briskly, pointing out glimpses of Keats amalgamating an English literary past with Hellenism. In these glimpses, we see Keats wanting to locate in that amalgam an alternative religiosity.

The invocation of *Endymion* is one example. The poem is, of course, a Hellenistic romance, but it is dedicated to Chatterton, and its epigraph is from a Shakespeare sonnet. In the opening scene of Book One, Keats says,

O kindly muse! Let not my weak tongue falter
In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee:
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unmew
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing. (1: 128-134)

Shakespeare and Chatterton have already entered *Endymion*, and now Keats talks metaphorically about following in Chaucer’s footsteps. Along with the references to the other Englishmen, this is more than an arbitrary reference to an author of Hellenistic subject matter. Keats is attempting to connect, in *Endymion*, to an English literary past. Moreover, we see the religious dimension to what Keats is attempting, in his desire to “unmew [his] soul” and to be anointed with “ethereal dew” by writing about what he calls “old piety.”

Similarly, in the invocation at the beginning of Book Four of *Endymion*, Keats again imagines an English literary past, with overtones of sacredness, saying:

Muse of my native land! Loftiest Muse!
O first-born on the mountains! By the hues
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
While yet our England was a wolfish den;
Before our forests heard the talk of men;
Before the first of Druids was a child;-
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude. (4: 1-9)

This passage heavily emphasizes the primal character of a specifically English muse, predating civilization, the Druids, and even language. Moreover, the muse is sacred, having been begot by “the hues / Of heaven on the spiritual air,” and being “Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.”

We see an even more overt sacred amalgam of Hellenism and an English literary past in “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.” Keats imagines, for the Elizabethan poets, the Mermaid tavern as an “elysium” (2, 24). Moreover, Keats fancies a modern connection to the bunch, speaking of an “astrologer” (16) seeing them “Underneath a new old sign / Sipping beverage divine, / And pledging with contented smack / The Mermaid in the zodiac” (19-22). So, Keats imagines the Elizabethans as having once resided in the elysium of the Mermaid Tavern, then having taken up permanent residence in the Greek zodiac, as a new astrological sign. This last piece is rich, because the implication of the Elizabethans having a sign in the zodiac is that an Englishman – a poet, for instance – could be ‘born under’ that sign, effectively a native son of that English-Hellenic amalgam.

“Robin Hood” is unmistakably a piece of nostalgia for an English past, beginning, “No! Those days are gone away,” referencing not the Elizabethans but medieval England, cataloging

all that is lamentably gone from the days of Robin Hood.¹⁰ As part of this catalog, Keats says, “There is no mid-forest laugh, / Where lone Echo gives the half / To some wight, amaz’d to hear / Jestings, deep in forest drear” (15-18). “Echo” is a subtle but unambiguous Hellenic reference. Moreover, “Echo” is interestingly placed, since she is the reverberation of the voice of “some wight.” In his brief discussion of “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” Richard Turley calls attention to the fact that in the first published version of that poem, the “knight-at-arms” is dubbed instead “wretched wight.” Turley calls “wretched wight” a more philologically interesting choice, which it indeed is. The word “wight” is unmistakably Anglo-Saxon in origin, and while Keats has placed this distinctive Englishness in “Robin Hood,” it is linked with the Hellenic presence of “Echo.” Specifically, the connection is linguistic, as “Echo” is a figuration of the wight’s own voice. This specific figuration turns Keats’s thinking back to philology, completing the intellectual matrix that has witnessed him pondering religion and Englishness.

II. “the holiness of the Heart’s affections”

“Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition” is a brief, explicit statement of an intellectual problem for Keats: religion in England as a mode of identification. Early poems like “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern,” “Robin Hood,” and even, in places, *Endymion* seem to be highly intellectualized amalgams experimented with as solutions to this problem. When Keats moves

10. Nicholas Roe, in *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, highlights the 'outlaw' spirit in both “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern” and “Robin Hood,” pointing to dissatisfaction with economic policy as Keats's primary concern in the poems.

into the Odes of 1819, he moves into a relatively coherent and confident articulation of the intellectual solution he has been developing, and it is more purely Hellenistic.

Recognizing that this Hellenistic solution is intertwined with early philology does not constitute a complete revision of the critical history of the Odes. Stuart Sperry has acknowledged the importance of Lockean empiricism to Keats's speculations on sensation and language. Helen Vendler has argued that “The odes that follow *Indolence* investigate various attitudes toward the senses, almost as though the odes were invented as a series of controlled experiments in the suppression or permission of sense-experience” (46). Though critics like Sperry and Vendler don't step as far beyond general Lockean thought as I am suggesting we should – into the core of early philology – their arguments share common ground with my argument about Keats's experimentation with philological solutions to the problem of cultural identification.

As per "Robin Hood's" suggestion of a Hellenistic figuration of Anglo-Saxon, in the form of 'Echo and some wight,' Keats's developing solution to the problem of cultural identification via religion is underscored by early philology. As I suggested with my discussion of "Kubla Khan" in the Introduction to this study, the general notion of “old piety” was a significant tenet of early philology. For instance, Condillac says in his *Essay*, “Poetry and music...were cultivated only to proclaim religion and laws and to preserve the memory of great men and the services they rendered to society” (152). Blair says virtually the same thing in the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*; when discussing the origin and progress of poetry, Blair asserts that from the “very beginning of Society, there were occasions on which they met together for feasts, *sacrifices*, and Public Assemblies” (314, my italics). Blair also uses Native Americans as an

example of primitive civilization and thus as a group using language and poetry in a primal state, and he says about them “that it is in Songs they celebrate their religious rites” (314). About the first poets (in an abstract sense), Blair says “their persons were held sacred” (318). So, sacredness, or holiness, was held by early philology to be an essential component of early language in general and early poetry in particular. And, as we have also already seen, these notions were hand in hand with the tenet of language decline. We recall Blair’s assertion, for instance, that, “Poetry, however, in its ancient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion, it owed its birth. Prompted and inspired by objects, which to him seemed great, by events which interested his country or his friends, the early Bard arose and sung” (322). Primal poetry and language, then, were theorized both to be more sacred in function and to possess more vitality than modern language.

In the “O for a Life of Sensations” letter to Benjamin Bailey, from November 22, 1817, Keats effectually synthesizes the issues of language decline and arbitrary signification. Keats asserts that he is “certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart’s affections and the truth of Imagination – What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth” (1: 184). Elaborating on what he means by the term ‘truth,’ Keats says, “The Imagination may be compared to Adam’s dream – he awoke and found it truth” (1: 184). According to this explanation, by the term ‘truth,’ Keats does not seem to mean moral or philosophical truth; he seems to be referring to material reality. While Richard Turley has suggested that Keats’s beauty-truth equation is a direct verbal echo of Condillac, the larger issue seems to be Keats’s engagement with the general discourse on

the relationship between sensation and the mind. If, as I am suggesting, truth essentially means something like ‘things as they are,’ it makes sense that Keats equates ‘sensation’ and the ‘Heart’s affections.’ ‘Imagination’ clearly being the work of the mind, Keats is representing early philology’s conception of the relationship between things and ideas. Saying, as he later does, that he cannot conceive of reaching truth by logic – by “consequitive reasoning” (1: 185) – Keats seems to be speaking against a model of highly abstract apprehension, in favor of a particularly empirical model of apprehension. What Keats wants to avoid, it seems, is abstract, hollow modern thinking. The way to avoid such thinking, and to gain the clearest concept of truth, or apprehension of things, comes from the mind working with the “Heart’s affections” – keeping the mind wedded to sensation. Most importantly, sensations – or “the Heart’s affections” are holy. Drawing upon the theorization that early language and poetry would have been both more sensuous and sacred, Keats seems to be expressing desire, here, for philological holiness along the lines of what we saw manifested in "Kubla Khan" in the Introduction to this study.¹¹

Keats’s philological thinking becomes even clearer in the “vale of Soul-making” letter. Ostensibly springing from the same sentiments as “Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition,”

11. In *The Archeology of the Frivolous: Reading Condillac*, trans. ed. John P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), Jacques Derrida argues that part of Condillac's very metaphysical objective, to unearth "'prelinguistic' origin, 'instinct,' or 'feeling'" (38), is doomed by its operation within language: "A philosophy of the sign -- Condillac's -- always threatens [the decision between the useful and the futile] but also expends and multiplies itself in order to reduce the threat, always adds 'too many signs' in order to efface the gap or fraction" (119). As I think this chapter progressively demonstrates, though, this does not seem to be the way Keats read Condillac. As I have begun to argue, Keats seems to have taken interest in Condillac's (as well as other early philologists') theorizations of vitality and sacredness in early language.

the letter asserts, “The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is ‘a vale of tears’ from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven – What a little circumscribed straightened notion!” (2: 101-102). Keats defines his alternative to the hollow thinking of religion by saying, “Call the world if you Please ‘The vale of Soul-making’” (2: 102). In his edition of Keats’s letters, Hyder Edward Rollins notes that the system that Keats then lays out has resonances of Locke’s *Essay*. The components of the system are “the *Intelligence* – the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World* or *Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul* or *Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*” (2: 102). Dismissing conventional religion, Keats is relocating the formation of holiness in the interaction of the mind and empirical experience – a system that seems to manifest conviction in the philological notion of the “holiness of the Heart’s affections.” When Keats goes on to say, “Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience,” (2: 103) the notion of the heart being holy is yet clearer. What is at stake is indeed a “sense of Identity;” it is the sort of imagining of identity that Benedict Anderson theorizes as being necessary after the erosion of Christianity’s authority by the Enlightenment. Also, in this April 1819 letter, Keats more clearly evinces a desire for the union of the mind and sensation, in saying that the Mind and Heart should be made to act upon one another.

“Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the hethen mythology abstractions are personified” (2: 103). This rhetorical question in the “vale of Soul-making letter,” about what Keats refers to as the originators of the Christian scheme, makes plain

how the Hellenistic “Ode to Psyche” grows out of the letter. Being the first of the great Odes of 1819, “Ode to Psyche” begins a dominant and obvious trend in the Odes in that it is Hellenistic. As “Ode to Psyche” is an outgrowth of Keats’s thinking about philological holiness, the Hellenism is fitting, hearkening back to some of his motives in *Endymion*, “Robin Hood,” and “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.” Keats presents “Ode to Psyche” to the George Keatses, in the long April 1819 letter that includes the “vale of Soul-making” scheme, as a sacred act: “You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apulieus the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour – and perhaps never thought of in the old religion – I am more orthodox than to let a hethen Goddess be so neglected” (2: 106). Psyche’s history constitutes a perfect appeal to Keats’s preoccupations in the “vale of Soul-making” letter. Relative to Keats, she is primitive; like Keats, she was, in a sense, belated. Keats is explicit that writing the ode to her is an act of orthodoxy – it constitutes him, in a sense, becoming a Hellenic devotee. Moreover, while ‘psyche’ of course means ‘soul,’ in its root sense, it takes on the modern connotation of ‘mind’ by the Victorian period. This enacts a sort of shift of divinity into the human mind, which recalls something that we have seen already in this study: the shift of language from divine to human origins. After all, according to Keats’s main source for Psyche’s history, Lempriere, Psyche is a mortal who gets deified to satisfy Cupid’s love. The suggestion seems to be that there is deifying power in the interaction of sensation with the mind.

After the invocation of the first four lines of the poem, Keats subtly questions a dichotomization of the activity of the mind and empirical perception, saying, “Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see” (5). In line six, when Keats talks about seeing “The winged Psyche with

awaken'd eyes," he stresses her receptors of empirical vision. Moreover, the moment of reception that Keats captures is primal, as the eyes are just awakened. In the following line, Keats elaborates on his own state as one of wandering "thoughtlessly," but this thoughtlessness is crucially checked by the sight of Psyche and Cupid – mind and heart, respectively. It is crucial that the first (and nearly only) 'action' that the poem narrates is the mind-stimulating apprehension of *both* Psyche and Cupid, physically joined, no less. Keats is stressing that his poetic project is to wed mind and heart.

Keats stresses repeatedly throughout the opening stanza the pristine nature of the scene. He describes Psyche and Cupid as "couched side by side / In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof / Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran / A brooklet, scarce espied" (9-12). The "deepest grass" suggests Keats delving deeply into something. The "scarce espied" brooklet represents something relatively unwitnessed. While the "whisp'ring roof" acts as an index for the wind, it also subtly speaks of secrecy, recalling Keats speaking of singing Psyche's secrets just a few lines earlier, stressing the idea of unprecedented expression. In addition, the "trembled blossoms" and "budded Tyrian" (14) both suggest freshness in new growth. Indeed, the scene of the first stanza as a whole is one of "*tender eye-dawn of aurorean love*" (20, my italics), with this characterization stressing primal empirical sensation.

Keats indicates his goal in the third stanza, when he says that Psyche was "...too late for antique vows, / Too, too late for the fond believing lyre, / When holy were the haunted forest boughs, / Holy the air, the water, and the fire" (36-39). What Keats desires is connection with a state in which material elements were holy. In the second stanza, Keats laments the thought of Psyche having no temple,

Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming. (29-35)

Standard treatment of a goddess in the Hellenic world would have included the sacred indexes of the “altar,” “virgin-choir,” “incense,” “shrine,” “oracle,” and “prophet.” The “*virgin-choir*” (my emphasis) enhances the notion of reaching back to pristine conditions.

The second stanza is also striking for its sensuousness. Beginning with the virgin-choir making delicious “moan” -- a good onomatopoeic word -- Keats launches into a passage that seems to aim for poetic effect as much as for emphasis on sacred Hellenism. The “incense sweet / From chain-swung censer teeming” is as marvelous a phrase describing one thing (all seven words combine to name just “incense”) as we’ll find in Keats – “incense” and “censer” containing alliteration in themselves with the soft “c” and “s” sounds, “incense” and “censer” alliterating and assonating with one another, “sweet” and “swung” alliterating with one another, and “sweet” and “teeming” assonating. Keats’s meter in the rhyming lines “No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet /...No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat” is also striking. The point of this seems clearer when we consider how the lines come back in the next stanza. Keats repeats these lines substituting “thy” for “no” in the next stanza after assuming the role of Psyche’s priest. Spoken by a priest in worship of a goddess, the lines come across as religious chant, as does the act of repeating them (slightly revised) from one stanza to another. Condillac’s theory on ancient prosody seems to have been particularly resonant with Keats on this point. Condillac says in Part Two of his *Essay*, at the opening of “Chapter III: The prosody of the Greek and Latin

languages and, en passant, the declamation of the ancients,” “It is well known that the Greeks and Romans had a notation for their declamation, and that it was accompanied by an instrument. Thus it was truly a form of chant” (123). Nugent’s translation of this last sentence is very similar: “it was therefore properly a kind of chant or song” (183). Condillac also explicitly links this idea of chant to language decline when he says, “if the Romans were more sensitive to harmony than we are, the Greeks must have been more sensitive than the Romans, and the Asiatics still more than the Greeks, for the older languages are, the closer they approach chant” (149). “At its origin style was poetic because it began by painting ideas in the most sensible images and in addition was marked by its strongly rhythmic quality” (150). This, Condillac maintains, is the origin of poetry. To paraphrase Condillac, because in its connectedness to the empirical world primal language was necessarily sensuous, rhythmic, sensuous, chant-like poetry was a natural outgrowth of primal language.

To go back to the second and third stanzas of “Ode to Psyche,” then, the modulating of the voice in the chant of lines 32-35 and 46-49 seems like a philological move - an attempt to reach back to the sort of vital connectedness to the empirical world that Condillac describes. We can even see a sort of chant in the modulated repetition that takes place between the metrically identical lines 33 and 35: “From chain-swung censer teeming; /...Of pale-mouth’d prophet dreaming.” Keats makes the same metrical parallel between lines 32 and 34, though they are just short of identical: “No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet /...No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat.” We can understand why Keats would have been so moved by Condillac’s theory surrounding a word translatable as “chant.” As Hans Aarsleff elaborates in his translation, Condillac’s word incorporated virtually all of the empirically-rooted qualities conceivable in

language. Moreover, Nugent's translation of the word as "chant" at the beginning of the chapter about classical prosody seems to have moved Keats in the specific way of breaking into a sort of chant as an integral part of the Hellenic "Ode to Psyche." On the whole, in those second and third stanzas, Keats seems to have been moved to reach back to a time "When holy were the haunted forest boughs, / Holy the air, the water, and the fire" (38-39) -- a time of sacred interaction with the elements -- a time in language that, it follows, would be characterized by the "holiness of the Heart's affections."

Keats has from the beginning of his presentation of "Psyche" been cognizant of belatedness -- both his own and Psyche's. She is "too late for antique vows" (36) and has no temple. In an ironic way, perhaps this adds to her appeal for Keats. She represents something primal insofar as she is of the classical world (while Keats is a 19th century Englishman), but she is also fresh in the sense that she was not worshiped the way Athena, for instance, was. As Keats says in the letter to his brother and sister-in-law, "the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour -- and perhaps never even thought of in the old religion" (2: 106). This feeling is a stark contrast to Book Four of *Endymion*, when Keats feels that he has been beaten to the punch of the full accomplishment of the English muse by the Elizabethans. Indeed, Psyche seems to be an empathetic figure to Keats, since she is belated, like he. At the same time, she represents a time when the world was younger, *and* she is still fresh for new worship.

Fittingly, the way that Keats conceives of his connection with Psyche is through empiricism. The shift, in "Ode to Psyche," from nostalgia to imagined connection takes place when Keats says,

Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired,
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours; (40-45)

“I see” marks the shift; Keats is “by [his] own eyes inspired.” It seems that empirical grounding is the link to Psyche, for Keats. Moreover, “by my own eyes inspired” would indicate a sacredness in this empirical grounding.

The final stanza of “Ode to Psyche” emphatically affirms that Keats’s mode of reconciling the belatedness paradoxes inherent in the conception of the poem is his philological theory of soul-making.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in! (50-67)

With the first two lines of this stanza, we must hearken back to “Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition” and John Horne Tooke. We recall Tooke's belief that all the empty Participles that most people think of as moral truths become legitimized in the process that he calls poetic

embodiment. The specific case of poetic embodiment that Tooke is here discussing has been to deplorable effect -- constructing Anglicanism. Nevertheless, Keats must have, at the same time he agreed with Tooke's assessment of the state of the church, been compelled by the idea that the use of language had such power. Because all of the empty moral signifiers are given a seeming potency by poetic embodiment, "the false morality...can only be examined by etymology." While Keats would have recognized the formula that the fane of the masses is simply a construction of the mind at work linguistically, he would have at the same time recognized that the mind could be a fane, through the poetic use of language. It is precisely this sort of work that Keats believes he has completed by the final stanza of "Ode to Psyche."

The final stanza of "Psyche" also seems to punctuate Keats's definition of the word 'psyche.' While the OED registers that 'psyche' clearly was taken to mean 'mind' by the Victorian period, there is no conclusive indication of such English definition as early as Keats's day. However, Alan Richardson has argued, in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, that the emerging science of neurology had a strong influence on Keats, with the final stanza of "Ode to Psyche" being a key manifestation. Indeed, taken along with Keats's "vale of Soul-making" letter, the final stanza of "Ode to Psyche" seems to be a forerunner of the shifting definition of 'psyche' from soul and mind. Specifically, to Keats, it is both. As we have seen, the combination is crucial to him.

To go back to the "vale of Soul-making" letter, Keats clearly thinks of a soul as something that is made through a process in which humans take part, as opposed to something divinely bestowed. The process that makes a soul is the interplay of heart and mind in the proper circumstances: "the *Intelligence* – the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind)

and the *World* or *Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul* or *Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*” (2: 102). Keats heavily emphasizes the mind in the final stanza of “Ode to Psyche,” talking about “some untrodden region of my mind,” “branched thoughts,” and “the wreath’d trellis of a working brain.” It is both in and with his mind that Keats sanctifies Psyche. It is as if his mind is becoming a soul -- as he put it in the vale of soul-making letter, he is trying “to school an Intelligence and make it a soul” (2: 102). But it is then crucial that we locate Cupid -- the heart - - in the final stanza, interacting with Psyche, and Keats makes this move with the concluding lines of the poem, making sure that there is “a casement ope at night, / To let the warm Love in.” The allegorical “Love” being “warm” is emphasis on the empirical connotations of the heart. Here is the heart to interplay with the mind. What results from Cupid’s re-entry to the poem in the final stanza is a complex formation of identity, in Keats’s estimation: a soul. Keats has striven to break down an irreverent dichotomization of sensation and thought. In this vein, I would agree with half of Helen Vendler's argument about “Ode to Psyche,” that Keats's reverie will be “an internal making” (47). I would disagree, though, with the contention that Keats wishes to “prescind from the bodily senses” (47) in “Ode to Psyche.” “Psyche” represents a union of heart and mind, forged through a philological process.

With the pieces of the soul-making scheme in place, Keats can “be [Psyche’s] priest, and build a fane / In some untrodden region of [his] mind.” The psyche can be given a sacred dwelling. And this seems to be further enabled by the pristine locale -- the “untrodden region.” Keats seems to be imagining a resolution to the problems of belatedness and outworn modes of identity. Further on the final stanza, the psyche can be given “A rosy sanctuary,” dressed, no

less, by the poetic use of language to which “the wreath’d trellis of a working brain” would seem to refer.

III. “a heart high-sorrowful and cloy’d”

Whereas “Ode to Psyche” closes with the goddess of the soul united with Cupid and enshrined in the poet’s mind – with an allegorical sacred union of the mind and sensation – “Ode on a Grecian Urn” begins rather differently, with the object of the ode addressed as a “still unravish’d bride of quietness” (1). While the “bride” recalls the union of Psyche and Cupid, the fact that the bride is “still unravish’d” would seem to resonate more with the virgin-choir of “Ode to Psyche.” And even at this, unlike the natural purity striven for with the virgin-choir of “Psyche,” there is something decidedly unnatural about a *bride* being yet unravished. Furthermore, the ambiguous “of” of the opening line of “Grecian Urn” would seem to suggest either (or both) that the bride herself is quiet, or/and that she is wedded *to* quietness. If we read the bride of “Grecian Urn” specifically as wedded *to* quietness, i.e., to the abstract idea of ‘Quietness,’ then we have a direct formal parallel to “Psyche,” remembering that Psyche (herself an allegorical figure, in one sense) is the bride of the representative of an abstract idea: Cupid, whom Keats seems to have meant to represent feeling and sensuousness. But this formal parallel creates a stark thematic contrast – with feeling replaced by ‘Quietness,’ imperiled is the religious incantation at the center of “Psyche” and annulled is the sacred union achieved at the end of the poem. From the beginning of “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” then, Keats seems to be directly engaging with and representing a breakdown of the central philological accomplishment of “Ode

to Psyche.”

Keats characterizes the urn as a "Sylvan historian" in line three. This historian, however, has an unnatural lineage, as she is the "*foster-child of silence and slow time*" (2, my italics). Moreover, being fostered by "slow time" suggests a great chronological distance from Keats. Fraught with the suggestion of artificiality and with the prospect of attempting to draw a philological connection to the past from a product of "silence and slow time," Keats's project thus seems problematic from the outset. Keats proceeds to follow this problematic identification of the urn as historian with a series of questions that reach after (hypothetical) fact:

What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? (5-10)

Each of the questions is of the factual 'What' was or has happened, as if Keats is a documenting historian. The stark contrast between this and "Ode to Psyche" is that in "Psyche," Keats views his transhistorical identity formation -- which is what his endeavor amounts to -- unproblematically, satisfied by his mind's power to build a fane. From the outset of "Grecian Urn," though, the transhistorical undertaking of Hellenism seems rife with complications. In the earlier ode, the object is the mind become a soul; in "Grecian Urn," feeling has been replaced by 'quietness,' and soul is replaced by an historian of questionable legitimacy.

Meanwhile, where Keats sees the sensuous as sacred through a meditation upon the union of a god and one-time mortal in "Ode to Psyche," he here wonders if he is looking at "deities or mortals," "men or gods," or "both." Keats seems to be starting to ponder a sort of bifurcation, as opposed to union. And though the line break after "shape" seems to help us read lines five

through seven as saying (paraphrased), 'What leaf-fringed legend of deities or mortals, or of both, in Tempe or the dales of Arcady haunts about thy shape,' when we read right through lines five and six as Keats has crafted them without punctuation, we have another "of" packed with double meaning: is the urn's shape the shape (figuratively) of a deity or a mortal, we might ask? Is the urn a sacred object with which a connection can be forged?

After all the questions of the first stanza, Keats begins the second stanza with, "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on; / Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd, / Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone" (11-14). Questions are followed up with a maxim, but the maxim comes not from the questioned but from the questioner. If Keats is trying to connect with the urn by getting it to speak to him, this turn is troubling, as he has simply answered for it. Furthermore, the maxim of stanza two does not really answer the fact-related questions of stanza one. Keats did not ask the urn about the respective merits of empirical reality and the imagination; he asked the urn about what was happening in the rendering of a particular circumstance. It is a fitting irony, then, that the maxim of stanza two takes the side of an absence of audible expression (unheard melodies are preferred): the urn hasn't answered Keats. Even more interesting is the way that stanza two's maxim takes up the key issue of "Ode to Psyche": where Keats previously envisions and facilitates a union of the heart and mind, he now dichotomizes empirical expression ("Heard melodies") and the work of the mind ("those unheard"). If the first two lines of the stanza weren't emphatic enough, Keats stresses the same idea with a preference of "the spirit" over "the sensual ear" in the third and fourth lines. In addition to dichotomizing empirical sensation and the mind, these latter two lines divorce sensation from sacredness ("the spirit"), marking a crucial

break with "Ode to Psyche." Where the "tuneless numbers" were suitable to forge a sacred connection with primal sensuousness in "Ode to Psyche," they here are made to define a crucial disconnect.

Just as he does after pondering empirical perception and the imagination near the beginning of "Ode to Psyche," after the maxim about heard and unheard melodies in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" Keats envisions a scene involving two lovers:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal -- yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! (15-20)

Like Psyche and Cupid, these two lovers are in a wild outdoor setting and just on the verge of a kiss. Unlike Psyche and Cupid, who are ready to "outnumber" past kisses, this couple gives no indication that they have ever been joined by a kiss, furthering the theme of disunion. It is important to Keats to identify Psyche and Cupid -- and to identify with Cupid, in a sense. He also identifies, in a sense, with this young male, sympathizing with him, but the youth and his love object remain anonymous (as was the unravished bride). Their anonymity is another example of a lack of understanding, functioning to the same end as the unanswered questions of the first stanza. We have some indication of sensuousness with the song that can never be left, but, in addition to being tempered by the never-extant kiss, we are left to wonder if the song is a ditty of no tone.

The turning point in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" -- like the turning point in "Ode to Psyche" -
- comes after the scene of the two lovers:

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. (21-30)

As he envisions in "Ode to Psyche" that "their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu" (17), Keats desires here in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" the idea of the leaves of the boughs never bidding the spring adieu, a situation that would mark a lasting pristine state. The "songs for ever new" indicate the same desire. And this desire stimulates a distinct linguistic mode in Keats. Having gone through the first four lines of the stanza, we have been told of the "happy, happy boughs" and the "happy melodist," and then Keats practically explodes in his use of the word 'happy' in the fifth line, using it three times in that line alone. This is the moment in "Ode to Psyche" where Keats breaks into the modulated chant, and in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" he uses the same word three times in four lines and three more times in the next line. We can also discern semantic repetitiveness within the fifth line, as it simply says the same thing twice -- the only thing changed in the second clause is a doubling of 'happy.' But while springing from the same impulse, this chant is a far cry from the chant of "Ode to Psyche," which is marked by semantic variation being grounded by rhythmic chant; even in the rhythmic dimension of the chant of "Psyche" there is more modulation than simply stating the same two-syllable word consecutively. The trochaic meter of 'happy' in "Grecian Urn" also seems to point to over-agitation, in contrast to the calm-beginning iambs of "No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet" of "Ode to Psyche."

Thinking further about 'happy' in "Grecian Urn," we see a signifier applied so broadly as to be of little semantic value. How, we might wonder, can boughs (plant material), a melodist (a human), and love (an abstraction) all be 'happy'? Even further, what exactly does 'happy' tell us? It's an excessively vague adjective. Indeed, in this case, bearing in mind the exceedingly broad applicability Keats has given it, it seems to take on (ironic) meaning along the lines of its cognate 'happenstance.' This is all the more troubling when we note that in the explosion of 'happy,' it is "love" that is 'happy.' Where 'love' has been the principle of sensation joined with the mind to form a soul in "Ode to Psyche," it is here dissipated into virtual meaninglessness (as Keats will recognize by the end of the stanza).

Keats continues his over-agitation to a breaking point in saying that the "love" is "For ever panting, and forever young." This drastically departs from the "calm-breathing" (15) Psyche and Cupid. With the phonetic quality of 'happy,' we could even characterize Keats's repetition of the word as an ironic onomatopoesis for panting; indeed, Keats realizes at this point in the poem that he cannot keep up or connect with the scene of the lovers. After what retrospectively appears to be a stinging reference to being "forever young," Keats acknowledges that the "love" is far above all breathing human passion. Therefore, the "love" can only leave "a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd, / A burning forehead, and a parching tongue." Where "Ode to Psyche" advances the "holiness of the Heart's affections," "Ode on a Grecian Urn" seems to see those hopes dashed. Here the heart is full of sorrow, and its affections amount to affectation, cloyed in over-fullness of what is for Keats, ironically, non-experience, or an inability to connect with the experience depicted on the urn. It is fitting then, that Keats is left with "a parching tongue," a lack of capacity for linguistic expression.

In stanza four, with "a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd," Keats falls back to questioning the urn, as he did in stanza one, saying:

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Leadst thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

The fact that Keats falls back to questioning the urn two stanzas after questioning it to begin with would seem to be further confirmation that his original questioning was fruitless. This stanza also marks a further step in the poem with its identification of a scene of sacrifice. Keats is following the same pattern that led to the religious worship of the second half of "Ode to Psyche," but here he can only question a "mysterious priest," continuing the emphasis on lack of understanding and sharply contrasting Keats himself becoming Psyche's priest. Moreover, the religious ceremony on the urn is one specifically of sacrifice, as opposed to the vibrant scene involving Psyche. Furthermore, where Keats formerly became the priest and thus the agent of worshipping Psyche and (figuratively) forming a soul, the mysterious priest here is the agent of sacrifice, which connotes asceticism -- a far cry from the sacred union of "Psyche." The heifer (an unravished bovine) stresses this point, following from the unravished bride and the never-kissing lovers. Keats again seems to be recognizing an absence of sensual connection. And the fact that this absence -- the asceticism -- should exist as part of a religious ceremony widens the gap between "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "the holiness of the Heart's affections" depicted in "Ode to Psyche." The "silken flanks with garlands drest" of the heifer, then, become especially ironic, as they

recall Keats saying in "Ode to Psyche," "A rosy sanctuary will I dress / With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain" (59-60). The floral dressing in "Psyche" corresponded to the poetic soul-making taking place, but it can now only prepare an ascetic victim for death.

The "for ever" principle of stanza three also returns in this fourth stanza. However, where it previously carried with hopes for transhistoricity, it now only preserves the absence of articulation. The streets of the depicted town "for evermore / Will silent be." Further, there will be "not a soul to tell" the reason for the desolation. The "soul" seems carefully chosen here, ironicizing the soul-making of "Ode to Psyche."

As Keats begins the final stanza, after a brief exclamatory apostrophe, highlighting "marble men and maidens" (42). The men and maidens being marble emphasizes lifelessness, the lack of capacity for sensation. Keats is refiguring the first stanza of the poem; there is no longer any question of status as deity or mortal or of pursuits, struggles, and wild ecstasy; they are now frozen on a vessel of mortal remains. Keats also subtly plays with the word "overwrought" in mentioning the "marble men and maidens." While "overwrought" establishes the "marble men and maidens" as part of the urn (wrought over the surface of the urn), it is a reminder of the cloyed state into which Keats worked himself in stanza three. Coming from an overwrought artist, art becomes overworked art, excessively manipulated art, or mere affectation, which, again, we have seen with the "heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd."

Addressing the urn as "silent form" in line forty-four reinforces the empirical non-existence established with the "bride" of line one. Moreover, the phrasing "silent *form*" (my italics) corresponds with the seeming allegorization of "quietness," the form to which the "bride" is wed, and this correspondence widens the gap between "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and the sacred

union of forms in "Ode to Psyche." That the "silent form...dost tease us out of thought" (44) is also interesting in that it links Keats's inability to connect with the urn on an empirical level to a corresponding stifling of thought. Empirical sensation and the mind were made to correspond in "Ode to Psyche," and they do correspond here in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," but only to the end that one nullifies the other. It logically follows that the silent form teases Keats out of thought "As doth eternity" (45). The transhistoricity ("eternity") necessary to connect with the primal sacredness of Hellenism has fallen to pieces in stanza three, and in this final stanza Keats emphasizes how such a concept has become inscrutable to him.

It is important to remember what Keats's object of speculation in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" literally is: a container of mortal remains. This fact would theoretically suggest that Keats's speculations can only lead him to a confrontation with lifelessness. When Keats addresses the urn as "Cold Pastoral" (45) and talks about old age wasting his generation (46), this confrontation seems to be taking place, in a way. The oxymoronic "Cold Pastoral" seems to emphasize how the realization to which Keats is coming is a far cry from the fresh liveliness that characterizes "Ode to Psyche."

At the same time, the realization of a concept of "Cold Pastoral" has taken over forty lines to state, after two efforts of interrogation, and it is still not something that the urn divulges to Keats. On this point, we remember that the urn is a *container* of mortal remains. It does not release, it encloses. Further, we could say that the urn *conceals* lifelessness -- that it attempts to put a gloss on lifelessness with art. This logic falls right in line with the urn's unresponsiveness throughout the poem. The urn finally does (sort of) speak to Keats:

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," -- that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. (47-50)

Even here, the maxim about beauty and truth is not something that the urn divulges to Keats, it is rather something that it generally "say'st" to "man." The emphasis on limitation of knowledge in the empirical world is also striking, here, with "all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." At the same time, what 'we' do know from the urn -- that "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'" -- begs to be the focal point of the entire poem, being rhetorically presented as a climactic answer to all the interrogation. However, like the maxim following the interrogation of the first stanza, this maxim does not really answer any of the numerous specific questions that Keats has posed. Furthermore, if we nevertheless welcome the urn's utterance as a response coming from a highly figurative consideration of Keats's questions and meditations, it still doesn't make much sense. Was 'Beauty' 'Truth' to Keats in the second and third stanzas? I think we have seen that it was not; what appealed to Keats as 'beautiful,' we might say, was far above him and left him with "a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd, / A burning forehead, and a parching tongue" (29-30). We might say that there was a certain sort of beauty for Keats in the sacrificial scene of stanza four, but there also seems to have been something very disturbing about the asceticism and the muting of expression; it was at any rate much more complex than a simple formulation such as 'Beauty' = 'Truth.' It is also difficult to characterize the fourth, or first, stanzas as representing truth, because they are most prominently characterized by unanswered questions; we would at least have reformulate the maxim to say something like: 'Silence is Truth.'

As I pointed out earlier, Jeffrey Cox, in *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, argues that Keats's Hellenism is part of "a Cockney project of wresting the control of the definition of the classical from the conservative defenders of a deadening, urnlike tradition" (186). "Ode on a

Grecian Urn," Cox maintains, pointing to the final lines as key evidence, abandons the unattainable ideals represented on the urn for an embraceable earthly eroticism, espousing libertine love: the urn ultimately tells Keats that erotic beauty is truth. However, reading the poem this way requires believing the urn's statement in some way, when believing it in *any* way is difficult to do given all that happens in the poem leading up to the statement. Furthermore, the shape of the statement suggests that the urn is still refusing to actually divulge any truth. Cox is right to call attention to the sexual overtones in the poem, and it is well to remember that Keats initially addresses the urn as a bride. This calls attention to the urn's yonic shape and corresponds with Keats's interrogation of the urn as an attempt to penetrate. The overtone of ravishment, as Cox acknowledges, is hardly free love, nor is Keats's futility in attempted figurative ravishment. Indeed, the enclosing, circular urn remains closed-off to Keats, and circularity is the best cue we have for understanding the urn's maxim. The only thing that the urn says is syntactically circular. The logic of the statement is also circular. Beauty is truth...why, we ask? -- because truth is beauty, we are told. This is far from convincing and is not at all, in any concrete terms, enlightening. The urn's maxim simply continues the impenetrability that has characterized it throughout the poem, and Keats is aware of this reality. He has realized that while beauty may be on the outside of the urn -- as it is on the syntactic outside (on both sides) of the urn's maxim -- truth is inside, as it is syntactically, but the truth inside is not the static rendering that is presented on the outside; the truth inside is decay to the point of lifelessness, not erotic beauty.

Marjorie Levinson argues that Keats produces poetry "too happy by far, too full by half" (8). This would seem to be a fair characterization of "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Levinson further

argues that "The real perversion of Keats's poetry is not its display of its cultural fetishes but its preoccupation with the system felt to organize those talismanic properties" (9). My suggestion, though, is that Keats becomes conscious, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," of this system, or production, as affectation. Levinson posits that "all Keats's meditations on art and identity (typically, plasticity), should be related to his abiding desire, to live" (9). As I think we have seen, though, Keats seems very consciously, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," to see his art as a varnish over fatality.

It has been my argument that, as far back as the early sonnet "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition," Keats is engaging with a specifically post-Enlightenment matrix of thought, which includes philologically inflected cultural identification concerns centered on religion and touching on Englishness. To understand where the conclusion of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" has brought Keats, we would do well to revisit Benedict Anderson's observation that "in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought" (11). Of course, as critical as Keats is of Christianity, he does not banish all "religious modes of thought" in favor of a simple form of nationalism, in the poems I have looked at thus far; he instead offers the English-Hellenistic amalgams and the wholly Hellenic Odes of the Spring of 1819. But Keats seems to have felt, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," that he has missed the mark with those efforts. As Anderson continues to observe,

With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning...few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. (11-

12)

Arbitrary and absurd concepts of fate and salvation clearly motivate the “Vale of Soul-making” letter and, in turn, it has been my argument, “Ode to Psyche.” And it would be an apt summation to say that “Ode on a Grecian Urn” is characterized by a failure to transform contingency into meaning. The illegitimate historian and the unanswered questions about deities and mortals in stanza one, the dichotimization of sensation and the mind in stanza two, the philological affectation in stanza three, the silent asceticism of stanza four, and the thought-denying artistic gloss over lifelessness of stanza five all speak to a failure to transform contingency into meaning. Desiring a form of continuity, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” founders upon arbitrary fatality.

As I discuss earlier, Benedict Anderson further asserts that “if the sacred silent languages were the media through which the great global communities of the past were imagined, the reality of such apparitions depended on an idea largely foreign to the contemporary Western mind: the non-arbitrariness of the sign. The ideograms of Chinese, Latin, or Arabic were emanations of reality, not randomly fabricated representations of it” (14). Anderson, here, speaks of the concept of ‘holiness’ that becomes crucial to Keats beginning with the “Vale of Soul-making letter” and “Ode to Psyche”: linguistic wholeness. As we have seen throughout this study, though Tooke, Blair, Condillac, and Rousseau liked to theorize that in primitive language and at etymological roots there was intrinsic meaning in language, arbitrary signification in modern language was a widely held tenet of early philology. For Keats in “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” arbitrary signification seems carry the implications that Benedict Anderson theorizes: it is a sign of spiritual fragmentation. Keats has come to see his Hellenistic attempt to reach back to a time “When holy were the haunted forest boughs, / Holy the air, the water, and the fire” as

affectation. He has drawn the conclusion, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," that his philological Hellenism falls far short of uniting experience with thought in a holy union -- it falls linguistic wholeness. In this way, Keats is most certainly engaging with his statement, from the letter in which he also puts forth his idea of "the holiness of the Heart's affections," that "Whatever the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth" (1: 184); Keats seems to be at pains to show that such a conception has become untenable. "Grecian Urn" shows a disconnect -- a distance -- over which expression is denied. There is no primal vitality of expression like in "Psyche." Keats has come to see his Hellenistic philological identity-forming endeavor as historicist affectation, artificiality as opposed to naturalness. By stanza three, Keats's own voice seems to sound to him as coming from the speaker of a modern language that has undergone decline to the point of meaninglessness. Where "Ode to Psyche" creates identity through philological Hellenism, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" sees this philological Hellenism break down.

IV. The Purest English

Where philological Hellenism has now failed Keats, moving toward "To Autumn," he will turn to what he views as a purer form of nationalism. Again, Anderson suggests that if there is a need for a "secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning," then "few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future." Arguably the most prominent theorist of this particular suitability was Johann Gottfried Herder.

As Anderson points out about Herder's prominence, his "conception of nation-ness as linked to a private-property language had wide influence in nineteenth-century Europe" (68). We remember from our consideration of Wordsworth that in his *Essay on the Origin of Language*, Herder agrees with Condillac, Blair, and Rousseau on the doctrine of language decline -- that "the ancient, the primitive, languages embody more of [ancient linguistic ancestry] the closer they are to the origin" (120). Further, Herder argues that "Not surprisingly, we associate the strongest sentiments with our native language" (163). So, it is not just primitive language, but a person's own native language that fosters connection to rich empirical experience. Similarly, when talking about the fleeting sensory connections that must lie at the roots of words, Herder says, "Moreover these connections are so intensely national, engendered according to the peculiar disposition and viewpoint of a people and conditioned by the time and circumstances of a country" (148).

On the prospect of putting together an etymological dictionary, Herder says,

How much learning and adaptability of mind are necessary to enter into the primitive intellect, the daring imagination, the national feelings of distant ages, and to render them in our own idiom. Such an undertaking would light a torch and illuminate not only the history, the mode of thought and the literature of the country, but also those dark regions of the human mind where ideas cross and intermingle, where the most diverse feelings generate one another, where times of need rouse all the powers of the mind and test its inventive ability to the full.
(148)

The images of the torch and the dark regions of the mind, so contextualized, are tantalizingly resonant with the final stanza of "Ode to Psyche," but this specific resonance aside, we can readily see the potential attraction of the prospect to enter "the primitive intellect" and "the national feelings of distant ages" and "to render them in our own idiom." And just as boldly, Herder later says, "By means of language [a child] is able to enter into communion with the way

of thinking and feeling of his progenitors, to take part, as it were, in the workings of the ancestral mind" (163). These ideas would all have spoken forcefully to Keats's desires and frustrations evident in the poems I have discussed thus far. Keats seems to have been moved by the desire to reach back to a genuine voice, and seems to have alternately believed in a poetic ability to figure that voice through Hellenism and in a practical inability to escape his actual disconnect from what Hellenism entails. But Herder suggests that through *native* language a person can enter into effectual functionality with the "ancestral mind" in specific. It is further compelling that Herder couples "the way of *thinking and feeling* of his progenitors," recalling the union in "Ode to Psyche." The "working of the ancestral mind" also recalls the "wreath'd trellis of a working brain" in "Ode to Psyche." But according to Herder it is the ancestral mind that can be tapped into through one's own native language, not, for instance, philological Hellenism. This line of thought would seem to offer to Keats a practicable way to fulfill the desires that leave him "high sorrowful and cloy'd" in "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

As I sketched near the beginning of this chapter, Keats's intellectual circle had strong philological inclinations, and much of that inclination was nationalistic. As I have pointed out, William Hazlitt, whose friendship was intellectually crucial to Keats and whose lectures Keats attended regularly in 1818 and 1819, was keenly interested in Tooke's Anglo-Saxon etymologies. Hazlitt's *New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue* borrowed most of its etymology from Tooke. Hazlitt's own reason for producing his *Grammar* was to promote interest in the mother-tongue. In *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), Hazlitt regrets the contemporaneous lack of attention to Anglo-Saxon and to Tooke.

Leigh Hunt was also interested in native English. In his Preface to *The Story of Rimini*,

Hunt says about poetic taste, "I do not hesitate to say however, that Pope and the French school of versification have known the least on the subject, of any poets perhaps that ever wrote. They have mistaken mere smoothness for harmony; and, in fact, wrote as they did because their ears were only sensible of a marked and uniform regularity" (xiii-xiv). Hunt also refers to Pope and the "French school" in *The Feast of the Poets* (1814) as employing "monotonous and cloying versification" (31). Bad poetry is epitomized by the Neo-Classical and continent-associated Pope. Even more interesting is Hunt's specific characterization of the poetry as "monotonous and cloying," which is a perfect description of the sort of false chant of 'happy, happy, etc.' that Keats breaks into in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," as Keats recognizes with the very word 'cloyed.'

In describing his aims with *The Story of Rimini* in the Preface, Hunt says,

With the endeavor to recur to a freer spirit of versification, I have joined one of still greater importance, -- that of having a free and idiomatic cast of language. There is a cant of art as well as of nature, though the former is not so unpleasant as the latter, which affects non-affectation. But the proper language of poetry is in fact nothing different from that of real life, and depends for its dignity upon the strength and sentiment of what it speaks. It is only adding musical modulation to what a fine understanding might actually utter in the midst of its griefs or enjoyments. The poet therefore should do as Chaucer or Shakespeare did, -- not copy what is obsolete or peculiar in either, any more than they copied from their predecessors, -- but use as much as possible an actual, existing language (xv-xvi).

The idea of an "idiomatic cast of language" is another subtle nationalistic gesture. Hunt clearly echoes Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in the sentiment about the language of real life, even if Hunt is not as explicit about an affinity for a rustic -- or more authentically English -- register. The principle of using "an actual, existing language" is interesting because it would seem to fall in line with the dissatisfaction that Keats develops with the sort of nostalgia represented in the Hellenism coming to a climax in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." We also see in this passage another resonance with what Keats has come to see as cloyed chant in "Ode on a

Grecian Urn" in Hunt talking about a "cant of art." 'Cant' is literally an ironicized cognate of 'chant.' Hunt seems to be warning against a poetry of the sort that Keats consciously represents falling into in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in which a sort of cloyed Hellenism usurps what should be a genuine English poetic voice. What should be desired in this vein is spelled out when Hunt goes on to say at the end of the Preface, "All the merit I claim is that of having made an attempt to describe natural things in a language becoming them, and to do something towards the revival of what appears to me a proper English versification" (xviii).

John Taylor, too, shared the nationalistic philological inclinations of Hazlitt and Hunt. John Clare, another of Taylor's poets, was practically a philological project for Taylor. As Tim Chilcott points out, much of Taylor's interest in Clare was linguistic: "The poetry was sprinkled liberally with dialect words, which obviously would have appealed to the philologist in him" (87). In specific, Chilcott argues, Taylor saw what he deemed to be linguistic strength in the clarity and directness of Clare's rusticity. Taylor defended Clare's rustic language in the introduction to *Poems Descriptive*, and he published a letter in the *London Magazine* in November 1821 taking up the same subject. After speculating, in this letter, that Spenser and Shakespeare would have been reduced to nothingness had they been forced to conform to standard idiom, Taylor writes,

...in reality, Clare is highly commendable for not affecting a language, and it is proof of the originality of his genius. Style at second-hand is unfelt, unnatural, and common-place, a parrot-like repetition of words, whose individual weight is never esteemed...In poetry, especially, you may estimate the originality of the thoughts by that of the language; but this is a canon to which our approved critics will not subscribe: they allow of no phrase which has not received the sanction of authority, no expression for which, in the sense used, you cannot plead a precedent. They would fetter the English poet as they circumscribe the maker of Latin verses, and yet they complain that our modern poets want originality! (544-5)

Taylor's rejection of affectation, of style that is "unfelt, unnatural," and of "a parrot-like repetition of words" sounds much like what has vexed Keats in "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

It is also worth noting the striking similarity between the image of "the English poet" being fettered and the Keats sonnet "If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd," where Keats argues that if the "sonnet sweet" must be "Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness," English poets should at least "weigh the stress / Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd / By ear industrious, and attention meet" (7-9). The premise of this sonnet, as Keats explains in a letter, is that English words do not adequately lend themselves to the rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan Sonnet (2: 108). Keats clearly, here, has a philologist-like ear closely attuned to English, though he is down on its "dull" rhyming possibilities. Keats is arguing that it is with minute attention to language that English poets are to achieve good poetry -- by "weigh[ing] the stress / of every chord," just as Taylor, from his philologist perspective, talks about the "individual weight" of every word.

This leaning toward philological nationalism in Keats's circle should not be surprising from the standpoint of social class. To revisit Ernest Gellner, middle-class mobility (real or perceived) is a major feature of nationalism emerging in industrial society. With a class of society increasingly thinking of themselves not as subjects but as citizens, capable of upward mobility, shared culture through language becomes a major form of identification. Specifically, a native language history was something that the Cockney circle, for instance, could imagine ownership of -- something, unlike Latin or French, for instance; something unmediated by a cultural elite.

In the letters framing "To Autumn," Keats goes further into what "native language," or the

"way of thinking and feeling of his progenitors," or the "workings of the ancestral mind" look like in poetry as distinct from what he has been doing from the early Elizabethan-Hellenic amalgams to the Hellenistic Odes of the Spring. In the September 21, 1819 letter to Reynolds, Keats writes,

How beautiful the season is now -- How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather -- Dian skies -- I never lik'd stubble fields so much as now -- Aye better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble plain looks warm -- in the same way that some pictures look warm -- this struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it. I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been at different times so happy as not to know what weather it was -- No I will not copy a parcel of verses. I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom, or particles like Chaucer(s) -- 'tis genuine English Idiom in English words. I have given up Hyperion -- there were too many Miltonic inversions in it -- Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather an artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from Hyperion and put a mark X to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one // to the true voice of feeling (2: 167)

We should consider this alongside Keats's September 24 letter to the George Keatses, in which he says,

I shall never become attach'd to a foreign idiom so as to put it into my writings. The Paradise Lost though so fine in itself is a corruption of our Language -- it should be kept as it is unique -- a curiosity, a beautiful and grand Curiosity. The most remarkable Production of the world. A northern dialect accommodating itself to greek and latin inversions and intonations. The purest english I think -- or what ought to be purest -- is Chatterton's -- The Language had existed long enough to be entirely uncorrupted of Chaucer's gallicisms and still the old words are used -- Chatterton's language is entirely northern -- I prefer the native music of it to Milton's cut by feet I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me. Miltonic verse cannot be written but in the vein of art -- I wish to devote myself to another sensation -- (2: 212)

We can readily see how the two letters are in many ways more or less different versions of the same statement. In the letter to Reynolds, Keats characterizes Chatterton as the purest writer in

the language, citing the absence of what he refers to as French idiom. Keats goes even further on this point in the letter to the Keatses, considering Chaucer's gallicisms and Milton's latinisms to be no less than corruptions of the English language. Such explicit statements about Milton in this latter letter cast in clearer light that Keats's assessment of the Miltonisms in the *Hyperion* poems, in the letter to Reynolds, is also a longing for purer English. As Keats goes on to say in the letter to Reynolds, "English ought to be kept up." We can clearly see that these letters bear strong traces of the Herderian and Tookean philology that interested Hazlitt, Hunt, and Taylor.

The idea that "Miltonic verse cannot be written but [in] the vein of art," in the letter to the Keatses, makes more sense in light of Keats writing to Reynolds about distinguishing "false beauty proceeding from art" from "the true voice of feeling." The Miltonisms, being written in an "artists humour" seem to be what give rise to "false beauty proceeding from art." So, what we have is impure English yielding false artistic beauty. The idea of "false beauty proceeding from art" would be a fair characterization of how Keats comes to view the "Beauty" of "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Indeed, the speaker can respond with only a cloyed utterance, not what we might call "the true voice of feeling."

While acknowledging the greatness of *Paradise Lost*, Keats insists on seeking a purer mode of English for his poetry. In both letters, deploring Miltonisms is followed by a resolution to commit himself to "other sensations," as he puts it in the earlier letter. These "other sensations" would be his new poetic mode, which would, from all indications in these letters, be a new version of 'pure English,' or the linguistic mode of connecting with "the workings of the ancestral mind," in Herder's terms. It is crucial that Keats characterizes the new endeavor(s) as "sensations," remembering the philological emphasis on primal purity in empirical experience, as

this emphasis seems to have motivated "Ode to Psyche." After the breakdown of the Hellenistic medium in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," a native English version of empirical experience, or "sensations," seem to be large part of the poetic mode into which Keats wants to move.

The letter to Reynolds is perhaps most remembered for its description of the circumstances surrounding the composition of "To Autumn" -- the five lines of text beginning "How beautiful the season is now." We must also read the rest of the passage in the letter to Reynolds -- and thus also the passage in the letter to the George Keatses -- as describing what contributed to writing "To Autumn," for two main reasons: for one thing, the thoughts on Chatterton, Chaucer, Milton, gallicisms, latinisms, and pure English are all concerning Keats's poetic compositions, of which "To Autumn" is the most recent (September 19); even more significantly, Keats connects his description of the Autumnal setting that inspired "To Autumn" with all of the thinking about language when he says, "I always somehow associate Chatterton with Autumn." This seemingly trite statement is actually what precipitates all the thinking about language. The following sentence, "He is the purest writer in the English Language," completes for us a crucial equation: Autumn = Chatterton = pure English. Truncated: Autumn = pure English; or "To Autumn" = pure English. It seems, then, that "To Autumn" is the other sensation or sensations to which Keats wants to devote himself in departing from the corrupted English and its practitioners that he discusses both of these September letters, and the poem is thus Keats's attempt at 'pure English.'

Turley recognizes Keats's interest in Chatterton in the September 1819 letters as philologically inflected, but Turley ultimately suggests that "Whereas Wordsworth offered some indication as to what this ideal idiom would sound like...Keats is less certain. Like Hunt, he is

only really convinced of one thing - that 1680 represented the cut-off point for a truly poetic language" (80). While Keats's idea of genuine poetry is complex and shifting leading up to 1819, he does seem to make an attempt an ideal of philological Hellenism in "Ode to Psyche." Further, the philological interest in Chatterton, along with the autumn-Chatterton association, in the September 1819 letters cues up a revised attempt at genuine poetry in "To Autumn" -- it is precisely when Keats is most explicit about his desire for genuine English poetry that he makes a clarified attempt in that vein.

Beginning to look at how "To Autumn" constitutes "the purest English" for Keats, there is one very distinct surface feature of "To Autumn" that seems to consistently escape being deemed of interpretive importance: unlike all the other great Odes of 1819, it is *not* Hellenistic. "Ode to Psyche" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" are quite obviously Hellenistic, and they are the poems that I am suggesting "To Autumn" is most in discourse with. But "Ode on Indolence" is only less Hellenistic than "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in title. "Ode to a Nightingale" has a different type of central topical concern, but it, too, has Hellenistic references a-plenty, with Lethe (4), Hippocrene (16), and "Bacchus and his pards" (32). In "Ode on Melancholy," we again have Lethe (1) and Psyche (7), and we have Proserpine (4). "To Autumn" has none of these things, nor does it contain any other sorts of transhistorical or transcultural references, both of which the other Odes abound in. To draw these factors together, "To Autumn" is what I would term immediate to Keats, with Keats atypically focusing on Autumn *in England*.

Furthering this theme of immediacy, "To Autumn" is relatively free of the sort of abstractions that dominate the other Odes. Indolence itself is an abstraction, as are the three identifications Keats makes in stanza three of that poem: Love, Ambition, and Poesy.

Melancholy also is itself an abstraction, and in treating it, Keats also considers Beauty, Joy, Pleasure, and Delight, all in stanza three alone. In stanza three of "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats deals explicitly with Beauty and Love; in stanza four, we have "the viewless wings of Poesy" (33), and in stanza five, Keats reflects on "easeful Death" (52). In "Ode to Psyche," we encounter most notably the abstractions Psyche and Love, and in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," besides making the urn highly abstract, Keats ponders Quietness, Love, Beauty, and Truth. In "To Autumn," the nearest Keats gets to abstraction is with Autumn itself, but Autumn is, of course, the totality of a myriad of empirical things, and, fittingly, Keats only identifies Autumn tangibly: as "Season of mists" (1), as the miller/reaper/gleaner of stanza two, and as the "music" (24) of the final stanza; Keats never actually says "Autumn" in the poem, and this seems to be a deliberate effort at empirical immediacy.

In addition to the absence of Hellenism, another glaring surface dimension of "To Autumn" that differentiates it from almost all of the other odes of 1819 is the stanza length and rhyme scheme. After "Ode to Psyche," Keats settles into a ten-line stanza, rhyming ABABCDECDE (or a very slight variation in the final three lines). "To Autumn," though, is written in eleven-line stanzas rhyming ABABCDECDDDE or ABABCDEDCCCE. In addition to being longer as a whole (than the earlier odes), either variation has the effect of drawing out the wait for the concluding E rhyme. As Paul Sheats has argued, this seems to forward the theme of drawing out sensation.

Much of the subject matter of "To Autumn" is the sensuous fecundity of Autumnal England. The first stanza, for instance, is all about the tangible ripeness of the time of year:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Fruitfulness is the theme, as the first line suggests, and the magnitude of this fecundity is highlighted repeatedly, in "load," "bend," "fill," "swell," "plump," "more" and "more," and "o'er-brimm'd." In addition to denotation, many of these words are onomatopoeic. The word "plump" is imitative in origin (OED); "load," with its low vowel sound is suggestive of being weighty; "swell" is expansive with its 'sw' cluster.

We can see what seems to be a philological move in Keats manifesting the fecundity of the subject matter in his language through onomatopoeia. This dual-fecundity is also heightened in stanza two with striking alliteration and assonance. For instance, line fifteen -- "Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind," with the 'ft' repeated in "soft" and "lifted," the short 'i' of "lifted" returning in both the first and last syllables of "winnowing" and in "wind," and with the 'w' sounds repeated internally in "winnowing" and from "winnowing" to "wind" -- rivals the "incense sweet / From chain-swung censer teeming" in "Ode to Psyche." The rest of stanza two continues to aim for linguistic effect as much as anything:

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours. (16-22)

"Drows'd" is onomatopoeic, as is "oozings." This last line is so deliberate in its use of "oozings" as opposed to 'oozing' and "hours by hours" instead of 'hour by hour' that it calls extra attention to the 'z' sound created and recreated. The effect is to draw out sensation, paralleling the drawing out of this part of the sensuous time of year. Personified Autumn, after all, is "sitting careless on a granary floor" (14), "sound asleep" "on a half-reaped furrow," "Spar[ing] the next swath," and watching the oozing of cyder "with patient look." Looking back to stanza one, we see the same theme of maximizing sensation in the last three-and-a-half lines: "to set budding more, / And still more, later flowers for the bees, / Until they think warm days will never cease, / For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells."

Keats's project to craft pure English is also manifested quite literally with the predominant etymology of his diction. Geoffrey Hartman has discussed Northwesterly movement in "To Autumn," in considering the ideological implications of the form of the ode. Hartman traces the poem paralleling a day's course of the sun, from East to West, sunrise to sunset, seeing this as reflecting national interest. Hartman also notes Keats's national interest in Chatterton, and says about the final stanza, "consider the northernisms. The proportion of northern words increases perceptibly as if to pull the poem back from its southerly orientation. There is hardly a romance language phrase: sound-shapes like *sallows*, *swallows*, *borne*, *ourn*, *crickets*, *croft*, predominate" (314).¹² The letters framing the ode clearly indicate that Keats had an ear attuned to etymology that reached back beyond Middle English. Hartman is right to point

12. Justine Morrison has also observed this in "Chatterton and Keats: The Need for Close Examination." *Keats-Shelley Review* 10 (1996): 35-50. Morrison's essay gives a close-reading of similarities in phrasing and theme between "To Autumn" and the Thyrd Mynstrelle's song in Chatterton's "Aella."

out the northern sound-shapes in the final stanza -- more right than he allows. In the final stanza alone, we can add "whistle," "aloft," "garden," "hedge," and "gnat" to the list of words that Keats would have easily recognized as Anglo-Saxon in origin. But this northerly orientation is hardly limited to the final stanza. In the first two stanzas, we encounter "mists," "bosom," "thatch," "apples," "moss'd," "cottage," "swell," "hazel," "kernel," "brimm'd," "winnowing," "reap'd," "furrow," "hook," "swath," "twined," "laden," and "brook." Keats has had a southerly orientation, in the Hellenism of the earlier odes, but the entirety of "To Autumn" seems to be an English philological effort.

James Chandler has argued that "To Autumn" reads as a "neopagan hymn," following from "Ode to Psyche," offering "a thanatopsis, a view of death, and as such it addresses the issues which the various forms of 'deism' in Keats's age have had most difficulty handling" (430). As I have suggested throughout this chapter, Keats's Hellenism (or paganism) is correlative with philology and inherently religious. Chandler is right to further point out that there are "decisive invasions of history-as-death in the middle *Odes*" (430), as I have argued about "Ode on a Grecian Urn." But while I read "To Autumn" as following in the discourse in which "Ode to Psyche" figures prominently, I think that we must be careful in assigning the term "neopagan" to "To Autumn," since Chandler clearly means it to carry Hellenistic connotation. As I have already pointed out, the absence of Hellenism is conspicuous in "To Autumn," so the last ode seems to follow "Ode to Psyche" more in a line of philological inquiry (with the inherent religious concerns), than in paganism.

What is most compelling about the thanatopsis of "To Autumn," which comes primarily in the final stanza, is how, having been relegated to lifelessness in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Keats

now handles mortality:

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, --
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

The chorus of sound in this stanza -- which is self-consciously called to attention with the first two lines -- is a drastic departure from the silence of "Ode on a Grecian Urn," just as the vibrant world of process of "To Autumn" is a drastic departure from the cold, static 'pastoral' of "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Indeed, as has been often noted,¹³ "the songs of spring" can be read as the Odes of earlier in the year, beginning with April's "Ode to Psyche" and including "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The notes of mortality in the music of Autumn come in the "soft-dying day," "stubble-plains," "wailful choir" of mourning gnats, "shallows," and the pun of the light wind living or *dying*. We do not have cold despair here, like we have in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Keats tells us in the letter to Reynolds, "Somehow a stubble plain looks warm," and the stubble plain in stanza three of "To Autumn" is touched with "rosy hue." Accordingly, once Keats actually utters the word "dies," he turns to expressive life with "And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn." Keats seems to be suggesting that with the mortality that comes with being grounded in the empirical world also comes such sensuous warmth as the "rosy hue" and such sensuous

13. See, for instance, Stillinger's notes in *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, and Chandler, *England in 1819*.

expression as the imitative "bleat" (OED) of lambs in the wonderfully alliterative 'l' sounds of the line "And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn." In short, the Autumnal English landscape in "Autumn" is empirically alive in response to the prospect of death.

Keats's course, then, in this thanatopsis, seems to be enacting something along the lines of what Benedict Anderson called a "secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning," or philological Englishness. Continuity is suggested by the "full-grown lambs" -- something both rooted in a primal state and empirically present. The "gathering swallows" function similarly. To begin with, the verb "gathering" is conspicuously present-tense, suggesting immediacy. Swallows are also an interesting choice as they are a migratory bird. In a sense, they portend the death of the year with their gathering for southward migration. Their southward migration also, though, serves to increase the significance of their return north to England to generate new life in the inevitable new year. Thus, more than they represent death or life, the swallows represent continuity, and they do so in that present-tense verb, with another imitative form of expression: "twittering" (OED). And sensation has been drawn out in the innovative rhyme scheme to the effect of the "skies" in which the swallows twitter, in completing the E rhyme, affirmatively refiguring the "dies" of line twenty-nine.

Though "To Autumn" does contain a sort of thanatopsis, we should hesitate to call it a neo-pagan hymn as Chandler suggests. This Hellenistic reading of the poem places Chandler in company with Hartman, who defines what he reads as the westerly movement of the sun in the poem as Hesperian, and who argues that the poem is concerned with Apollo. We also find Hellenistic readings in Helen Vendler and Nicholas Roe, who identify personified Autumn in

stanza two with Ceres.¹⁴ These consistent Hellenistic identifications are somewhat curious, though, given the conspicuous absence of the overt Hellenism of the earlier odes. The sun is "him," but it seems that if Keats had wanted to make reference to Apollo, he would have done so explicitly. Concerning the Ceres identification, there is nothing in the poem that actually genders the Autumn personification female. Making the Autumn personification female to counterbalance the male sun makes little sense in light of the fact that the two are bosom-buddies, without any hint of being lovers. Throughout the poem, Keats consistently adheres to neutral direct-object or second-person pronouns, such as "thee" and "thou." But most importantly, identifying as Ceres the figure in stanza two overlooks the fact that Keats tells us after describing the compositional conditions of "To Autumn" that he always associates someone with Autumn: Thomas Chatterton, the writer of "The purest English." When we remember Keats's shift in sentiment from "Ode to Psyche" to "Ode on Grecian Urn," along with all the unique philological characteristics of "To Autumn," the Autumn = Chatterton truncated formula from the letters becomes very persuasive.

If we consider again the question of social class, it is curious that Marjorie Levinson does not account for "To Autumn." She argues that "the deep desire in Keats's poetry is not for aesthetic things or languages per se...but for the social code inscribed in them...Keats could have had all the urns, Psyches, nightingales, Spenserianisms, Miltonisms, Claudes, and Poussins he wanted; he was not, however, permitted possession of the social grammar inscribed in that aesthetic array, and this is just what Keats was after" (9). With "To Autumn," though, this theory

14. Vendler forwards this argument in *The Odes of John Keats*. Roe suggests the same in *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*.

would seem to break down. In the letter framing "To Autumn," Keats explicitly distances himself from Milton (and Chaucer). In aligning himself with who he thought of as a writer of pure English, Keats adopts a "social grammar" that does not feel like affectation to him. Native language roots were, indeed, a social grammar newly available to the bourgeoisie. In this sense, philological nationalism can become the very answer to the problem of cultural elitism.

Leaving off classical and Gallic linguistic influences, in "To Autumn," Keats represents what Herder called "the way of thinking and feeling" of what he had come to consider his linguistic ancestry. The poem strongly manifests the philological convictions expressed by John Taylor, and those such as this expressed by Leigh Hunt: describing "natural things in a language becoming them," and thereby doing "something towards the revival of what appears to me a proper English versification." This act of keeping English up, as Keats would put it, is really the conclusion -- as of late-September 1819 -- of a long process of experimentation with different modes of forming identity. It has been a process negotiated through philology all along, and the ultimate resolution of the negotiation is the poet settling on an abstract phenomenon that was both motivated and expressed by philology: nationalism.

Afterword: Borders of Philological Nationalism

The central goal of this project has been to explore the intersection of thinking on language and nationalism in the Romantic period. The impetus for this exploration was the repeated encounter with what have come to seem like 'philological moments.' Explicit moments such as Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Keats's letters, Scott's Advertisement to *The Antiquary*, and the Creature's epistemological development in *Frankenstein* prompted the following questions: what was the foundation for these thoughts language? Why do they emerge at this point, in the Romantic period? And what was at stake? Exploring the first of these questions, there emerged a rich tradition of early philology from the eighteenth century. Exploring how and why this tradition mattered to the Romantics has moved me to argue to that early philology provided a new mode of cultural identification: philological nationalism.

Recognizing philological nationalism in the Romantic period obviously adds to our understanding of conceptions of language in the period. It also prompts us to reevaluate British philological nationalism in general. It is perhaps easier to recognize philological nationalism in the heyday of comparative philology and during the apex of the British empire -- in the Victorian period. But early philology, as we have seen, bore distinct differences from the comparative philology of the Victorian period, and these differences engendered a different philological nationalism -- one more concerned with an imperiled Britain's sense of itself than with growing a powerful empire. Understanding philological nationalism's role in this time of upheaval also thus adds to our picture of Romantic radicalism.

Engagement with philological nationalism shows up in a variety of venues in the period.

We see the radical national implications of language debated in reviews of Wordsworth's work. The Pictish Question was hotly contested in primitivist histories. 'Pure' English was of particular interest to Keats's publisher, John Taylor. The most prominent philology of the day -- John Horne Tooke's Anglo-Saxon-centered insistence on etymology -- entered the legal sphere with the beleaguered Tooke. And of course philological nationalism found expression in letters, essays, novels, and poems, by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Mary Shelley, and Keats.

The discursive diversity of manifestations of philological nationalism is equaled by the subtly varying attitudes ultimately taken toward it. While Keats seems to be confident in an enactment of 'pure English' in "To Autumn" (after struggling mightily with philological affectation in earlier poems), Scott is intrigued by the potential for philology to reconstruct history, but ultimately skeptical about the practical viability of the undertaking. In response to dashed revolutionary hopes and a persistent sense of homelessness, Wordsworth invokes his own production of a *Volksstimme* to construct an imagined 'England' atop Mount Snowdon. Conversely, *Frankenstein* seems to regard a return to native simplicity as desirable but impossible, warning England against the danger posed by societal institutions whose authority comes to rest upon arbitrary signification.

Differences such as these collectively become the most salient feature of philological nationalism in the Romantic period. On a broad scale, Wordsworth, Scott, Mary Shelley, and Keats approach the discourse for different reasons and in different ways, and they reach different conclusions. On a more narrow scale, the greatest challenge for each of these artists engaging in the discourse of philological nationalism is the extent to which philological nationalism was subject to variation. This propensity for variation, or malleability, is intrinsic to the discourse

because of its roots. As I have pointed out, the Enlightenment reduced long-enshrined institutions such as monarchy, religion, and language to human constructions subject to change. As we have seen, while this emphasis on mutability in the new paradigm brought the possibility of meaningful cultural redefinition, it also meant that meaning could be manipulated, or could prove elusive.

In the same vein, though it is perhaps counter-intuitive, tangible political borders are often hazy in the philological nationalism of the Romantic period. For Wordsworth, the revolutionary ideas he embraces come from France, but the *Vox Populi* he requires for the definition of his poetry comes from England; at the same time, Wordsworth feels materially homeless in England. In Scott, a periphery of the British empire produces the same preoccupations with language and nation that we find coming England; and in *The Antiquary*, the true borders and conflicts are linguistic, not political. In *Frankenstein*, we follow the destructive movement of an Enlightenment Natural Man over most of Europe, but the idea of idyllic native simplicity is actually subverted from within the Creature's land of origin, through intellectual corruption; the breakdown of native simplicity is not the consequence of any actual international political conflict.

As Benedict Anderson and Linda Dowling argue, one of the great shifts brought by early philology was to situate language in human history. Language undergoes change throughout history, in the mouths of speakers. Language is shaped by people, therefore belongs to people, and thus shapes cultural identity over time. Philological nationalism imagines identity based upon shared cultural history. In this sense, philological nationalism is an act of retrospection. However, the view afforded the Romantics by this type of retrospection was not of historical

process as an uninterrupted march toward simple and stable present definition. *The Antiquary* and *Frankenstein* are both explicitly framed as acts of retrospection. Both are published in the second decade of the nineteenth century, but set in the 1790s. *Frankenstein* is profoundly shaped by 1790s Tookean radicalism, and it seems to call attention to the failure of that radicalism as a warning to an unstable England in the years just following Waterloo -- an England arguably less socially stable following military victory than before. The retrospection of *The Antiquary* suggests that Germanic linguistic invasion was a greater threat to Scottish identity in 1794 than was the fear of French military invasion. At the same time, this revisionary history recognizes that attempted reconstruction by philology was problematic, perhaps capable at best of a sort of footnoting of history; after all, as late as 1829, Scott was still reluctant to unequivocally pronounce victory for the Celtic side of the Pictish Question. In both *The Antiquary* and *Frankenstein*, we see an awareness of philological nationalism as a historical process -- both subject to and produced by retrospection -- and as part of that process, inherently complex and fluid.

This historical process, producing a tenuous and malleable form of identification, continues today. The population center for speakers of English has long since shifted from Britain to America. It is telling that we can observe contemporary American mutations of the mode of cultural identification that we have seen growing from philology in British Romanticism. For instance, mainstream American cinema in the twenty-first century routinely employs English as a means of appropriation of cultural heritage. Hollywood has a penchant for inflecting foreign cultures throughout Western history with a British accent. For a predominantly English-speaking, Caucasian audience, films routinely feature American actors putting on

modern British accents to portray ancient Greeks, ancient Romans, or medieval Scandinavians, for example. Moreover, Shakespeare is also rendered in a modern British, which is to say non-rhotic, accent, in spite of the fact that the shift to a non-rhotic 'r' had not occurred by Shakespeare's day. Conversely, when depicting non-Caucasian historical cultures, racial 'others' with whom Hollywood seems to presume that a majority Caucasian audience neither imagines nor desires a cultural connection, the modern British accent is typically absent. Thus, English seems to function as a way to approximate cultural connections and thereby appropriate cultural heritage. This sort of philological conquest of foreign culture shouldn't seem overly strange to us; appropriation of classical culture in a search for identity is precisely what we have seen with Keats's pairing of Echo and some wight, and in his Hellenic odes.

Hollywood's modern American mutation of fluid cultural identification via English is benign compared to how English is often wielded in contemporary political discourse. "Agitation on behalf of official language laws, for example, arises in part from convictions over what a city or nation is or should be, and requiring English is a way to enforce views about society or ethnicity through language" (8). This observation from Tim William Machan highlights the same power that we find language possessing in the Romantic period: the power to define the nation. In the Introduction to this study, I suggested that philology in the Romantic period was a mode of reconstructing the past that was just coming to serve the purpose of defining the present. Machan characterizes English as "something that evokes the horrors of the past and encodes the tensions of the present" (8). The parallelism in these two statements constitutes the double-edged sword of malleability in philological nationalism. Definition can empower, and it can oppress; it can grant membership, and it can disenfranchise. Tooke certainly

believed that his government sustained oppressive power through the manipulation of language.

Language became for the Romantics and still seems to be today a medium for the negotiation of cultural conflict. As such, philological nationalism provides interesting commentary on several types of borders. In the Romantic period, it pervaded diverse venues, accommodated diverse conclusions, rendered contemporaneous political boundaries hazy, and suggested historical process as highly malleable. Even where Wordsworth and Keats seem to settle on a sense of English identity, this sense is the product of an extensive process of intellectualization, challenged at many turns. This type of tenuous and critical engagement by the Romantics helps illuminate both the origins and the legacy of both philology and nationalism. Springing as it did from Enlightenment philosophy, early philology participated in a challenge to the sovereignty of ancient societal institutions. This challenge, in turn, produces an ongoing process of challenge. Ultimately, the story of philological nationalism is, in a sense, much like Jonathan Oldbuck's "Caledoniad": not the rendering of a definitive battle, but the footnotes of historical process. The body of "Invasion Repelled" defies composition, for intellectual and cultural history is not one battle that settles all future conflicts, but a constant process of definition and redefinition.

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