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Plagiarists, Sodomites, and Cannibals:

Authorship and the History of Sexuality, 1740-1820

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in English

by

Julia Kark Callander

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Plagiarists, Sodomites, and Cannibals:

Authorship and the History of Sexuality, 1740-1820

by

Julia Kark Callander

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Helen E. Deutsch, Chair

Romantic-period authors, reviewers, and critics persistently invoked sodomy and cannibalism when criticizing literary ‘perversions,’ the most significant of which was plagiarism. This dissertation accounts for this cluster of associations and elucidates their meaning for the histories of sexuality and authorship more broadly. First, I trace how critical discourse in the Romantic period projected older anxieties about sodomy and other kinds of ‘perverse incorporations’ onto authorship. Second, I contend that features of late eighteenth-century authorship actually prefigure structures integral to modern sexuality. In the eighteenth century, Britons and Americans used authorship as a primary concept with which to articulate the relationships between subjects, between a subject and the public, and between a subject and the law. By the end of the nineteenth century, heterosexuality had taken precedence as the defining feature of subjectivity in these relationships. Over the course of the Romantic period, authorship underwent a ‘straightening’ that paradoxically involved the incorporation and assimilation of the very textual and corporeal perversions—particularly plagiarism, cannibalism, and sodomy—against which normative authorship, and normative masculinity, continued to be defined. This project

thus makes two broader claims: it argues that incorporation and subsequent disavowal form the basis by which modern masculine subjects define themselves, and it describes and analyzes the incorporative structure of perversion in modern Anglo-British culture more generally. This project focuses on the work and reception of authors with uneasy or contested relationships to their source texts, and whose own sexual sensibilities were richly unconventional: Thomas Gray, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Brockden Brown. These figures are instructive not because their work reveals some essential 'gayness' or 'queerness,' but because their blackmailability (in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's well-known formulation) both as men and as authors allows us to see more clearly the logic underlying masculine sexuality and authorship in the period more generally.

The dissertation of Julia Kark Callander is approved.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	vi
Vita	vii
Introduction	1
1. Thomas Gray: Masculinity, Melancholy, and Disavowal	38
2. ‘Perverted Genius,’ Cannibals, and Crypts in Matthew Lewis	87
3. “The Perilous Precincts of Private Property”: Closets, Circulation, and Sterility in Charles Brockden Brown’s 1799-1800 Novels	140
Coda and Conclusion: “An Appetite for Being Buried”: Consumption, Contagion, and the Thingness of the Body in Matthew Lewis’s Journal of a West India Proprietor	175
Bibliography	196

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INTRODUCTION

“sodomy—that utterly confused category”¹

“The whole problem of poetic borrowing clearly remained highly confused, as indeed it has to the present day”²

For years after the publication of *The Monk* (1796), Matthew Lewis’s critics persistently and creatively emphasized how his “talents [were] strangely perverted.”³ His 1801 miscellany *Tales of Wonder*, which borrowed from many authors, earned the nickname ‘tales of plunder’ and led Irish poet Thomas Dermody to ask, “Did I discover the mysterious hole, / From whence your putrid carcasses [sic] you stole?”⁴ Invoking the historical definition of plagiarism as kidnapping and seduction, Dermody compares plagiarized texts to dead bodies, likening Lewis not only to a grave robber, but also potentially a necrophile. The emphasis on pillaging dead corpses for parts also hints at cannibalism, and the phrase “mysterious hole” would have resonated particularly with readers who by 1801 were already familiar with Lewis’s reputation as a lover of men. In short, Dermody condemns Lewis’s textual misdeeds by insinuating something “perverted” about Lewis’s sexuality as well.

¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 101.

² Roger Lonsdale, “Gray and ‘Allusion’: The Poet as Debtor,” *Studies in the Eighteenth Century IV*, ed. R.F. Brissenden and J.C. Eade (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 31-55, 47.

³ Rev. of *Tales of Wonder*, *The Antijacobin Review* VIII (1801): 322-23, 323.

⁴ Thomas Dermody, “More Wonders!” in *The Harp of Erin: Containing the Poetical Works* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807), 1:108-24, 116.

Romantic-period critics closely associated sexual, textual, and alimentary transgression. The anonymous “Printed by Mistake” (1823) compares the literary marketplace to the famously homoerotic cannibal shipwreck scene in Canto II of Byron’s *Don Juan*. The author equates intertextual borrowing with the cannibalization of other writers: “this prodigious multiplication of Magazines and Periodicals can never endure,” he writes, “for how can their myriad and insatiable maws be replenished without generating a literary famine in the land? . . . we are beginning to be driven to the cannibal repast of the shipwrecked Don Juan.”⁵ But that material soon grows scarce, and authors “tear . . . open our own bosoms to supply flesh and blood to the ravenous brood of the public. Nay, we even join in their repast. Autophagi that we are! in the voracity of our egotism, we find a perpetual feast in our own heart and head.” The essayist becomes both guest and host, “dish[ing himself] up” to the “ravenous” public, but also eating himself.⁶ Satires and reviews like these both construct and criticize an ideology of solitary masculine genius, characterized by Maggie Kilgour “the desire for absolute self-reliance and independence from all external influences [which] would be best satisfied by self-cannibalism, in which one doesn’t even need to rely on the world outside for food.”⁷ Perhaps the most iconic instance of this phenomenon occurs in Samuel T. Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in which the Mariner must bite and drink from his own arm before he can speak: “Through utter drought all dumb we stood! / I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, / And cried, A sail! a sail!”⁸ This desire for independence—even at the cost of autophagy—reaches its apex in the Romantic

⁵ “Printed by Mistake,” in *The New Monthly Magazine* VII (1823): 529-32, 530.

⁶ “Printed by Mistake,” in *The New Monthly Magazine* VII (1823): 529-32, 530.

⁷ Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 150.

⁸ Samuel T. Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (rev. 1834), in *Coleridge’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. Nicholas Halmi et. al (New York: Norton, 2004), 58-99, ll. 159-61.

period, with important implications for our understanding of both authorship and the history of sexuality.

This dissertation charts the entwined histories of sexuality and authorship in Anglophone writing from the 1740s to 1820s, contending that by the Romantic period the author had become a representative figure for the masculine subject more generally. This project focuses on the work and reception of authors with uneasy or contested relationships to their source texts, and whose sexual sensibilities were richly unconventional: Thomas Gray, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Brockden Brown. Gray and Brown each had intense and largely chaste friendships with peers who died young; Lewis experienced more sexual notoriety, but also greater immunity due to his higher social standing. Gray was lauded in his time precisely because of his erudition and allusiveness; Lewis was reviled for his perceived derivativeness in adapting and translating others' work. Gray was wildly popular in his historical moment but disavowed by a subsequent generation of readers and critics; Lewis and Brown's reception histories took much more varied paths. These authors were blackmailable in matters of both sexuality and authorship, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's formulation: they were under a great deal of social pressure to prove that the relationships between their bodies and texts and those of other men were normal and masculine, but they had no mechanism by which to do so.⁹ These figures are instructive not because their work reveals some essential 'gayness' or 'queerness,' but because their blackmailability allows us to see more clearly in their work the fractures and contradictions running throughout the culture of the long (Anglophone) eighteenth century.

This project contributes to and intervenes in existing scholarship in four main ways. First, it adds nuance to the histories of authorship and sexuality by tracing their shared rhetorics over

⁹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 88-90.

the course of the long eighteenth century. We cannot fully understand the history of authorship in this period without considering the way tropes of sodomy and unnatural or perverse reproduction were leveraged to enforce authorial norms; likewise, we cannot fully understand the history of sexuality in the period without looking at how metaphors of plagiarism (and other ‘perverse incorporations’) were used to impugn (male) authors’ masculinity for homophobic purposes.

Secondly, by focusing on incorporation as a structure that informs both authorship and sexuality, this project uncovers a paradox at the heart of the ideology of possessive individualism. As is well known, Locke’s entire theory of property rests on the premise that every subject has “a property in his own person”; that subject acquires additional property through labor that brings the external world into the sphere of that original, presumably inalienable, property. The prime example of this labor in Locke’s *Second Treatise* is the ingestion of apples and acorns.¹⁰ This theory relies on several weak premises: first, that the external world is comprised of passive, assimilable matter (Locke’s economic man never gets food poisoning), and secondly, that the subject’s body is indeed inalienable (Locke’s economic man is never sold into slavery or cannibalized). In fact, as I demonstrate throughout this study, by grounding property rights in incorporation, Locke (and those who follow him) actually opens the subject up to an endless chain of predatory re-incorporations. Subjects are pitted against one another, not only competing for property but on the defensive against being “cannibalized” by one another. This is particularly true when it comes to intellectual property, given how closely an author’s output is associated with his/her body. Add to this the idea that incorporated property might actually compromise the subject (i.e., food poisoning), and a stable, unidirectional theory of property based on incorporation starts to fall apart at the seams. As masculinity becomes

¹⁰ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. (London; New York: Dent; Dutton, 1953), 130.

increasingly tied to an independence from influence over the course of the eighteenth century, male authors find themselves increasingly defending against claims of perverse incorporation or intimacy between their texts and others'. In short, authors become blackmailable in the Sedgwickian sense, as intertextuality in the late eighteenth century operated in a "paranoid Gothic" mode, "in which," Sedgwick writes, "a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure, in some respects his 'double,' to whom he seems to be mentally transparent."¹¹

That authors become blackmailable over the course of the long eighteenth century is crucial to my third intervention. Since the 1978 publication of Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* vol. 1, scholars have hypothesized a variety of paths by which "the sodomite" shifted into "the homosexual."¹² Randolph Trumbach has traced the ways in which homosexual sex came to be associated less with power and libertinism and more with effeminacy and an inversion of gender roles.¹³ Others, including Stephen Shapiro, Bruce Burgett, Caleb Crain, George Haggerty, and Paul Kelleher, have emphasized the role of sensibility in this transitional period.¹⁴ Some of this work on sensibility draws on more general claims by Henry Abelove and

¹¹ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd ed. (University of California Press, 2008), 186n.10.

¹² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

¹³ Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 129-40. While Trumbach's work was groundbreaking, eighteenth-century writing about sodomy suggests a more complicated account: the molly emerges as a potent negative figure in the eighteenth century, but part of what makes sodomites such a menace is not merely their effeminacy but their phallic potency—and in cases like Matthew Lewis, Titus Oates, or Colley Cibber, their squandering or misuse of that masculinity. Thus, I am more sympathetic to Cameron McFarlane's critique of Trumbach's argument: McFarlane emphasizes the continuity of a heterosexual framework over the course of the eighteenth century for thinking about sodomy, and he also draws attention to the (chaotic, incoherent) heterogeneity of representations of sodomites throughout the century. Cameron McFarlane, *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire, 1660-1750* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ Stephen Shapiro, "'Man to Man I Needed Not to Dread His Encounter': *Edgar Huntly's* End of Erotic Pessimism" in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*, ed. Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004): 216-51; Bruce Burgett,

Cameron McFarlane that sexuality in this transitional period was much more heterogeneous than is often assumed.¹⁵

As my focus on blackmail in Romantic authorship suggests, I argue that the missing link between sodomite and homosexual is actually the plagiarist. At the same time that older tropes about sodomy as misdirected generative power are used to condemn plagiarism in the later eighteenth century, we can also see in Romantic period discourse about plagiarism the workings out of a blackmailable public subjectivity that anticipates the later nineteenth-century “homosexual.” Many of the defining aspects of modern sexuality actually have antecedents in eighteenth-century constructions of authorship, particularly in discourses of melancholy and mourning, concealment and exposure, and performance and authenticity. In other words, Romantic-period ideas about plagiarism both reflect earlier ideas about sodomy and anticipate subsequent features of modern homosexuality.

In the eighteenth century, it was through authorship that Britons and Americans thought about the relationships between subjects, between a subject and the public, and between a subject and the law. By the end of the nineteenth century, heterosexuality had taken precedence as the defining feature of masculine subjectivity in these relationships. Over the course of the Romantic period, authorship underwent a ‘straightening’ that paradoxically involved the incorporation and assimilation of the very textual and corporeal perversions—particularly plagiarism, cannibalism,

Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Caleb Crain, *American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); George Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Paul Kelleher, *Making Love: Sentiment and Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Henry Abelove, *Deep Gossip* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and MacFarlane. See also Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982); G.S. Rousseau, “The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: ‘Utterly Confused Category’ and/or Rich Repository?” in *‘Tis Nature’s Fault: Unauthorized Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Purks Maccubbin (Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Thomas Alan King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750: Queer Articulations*, vol. 2 of 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

and sodomy—against which normative authorship, and normative masculinity, continued to be defined. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, however, the contradictory discourses of masculinity informing that ideal paradoxically locate the perverse at the very heart of the normal. In other words, the very process by which authorship became modern was itself melancholy, queer, and gothic.

A study involving blackmail, incorporation, and authorship necessarily revisits material from earlier critical moments in the twentieth century. This backward-looking aspect to the project enables its fourth and final intervention. Queer studies in the long eighteenth century continues to grapple with the Sedgwick’s critique of “paranoid reading,” which Sedgwick linked to a psychoanalytic “greed for ‘good’ things that is figured in terms of ingesting them and holding them inside, where they are liable to remain distinct and magically alive, doing battle with ‘bad’ contents and vulnerable to being devoured or fatally contaminated by them.”¹⁶ I argue that later eighteenth-century masculinity might itself be described in this way—an assertion that poses thorny theoretical and methodological problems for the field about objectivity, distance, and collusion. By focusing on incorporation as the key structure informing subjectivity and public discourse in the period, my project stages a rapprochement between recent work in queer studies and affect theory and older critical frameworks such as psychoanalysis and deconstruction. Just as Sedgwick’s critique of paranoid reading ends with a call for a critical vocabulary for the “many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture” that doesn’t want them, so too does my project require something of a “reparative reading” of—or “feeling backward” toward—the very critical lenses that have been

¹⁶ Sedgwick, “Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes,” in *After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory*, ed. Janet Halley and Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 283-301, 291.

found wanting due to their implicit sexism, homophobia, binarism, or political inefficacy.¹⁷ In other words, rather than participating in a dynamic of paranoid incorporation and disavowal, this project enacts reparative reading not only of its primary objects of study but also of the very methods we use to understand them.

Eighteenth-century condemnations of plagiarism relied on a complex articulation of gendered responsibility and perversion. The plagiarist (like the sodomite and the cannibal) is male, both predatory and impotent, a ‘perverted genius’ who ‘ought to know better.’ As Rebecca Moore Howard has argued, although plagiarism is associated with the unmanly, the flaccid, and the nonreproductive, its origins in concepts of kidnapping and rape accord a great deal of (phallic) agency to the plagiarist.¹⁸ Although Howard’s article ultimately focuses on reform in present-day higher education, her provocative argument resonates with the histories of several eighteenth-century male authors whose work bore anxious or highly-contested relationships with their source texts. To be sure, as Laura Rosenthal writes, “Women writers were . . . acutely aware of . . . their gendered vulnerability to charges of plagiarism.”¹⁹ Yet Rosenthal herself later claims that “while the women satirized in both plays [*The Royal Mischief* and *The Female Wits*, both 1696] endured charges of plagiarism and impropriety, it was Colley Cibber who emerged as the cultural symbol for compromised authorship.”²⁰ Rosenthal argues men who “fritter away the potential masculine privilege of full social subjectivity and inalienable selfhood” came in for

¹⁷ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 150-51.

¹⁸ Rebecca Moore Howard, “Sexuality, Textuality: The Cultural Work of Plagiarism.” *College English* 62. 4 (March 2000): 473-91.

¹⁹ Laura Rosenthal, *Playwrights and Plagiarists in Early Modern England: Gender, Authorship, Literary Property* (Cornell University Press, 1996), 40.

²⁰ Rosenthal, 190.

much harsher criticism than their female contemporaries “since they embarrass other men and expose the vulnerability of masculine self-ownership.”²¹

Although the definition and significance of plagiarism shifted over the course of the eighteenth century (see chapter 1), when Lewis’s *Monk* was published in 1796, the gendered articulation of authorial responsibility in plagiarism remained the same. As many have recounted, condemnations of *The Monk* really only appeared in full once Lewis, a new member of Parliament, appended his name to the second edition of the text. No longer imaginable as an anonymous, perhaps female, hack, the author of *Monk* was an upper-class man. Lisa Wilson and Michael Gamer have both shown how reviewers struggled to condemn Lewis in terms that both rehearsed the standard lament about Gothic novels *and* accorded Lewis enough responsibility for his own work. “[F]orth step hundreds of novelists, who ape the perverted genius of the author of the Monk,” writes one London reviewer of *The Monk*. Another writer for the *Monthly Review*, writing of Lewis’s drama *The Castle Spectre* (1797) a year later, suggests, “Mr. Lewis . . . will draw after him a train of imitators.”²² At the same time that detractors want to condemn both Lewis’s derivativeness and his immorality, they must accord him, as in the first example above, a degree of “genius” in order to proclaim its ‘perversion.’²³ In short, throughout the long eighteenth century, plagiarism was articulated through a gendered discourse of agency and abjection, original genius and its perversion.

To understand the relationship between authorship and male sexuality in the long eighteenth century, we need to look at these concepts through the lens of cannibalism. The idea

²¹ Rosenthal, 191.

²² Quoted in Lisa M. Wilson, “‘Monk’ Lewis as Literary Lion,” *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997): n.p.; and Michael Gamer, “Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama,” *ELH* 66.4 (1999): 838.

²³ See also Elfenbein, *Romantic Genius: The Prehistory of a Homosexual Role* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

of cannibalism was integral to the way eighteenth-century Britons and Americans thought about masculinity and property, from *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to Byron's *Don Juan* (1819) and beyond. Consider the well-known passage in which Locke articulates his theory of property using acorns and apples. Locke's entire theory of property is founded upon the idea that "every man has a 'property' in his own 'person.'"²⁴ This property precedes and validates the acquisition of other property as "man" moves through the world, appropriating things and making them his by mixing them with his labor; that is, extending the reach of his body to other properties. Locke's prime example of this appropriation is literal incorporation: "He that is nourished by the acorns he picked up under an oak, or the apples he gathered from the trees in the wood, has certainly appropriated them to himself. Nobody can deny but the nourishment is his."²⁵ In this theory of property, the subject begins with the first inalienable property—one's own body—and then proceeds out into the world, acquiring more property by bringing it into the bounds of that original property either through labor or through incorporation.

This is a handy and enduring theory of property, and it's no surprise that it went on to inform centuries of Western thought about subjectivity, gender, and labor. It underwrites what Valerie Loichot describes as discourse of the "Colonial mouth,"²⁶ and it informs bell hooks's well-known critique in "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance."²⁷ Alan Bewell, Charlotte Sussman, and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, among others, have also explored how consumption

²⁴ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. (London; New York: Dent; Dutton, 1953), 130.

²⁵ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. (London; New York: Dent; Dutton, 1953), 130.

²⁶ Valerie Loichot, *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), vii. See also Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986); and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2012). For more on the colonial-etymological history of the word "cannibal," see the first two chapters of Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986).

²⁷ bell hooks, "Eating the Other," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 21-39.

plays a fundamental role in colonial ideology.²⁸ Indeed, I argue alongside Maggie Kilgour that incorporation provides the modern West with its model not only of property acquisition, but of subjectivity more generally. Kilgour describes a shift over the course of the seventeenth to twentieth century towards a greater and greater emphasis on incorporation—a shift that parallels the rise of the (middle-class, white, male) individual as an independent unit of subjectivity: in or around the seventeenth century, Kilgour writes, “terms previously held in a more flexible relation to each other became consolidated as binary oppositions. The product of this fall is the individual, a unified and coherent being defined by and against others who appear less coherent, even fragmented” (167). We need only look to *Robinson Crusoe* for an example of this. While we typically read the novel as exemplifying a particular ideology and a particular type of modern selfhood—one grounded in a mixture of Protestant theology, capitalism, and Lockean empiricism—Crusoe’s self-actualization depends foremost on his acquisition and incorporation of property, just as in Locke.

As the cannibals haunting *Crusoe* suggest, however, Locke’s Edenic and gustatory depiction of property acquisition leaves a few things out: eating is not always an unproblematic, one-way vector. Sometimes food is scarce. Always, eating produces a waste product that is not assimilated. And of course, needing to always acquire more in order to sustain oneself is just inconvenient. Finally, there are two other problems with incorporation that I think are particularly important: 1) food poisoning and 2) cannibals. Food poisoning troubles us because, while we eat to reify and sustain the self, there’s always the risk that what we eat might change us. At the same time that eating is a colonial, expansive, and acquisitive process, it also renders

²⁸ Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000); Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

us fundamentally vulnerable to our environment, letting the outside in. Secondly, it's no coincidence that eighteenth-century Europeans were fascinated by tales of cannibals from the new world. After all, if claims to property are predicated upon the presumed inalienable nature of one's own body—one's original property that underwrites the further acquisition of property—then what does it mean that even that property could be forcibly taken away from oneself?²⁹

The figure of the cannibal preoccupies critical literary and cultural discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it inverts and negates the very foundations on which property rights are thought to rest. Like the plagiarist and the sodomite, then, the cannibal registered paradoxical values and anxieties around masculinity and property. Early modern authors often explicitly link these scare-figures, capitalizing on their similarities for greater emphasis. For example, Robert Holloway's account of a London molly-house in *The Phoenix of Sodom* (1813) describes how 'sodomites' marry women for their property, leaving the women with no recourse or ability to divorce. Holloway concludes that "this vice is more expensive than any other, and is the vortex that engulphs the property of men."³⁰ Holloway's condemnation of sodomy, in other words, trades on a familiar fear of engulfment and property loss that *Crusoe* and others link to cannibalism. Predatory and derivative, agential and abject: plagiarists, sodomites, and cannibals tend to undo their own metaphorical work, revealing just how precarious and easily inverted are one's claims to property.

Confusion between cannibalism and sodomy may stretch back to the very inception of the concept of sodomy in the New Testament (which predates the term 'cannibalism,' of course,

²⁹ Of course, most people in the eighteenth-century transatlantic modern world—women, non-white people, colonial subjects, children, those in poverty or indentured servitude—were already denied this full subjectivity based on the inalienable nature of one's own body and labor. And it's for that reason that I've actually chosen to focus this project on people who occupied privileged positions: educated white men from the upper and middle classes. I expand on this choice below.

³⁰ Quoted in Thomas A. King, *The Gendering of Men*, vol. 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 11.

by about a millennium³¹). The Letter from Jude, one of several biblical texts to mention Sodom and Gomorrah, recalls how these cities' inhabitants "indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust," a phrase that is more literally translated from Greek as "went after other flesh," which critics have interpreted to mean everything from homosexual intercourse, to sex with angels, to anthropophagy.³² David Bergman also cites Epiphanius of Salamis (4th century CE) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) as early examples of writers who conflate sodomy and cannibalism.³³

Early modern texts often associated sodomy and cannibalism in order to reinforce Western superiority against colonial or Orientalized others. Ethnographic writing about the Americas contains many passages associating the alleged cannibalism of native peoples with sodomy or homosexual activity. Anthony Pagden and Jonathan Goldberg have each shown how Spanish colonial writers repeatedly did so in order to justify the oppression of indigenous peoples; a 1526 report by Fernández de Oviedo, for example, claims that "The Indians eat human flesh and are sodomites."³⁴ Somewhat later, in a 1672 treatise on the fallaciousness of natural law, a list of horrendous customs around the world mentions the consumption of human flesh and the "unnatural Vice [of] Pollution with the Male Sex" in nearly the same breath.³⁵ This conflation carried on well into the eighteenth century: a short account of "Marriage RITES, &c.,

³¹ See Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*.

³² "The Letter of Jude," in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 417-19.

³³ David Bergman, "Cannibals and Queers: Man-Eating," in *Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 142.

³⁴ Quoted in Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 193. See also Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 176-79.

³⁵ Samuel von Pufendorf, *De jure naturae et gentium*, 1672, cited in Catalin Avramescu, *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 16-17.

of the *Barbarous Peruvians*” (1724), for example, opens by describing the myriad types of cannibalism the indigenous people of Peru purportedly commit, and closes by stating that “their Priests were addicted to Sodomy, and committed it in the Temples, on Pretence that it would please their Idols.”³⁶ This final example also resonates with anti-Catholic propaganda’s similar conflation of sodomy and cannibalism, which I address below.

Sodomy and cannibalism, sameness and difference, are collapsed in John Astruc’s *Treatise of Venereal Diseases, in Nine Books; Containing an Account of the Origin, Propagation, and Contagion of This Distemper* (1754). At one point, Astruc “recite[s] and confute[s]” suggested ways by which venereal disease entered Western Europe.³⁷ In immediate succession, Astruc considers: 1) feeding on human flesh, 2) bestiality with a diseased animal, 3) “sodomy” with monkeys (not necessarily diseased themselves), and 4) eating iguana (again, not themselves diseased).³⁸ To be sure, Astruc is debunking all of these claims. Yet that they come sequentially in a list (which only numbers seven items altogether) suggests that their co-

³⁶ *A Critical Essay Concerning Marriage. Shewing, I. The Preference of Marriage to a Single Life. II. The Arguments for and Against a Plurality of Wives and Concubines. III. The Authority of Parents and Governors, in Regulating or Restraining Marriages. IV. The Power of Husbands, and the Privileges of Wives. V. The Nature of Divorce, and in What Cases It Is Allowable. VI. The Reasons of Prohibiting Marriage Within Certain Degrees. Vii. The Manner of Contracting Espousals, and What Engagements and Promises of Marriage Are Binding. Viii. The Penalties Incurred by Forcible and Clandestine Marriages, and the Consequences Attending Marriages Solemnized by the Dissenters. To Which Is Added, an Historical Account of the Marriage Rites and Ceremonies of the Greeks and Romans, and Our Saxon Ancestors, and of Most Nations of the World at This Day. By a Gentleman.* (London: 1724), 320-22. For further examples of the conflation of sodomy and cannibalism in writing about the Americas, see Avramescu’s discussion of Sade and Abbé Raynal in *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism*, 101-5; and a collection of works on Melville, including Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels,” *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History* 66.1 (1994): 25-53; Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998); and Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, *Cannibal Old Me: Spoken Sources in Melville’s Early Works* (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 2009).

³⁷ John Astruc, *A Treatise of Venereal Diseases, in Nine Books; Containing an Account of the Origin, Propagation, and Contagion of This Distemper. As Also of the Nature, Cause, and Cure of All Venereal Disorders, Whether Local or Universal. Together with a Short Abstract of the Lives of the Authors Who Have Wrote on Those Diseases, and a List of Their Works. By John Astruc, Physician to His Present Majesty the King of France. Translated from the Last Latin Edition Printed at Paris.*, vol. 1 of 2 (London: 1754), 67.

³⁸ Astruc, 67-78.

incidence merits closer attention. Both same-species cannibalism (1) and interspecies sodomy (3) are considered as acts which spontaneously create venereal disease. This is not about mere infection: in the first case, the mere transgressiveness of putting same into same reportedly causes the disease: hogs, dogs, and hawks who are fed their own kind also purportedly develop symptoms. In the case of the monkeys, it is presumably the *too-large* distance between species which is to blame. The iguana example (4) falls somewhere in between these other two: here, one author who claims that eating iguana causes infection also claims that “the Indians devour [it] greedily.” This statement (which closely resembles several from Lewis’s *Journal*) suggests that the degree of difference between European and iguana is too great, but that between “Indian” and iguana is just the right amount of difference. Of course, Europeans could eat, and were eating, many New World species without a problem. Nevertheless, this list probes the relationship between ingestion and sodomy, expresses anxiety about overconsumption, and uses racial difference to do so. I explore this thread in chapter 4.

Anti-Catholic writing in England often promoted images of Catholic priests as sodomites—enforced, perhaps, by distrust towards the idea of powerful and secretive all-male religious communities.³⁹ A 1719 publication criticizing “The Superstitious Ceremonies and Wicked Practices of the Church of Rome, in the Holy Week,” for example, mentions priests’ alleged sodomy no less than five times.⁴⁰ Indeed, as Cameron McFarlane has argued, the association “Italian/Catholic/sodomite” accomplished much cultural work throughout the

³⁹ Henry VIII dissolved religious orders in England; not until the mid-nineteenth century were they reinstated. See James G. Clark, *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England* (Woodbridge, Eng.: Boydell & Brewer, 2002).

⁴⁰ James Gordon, *An Account of the Superstitious Ceremonies and Wicked Practices of the Church of Rome, in the Holy Week. By Parthenopæus Hereticus* (London: J. Roberts, 1719), 15, 16, 53, 55. As a bonus, the text also suggests that Catholics’ actions in the Thirty Years’ War “wou’d make Indians and Cannibals blush” (44).

eighteenth century in Britain.⁴¹ Catholics were often labeled cannibals as well as sodomites; just as the lack of religious orders distinguished Anglicanism from Catholicism, so did doctrinal differences concerning the nature of the Eucharist. Robert Mahoney has traced back images of the Irish as cannibals to seventeenth-century theological debates in which some Catholics “insiste[d] that Christ’s injunction to consume his flesh and blood is not metaphorical.”⁴²

Focusing on Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens*, Jody Greene demonstrates that ‘sodomy’ in the early modern period often meant a wide range of ‘debauchery,’ including intemperate or unmanly eating.⁴³ Greene’s reading of *Timon* produces much more direct correspondences between cannibalism, sodomy, and economic anxieties about the limits of usury and debt. Greene invokes Aristotle’s “claim that both usury and sodomy constituted ‘unnatural breeding’”—intercourse based on sameness rather than difference—before turning to the cannibalistic figures of speech that pervade *Timon*. Her reading of the relationships between eating, sex, and patronage in the play allow her to conclude that “if sodomy and usury are everywhere figured as threats to alliance in the period, they are also what make alliance possible—the ‘subtle’ bonds hidden beneath the moderating discourses of patronage and ‘just’

⁴¹ McFarlane, *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire, 1660-1750*. Quoted in George Haggerty, “The Horrors of Catholicism: Religion and Sexuality in Gothic Fiction,” in *Catholic Figures, Queer Narratives*, ed. Lowell Gallagher, Frederick S. Roden, and Patricia Juliana Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 37. Haggerty’s work, however, tends towards a broader, more recuperative sense of the ‘queer’ in the Gothic, arguing that “Gothic fiction offered a testing ground for many unauthorized genders and sexualities” (33). For a slightly earlier document associating Catholicism and sodomy—with an undertone of cannibalism—see “The Sodomite, or the Venison Doctor, with His Brace of Aldermen-stags ... To the Tune of, Sauny Shall Ne’re Be My Loge Again” (London: Nat. Thompson, 1684), a satirical ballad mocking Titus Oates, mastermind of the “Popish Plot,” who had been accused of sodomy.

⁴² Robert Mahoney, “Swift’s Modest Proposal and the Rhetoric of Irish Colonial Consumption,” *1650-1850* 4 (1998): 205-14. See also Alberto Radicati, *A Comical and True Account of the Modern Canibals’s* [sic.] *Religion* (London: J. Martin, 1734), in which, Gulliver-like, the protagonist is cast on the shores of a country where something akin to Catholicism is practiced, though it is presented in the guise of Islam. The conflation by British writers of Catholicism with other religions is a relevant one to this project, insofar as those other religions are also associated with sodomy and cannibalism.

⁴³ Jody Greene, “‘You Must Eat Men’: The Sodomitic Economy of Renaissance Patronage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1.2 (1994): 163–97, 168-69.

exchange which claim to defend against the disorder of such debauched categories.”⁴⁴ Greene’s claim here anticipates my own: that British-American culture had to incorporate and disavow the very perversions against which it was purportedly constructed.

In eighteenth-century Britain and America, an autonomous, masculine, and embodied self was constituted in opposition to figures like cannibals and sodomites. As many have argued, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in western Europe saw a greater emphasis on the individual, a shift that had consequences for every aspect of human life, but especially attitudes towards property ownership and authorship.⁴⁵ Scholars like Daniel Cottom have shown—and complicated—how this self-possessed individual was also an embodied one.⁴⁶ Those who didn’t fit into this model of the self—for example, women and ‘savages’—had to be either ignored or called upon as examples of the outside which constituted that very inside. These Others were also frequently understood to be historically Other as well: while the portrayals of plagiarism, sodomy, and cannibalism I will be discussing are very much early modern inventions, the culture that depended on them for definition constructed them as remnants of a prior historical moment.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Greene, “‘You Must Eat Men,’” 191.

⁴⁵ Consider, for example, Locke’s theories of possessive individualism; Lucretius on epicureanism; Wolfram Schmidgen on property law in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Law of Property* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Mark Rose on changes in attitude towards authorship and copyright in “The Author as Proprietor: Donaldson v. Becket and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship,” *Representations* 23 (Summer 1988): 51–85, and in *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁴⁶ Daniel Cottom, *Cannibals & Philosophers*. See also Richard W. F. Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); and Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004).

⁴⁷ See Saree Makdisi’s chapter on *Waverley in Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*, *Cambridge Studies in Romanticism* 27 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 85–99; Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 33–35.

As this modern individual becomes visible as the fundamental unit of capitalist society, writers evince increasing anxiety about threats to that individual self. In readings of *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, critics often identify Crusoe's violence or fear towards his ship, the sea, cannibals, and other elements of his surroundings as symptomatic of his more general fear of engulfment.⁴⁸ Interestingly, at the same historical moment that Crusoe and others fear cannibalism—incorporation by the Other—anxieties about the costs of incorporating *too much* also become more prominent, in discourses of luxury and effeminacy.⁴⁹ These inversely related anxieties—being consumed and consuming too much—are endlessly invertible: Cottom argues that the early modern fascination with cannibalism was largely a displacement of European anxieties about the violence of empire, a point I will explore in greater depth in chapters 3 and 4. Thus, the very same figures that stand outside of the definition of the modern self are also those that insiders constantly risk *becoming*. This is the dynamic of the 'paranoid gothic' described by

⁴⁸ See for example, Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters : Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 196; and Minaz Jooma, "Robinson Crusoe Inc(orporates): Domestic Economy, Incest, and the Trope of Cannibalism," in *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 57-78.

⁴⁹ Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000). Collapsing this difference in on itself, Daniel Cottom demonstrates how cannibals themselves, with their 'perverse attractiveness,' were objects of Western consumption. Cottom, 153-56. Even without bringing homosexuality explicitly into the equation, we can easily identify this overlap between over-tastefulness and savagery elsewhere in British representations of the French at the close of the eighteenth century: not only did the masculine simplicity of English food compare favorably to what were perceived as overwrought and effeminate French culinary tastes and cooking methods, but also the health and civilization of the English were contrasted with depictions of the French as starving cannibals—a trend that extended beyond its initial association with *sans-culottes*. See Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39. Indeed, this idea of the *juste milieu* (to inappropriately borrow from the French) necessitates a considerable amount of representational complexity—for example, in Frances Brooke's Canadian epistolary novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1767), where the English letter writers struggle to define themselves not only in contrast to the French government officials and the native peoples, but also to the Canadian-born peasants of French descent who appear alternately as over- and under-civilized. Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1995).

Sedgwick and George Haggerty, in which male characters are haunted or pursued by uncanny doubles of themselves, whose unclear relationship to them provokes anxiety.⁵⁰

At the same time that developments such as possessive individualism, Lucretian Epicureanism, and copyright law presupposed atomistic and independent parties, contemporaneous events exposed the vulnerability of that fictional self. When interiority becomes more important, the subject becomes more vulnerable to all pollution and transformation.⁵¹ Cannibalism is the most absolute instantiation of interiority, but also the biggest threat to it. As Kilgour writes, “The use of [cannibalism as] image reflects the fact that the return to a Golden Age [i.e., a mythical moment before fragmentation] is actually treated with a great deal of ambivalence that reflects both desire and aggression, nostalgia and horror.”⁵² Eighteenth-century representations of sodomy—and of deviant intertextuality—function in many of the same ways.

⁵⁰ Cottom, *Cannibals & Philosophers*, 149; Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); George Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006). In a similar deconstructive move, Haggerty finds in the Gothic “a queer world that attempts to transgress the binaries of sexual decorum,” binaries encoded by the Novel, which “celebrates the codification of middle-class values” (2, 10). Of course, this definition of the capital-N Novel is slightly misleading; even such a seminal text as Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* evinces substantial (even Gothic) anxiety about those middle-class values it purports to encode.

⁵¹ Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 227. The overarching argument of Kilgour’s survey is that a sense of lost unity undergirds most important Western binaries, and she sides with Derrida in privileging the inside/outside binary as the foundation of all others (4). Assuming that this opposition has its source in the body, “it is usually . . . the inside that appears the superior, as the literally central term” (4), which legitimates Kilgour’s interest in metaphors of incorporation as central to Western thought. Having thus identified her field of study, Kilgour traces a general move in Western culture “of increasing internalization, a movement toward a world in which everything is imagined as being ‘inside’” (226-27), similar to Julia Kristeva’s argument that Christian thought takes the abject and locates it within the subject. For other theorizations of the boundaries of the body as a system, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); and Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁵² Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 11.

Perversion and Melancholy

In the eighteenth-century British imagination, cannibals are neither wholly human nor wholly other. Men who commit sodomy are neither normatively masculine nor are they women. Plagiarists are only threatening when they possess some modicum of originality. One main reason that these discourses were available to cross-pollinate one another was that ‘perversion’ in each was structured in the same way, both liminal and binary. Recent work historicizing perversion in and around the Romantic period bears this observation out. Richard Sha argues that a greater understanding of the science of sexuality and reproduction made it possible to think about sexuality that was divorced from reproduction or function—i.e., perverse sexuality.⁵³ This medicalization of sexuality (perverse and otherwise) granted sexuality a much more public function than previously possible.⁵⁴ Sha is primarily interested in the aesthetic and political possibilities opened up by this new understanding of perversion.⁵⁵

Dino Felluga’s *The Perversity of Poetry: Romantic Ideology and the Popular Male Poet of Genius* (2006) also examines the role of perversion and public health in critical discourse about poetry and masculinity. Felluga claims that the main meaning of ‘perversion’ shifted in the nineteenth century from ‘political subversion’ to ‘sexual disorder,’ but I argue that this shift occurred earlier: the materials in this dissertation demonstrate that perversion was already quite

⁵³ Richard Sha, *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750-1832* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); “Romanticism and the Sciences of Perversion” *Wordsworth Circle, Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature* (2005): 43-48; “Medicalizing the Romantic Libido: Sexual Pleasure, Luxury, and the Public Sphere,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 27. 1 (2005): 31-52.

⁵⁴ Sha, “Medicalizing the Romantic Libido,” 32; “Romanticism and the Sciences of Perversion,” 43.

⁵⁵ Sha, *Perverse Romanticism*, 8.

clearly linked to sexuality by the 1790s as a type of contamination affecting the body politic.⁵⁶ Felluga's observations about the *structure* of perversion in the period, however, closely align with my own. Felluga argues that much of the anxiety about male genius derives from its strange position in relationship to the norm: "The poet of genius . . . marked at once the essence within and the threat against capitalism."⁵⁷ This parasitic structure of threat and norm ultimately provides culture with its own containment strategy: as Felluga argues, "the nineteenth-century had to neutralize the radical *potential* of Byron's poetics by reducing the poet, as we will see, to no more than an adolescent sexual perversity."⁵⁸ Felluga observes that Matthew Lewis was similarly incorporated and neutralized.⁵⁹

Jonathan Dollimore's work on perversion in *Sexual Dissidence* (1991) clearly articulates these structures and procedures. Dollimore theorizes a "perverse dynamic," emphasizing "the significance of the proximate—i.e., that which is (1) adjacent and there-by related temporally or spatially, or (2) that which is approaching (again either temporally or spatially) . . . (3) the opposite of remote or ultimate."⁶⁰ For Dollimore, an emphasis on proximity (rather than alterity) opens up the possibility of dynamic change within a system that regulates norms and perversions: "As we shall see, the proximate is often constructed as the other, and in a process which facilitates displacement. But the proximate is also what enables a tracking-back of the

⁵⁶ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Dino Felluga, *The Perversity of Poetry: Romantic Ideology and the Popular Male Poet of Genius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ Felluga, 136. See also Andrew Elfenbein, "'Stricken Deer': Secrecy, Homophobia, and the Rise of the Suburban Man," *Genders* 27 (1998): n.p.

⁵⁸ Felluga, 106.

⁵⁹ Felluga, 128.

⁶⁰ Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 33.

‘other’ into the ‘same.’ I call this transgressive reinscription if the perverse dynamic generates internal instabilities within repressive norms, reinscription denotes an anti-essentialist, transgressive agency which might intensify those instabilities, turning them against the norms.’⁶¹

Dollimore argues that this model of perversion in the cultural imagination both predates and exceeds the sexual. To be sure, this model shares much with other models of alterity and resistance, such as Judith Butler’s resignification and Homi Bhabha’s mimicry.⁶² Although their methods and political projects differ, all three of these theorists’ work bears the mark of poststructuralism, and all three envision dynamic systems in which radical change or resistance might be possible through repetition with difference.

More recently, however, Butler has critiqued certain models of perversion, finding them politically limited at best. In *Antigone’s Claim* (2002), she undermines a certain type of supposedly ‘radical’ poststructuralist gesture: “this position often is quick to claim that although there is a normative conclusion for the oedipal drama, the norm cannot exist without perversion, and only through perversion can the norm be established. We are all supposed to be satisfied with this apparently generous gesture by which the perverse is announced to be essential to the norm. The problem as I see it is that the perverse remains entombed precisely there, as the essential and negative feature of the norm, and the relation between the two remains static, giving way to no rearticulation of the norm itself.”⁶³

Butler’s critique of this move is well taken, and worth keeping in mind when one is tempted to perform would-be “radical” close readings that really only amount to pointing out

⁶¹ Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 33.

⁶² See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁶³ Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 75-76.

how necessary a taboo or a perversion is to the construction of a norm. Butler turns instead to Antigone, whose particular relationship to the incest taboo—and whose perversely particularly *public* actions—collapses the whole idea of a norm: “She is not of the human but speaks in its language If she is human, then the human has entered into catachresis: we no longer know its proper usage.”⁶⁴ Antigone’s existence and her insistence on public intelligibility are a type of political catachresis: an impossibility that requires revisiting the very idea of the human. “In confronting the unspeakable in Antigone,” Butler continues, “are we confronting a socially instituted foreclosure of the intelligible, a socially instituted melancholia in which the unintelligible life emerges in language as a living body might be interred into a tomb?”⁶⁵ This type of a figure, not only as a model for resistance but as a model which gives the lie to the entire structure of norm and perversion, seems immensely useful for queer critique.

Butler and Dollimore’s models, however are not incompatible. Indeed, I strongly disagree with Butler’s statement that “to establish the structural necessity of perversion to the law is to posit a static relation between the two in which each entails the other and, in that sense, is nothing without the other.”⁶⁶ Rather, a model that focuses on the *proximity* of the perverse still fulfills that poststructuralist understanding that a norm and its perversion are mutually constitutive, while leaving open the possibilities of tracking back and slipping across that membrane separating them. Indeed, Butler’s emphasis on entombment in this essay—“a melancholy of the public sphere”⁶⁷—actually suggests such a dynamism. If the perverse is entombed, it’s located on the inside of the norm; this is only problematic if this is a static

⁶⁴ Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, 82. See also Anahid Nersessian’s work on catachresis and calamity.

⁶⁵ Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, 80-81.

⁶⁶ Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, 67.

⁶⁷ Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, 81.

relationship. The idea of *live burial*, then, which appears throughout Butler's essay as well as in the discussions of melancholia I will be analyzing below, is promising exactly because it leaves open the possibility that the entombed perverse might arise from within the norm and speak in a language supposedly inaccessible to it. Thus, the history of authorship and sexuality is not only melancholic, but also gothic.

We gain a clearer picture of perversion at the end of the eighteenth century by looking to *authorship*, with its slippages between textual and corporeal bodies and its fixation on incorporation and influence. Take, for example, J. Hillis Miller's observation in his landmark essay "The Critic as Host" (1977) that the term "parasite," while wielded by critics as unambiguously negative, actually contains within itself its own double:

'Para' is an 'uncanny' double antithetical prefix signifying at once proximity and distance, similarity and difference, interiority and exteriority, something at once inside a domestic economy and outside it, something simultaneously this side of the boundary line, threshold, or margin, and at the same time beyond it, equivalent in status and at the same time secondary or subsidiary, submissive, as of guest to host, slave to master. A thing in 'para' is, moreover, not only simultaneously on both sides of the boundary line between inside and outside. It is also the boundary itself, the screen which is at once a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside, confusing them with one another, allowing the outside in, making the inside out, dividing them but also forming an ambiguous transition between one and the other.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," *Critical Inquiry* 3.3 (1977): 439-47, 441.

Miller applies this insight to intertextuality, suggesting that the relationship between any text, critical or literary, and the prior one on which it feeds, is a relationship of “[I]ntimate kinship and at the same time . . . enmity.”⁶⁹ The text, then, is also internally divided, both host and parasite: “[A]ny poem, is, it is easy to see, parasitical in its turn on earlier poems, or contains earlier poems as enclosed parasites within itself, in another version of the perpetual reversal of parasite and host. If the poem is food and poison for the critics, it must in its turn have eaten. It must have been a cannibal consumer of earlier poems.”⁷⁰ Ultimately, Miller’s focus on the proximate, parasitical, contagious, and cannibalistic provides a model not only of perversion but also of intertextuality.

In *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), Harold Bloom begins from a different theoretical position but arrives at a structurally similar conclusion: a psychoanalytic model of influence as melancholic begetting and predation. According to Bloom, certain modern authors who attempted to be completely *free* of predecessors struggled unnecessarily because of “the melancholy of the creative mind’s desperate insistence upon priority.”⁷¹ Bloom writes that “A poem is a poet’s melancholy at his lack of priority. The failure to have begotten oneself is not the cause of the poem, for poems arise out of the illusion of freedom, out of a sense of priority being possible.”⁷² Poems, in other words, belie their own begetting in order to beget themselves.

Essential to Bloom’s argument (and to later revisions of it by critics such as Kilgour) is the distinction initially drawn by Freud between mourning and melancholia, and rearticulated by

⁶⁹ Miller, 444.

⁷⁰ Miller, “Critic as Host,” 446. See also Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

⁷¹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13.

⁷² Bloom, *Anxiety*, 96.

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok as a distinction between introjection and incorporation.⁷³ In each version, a healthy model of loss (mourning or introjection) is contrasted with a pathological one (melancholia or incorporation). In melancholia, the lost object is incorporated and identified with the ego. Whereas mourning is progressive and public, melancholia is stubborn, static, and private. Whereas introjection is about a broadening of the ego, a healthy process of mourning, incorporation is about lack, loss, and failure: a missed opportunity, cannibalism that results in indigestion, a live burial.

This dissertation takes up melancholy as a model for the relationships between individual subjects, authors, and/or texts. Melancholy is particularly useful when thinking through those relationships which are queer, non-productive, stubborn, or perverse.⁷⁴ To be sure, applying such a model to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers invites accusations of anachronism. However, I follow critics such as Stephen Greenblatt, Terry Castle, Mladen Dolar, and Julie Park in maintaining the relevance and applicability of psychoanalytic thought to the long eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Greenblatt, in a well-known 1986 essay, argued that “psychoanalytic interpretation [of early modern texts] is causally belated, even as it is causally linked”; that is, early modern texts

⁷³ Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 2005); Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection vs. Incorporation,” in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 125-38, 126-27.

⁷⁴ For other uses of melancholy in queer theory, see Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007); Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Angus Gordon, “Turning Back: Adolescence, Narrative, and Queer Theory,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5.1 (1999): 1-24; Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Michael Du Plessis, “Mother’s Boys: Maternity, Male ‘Homosexuality,’ and Melancholia,” *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 16.1 (1993): 145-73.

⁷⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, “Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture,” in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia A. Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 210-24; Mladen Dolar, “‘I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night’: Lacan and the Uncanny,” *October* 58 (1991): 5-23; Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

both invite and frustrate psychoanalytic readings because psychoanalysis grapples with a model of the self that was still emerging in the Renaissance.⁷⁶ Similar, more specific, arguments are made by Dolar, Castle, and Park (for the emergence of the uncanny in the Enlightenment), and by Carla Mazzio and Jonathan Flatley (for the historical specificity of psychoanalytic melancholy and its relationship to modernity).⁷⁷

Indeed, for Bloom (as Kilgour reads him), the distinction between mourning and melancholy maps onto literary history: “Milton marks the fall from *imitatio* into influence, from communal to cannibalistic relations among writers. The anxiety of influence is both a kind of indigestion on the part of later writers whose stomachs are not as strong as Milton’s and who are faced furthermore with a greater amount of material to digest, and also a fear of starvation, as ‘each poet’s fears that no proper work remains for him to perform’ propel him to imaginative vampirism.”⁷⁸ Earlier models of influence, Kilgour argues, differ from plagiarism and cannibalism in that they rely on an idealized process of digestion and assimilation.⁷⁹ In other words, for Kilgour’s reading of Bloom, modern authorship is a fall from introjection (a model that admits its relationship to sources without anxiety) to melancholic incorporation: cannibalizing one’s predecessors while denying one has done so.

⁷⁶ Greenblatt, 221.

⁷⁷ Carla Mazzio, “The Melancholy of Print: Love’s Labour’s Lost” in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 186-227; Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁷⁸ Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 138-39. For another treatment of Milton’s role in the history of originality, see Matthew Wickman, “Imitating Eve Imitating Echo Imitating Originality: The Critical Reverberations of Sentimental Genius in the Conjectures on Original Composition,” *ELH* 65.4 (1998): 899-928.

⁷⁹ Kilgour, 105.

Other accounts of modern authorship suggest another, more gendered, version of melancholic incorporation. Helen Deutsch has detailed how “The engendering of male authorship . . . involves a need both to envision (i.e., to consign to the visible) and to incorporate (i.e., to mirror and replace) femininity.”⁸⁰ Deutsch updates earlier feminist critiques of androgyny in modern authorship, such as Christine Battersby’s, which argues that over the course of the early modern period, “women continued to be represented as artistic inferiors . . . even though qualities previously downgraded as ‘feminine’ had become valuable as a consequence of radical changes in aesthetic taste and aesthetic theory cultural misogyny remained (and even intensified) despite a reversal in attitudes towards emotionality, sensitivity and imaginative self-expression.”⁸¹ Far from being an egalitarian ideal, androgyny nearly always entailed the masculine writer incorporating feminine attributes, rather than the opposite. The utopianism in the idea of the androgyne writer, then, typically has a colonizing element to it. Much as George Haggerty has argued that “male-male desire is the open secret of sensibility,” the increasing value on androgyny in discourses of creativity entailed a kind of melancholy, in the Freudian sense: incorporating feminine traits while denying that incorporation.⁸²

I am leery, however, of ascribing to a particular historical moment a particular psychological formation, if only because those formations’ gradual emergence—and the co-presence of other formations—makes such claims infinitely iterable for adjacent historical moments. In this vein, in their introduction to *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern*

⁸⁰ Helen Deutsch, “Symptomatic Correspondences: The Author’s Case in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *Cultural Critique* 42 (1999): 35-80, 55.

⁸¹ Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 23.

⁸² George Haggerty, “O Lachrymarum Fons: Tears, Poetry and Desire in Gray,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 (1996): 81-95, 83.

Culture (2000), Mazzio and Trevor give nuance to Greenblatt's claim, stressing such key terms shared between historicism and psychoanalysis as "anxiety, desire, otherness, fetish, and symptom, to name a few."⁸³ Like me, they are cautious of Greenblatt's implication that the reason psychoanalysis has a place in early modern studies is because of the period's role in a 'birth of the subject' of some kind, but they nevertheless stress the importance and appropriateness of some mixture of historicism and psychoanalysis in early modern studies—if not for this grand 'birth of the subject,' at least because of "the complex interplay between the material and the psychic integral to many early modern discourses."⁸⁴ Such a vantage point, I think, is easily defensible and just as appropriate for the eighteenth century, and informs the readings throughout this project.

Nevertheless, this dissertation does offer its own narrative about modernity, one that draws upon the models of perverse and melancholic incorporation that I have been discussing here. I will demonstrate how the dominant discourse of authorship in and around the Romantic period in Britain and America performed its own melancholic incorporation and disavowal: as changes in the economics and politics of writing, printing, circulating and reading caused these actions to have not only an implicit gender but also a sexuality, authorship had to be remade "straight"—a process which paradoxically involved the incorporation of those very perversions—plagiarism, sodomy, and cannibalism—against which it continued to be defined. In other words, the very process by which authorship became modern was itself melancholy, queer, and gothic.

⁸³ Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor, "Introduction," in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 1-18, 3.

⁸⁴ Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor, "Introduction," in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 1-18, 5.

Of course, this all sounds rather paranoid. Critical reading practices have been forever transformed by Sedgwick's critique of 'paranoid reading' in *Touching Feeling* (2002) and elsewhere, by Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best's curation of a 2009 issue of *Representations* on "Surface Reading," and by a general turn in queer studies towards affect, surface, and "thin description."⁸⁵ In an influential chapter in *Touching Feeling*, Sedgwick exposes and troubles some of the assumptions underlying "paranoid" critical reading practices, suggesting that so-called paranoid reading tends to reify its own enemies (such as power and normativity) by continually anticipating and exposing them. If you go looking for something, Sedgwick observes, you are likely to find it.⁸⁶ In place of 'paranoid reading,' Sedgwick advocates for 'reparative reading':

to read from a reparative position is to surrender the knowing, anxious paranoid determination that no horror, however apparently unthinkable, shall ever come to the reader *as new*; to a reparatively positioned reader, it can seem realistic and necessary to experience surprise. Because there can be terrible surprises, however, there can also be good ones. Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates. Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving,

⁸⁵ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Sedgwick, "Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes," in *After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory*, ed. Janet Halley and Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 283-301; Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108.1 (2009): 1-21; Heather Love, "Close Reading and Thin Description," *Public Culture* 25.3 (2013).

⁸⁶ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 126-27.

ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did.⁸⁷

My focus on melancholy and incorporation necessitates an engagement with this recent work. What new types of relationships might become visible if instead of just disavowing melancholia as a “failed” or phobic version of mourning, we allowed that it might have positive political or aesthetic value?⁸⁸ After all, there’s something potentially ethical about incorporation—a preservation of difference rather than assimilation, and an insistence on the material, the nonmetaphorical, and the nonlinguistic.⁸⁹ A criticism that lives with melancholy—neither disavowing it nor falsely celebrating it—what would that look like? Melancholic incorporation generates particular affective and ethical relationships that defy ‘either/or’ understandings of power, of normativity, and of temporality.

Despite transforming my own reading practices, these critiques of ‘paranoid reading’ also raise a few objections for me. Sedgwick (and subsequent others such as Marcus, Best, and Love) uses an extremely pure brand of paranoid reading as a straw man for a body of critical reading practices that have in reality always been more heterogeneous. I can think of any number of readings from the past few decades that, while engaging in some of this paranoid, even over-determined, exposure, also find in their readings new possibilities of creation, resistance, or

⁸⁷ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 146.

⁸⁸ See also Love, *Feeling Backward*. Love’s project touches on melancholy more as affect than as a structure of relation.

⁸⁹ Recent revisitings of Abraham and Torok have attempted to steer the conversation away from Derrida’s influence by re-prioritizing the ethical, even positivist imperative of *Wolf Man’s Magic Word* (which is less evident in Derrida’s better-known foreword). Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and Derrida’s introduction to the same, entitled “Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.” For more on melancholic incorporation as *ethical*, see Sara Guyer, “Albeit Eating: Towards an Ethics of Cannibalism,” *Angelaki* 2.1(1997): 63-80; Maria Christou, “I Eat Therefore I am: An Essay on Human and Animal Mutuality,” *Angelaki* 18.4 (2013): 63-79; Nicholas Rand, “Translator’s Introduction,” *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word*, li-lxix; and Maria O’Connor, “Canopy of the Upturned Eye: Writing on Derrida’s Crypt,” *Mosaic* 44.4 (Dec. 2011): 109-23.

compensation. I firmly believe that both of these kinds of reading can and likely should be used together.

In fact, a focus on incorporation necessitates that the critic draw on a variety of reading practices and theoretical frameworks, new as well as old. To be sure, a focus on incorporation requires that the reader revisit relatively old work from psychoanalysis and deconstruction, but to do so from a queer theoretical position that requires a great deal of adjustment and reconciliation with the apparent homophobia and binarism of mid-century theory. This is an opportunity to think through what is still useful from these prior critical moments—in effect, doing a kind of reparative reading on/with Freud, Kristeva, and Derrida themselves, “entertain[ing] . . . ethically crucial possibilities . . . that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did,” and “extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture . . . whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain” the queer, the femme, or the nonbinary.⁹⁰

Sedgwick also casts doubt on the idea that “mak[ing] something visible as a problem”—a common critical project—is the same as solving it.⁹¹ This takedown of paranoid reading draws upon a contemporary context in which, she points out, structural violence is not hidden and thus does not suffer at all from the ‘exposure’ enacted by paranoid reading. In our world today, we are all already paranoid and cynical, and our apparent knowledge of structural violence does not seem to change the fact of that violence.⁹² Be that as it may, Sedgwick side-steps the question of whether things were different in previous historical moments: might there not be value in

⁹⁰ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 146, 150-51.

⁹¹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 139.

⁹² Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 141-43.

paranoid readings of texts from earlier, and categorically different, periods? Might this in fact not be its own variety of surface reading?

Ultimately, I find that the opposition between paranoid and reparative reading is a false one when one is studying the long eighteenth century. My subjects in this project *were* paranoid (for good reason!), and they also managed to find meaningful, queer, and reparative ways of transcending those power structures governing their relationships. Surely a catholic set of reading practices is the most appropriate way to approach these authors and their texts on their own terms.

Chapter Overviews

This project explores points of fracture in dominant ideologies of property and masculinity. Although these ideologies impacted the lives of people across the eighteenth-century transatlantic modern world, the vast majority of those people—women, non-white people, colonial subjects, children, those in poverty or indentured servitude—were under no illusion that property and self-possession were inalienable. By looking at the privileged (and therefore blackmailable) few—educated white men from the upper and middle classes—we can identify the fault lines threatening their (supposedly inalienable) privilege and masculinity, and ultimately better understand and work to reconfigure or dismantle cultural dominants that inform every subject's experience.

Thomas Gray, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Brockden Brown: Each of these authors' work and reception sheds light on some of the hidden fractures in normative masculine subjectivity. Incorporation, far from being unproblematically masculine and expansionist, is richly vulnerable to perversion of one kind or another. Thus, each chapter focuses not only on

one author but also on one or more ‘perverse incorporation’: a structure or relationship that troubles what we think we know about masculinity and authorship in the period.

In the first chapter, I focus on the work, correspondence, and reception of Thomas Gray (1716-1771) in order to theorize **MELANCHOLY**, for which Gray was well known.

Melancholy provides a rich arena in which to explore the methodological uses of psychoanalysis and queer theory in a period that precedes those ideas’ inception. Far from a belated or anachronistic application of contemporary ideas, a focus on melancholy highlights aspects of modern subjectivity that were already in place by the eighteenth century. Recent developments in queer theory suggest that melancholy can illuminate negative affects and their relationship to heteronormativity, progress, and productivity. Such a focus helps elucidate the complicated gender and sexuality politics of Gray’s own ambivalence to the market and to the reading public. Similarly, psychoanalytic understandings of melancholy as a process of incorporation and denial, a reaction to loss that is both pathological and universal, highlight the thematic and formal aspects of melancholy and loss in Gray’s own work. Moreover, thinking of melancholy as incorporation and denial also gives us a new way of talking about intertextuality in Gray.

Gray exemplifies the ways in which the eighteenth century was a period of transition from one type of masculine authorship into another—from masculinity as self-possession to masculinity as possession of one’s work. Gray’s work and correspondence reveal the great extent to which (as Gray saw it) the literary marketplace had shifted from a homogenous communality of shared cultural knowledge, to a more diverse market where an author could never take for granted what his readers would recognize. In this brave new world, authors who borrowed or alluded to their forebears were damned if they did, and damned if they didn’t: either one could explicitly cite every influence, opening oneself up to charges of unoriginality (in fact exactly

what happened with Gray in subsequent decades), or one could choose not to reveal all of one's influences, putting the author in a paranoid relationship to readers who might recognize or might suspect an influence, and might triumphantly find the author guilty of plagiarism in the court of public opinion. Since revealing all of one's influences was neither desirable nor practical, authors (as Gray saw it) were now in an eternally paranoid relationship to each other and to their readers, worrying about how much to disclose and damned either way. This is what I mean when I use Sedgwick's formulation of the "paranoid gothic" to describe later eighteenth-century authorship.

The second chapter focuses on the reception of Matthew Lewis (1775-1818) in the 1790s and early 1800s, paying particular attention to the frequency with which **PERVERSION** was attributed to him and his work. Whereas the first chapter focused on a perverse incorporation (melancholy) at the level of the subject, this chapter considers the society-wide relationship between normative culture and its "perversion." Drawing on the work of Judith Butler and Jonathan Dollimore, as well as older work by J. Hillis Miller, this chapter develops a theory of perversion based in proximity rather than alterity. Public health plays a significant role in the discourse of perversion that springs up around Lewis's life and work. This chapter also expands upon the previous chapter's inquiry into how critics understood intertextuality as a type of incorporation that was ultimately endlessly invertible. The more critics attempted to ground authorial property in metaphors of cannibalism and the author's bodily autonomy, the more suspect those claims became.

Finally, in this chapter I also consider the image of the **CLOSET**—another structure in which a perversion is incorporated within normative society—particularly in Lewis's *Monk* itself. As cultural structures, closets shift nimbly between being a society-wide "perverse

incorporation” and being another perverse incorporation at the level of the subject— incorporation and denial, not unlike melancholy. An inquiry into live burial and bosoms in *The Monk* reveals that these images replicate that same structure, and I argue that the authorial closet of the eighteenth century provides the structure and the model of the (public/private) self onto which sexuality can be mapped later in the nineteenth century.

The third chapter, on the work and reception of Philadelphia author Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), maintains a focus on the **CLOSET**, investigating the ways in which this image structures Brown’s understanding of authorial self-revelation in the new Republic. Focusing on *Arthur Mervyn* (1799, 1800) and *Edgar Huntly* (1799), it also explores how anxieties about sodomy and male-male intimacy in Brown’s work are mapped onto perverse forms of authorship like plagiarism and fraud. The latter part of this chapter also takes up the figure of **CONTAGION** in *Arthur Mervyn* as another type of perverse incorporation that complicates received understandings of rational, masculine subjectivity in the period.

This emphasis on **CONTAGION** continues in the coda to this dissertation, which reads Lewis’s *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (c. 1814-18, p. 1834) as the last chapter in a complicated decades-long process of authorial self-presentation and revision. As a wealthy, well-connected man, Lewis always had a position of privilege; however, as a lover of men, an object of public consumption and scandal, and a man who owned no property for most of his life, Lewis is a complex figure in the history of masculinity, sexuality, and authorship. This role only becomes more complex when Lewis’s father leaves the (estranged, nominally abolitionist) Lewis his two Jamaican plantations. In this chapter I study the new relationships between authorship and masculinity that become visible when the focus is not only on literary property but also on human property, and on Lewis’s own sense of his physical vulnerability in the Caribbean

environment. **PARASITISM** and **EATING** more generally appear as the final ‘perverse incorporations,’ as the ideology of the “colonial mouth” underlying Lewis’s claims to autonomy and subjectivity is put to the test by his actual experiences and representations of them.

CHAPTER 1

Thomas Gray: Masculinity, Melancholy, and Disavowal

Mr. Gray had ever expunged the word *lucrative* from his own vocabulary. . . . But it is rather my less-pleasing province at present to acknowledge one of his foibles; and that was a certain degree of pride, which led him, of all other things, to despise the idea of being thought an author professed.¹

Mine, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the most part; which though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and *ça ne laisse que de s'amuser* But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est*; for it believes, nay, is sure of every thing that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and every thing that is pleasurable; from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but shall be never the nearer any society; so, if you have any charity, you will continue to write.²

¹ William Mason, *Life of Gray*, in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings* by W. Mason, M.A., 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), 335.

² "Letter 10 [Section 3]: Mr. Gray to Mr. West, May 27, 1742," in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings* by W. Mason, M.A., 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), 151-55, 151. My primary focus in this chapter is Gray's immediate afterlife through the Romantic period. Therefore, for those letters which appear in Mason's *Life of Gray*, I have chosen to cite from that edition despite the fact that Mason sometimes edited and even recombined parts of different letters.

This oft-quoted passage on melancholy opens one of Thomas Gray's very last letters to his close fellow Etonian Richard West, who suffered from chronic health problems and died young. Melancholy is a persistent presence throughout their textual relationship. In an earlier letter, West asks Gray to imagine him lonely at Oxford (Gray is at Cambridge): "Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light."³ The two men also exchange poems, largely translations of their favorite Latin poets, favoring "so melancholy a kind of poesie."⁴ West delights in being a sort of melancholy alchemist: "I have been very ill, and am still hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus . . . and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in sickness, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy and this melancholy letter I turned into a more melancholy epistle of my own, during my sickness, in the way of imitation."⁵

In these letters, melancholy is not only an affect or a medical condition, but also a way of constructing and communicating relationships: between the men and the culture from which they feel estranged, between the men and their poetic endeavors, and between the two men themselves. Melancholy is at once a structure of relation and a discourse through which Gray and West communicate that structure. Although editor W.A. Mason edited and combined some of

³ "Letter 1 [Section 1]: Mr. West to Mr. Gray, November 14, 1735," in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughes, 1775), 6-7.

⁴ "Letter 5 [Section 1]: Mr. West to Mr. Gray, Dec. 22, 1736," in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughes, 1775), 16.

⁵ "Letter 7 [Section 1]: Mr. West to Mr. Gray, July 4, 1737," in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughes, 1775), 18-22, 18.

these letters, and omitted and even destroyed others⁶, something very true nevertheless comes through in those which make it into his 1775 *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Gray*. Perhaps still more importantly, it is these letters that subsequent generations of people read, and therefore it is these letters which tell us about the ways in which later eighteenth-century writers understood the possibilities of relationships between men—and between poets.

Melancholy plays a key role in the Gray-West relationship, as it does throughout Gray's career and reception history. Curiously (whether as an assertion of critical distance or as an attempt to say something new in a crowded field), Gray's recent critics have often followed a familiar pattern in rejecting Gray's own self-diagnosis of melancholy. Jean Hagstrum argues that "sensibility" is a more useful term than "melancholy" in describing Gray's condition because melancholy is too solitary given Gray's participation in the "humanist tradition."⁷ George Haggerty explicitly privileges "abjection" over "melancholy."⁸ And Suvir Kaul also distances Gray from melancholy, arguing that the poet "is interested more in investigating a poetics than an ethics" and that to make such a claim "is to controvert most critical opinion that has read [the Eton ode] primarily as an instance of Gray's ethical, humanistic and psychological development and/or as an expression of what Gray himself described as his 'white Melancholy, or rather Leucocoly.'"⁹ I open this chapter, then, curious not only about what critics have found so

⁶ Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, eds., *Correspondence of Thomas Gray* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), xiv-xxxi.

⁷ Jean H. Hagstrum, "Gray's Sensibility," in *Fearful Joy: Papers from the Thomas Gray Bicentenary Conference at Carleton University*, ed. James Downey and Ben Jones (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 6-19.

⁸ George E. Haggerty, "'The Voice of Nature' in Gray's Elegy," *Journal of Homosexuality* 23.1-2 (1992): 199-214, 200.

⁹ Suvir Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority: A Study in Ideology and Poetics* (Stanford University Press, 1992), 66.

unappealing or unnerving about melancholy as a concept with which to read Gray's work, but also interested in taking seriously Gray's self-diagnosis.

This chapter critically reads Gray's poems from the 1740s and 50s (focusing on "Ode on the Spring," "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and "The Bard") and letters in order to draw connections between eighteenth-century conceptions of melancholy and newer ones from psychoanalysis and queer theory. In tracing the relationships between humoral and astrological theories of the author's body, structures of incorporation and disavowal, lack of (or identification with) an object, and negative and antiproductive affects, I show that the seeming incoherence of melancholy as a concept can be marshaled into a powerful lens with which to study the relationships between authorship and sexuality across historical periods.

Each section in this chapter draws on some concept of melancholy. First, I focus on melancholy as a 'queer' or nonreproductive affect in order to ascertain Gray's relationship to the changing economics of authorship, looking at "Ode on the Spring," "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and Gray's letters from the 1740s and 50s. I argue that Gray's invocation of melancholy as resistance to entry into the print marketplace complicates the way masculinity was constructed in relationship to that marketplace. In the second section, I focus on melancholy as historically related to ideas about literary influence, particularly a dynamic of incorporation and disavowal, focusing on "The Bard," on Gray's later letters, and on Gray's reception history and afterlife. In that section, I examine the mid- to late-century construction of masculinity with regard to the increasing value placed on originality. In the final section, I bring these two strands of argument together to reassess the construction of masculinity and authorship in the long eighteenth century. By focusing

on sexuality, rather than gender, we will recount a somewhat different story than previous critics have told. Throughout this chapter, I am interested in reading Gray's writings not to get to the heart of why he wrote the things and ways he did, nor what he felt or did with West or Horace Walpole or Charles Victor de Bonstetten, but rather what Gray's melancholy tells us about his relationship to the literary marketplace and to literary influence—and what all these things tell us about the broader mappings of authorship and sexuality in the period.

A focus on melancholy highlights how the defining parameters of masculine authorship changed in the later part of the eighteenth century from one type of independence (self-possession) to another type (unique possession of one's texts). The rise of this latter type of independence occasioned greater emphasis on the paranoid homoerotic dynamics of authorship: claims to authorial independence were increasingly fraught with disavowal and blackmailability. In these structures of relationships between authors (and, by extension, between subjects) we can identify a model of proto-heterosexuality. Gray's career—and his Romantic afterlife—play a key role in this transition.

I. Masculinity, the Market, and the Public

Melancholy is a slippery, historically-contingent concept, such that it hardly seems like Aristotle and, say, Harold Bloom are talking about the same thing at all, beyond a general association with the sad, depressed, depressing, or disappointing.¹⁰ Yet there are more substantive transhistorical connections as well.

¹⁰ As explained in the introduction, throughout this project I move between a) how eighteenth-century writers and their critics are themselves using melancholy, b) how twentieth-century theorists and critics (particularly Bloom) use melancholy to describe those above writers, and c) how twentieth-century theorists and critics use melancholy in a more abstract/theoretical/psychoanalytical sense that is not explicitly applied to authorship or to eighteenth-century discourse. Wherever possible, I attempt to keep these categories clear in order to avoid anachronism. Stephen Greenblatt ably tackles this issue in "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia A. Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 210-24.

While eighteenth-century writers of course lack a queer/affect theory framework to describe melancholy, melancholy in the eighteenth century nevertheless functioned as an affect that we might very well term both creative and queer. Authors in the period invoked melancholy to express ambivalence about productivity, futurity, creation, and independence. As I will argue in this section, Gray's melancholy in "Ode on the Spring" is clearly imbricated in both his ambivalence towards literary productivity, and his relationship to procreative, normative heterosexuality.

Secondly, while eighteenth-century writers also lacked a psychoanalytic framework, their understanding of melancholy anticipates psychoanalytic models in several important ways. In particular, melancholy is associated across these periods with the lack of an object: even Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and Anne Finch's "The Spleen" (1701) continually return to the idea that of melancholy's lack of an object is its defining and differentiating quality.¹¹ As such it resonates with psychoanalytic and queer understandings of melancholy as unreasonable, stubborn, or selfish sadness, unlike (or exceeding) normal mourning.¹² In a variation on this connection, Fredric Bogel points not only to the prevalence of melancholy as a subject *in* the eighteenth century (and the popularity of elegy and of the theme of loss), but to

¹¹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621 (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001); and Anne Finch, "The Spleen," in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 22-26.

¹² Queer theorists and scholars who have engaged with psychoanalytic conceptions of melancholia in various ways include Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Douglas Crimp, *Melancholia and Moralism: Essays on AIDS and Queer Politics* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002); Michael Du Plessis, "Mother's Boys: Maternity, Male 'Homosexuality,' and Melancholia," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 16.1 (1993): 145-73; Angus Gordon, "Turning Back: Adolescence, Narrative, and Queer Theory," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5.1 (1999): 1-24; Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For more on queer negativity, see also Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

other characteristics as well, such as the general *Zeitgeist* of “ontological insecurity.”¹³ Identifying a “specifically melancholic depletion of the sense of self” in Cowper, Smart, Johnson, and others, Bogel sketches out a Freudian account of melancholy for these authors, in which the “the melancholic does not attach elsewhere the libido he withdraws from the object but withdraws it into the ego itself to establish an *identification* (rather than an object-relation) with that object.”¹⁴ This “economy of loss and conservation,” Bogel argues, describes many compensatory identifications in this writing, particularly writers’ odd identifications with past times (such as Walpole “living back into centuries that cannot disappoint one”).¹⁵

In the section that follows, I consider how Gray’s use of melancholy as a mode of resistance to changes in the literary marketplace sheds light upon the complicated gendering and sexuality of authorship in this transitional period. Linda Zionkowski has compellingly argued that Gray’s career is something of an exception that proves the rule—the rule being that by the 1740s and 1750s, participation in the literary marketplace was not only no longer seen as feminizing (which would have been true earlier in the century, as Raymond Stephanson, Helen Deutsch, and Zionkowski have variously argued); it was actually now seen as masculine.¹⁶ For

¹³ Fredric V. Bogel, *Literature and Insubstantiality in Later Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984), 24-25, 189, 210.

¹⁴ Bogel, 211.

¹⁵ Bogel, 212, 213. Bogel paraphrases from a 1766 letter from Walpole to George Montagu: “Visions you know have always been my pasture; and so far from growing old enough to quarrel with their emptiness, I almost think there is no wisdom comparable to that of exchanging what is called the realities of life for dreams. Old castles, old pictures, old histories, and the babble of old people, make one live back into centuries, that cannot disappoint one. One holds fast and surely what is past.” Horace Walpole, Letter 1034, To George Montagu, Esq., Paris, Jan. 5, 1766, in *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Oxford*, 9 vols., ed. Peter Cunningham (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1906), 4.458-59.

¹⁶ Linda Zionkowski, *Men’s Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660-1784* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Raymond Stephanson, *The Yard of Wit: Male Creativity and Sexuality, 1650-1750* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Zionkowski, then, Gray's refusal to participate in the marketplace was seen in his time and through the nineteenth century as "an infantile, or effeminate, dependence upon others."¹⁷ And, to be sure, this seems obvious when one thinks of the extent to which earlier models of authorship relied much more heavily on patronage—or at least the support of a group of elite readers.

On the other hand, there are significant ways in which Gray's reclusive authorship provided *greater* independence: freedom, for example, from the need to pander to the tastes of the masses. As such, Gray appears to be a holdover from an earlier moment like that of Alexander Pope: Stephanson has demonstrated that as male sexuality became more closely associated with interiority in the eighteenth century, sexualized metaphors of creativity such as "wit-yard tropes" fostered "collective anxieties, especially when it came to ideas of the transfer of creativity from the interior mental place to its plight in the public domain . . . the public circulation of oneself as male poet was also represented as a symbolic circulation and potential loss of one's sexuality."¹⁸ Ultimately, "such entry [into the public] was metaphorized as equivalent to putting one's privy member in public circulation where it could be bought and sold, laughed at or admired, figuratively castrated, and owned by others."¹⁹ Deutsch, too, has argued that participation in the print sphere for Pope meant acquiescing to feminization by the press and by his readers.²⁰ Such dynamics of sexualized self-exposure, I argue, prefigure later models of sexuality. In other words, whereas an emergent later eighteenth-century model of masculine

¹⁷ Zionkowski, 132. See also Deutsch on the politics of elegy and the classical *recusatio* in "Elegies in Country Churchyards: The Prospect Poem in and Around the Eighteenth Century," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 187-205.

¹⁸ Stephanson, 17.

¹⁹ Stephanson, 17.

²⁰ Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace*.

authorship required active participation in the marketplace, the earlier model actually demanded the opposite. Gray's (highly class-inflected) nostalgia for that earlier model results in his seeming 'queer' in relation to the prevailing norm.²¹

Gray's own letters about the publication of his work provide a more nuanced sense of his relationship to that earlier historical moment. In particular, the metaphors that Gray uses in private discussions of his work (and the publication of his work) oscillate between focusing on the conception/creation of a poem and its subsequent publication. Additionally, these metaphors blur the line between poems as offspring and poems as consumable commodity—in rather shocking ways. A letter to Thomas Wharton demonstrates the extent to which Gray viewed the process of publication, rather than of composition, as a type of maternity. Gray teases Wharton for having no news about being an expectant father:

According to my reckoning M^{rs} Wh: should have been brought to bed before this time; yet you say not a syllable of it. if [sic] you are so loth to publish *your productions*, you can not wonder at the repugnance I feel to spreading abroad mine. but in truth I am not so much against publishing, as against publishing *this [The Progress of Poesy] alone*. I have two or three Ideas more [including *The Bard*] in my head. what is to come of them? must they too come out in the shape of little six-penny flams, dropping one after another, till M^r Dodsley thinks fit to collect them with M^r this's Song, and M^r t'other's epigram, into a pretty Volume?²²

²¹ For more on the role of class in the history of sexuality in eighteenth-century England, see Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28.3 (1995): 295-322.

²² Thomas Gray, Letter 196 to Thomas Wharton, 9 March 1755, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 1 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 420-22, 420.

Here, Gray is clearly more reluctant to publish his poems than to ‘conceive’ them—just as he teases Wharton for having presumably gotten his wife pregnant but not “publish[ing]” news of his “productions.” Whereas many writers use the language of conception and birth to discuss poetic creation, here Gray uses it to discuss publishing and “spreading [his poems] abroad.” By describing publication as birthing (the poems “come out” and “drop”), Gray already suggests his own feminization. But what follows highlights not Gray’s vulnerability, but his poems’: his primary objection is to the poems’ being published individually: they are “little six-penny flams”—flam being associated with mocking, flouting, falsehood, and counterfeiting.²³ “[S]ix-penny” recurs as a scornful epithet again in Gray’s correspondence in 1768 when he grumbles about being pressured into adding notes to *The Bard* to explain “a few common facts to be found in any six-penny History of England by way of question & answer for the use of children.”²⁴ Publishing in this context, then, is both objectifying and infantilizing: coming out one at a time makes the poems inconsequential, easy “little” prey for publishers and the public; the best end they could hope to meet is to be collected by Dodsley with other men’s inconsequential poems—“Song[s]” and “epigram[s],” into a “pretty Volume.” This passage demonstrates how Gray associates publishing with objectification, a lack of self-sufficiency, and ultimately feminization, as Zionkowski argues. What is particularly compelling about this passage, however, is the reproductive language, in which Gray imagines artistic creation as conception and publication as delivering (or birthing). Gray again figures publishing (rather than composing) as childbirth in a letter to Horace Walpole when Walpole is about to start printing *The Bard* and *The Progress of*

²³ “flam, n.1 and adj.” *OED Online*. June 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/70994> (accessed 11 August 2014).

²⁴ Thomas Gray, Letter 465 to James Beattie, 1 February 1768, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 3 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 1001-4, 1002.

Poesy: “If the press stands still all this time for me, to be sure it is dead in child-bed.”²⁵ In a grotesque variation on the maternity metaphor, Gray’s unpublished (or poorly published, or published too late) poems are stillborn children, brought dead into the world.

Elsewhere Gray describes *The Bard* as a kind of alien spawn: after the famous visit from the “blind harper” from Wales, Gray is newly inspired and finishes the last section of the poem. He writes to Mason that “M^r Parry [the harper] (you must know) it was, that has put Odikle [*The Bard*] in motion again, & with much exercise it has got a *tender Tail* grown, like Scroddles [Gray’s nickname for Mason], and here it is. if you don’t like it, you may kiss it.”²⁶ Yet in his following letter to Mason, Gray switches metaphors: having enclosed the new “tail” of the poem previously, here he appends the rest of the poem: “I send you enclosed the breast & merry-thought & guts & garbage of the chicken, w^{ch} I have been chewing so long, that I would give the world for neck-beef, or cow-heel.”²⁷ As editors Toynbee and Whibley point out, Gray seems to be responding to Mason’s earlier description of *The Bard* as a “Welsh Ode; w^{ch} is as one may say now just warm from your Brain, & one would expect as callow as a new-hatched Chicken (pardon the barndoor Simile).”²⁸ In that letter, Mason refers to verses from another friend:

I would transcribe them for you if it was not too much trouble. & yet you would not like them, if I did; because of some Words, w^{ch} I know would not digest upon your Stomach; neither do they on mine; for I dont know how it is, but the slops

²⁵ Thomas Gray, Letter 240 to Horace Walpole, 11 July 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 507-8, 507.

²⁶ Thomas Gray, Letter 238 to William Mason, [24 or 31] May 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 501-3, 502.

²⁷ Thomas Gray, Letter 239 to William Mason, 11 June 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 503-7, 503.

²⁸ William Mason, letter 209 to Thomas Gray, 26 November 1755, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 1 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 443-46, 445.

you have given me have made my Digestive facultys so weak, that several things of that sort, w^{ch} were once as easy to me as hasty pudding, never get thro the first concoction, & lay as heavy in the prima Via as toasted Cheese. All w^{ch} I impute to your Nursery, where you would never let one eat any thing that was solid, as I did at S^t Johns.²⁹

In this pair of letters, the writers' chosen metaphor (the new-hatched chicken) elides the distance between poem as offspring and poem as object of consumption. Like the melancholy Saturn, Gray figures himself as infantiphagous, chewing (literally ruminating?) on his offspring. Over the course of his period of composition, the poem goes from young offspring (in Mason's metaphor) to tough meat being masticated. Here, it is the process of revision for publication that changes poems from offspring to meat. Gray's subsequent letters continue this metaphor: to Mason, he writes that "Dodsley had orders to send you some Odes, the instant they were off the spit."³⁰ And to Edward Bedingfield, he writes again, "I have order'd Dodsley long since to send you piping hot from the Press four copies of the Bard & his Companion."³¹ Gray's letters suggest a conflict between thinking about the poems as extensions of himself and thinking about the poems as products for sale and consumption. This undefined distinction produces a rather grotesque set of metaphors, in which Gray both engenders, delivers, and births poems, only to send them out into the world to be ingested by others. Gray's language evinces profound

²⁹ William Mason, letter 209 to Thomas Gray, 26 November 1755, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 1 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 443-46, 445.

³⁰ Thomas Gray, letter 242 to William Mason, 1 August 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 511-12, 512.

³¹ Thomas Gray, letter 244 to Edward Bedingfield, 10 August 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 514-15, 514.

ambivalence about the relationship between his poems and himself, and therefore about the entry of his work into the unregulated world of print.

Although poetry lagged behind other genres in becoming lucrative for authors who published for the mass market,³² Daniel Tiffany has shown how the perceived ‘elite’ nature of Gray’s poetry (particularly in the case of his *Elegy on a Country Church-Yard*) actually made it recuperable as an item of mass culture. Gray’s *Elegy*, Tiffany writes, “appears to be at once native and contrived, popular and arcane. This dichotomy reflects two prevailing yet divergent assessments: Gray’s poetic diction is said to be unnatural, remote, and unintelligible, yet also popular, stereotypical, and familiar.”³³ This paradox suggests the strange construction of “mass” culture in Gray’s time—and in his later Odes, Gray actively strived to write a poetry that could not be coopted in this way. Despite the fact that this strategy sometimes backfired, Gray uses inward-looking, aristocratic modes (arcane allusions, artificial syntax, and complex forms) to articulate ambivalence about the market: that is, this poetry communicates a longing for a time in which the relationship between poet and audience was unobscured by any interference—privileging speaking and hearing over writing, and coterie writing (particularly through insider allusion). Poems like the Eton Ode and Sonnet to West mourn that disconnection between speaker and audience, which can be mapped both onto Gray’s loss of West and onto Gray’s negative feelings about the print marketplace.³⁴ But Gray mourns an ideal culture of poetic relationships that never actually existed.

³² Zionkowski, 5-6.

³³ Daniel Tiffany, *My Silver Planet: A Secret History of Poetry and Kitsch* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 54. See also John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (University Of Chicago Press, 1995).

³⁴ See also Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority*.

In looking at some of Gray's early poems, I contend that changes in the marketplace required that the gendering of authorship change from masculinity as self-possession to masculinity as possession of one's work. For authors like Gray, these discourses of masculinity conflicted with one another: while participation in the literary marketplace was increasingly seen as an indicator of masculine independence, other discourses dealt with the unrestrained proliferation of copies and frauds by drawing on earlier models of sodomitical transgression (see chapters 2 and 3). Thus authorship had to be remade not only masculine, but also 'straight.' That new kind of straight masculinity was deeply implicated in the market—unlike Gray's poetry, which, as Zionkowski writes, "articulate[s] desires—for intimate community with sympathetic readers, for influence over a social elite, for a self (and a sexuality) not defined through the manufacture of commodities—that the operations of a commercial economy, and its emergent ethos of productivity, could not fulfill."³⁵

It follows, then, that a particular kind of 'queer' position also came into being concurrently. In consciously rejecting this newer model of masculinity, which, as Zionkowski writes, "took as its reference point the market rather than the court, the bourgeois or economic man rather than the gentleman or aristocrat,"³⁶ Gray's poetry illustrates for us a historical point of emergence for a particular kind of queer (as well as authorial) sensibility: in other words, a kind of proto-'queer negativity' emerges in Gray's work and elsewhere as a reaction to changes in masculinity occasioned by changes in print culture/economics. This queer negativity—by

³⁵ Zionkowski, 170.

³⁶ Zionkowski, 5.

which I mean here a resistance to normative futurity and productivity—has profound formal implications in Gray’s writing.³⁷

Gray’s “Ode on the Spring,” written in 1742, describes a pastoral spring in the third person for several stanzas before passing judgment on the happy people celebrating: “To Contemplation’s sober eye / Such is the race of Man: / And they that creep, and they that fly, / Shall end where they began.”³⁸ Yet this stanza is itself judged by the responding revelers, who mock the solitary, melancholy poet and get the last word: “We frolick, while ‘tis May” (50). Thus the poem critiques the speaker as well as “the Busy and the Gay” (35). The poet himself, then, is in temporal disjunction, summoning spring, then saying it does not matter, then showing how it matters to everyone else.

One is struck by how thoroughly the poem’s speaker, a “Poor moralist” (43), resembles Jacques from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* (1603). Each man stands at a remove from the springtime sexual coupling all around him, and consequently from the ‘normal’ progression of the seasons. As Shakespeare’s play ends, Jacques stands apart: “So to your pleasures. / I am for other than for dancing measures.”³⁹ Each character frames and ironizes the pastoral comedy marriage plot (explicit in *As You Like It* and implied in Gray’s ode), but in each text, the character is also himself ironized, suggesting a fascinating amount of ambivalence towards characters who serve—particularly in Gray’s case—as stand-ins for the author.

³⁷ My use of “queer negativity” as a concept is indebted to, among others, Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

³⁸ Thomas Gray, “Ode on the Spring,” in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), pp. 3-8, ln. 31-34. Subsequent quotations will be cited parenthetically.

³⁹ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et. al., 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), pp. 399-436, V.iv.192-93.

Thus, while Gray never uses the word, “Ode on the Spring” is a poem deeply concerned with melancholy—for which Jacques is famously known. As Jacques tells us in *As You Like It*, his melancholy is a specific, pure kind (though also a product of traveling widely):

I have neither the scholar’s melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician’s, which is fantastical; nor the courtier’s, which is proud; nor the soldier’s, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer’s, which is politic; nor the lady’s, which is nice; nor the lover’s, which is all these, but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.⁴⁰

Most importantly, in this passage (which resonates not only with Gray’s poem but also with the passage on melancholy from his letter quoted earlier), it is the lack of an object that defines Jacques’s melancholy—whereas scholars, lawyers, lovers are melancholy for the purpose of impressing others, Jacques’s has no evident value. That lack of value accords a peculiar type of ownership: “it is a melancholy of mine own.”

This kind of solipsistic self-ownership also resonates with Gray’s speaker’s appellation of “solitary fly” (44), contrasted with bee-like revelers:

Still is the toiling hand of Care:
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how thro’ the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,

⁴⁰ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et. al., 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), pp. 399-436, IV.i.10-20.

Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some shew their gayly-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun. (21-30)

These youths, like bees, are happy, reproductive, and communal, while the fly is solitary and drab. This comparison recalls Swift's fable of the spider and the bee in *Battel of the Books* (1704), in which the spider spins his own guts into modern hack writing while the bee jumps from plant to plant, sharing and spreading the wisdom of the ancients.⁴¹ But while Swift's contrast is ultimately about literary production (self-reliance being disgusting, naïve, and hubristic, borrowing and communing being beautiful "sweetness and light"⁴²), here the contrast is more explicitly also about sex: "Thy Joys no glittering female meets, / No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets" (45-46). Although the "hoarding" in these lines seems to act against the portrayal of the bees as communal, it nevertheless emphasizes their fertility and productivity. Moreover, perhaps the solitary speaker can only imagine the bees as solitary themselves.

In the case of each allusion (to Shakespeare and to Swift), Gray's poem clearly places melancholy in contradistinction to normative reproductivity and the passing of the seasons. This melancholy also accords a certain amount of property in the form of self-possession ("mine own"). Through this solipsistic melancholy, Gray asserts originality and independence from the

⁴¹ Jonathan Swift, *The Battel of the Books*, in *A Tale of a Tub. Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind. To which is Added, an Account of a Battel between the Antient and Modern Books in St. James's Library*, 2d edn. (London: Printed for John Nutt, 1704); ECCO ESTC T049833; pp. 242–51.

⁴² Swift, *Battel*, 251.

market, but this also separates him from the emergent burgeoning heterosexuality of normative (print) culture.

These moves in “Ode on the Spring,” moreover, also shed doubt on the very purpose of poetry—if no one reads it, what is the point? Just as Gray and Jacques’s melancholy lacks an object, this question of the market plays out in formal aspects of Gray’s poetry. One way in which this manifests is in Gray’s favorite forms: the ode, and in particular, the sonnet. As Zionkowski has observed of Gray’s “Sonnet on the Death of Richard West,” the choice of the sonnet implies non-publishing and privacy because of its aristocratic coterie associations.⁴³

While Gray’s sonnet on the death of West has a vastly different composition and publication history than “Ode on the Spring,” the two are closely related: Gray sent “Ode on the Spring” to West in 1742, not knowing that he had already died. Thus the ode’s composition history coincidentally enacts the object-less melancholy portrayed within the poem: it seems to not know what it is mourning, and it is addressed to someone who is no longer there. Gray’s “Sonnet on the Death of Richard West” (written in 1742 but not published until after Gray’s death) works through these ideas much more explicitly, particularly on the level of form.

In vain to me the smileing Mornings shine,
And redning Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
Or chearful Fields resume their green Attire:
These Ears, alas! For other Notes repine,
A different Object do these Eyes require.
My lonely Anguish melts no Heart, but mine;

⁴³ Zionkowski, 137-38. For more on the sonnet’s historical relationship to privacy and coterie circulation, see Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993), 45-50.

And in my Breast the imperfect Joys expeire.
Yet Morning smiles the busy Race to chear,
And new-born Pleasure brings to happier Men:
The Fields to all their wonted Tribute bear:
To warm their little Loves the Birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.⁴⁴

Formally, the sonnet enacts several layers of alienation: the speaker is the object, not the subject, of the poem's opening ideas, but he is not a proper object: not only is it "to me" that "the smiling Mornings shine"; it is also "In vain" (1). This move is mirrored in the final two lines: "I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear, / And weep the more, because I weep in vain" (13-14). The poem's odd address contrasts with a poem like Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (1681), which, as William Waters has observed, excludes "the poem's *you* from the full obligations and rights of being, besides the addressee, the authentic target of what is said. As a speaker shifts the role of target away from even (let us say) a real, hearing addressee, the effect is to abstract or 'fictionalize' that speaker's use of *you* until it only weakly means the interlocutor who is genuinely present."⁴⁵ Gray's sonnet formally enacts the opposite: the poem is meant for only one reader, but that reader cannot possibly be the addressee, so the pragmatics of the poem do a short-circuit at the volta: "My lonely Anguish melts no Heart, but mine; / And in my Breast the imperfect Joys expire" (9-10). (Of course, the poem's being published changes all of this).

⁴⁴ Thomas Gray, "Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West," in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), 60.

⁴⁵ William Waters, *Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 28.

The poem moves from the speaker as absent object, to West as absent object. And while the speaker and the natural world are presented at total odds in the beginning, the fact of their similar ineffectiveness also draws them together: whereas “the smiling mornings shine” to the speaker “in vain” at the poem’s opening, in the final lines, the speaker “mourn[s]” and “weep[s] in vain” to West (1, 13, 14). Thus, the poem collapses the very distinction that should be the strongest: between the speaker and would-be addressee, between Gray and West, between the living and the dead. The poem enacts a melancholy incorporation of, denial of, and identification with the lost object. This also plays out in the sonnet’s unusual use of rhyme: while the poem is roughly ABABABAB CDCDCD, the D and C rhymes are pararhymes, respectively, of the A and B rhymes: “shine,” “join,” “repine,” and “mine” (1, 3, 5, 7) are only a vowel away from “men,” “complain,” and “vain” (10, 12, 14); similarly, compare “fire,” “attire,” “require,” and “expire” (2, 4, 6, 8) with “cheer,” “bear,” and “hear” (9, 11, 13). In other words, at the volta, the internal vowels rise, phonetically, from [aj]/[oj] to [ej]/[ɛ] and from [ajr] to [ir]/[er]. The similarity of these rhyming sets suggests a near-equivalence between “shine” and “vain,” between “expire” and “cheer,” and between “mine” and “happier Men.” The sonnet, then, is about lacking an object, but it is also about collapsing the distance between the speaker and the lost object: the poem formally enacts the ways in which the lost object and the speaker become one, closing the circuit in a way that should be impossible.

Gray’s sonnet enacts melancholy rather than mourning, and incorporation rather than introjection. Drawing on Freud’s distinction between melancholia and mourning (in melancholy, the lost object becomes incorporated and identified with the ego⁴⁶), Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok distinguish introjection from the pathological and fantastical incorporation:

⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 2005).

the fantasy of incorporation merely simulates profound psychic transformation through magic; it does so by implementing literally something that has only figurative meaning. So in order not to have to ‘swallow’ a loss, we fantasize swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing Incorporation is the refusal to reclaim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost; incorporation is the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognizes as such, would effectively transform us. In fine, incorporation is the refusal to introject loss. The fantasy of incorporation reveals a gap within the psyche; it points to something that is missing just where introjection should have occurred.⁴⁷

Whereas introjection is about a broadening of the ego, a healthy process of mourning, incorporation is about lack, loss, and failure: a missed opportunity, a live burial. While introjection and mourning are public—and publicly intelligible—processes, incorporation and melancholia are stubbornly private: the loss cannot be communicated; the subject refuses to communicate, and is therefore removed from the normal passage of time. Importantly, incorporation takes the place of introjection when “The abrupt loss of a narcissistically indispensable object of love has occurred, *yet the loss is of a type that prohibits its being communicated.*”⁴⁸ Thus we might easily read Gray’s sonnet on the death of West as enacting melancholy (and incorporation): a loss that cannot be communicated causes the speaker to

⁴⁷ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection vs. Incorporation*,” in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 125-38, 126-27.

⁴⁸ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection vs. Incorporation*,” 129. Emphasis added.

formally incorporate the lost object (“Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject”⁴⁹), even as he denies the possibility of mourning.

Torok and Abraham’s work on melancholy and incorporation suggests a strong link between the two types of melancholy at work in “Sonnet on the Death of Richard West” (lack of an object, or incorporation of and identification with the lost object) and “Ode on the Spring” (stubborn, perhaps “queer,” resistance to publicly-ratified emotion and productivity—in this poem, opposing artistic creation to the needs and modes of the market). These two strands of melancholy come together in Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,” also written in 1742.⁵⁰ The Eton ode attempts to redefine masculinity in vastly different terms than those of Gray’s broader cultural context. In order to do so, the poem formally enacts a melancholic incorporation of, identification with, and disavowal of the lost object—the homogenous and homosocial world exemplified by the Eton schoolboys.

Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” presents a surprising version of masculinity vis à vis publicity and privacy. Masculinity in this poem is simultaneously constructed and threatened by exposure to the outside world: whereas the boys ensconced at Eton positively possess both feminine and masculine qualities, the ‘men’ of the outside world are defined primarily by their emasculation.

In the poem’s third stanza, both the Eton schoolboys and the river Thames are equivocally gendered: the boys’ arms are “pliant,” but they “cleave,” and while the river is being “cleaved,” it is still “Father” (25-26, 21). The boys are alternately “enthral[ed]” by birds, and

⁴⁹ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection vs. Incorporation*, 130.

⁵⁰ Thomas Gray, “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,” in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 350-52.

“chase” and “urge” toys in sports (27, 29-30). Beyond the gendering of these words’ connotations, grammatically speaking, the boys are both subjects and objects.

The speaker, by contrast, appears as the passive recipient of breezes and memories:

I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breath a second spring. (15-20)

While he is the speaker of the poem, he once again lacks a proper addressee, requiring (unspecified) outside agents to “tell [the boys], they are men!” (60). Moreover, as subsequent stanzas demonstrate, to be a man is to be a victim: to be “ambush[ed],” “seize[d],” torn, “waste[d],” “gnaw[ed],” “pierc[ed],” “whirl[ed]” to one’s doom, “sacrifice[d],” stung, “mock[ed],” and “defil’d” (58-80).

This victimization takes place only on the “outside” in the poem’s schema, and the clear demarcations of outside and inside in the poem suggest more about Gray’s relationship to print and publicity. The “survey[ing]” which opens the poem is echoed by the boys in the fourth stanza who run away from the school, “disdain[ing] / The limits of their little reign / And unknown regions dare descry” (35-37). But whereas the speaker’s initial gaze is at Eton, the boys’ gaze is looking looking out, not in. Each of these lines (“Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey” [7]; “And unknown regions dare descry” [37]) occurs in the seventh line of its stanza, the third consecutive line tetrameter of five in a row, and the only tetrameter line that rhymes with a trimeter line (the tenth line of the stanza). All of this suggests that the line is longer than it

should be, imparting a sense of striving and pushing boundaries. Yet even that rebellion is made regular by the structure of the ode—the rebellion happens in every stanza; it is almost predestined. The “fearful joy” felt by the school boys is the result of play, experimentation, and freedom, but those things only take place within clearly defined limits. The poem therefore can be read as longing for a time when the outside world was cordoned off from a community of like-minded readers and writers. Taking risks was safe within the confines of that homogenous society of readers.

Part of what renders the speaker’s address to the boys so oblique is his odd relationship to them, as underscored by the poem’s peculiar treatment of the literal and the figurative. The geographic distance of the speaker’s prospect is impossibly great, but the “momentary bliss,” brought on by winds from the valley below, reminds the speaker and the reader that the poet’s embodied presence connects him to the past experienced in that same body. Perhaps this accounts for the important status of the boys’ bodies throughout the poem: after all, the grim fate that awaits the boys is not merely ruin and despair but is viciously enacted upon their bodies—being whirled, stung, torn, and more. Yet these physical assaults are themselves metaphors; the real bodies of the boys have vanished in their imagined foray into the outside world. Whereas the boys at play are described doing primarily physical activities, in the fate that awaits them, their bodies are turned into the metaphors by which their spiritual doom is figured—odd, particularly since their doom is basically aging. Similarly, Eton’s geographic, albeit poeticized, environment is later sublimated into metaphor in “the vale of years beneath” (80). Physical presence, therefore, has turned into a metaphor out on the open market, whereas in the community Gray mourns, physical presence actually underwrote relationships.

The final stanza destabilizes the poem as the speaker first highlights, then undercuts, his relationship to the boys: “To each his suff’rings: all are men, / Condemn’d alike to groan; / The tender for another’s pain, / Th’ unfeeling for his own” (81-84). In this passage, the speaker suggests that his feeling for the boys is no different than if he were feeling for himself. While this might be true in a sense—there is little difference, one supposes, between the boys’ future pain and the speaker’s own present pain—this passage clashes with the entire rhetorical premise of the poem: the speaker’s distance from, but identification with, the schoolboys. In fact, it seems that the speaker’s sympathy—which spans space, time, and distance between metaphor and identity—is in fact the thing which makes the poem happen, even if that sympathy arises involuntarily (“Condemn’d alike to groan” [81-82]). The very “message” of the poem urges disavowal: “where ignorance is bliss, / ‘Tis folly to be wise” (89-90). This entire poem is melancholy, not just in the sense that it is sad or backward-looking, but also in the sense that the speaker has incorporated the lost fraternal community, identified with it, and then disavowed the loss.

In these early poems, Gray uses melancholy in a variety of ways to express and deal with ambivalence towards publishing his poems for a heterogeneous readership. Melancholy arises in his treatment of sexual reproduction and progress, as well as in his poems’ lack of an object and backward-looking tendencies (thematic and formal). But even as someone who seemingly had little interest in newfangled ways of thinking about authorship and inspiration, Gray nevertheless cannot articulate the object of his nostalgia.

II. Literary Influence as Melancholy: Incorporation and Disavowal

As the century drew to a close, plagiarism came to be defined less by the relationship between an author and his readers (allusions that you can assume your readers will recognize), and more uniquely by the relationship between an author and his sources (an objective measure of how much material comes from elsewhere). Gray's originality (or lack thereof) became an increasingly important issue. Gilbert Wakefield's 1786 *Poems of Mr. Gray*—and the response to it—shows how much the critical climate had changed since Gray's death. The title page of Wakefield's bears the following epigraph:

Creative Genius; and the glow divine,
That warms and melts th' enthusiastic soul;
A pomp and prodigality of phrase:
These form the poet, and these shine in thee!⁵¹

This catalogue of qualities that “form the poet, and . . . shine in [Gray]” is surprising: “pomp and prodigality of phrase”—connoting extravagance, ostentation, and abundance—seem to align neither with the healthy, simple aesthetics championed by later critics like Wordsworth, nor with the reserve of earlier neoclassical poets such as Pope. Wakefield apparently uses these terms to attribute to Gray a kind of productivity and showiness that seems completely inaccurate for Gray. Equally perplexing, Wakefield clearly gives “Creative Genius” pride of place.

While Matthew Wickman and others have complicated our understandings of the ideology of originality espoused in Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), Young's text nevertheless demonstrates the increased valuation of originality as the eighteenth century went on. In one of many similar passages, Young writes, “An *Original* may

⁵¹ Thomas Gray, *The Poems of Mr. Gray*, ed. Gilbert Wakefield (London: G. Kearsley, 1786), <http://books.google.com/books?id=-UwJAAAAQAAJ>, i.

be said to be of a *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of Genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*: *Imitations* are often a sort of *Manufacture* wrought up by those *Mechanics, Art, and Labour*, out of pre-existent materials not their own.”⁵² Gray is clearly not the best exemplar of this aesthetic; his poems are highly allusive, speaking to a specific readership who would have read (and imitated) the same source texts. Thus, Wakefield’s epigraph struggles to fit Gray into that other model.

Compare Wakefield’s awkward epigraph to Samuel Johnson’s praise of Gray’s *Elegy* in his *Life of Gray* (1781). Although Johnson’s opinion of Gray’s work was ambivalent at best, he highly praised the *Elegy*, writing in that

The “Churchyard” abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning “Yet even these bones” are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them.⁵³

The “originality” of these stanzas for Johnson seems not to conflict with their heavy allusiveness. As Neil Hertz points out: “Johnson knew [the language of these stanzas] by heart and returned to them again and again.”⁵⁴ As Boswell reports, Johnson was fond of repeating these stanzas but

⁵² Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition: In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), <http://books.google.com/books?id=h1IJAAAAQAAJ>, 12; Matthew Wickman, “Imitating Eve Imitating Echo Imitating Originality: The Critical Reverberations of Sentimental Genius in the *Conjectures on Original Composition*,” *ELH* 65. 4 (1998): 899-928.

⁵³ Samuel Johnson, *Life of Gray*, in *Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Frank Brady and W.K. Wimsatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 633-42, 642

⁵⁴ Neil Hertz, “Dr. Johnson’s Forgetfulness, Descartes’ Piece of Wax,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 16.3 (1992): 167-81, 168.

also forgot them on one occasion.⁵⁵ Hertz argues that for Johnson this repetition and forgetting, and praise of originality with knowledge of source texts, was something of a literary Eucharist, in which Johnson is “communing with Literature, taking it into his mouth . . . in a necessarily duplicitous fashion, we could say—as signifier and as signified, as cadenced language . . . and as just representations of general nature.”⁵⁶ “Like its religious model,” Hertz continues, “this secular version of Eucharistic incorporation works to consolidate a collective or mystical body of communicants.”⁵⁷ That model, however, was by Johnson’s time besieged.⁵⁸

Gray’s Romantic-period readers were less convinced of his “Creative Genius.” Indeed, Wakefield himself set Gray up for failure in this regard by publishing in notes many parallel passages from which Gray had borrowed. The *Critical Review*, while generally defending Gray against censure, nevertheless focused on Gray’s borrowings: “We think very highly of Gray, but not so highly as Mr. Wakefield, of the ‘strength of his imagination;’ at least if means to infer by it invention, or originality of thought.”⁵⁹ *The Gentleman’s Magazine* expressed similar ambivalence, opening by observing that “[p]erhaps no celebrated writer, in so small a compass, has so much availed himself of the thoughts and observations of others.”⁶⁰ This reviewer, however, actively reframes the terms of the debate about Gray’s literary worth:

⁵⁵ Hertz, 167-68.

⁵⁶ Hertz, 179.

⁵⁷ Hertz, 179.

⁵⁸ On the other hand, Jeff Dolven suggests an enduring conception of style (if not “originality” or intellectual property) that actually *depends* upon imitation by definition. “Reading Wyatt for the Style,” *Modern Philology* 105.1 (2007): 65–86. Mazzeo’s study of Romantic-period plagiarism suggests that this model of authorial identity persisted aesthetically, if not legally. Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Rev. of *Poems of Mr. Gray* (1786), ed. Gilbert Wakefield, in *Critical Review* 66 (1786): 132-36, 133.

⁶⁰ Rev. of *Poems of Mr. Gray* (1786), ed. Gilbert Wakefield, in *Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle* 56.2 (1786): 591-93, 591.

This remark, which might seem, on a superficial view, to convey a tacit censure on his *character* as a writer, will, however, on a nearer inspection, constitute a considerable portion of his praise; for, when we see with what exquisite taste he has selected, and with what inimitable skill he has appropriated what he has taken, the most rigid criticism will be constrained to acknowledge, that he has manifested in this, not only the excellency of his judgement, *but the powers of his genius*.⁶¹

While the reviewer invokes the increasingly popular language of genius, he attempts to reclaim the term away from originality—the kind articulated in Young’s *Conjectures*—for an earlier model of authorship as curation, recombination, and translation (like Swift’s bee). Yet like Wakefield’s epigraph poem, this review struggles to do so.

An 1806 reviewer for the *European Magazine* was not so kind. In this essay (not explicitly a review of a particular text), the reviewer rails against Gray’s perceived unoriginality, conflating textual and moral failings:

if it be proved that the greater part of [Gray's] sentiments and images are copied, with very little alteration, from the works of others, it will be of little consequence to inquire whether his poems are excellent or otherwise. It is easy to adopt the ideas of another, and to amplify them in such a manner, that they cannot be easily distinguished; but when the *fraud* is discovered, every endeavour should be used to punish such a violation of literary *justice*, and to strip the offender of borrowed plumage. . . . To say that Gray acknowledged some of his imitations, is nothing to the purpose. The confession may induce us to admire his prudence but not his

⁶¹ Rev. of *Poems of Mr. Gray* (1786) in *Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, 591. Emphasis added.

poetry. It will not be very difficult to prove that the imitations which he has acknowledged do not amount to one sixth of those he has concealed.⁶²

While the reviewer later emphasizes that “To say that such plagiarisms are a disgrace to the *character* of Gray would be ridiculous,” the very fact that he has to make this disclaimer suggests the extent to which imitation had been rebranded as transgression, and to which moral and textual transgressions had become aligned.⁶³

In this review—and in others, such as those of Matthew Lewis I will discuss in the following chapter—we can see the beginnings of a homology linking plagiarism and other literary misdeeds with corporeal misbehavior and immorality. Writing about fakery, Daniel Tiffany argues that “The analogy between fraudulent texts and inscrutable sexual personae shows itself in the usage of the word ‘imposture,’ which refers at once to deviant textual and social practices. The tentative elaboration of queer personae in the eighteenth century thus resonated with the uncertainty about authorship and diction in the public theater of poetic imposture.”⁶⁴ Rebecca Moore Howard focuses more specifically on plagiarism, writing that “Embedded in the discursive construction of plagiarism are metaphors of gender, weakness, collaboration, disease, adultery, rape, and property that communicate a fear of violating sexual as well as textual boundaries.”⁶⁵ Although plagiarism is associated with the unmanly and the nonreproductive, its origins in concepts of kidnapping and rape accord a great deal of (phallic)

⁶² “The Reasoner: No. II,” in *The European Magazine, and London Review* 50 (1806): 292-95, 292-93. Emphasis added.

⁶³ “The Reasoner: No. II,” 295. Emphasis original.

⁶⁴ Tiffany, *My Silver Planet*, 6.

⁶⁵ Rebecca Moore Howard, “Sexuality, Textuality: The Cultural Work of Plagiarism,” *College English* 62.4 (March 2000): 473-84, 474.

agency to the plagiarist, coding plagiarism in the cultural imagination as male-male rape.⁶⁶ None of the above-cited reviewers went this far in criticizing Gray. Yet in his Romantic-period reception—and in the conversations Gray and his friends had about plagiarism—we can begin to see this emergent homology between sodomy and plagiarism.

In the remainder of this chapter, I demonstrate how melancholy may be used to think transhistorically about both textual and corporeal incorporation. First, I invoke twentieth-century psychoanalytical understandings of melancholy as incorporation, assimilation, and denial of one's fathers—this is how Harold Bloom uses melancholy in *The Anxiety of Influence*, for example.⁶⁷ Similarly (as noted earlier), Abraham and Torok have suggested a psychoanalytic model which differentiates between introjection and incorporation. 'Introjection,' here, means an incorporation which recognizes and maintains difference; 'incorporation,' by contrast, is the pathological assimilation and denial of the lost object (like Freud's melancholia).⁶⁸ We might then apply Abraham and Torok's model to the broad historical shift described by Kilgour:

⁶⁶ Howard. For more on the gender and sexuality of plagiarism, see Rebecca Moore Howard, *Standing in the Shadow of Giants: Plagiarists, Authors, Collaborators* (Stamford, Conn: Ablex Pub, 1999); Miriam Brody, *Manly Writing: Gender, Rhetoric and the Rise of Composition* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1993); and Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Duke University Press, 1994). For more on eighteenth-century plagiarism in general, see Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Bertrand Goldgar, "Imitation and Plagiarism: The Lauder Affair and Its Critical Aftermath," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 34.1 (2001); and Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 1997), 13.

⁶⁸ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and Derrida's introduction to the same, entitled "Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok." See also Kilgour's assertion that "fantasies of incorporation . . . involved the denial of loss, especially the loss of unity that, I have been arguing, appears to be echoed throughout descriptions of the Renaissance" (*Communion* 151). In addition to Abraham and Torok's concept of the "crypt" as a marker of an absence, Derrida uses the archaic word "fors" as a second way to explore the complex relationship between interiority and exteriority. See also Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 170; Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well," in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Sara Guyer, "Albeit Eating: Towards an Ethics of Cannibalism," *Angelaki* 2 (1995): 63-80.

‘introjection’ would be the earlier model which admits its relationship to sources without anxiety, while Abraham and Torok’s version of ‘incorporation’ resembles Bloom’s melancholic (and modern) authorship in that authors incorporate predecessors while denying that they have done so.

Identification with the lost (incorporated) object requires disavowal. The mythical cannibal feast in *Totem and Taboo* only works because it is denied. Once again, while the eighteenth century lacks this vocabulary, authorship in the period is nevertheless characterized not only by incorporation but also by subsequent disavowal. This dynamic of incorporation and disavowal is key in my reading of Gray’s work, which builds on Robert Gleckner’s argument in *Gray Agonistes* that Gray’s disavowed relationships to Milton and to his friend Richard West form the defining nexus of Gray’s life and work. Gleckner highlights how Gray, for all his citationality, never mentioned publicly “Milton’s ubiquitous role in his poetry,” which renders it “an eloquent absence or omission.”⁶⁹ In drawing comparisons (and claiming that Gray himself drew comparisons) between Milton and West, Gleckner does connect authorship and sexuality, but he does so in a way that is more biographical, more subjective, and more specific than the scope of this project. I follow Gleckner in linking plagiarism and male-male desire as relationships that, if explicitly articulated, are cause for condemnation, but if hinted at or otherwise framed, find acceptance in Gray’s time, but I build on his project by drawing on a stronger theoretical framework and by using Gray to make broader claims about the mapping of authorship and sexuality in the period.

This dynamic of incorporation and disavowal (linked explicitly with melancholy later, but associatively with melancholy in the period itself, particularly vis à vis Gray) prefigures not

⁶⁹ Robert F. Gleckner, *Gray Agonistes: Thomas Gray and Masculine Friendship* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4.

only the psychoanalytic model of the self but also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's closet. In other words, these 'melancholy' structures of eighteenth-century authorship play a crucial role in the later construction of homosexuality. Sedgwick, of course, was not unconcerned with the Romantic period. While she dates the closet to the later nineteenth century, she, too, has identified precursors to the closet in the Gothic literature of the 1790s and early nineteenth century. Most important is the "paranoid Gothic" mode, "in which a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure, in some respects his 'double,' to whom he seems to be mentally transparent."⁷⁰ The way in which Romantic-period writers understood literary influence and textual incorporation was not only 'melancholy' and cannibalistic but also paranoid, in Sedgwick's sense of the term. In the next chapter I will focus on treatments of literary influence more explicitly invoking cannibalism in order to reveal a paranoid gothic structure where being a cannibal renders one susceptible to being cannibalized oneself. Even without the extended metaphor of actual cannibalism, Romantic-period discourse suggests substantial anxiety about the degree to which the vectors of influence, appropriation, and incorporation are infinitely reversible.

Gray's 1757 ode *The Bard* grapples with questions of literary influence through both its subject matter and its heavy allusiveness.⁷¹ *The Bard* is a formally fascinating poem, employing an irregular Pindaric ode structure that had not been popular for half a century, and switching between three types of speaker: the ahistorical poet-speaker who frames the tale (which takes place in thirteenth-century Wales), the beleaguered last Bard who defiantly speaks to an invading

⁷⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd ed. (University of California Press, 2008), 186n.10.

⁷¹ Thomas Gray, *The Bard*, in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 363-368. Subsequently parenthetically cited by line number.

King Edward I before jumping to his death, and the communal chorus of all the other bards whom Edward has already had executed (in Gray's version of history, at least).

While it is tempting to see in the prophetic, doomed Bard a forerunner of the solitary Romantic poet, such a link has been overstated by critics. One looming issue is the question of the bards' agency in the poem. Are they writing future events with their verse or simply foretelling it? The bards are "wea[ving] . . . tissue" (48), "trac[ing]" "the characters of hell" (52) and "Mark[ing]" certain doomful dates (53). In these moments they are much more all-seeing recorders of history than agents or creators. Again, in "Stamp[ing] we our vengeance deep, and ratify[ing Edward's] doom" (96), the bards seem more like cosmic paper pushers than legislators or executors. Yet they are also "Avengers" (46). Suvir Kaul writes that "the language of prophecy . . . is witness to the contemporary urgency or poetic desire for (the fiction of) a time when poets could declaim, and in the very act of declamation, move mountains and men, *make history happen*."⁷² But this kind of power seems to have more to do with the bards' vast historical perspective than with their ability to react to, and doom, an invading power. Similarly, the Bard speaks of "Cambria's curse" (8), but what kind of agency over that curse does he possess? When the poem reaches a positive vision of the Renaissance, the Bard seems to be only describing that which passes before his eyes, rather than creating it.

Indeed, the bards often seem merely instrumental. The singing reported in the first antistrophe is done not by the Bard, but by the Welsh landscape itself:

'Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
'Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
'O'er thee, oh King! Their hundred arms they wave,

⁷² Suvir Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority: A Study in Ideology and Poetics* (Stanford University Press, 1992), 206. Emphasis original.

‘Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breath;
‘Vocal no more, since Cambria’s fatal day,
‘To high-born Hoël’s harp, or soft Llewellyn’s lay. (23-28)

The mountains themselves are described as mourning the bards, who in turn gave them voice (32-34). Later, as the Bard imagines a musical renaissance under Queen Elizabeth, he foretells the music around the Queen “breath[ing] a soul to animate [Taliessin’s] clay” (119-22). In all, the bards are merely fragments of a vast, communal, and embodied yet transhistorical poetical process.

In this light, the lone Bard’s abandonment by the dead bards can be read as a sort of fall into modern authorship: he expresses anguish at being left “forlorn,” “unbles’d, unpitied” (100-101), and the poem “laments a lost tradition and a dispersed community.”⁷³ This community is bound by blood, both in a genealogical sense and in a quasi-embodied sense. The bards are “Smear’d with gore, and ghastly pale” (36), and “Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm [the Bard’s] heart” (41). Yet that communal voice is constituted, and its power ratified, only at the moment of its dissolution: “ ‘Avengers of their native land: / ‘With me in dreadful harmony they join, / ‘And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy [Edward’s] line’ ” (46-48). Such a dynamic corresponds to the queer desire Haggerty identifies in Gray’s work: “Like other men of feeling, Gray eroticizes emotional distance as a way of understanding the melancholy with which he knows he has been marked, and he takes pleasure in the symptom . . . the tears that both commemorate and define this moment of intimacy.”⁷⁴ In other words, this kind of intense feeling

⁷³ Fairer and Gerrard, 363. For a discussion of the nationalist aspects of the poem, see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-10.

⁷⁴ George E. Haggerty, “O Lachrymarum Fons: Tears, Poetry, and Desire in Gray,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30.1 (1996): 81-95, 87.

towards other men can only be expressed when it is impossible, or too late: unrequited, forbidden, or posthumous.

A second queer resonance of *The Bard*'s treatment of authorship is, once again, an ambivalent relationship to the progress of history. As Kaul writes, "in order for (the powers of) the Bard to be credible, he has to be shrouded in the sublime obscurities of a historically earlier and less well known period, and represented as not so much *within* this period, as transcendent of it, rising above it."⁷⁵ Compared to "Ode on the Spring," *The Bard* presents a more positive depiction of this relationship to time via the poem's peculiar rhetorical situation. The poem occupies many—perhaps all—times simultaneously: the times of the dead bards, that of the last living one, and that of the frame-narrating speaker. Hence the poem's logic of impossibility: as Bogel has written, while the Bard "is in one sense the poem's principal exemplar of substantial experience, [he] is nevertheless isolated from the full flourishings of heroic poetry and permitted to triumph only in memory or prospect. His suicide . . . is therefore less a gesture of romantic defiance than an emblem or fulfillment of his true situation."⁷⁶

But while the bards' poetic community is constituted in the moment of its demise, the remaining Bard's forlornness does not last very long. While he stays the lone speaker for most of the rest of the poem, he envisions a renaissance of poetry to come, and he is of course never really alone—the frame-narrative speaker has been with him the whole time. Gray's critics have emphasized the frame-narrative speaker's insignificance to the poem: Gleckner writes that "[Gray's] career-long effort to emulate, if not triumph over, Milton's precedent, even now in the waning 1750s at age forty, had produced not only no 'voice as of the cherub-choir' but one

⁷⁵ Kaul, 202.

⁷⁶ Bogel, 95-96; quoted in Kaul, 209.

already dwindling into ‘distant warblings’ on the verge of the very extinction the Bard enacts.”⁷⁷ And Kaul argues that the speaker shies away from “a complete identification with the Bard” and that “he can know himself as less than, but also more secure than, the figure of ultimate inspiration.”⁷⁸ But the last Bard standing fails as a figure of ultimate inspiration; rather, he is “forlorn,” impoverished by his distinction from the other bards (though it is interesting that the positive vision of the Renaissance appears only to the lone Bard, not to the chorus). In fact, despite the poem’s emphasis on communality, it is the speaker—whom Kaul reads as merely a meek observer—who is ultimately elevated above the lone Bard. Just as the community of bards really only comes into being at the moment of its annihilation, the poem’s championing of oral and communal forms of poetry is contained within its written, individually-created and individually-spoken form. All the allusiveness in the world cannot erase Gray’s master hand.

Within the poem, the figure of Taliessin best represents Gray’s poetics. Though an exceptional individual figure, “chief of the Bards”—this much Gray tells us in his note—as Fairer and Gerrard point out, “The manuscript ‘Book of Taliesin’” is in fact a centuries-later “collection of poems by various authors and from different periods.”⁷⁹ Gray does not note this second part, perhaps because he wishes to emphasize the figure of the “chief of the Bards”—a simultaneously communally-oriented and exceptional Poet figure. The majority of Gray’s allusions in the poem, moreover, are to similarly exceptional “greats”: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden.

⁷⁷ Gleckner, *Gray Agonistes*, 90-91.

⁷⁸ Kaul, 203.

⁷⁹ Fairer and Gerrard, 367n.121.

Thus, the poem ultimately wants to have it both ways: it identifies and celebrates particular poets (both thematically and through allusion), but it longs for a lost pre-lapsarian community in which all voices sang in political and aesthetic harmony. In this poetic world envisioned by Gray, footnotes would be unnecessary because every reader would be part of the same eternal intertextual discourse. Having to include notes to be understood means that Gray is put in the position of ‘avowing’ things—it creates a suspicion of guilt and an onus of self-policing. Although Gray is a more highly visible example, this dynamic was decades in the making: Lonsdale notes that even Dryden felt compelled to include notes about his sources in *Annus Mirabilis* (1666): “In some places where either the fancy, or the words, were [Virgil’s], or any others, I have noted it in the Margin, that I might not seem a Plagiary.”⁸⁰

The first published version of *The Bard* included only four footnotes, all of which were about the poem’s historical references (rather than the literary allusions). Even these Gray included begrudgingly at Walpole’s suggestion: “I do not love notes,” Gray wrote to Walpole in 1757, “though you see I had resolved to put two or three. They are signs of weakness and obscurity. If a thing cannot be understood without them, it had better be not understood at all.”⁸¹ Many readers, accordingly, experienced the latter of these two responses. Accordingly, Gray felt pressure to include more notes in Dodsley’s 1768 *Poems by Mr. Gray*, but he did so with bitterness: the “Advertisement” to *The Progress of Poesy* reads, “When the Author first published this and the following Ode [*The Bard*], he was advised, even by his Friends, to subjoin some few explanatory Notes; but had too much respect for the understanding of his Readers to

⁸⁰ Roger Lonsdale, “Gray and ‘Allusion’: The Poet as Debtor,” *Studies in the Eighteenth Century* IV (1979): 31-55, 36-37.

⁸¹ Thomas Gray, Letter 240 to Horace Walpole, 11 July 1757, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 507-508, 508.

take that liberty.”⁸² In addition to expanded historical notes, Gray’s additional notes indicate allusions to Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton, Spenser, and several paintings. He also makes explicit in his notes to the final epode that certain lines refer explicitly to Shakespeare and Milton.

A letter to James Beattie about the new edition gives more specific reasons for Gray’s aversion to notes:

& as to the notes, I do it out of spite, because the Publick did not understand the two odes (w^{ch} I have call’d Pindaric) tho’ the first was not very dark, & the second alluded to a few common facts to be found in any six-penny History of England by way of question & answer for the use of children. the parallel passages I insert out of justice to those writers, from whom I happen’d to take the hint of any line, as far as I can recollect.⁸³

Fascinatingly, in this letter Gray separates the historical notes from the literary ones. To be sure, Gray is clearly loathe to include either type, viewing them both as matters of mere cultural literacy (any deserving reader should know enough to go without either type of note). However, the 1757 *Bard* did include some historical (but no literary) notes. The fact that he specifically withheld, then was later pressured to include, notes clarifying literary borrowings speaks to a shift in literary values over that decade—specifically, the value of authorial independence.

Whereas the more important determinant of masculinity earlier in the century had been independence from the market (and thus a kind of self-ownership), in this later moment authorial masculinity was much more dependent upon the independence of one’s *texts* from influence—an

⁸² Thomas Gray, *Poems by Mr. Gray* (London: J. Dodsley, 1768), 36.
<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW3310706738>.

⁸³ Thomas Gray, Letter 465 to James Beattie, 1 February 1768, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 3 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 1001-4, 1002.

impossible ideal that fueled the dynamics of culpability, (dis)avowal, and blackmailability that we see in Gray's notes and in the critical discussion of his sources.

Gray's letters in the years leading up to the composition and publication of the Odes suggest that Gray himself seems not to have worried too much about the emergent ideology of originality. At least privately, Gray certainly did avow his influences and borrowings, though he appears to have preferred the word "steal" to "plagiarize." In a 1748 letter to Walpole, Gray writes, "I send you a bit of a thing [from Matthew Green's 1732 *The Grotto*] for two reasons; first, because it is of one of your favourites, Mr. M. Green; and next, because I would do justice. The thought on which my second Ode* ["Ode on the Spring"] turns is manifestly stole from hence; not that I knew it at the time, but having seen this many years before, to be sure it imprinted itself on my memory, and, forgetting the author, I took it for my own."⁸⁴ Gray refers to the stanza in "Ode on the Spring" about "contemplation's sober eye."

A later (1756) letter to Bedingfield uses "steal," "borrow," "pilfer," "affinity," and, indirectly, "Plagiary": Gray identifies many sources from a variety of his poems, writing, the thought, w^{ch} you applaud, in those lines, *Loose his beard &c: [Bard]* is borrow'd from painting the words you see are almost stoln from Milton I must tell you too, that *Thoughts that breath, &c: [Progress]* is an imitation of Cowley The *Knell of parting day [Elegy]* is taken from Dante, who describing a Pilgrim listening to the evening-bell says [direct

⁸⁴ Letter 168 to Walpole, [January or February 1748], in *The Correspondence of Gray, Walpole, West and Ashton (1734-1771)*, vol. 2, ed. Paget Toynbee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915): 89-99, 95-96. First published in 1798. See *Thomas Gray Archive* <http://www.thomasgray.org/cgi-bin/display.cgi?text=tgal0163#panel_record>, accessed 10 August 2014. The poem to which Gray refers is Matthew Green, *The grotto, a poem. Written by Peter Drake, Fisherman, of Brentford. In the year of our Lord 1732* (London: 1733). *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 16 Sept. 2014 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW110000913&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

quotation]. That about the Banners of K: Edward [in *The Bard*] has a near affinity to a line in Shakespeare's King John, 'Mocking the air with colours idly spread.' & there are two lines together in the Epode [*Bard*] here pilfer'd from his Julius Caesar."⁸⁵

Anticipating his later reception, Gray continues, "do not wonder therefore, if some Magazine or Review call me Plagiary: I could shew them a hundred more instances, w^{ch} they will never discover themselves."⁸⁶ Gray thus negotiates his relationship to originality. On the one hand, he feels the need to "do justice" and confess his borrowings; on the other hand, the letter to Bedingfield seems anxious to defuse accusations of "Plagiary" by preempting them, and his final assertion that he "could shew them a hundred more instances, w^{ch} they will never discover themselves" feels defiant: after all, if those critics do not even recognize the majority of Gray's borrowings, perhaps they are not qualified to scold him for the few that they do identify.

Indeed, this letter demonstrates how Gray attempts to construct an elite discourse-community of readers. When Gray avows all of these influences (even thefts), he emphasizes physical presence, citing specific paintings in specific places: "Rafael in his Vision of Ezekiel (in the Duke of Orleans' Collection) has given the air of head, w^{ch} I tried to express, to God the Father; or (if you have been at Parma) you may remember Moses breaking the Tables by the Parmeggiano, w^{ch} comes still nearer to my meaning."⁸⁷ Thus, though Gray here calls attention to his alleged derivativeness, he does so in the service of establishing a particular elite community of reader who are not only similarly educated, but who have traveled to the same places and seen

⁸⁵ Thomas Gray, letter 222 to Edward Bedingfield, 27 August 1756, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 474-78, 476-77.

⁸⁶ Thomas Gray, letter 222 to Edward Bedingfield, 27 August 1756, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 474-78, 477.

⁸⁷ Thomas Gray, letter 222 to Edward Bedingfield, 27 August 1756, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 474-78, 476-77.

the same paintings. Here, Gray does a variation on Fielding's treatment of allusion in Chapter I, Book XII of *Tom Jones*, "Shewing what is to be deemed Plagiarism in a modern Author, and what is to be considered as lawful Prize."⁸⁸ As Bertrand Goldgar argues, this chapter distinguishes between plagiarism and imitation by emphasizing that the narrator's readers are so learned that they need not be insulted by the explicit citation of every allusion: Fielding "recognizes that the unlearned reader will miss the entertainment one should get from allusion or imitation and merely think he has stolen good lines and is concealing the theft."⁸⁹ As Fielding defines it, then, plagiarism is as much about the relationship between an author and his readers as it is about the relationship between an author and his sources. Gray reinforces this sentiment in the above letter when he writes that women—due to their exclusion from this type of education—are unable to understand his poetry:

I must say, (but this is sacred, & under the seal of confession) there is no Woman, that can take pleasure in this kind of composition. if Parts only & Imagination & Sensibility were required, one might (I doubt not) find them in that Sex full as easily as in our own: but there is a certain measure of learning necessary, & a long acquaintance with the good Writers ancient & modern, w^{ch} by our injustice is denied to them. and without this they can only catch here & there a florid expression, or a musical rhyme, while the Whole appears to them a wild obscure unedifying jumble.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling. In Four Volumes*, vol. 3 of 4 (London, 1749), 131-35. <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW3310120696>>. Accessed 18 August 2014.

⁸⁹ Bertrand Goldgar, "Imitation and Plagiarism: The Lauder Affair and Its Critical Aftermath," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 34.1 (2001): 1-16, 8.

⁹⁰ Thomas Gray, letter 222 to Edward Bedingfield, 27 August 1756, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Jackson Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 474-78, 478.

Gray thus triply creates his community of ideal readers, calling attention to the aspects of his poetry that exclude others, making that exclusion explicit, and then swearing that ideal reader to secrecy (“under the seal of confession”). Thus Gray’s disclosures only suggest the extent of what he is not disclosing; he draws his friends’ attention to what is still undisclosed and interpellates them precisely by not making those things explicit.

Notably, such disclosures meant something quite different to Gray’s editors and biographers, and this helps account for Gray’s awkward relationship to the Romantic pantheon of original “genius.” Though Gray’s 1748 “manifestly stole from [Green]” letter to Walpole was first published in the 1790s, it did not appear in several earlier eighteenth-century collections. Moreover, the longer letter to Bedingfield was not published until 1935 (though some of the same influences were acknowledged in the notes to the 1768 *Poems*). Mason certainly was concerned about plagiarism, however, as his notes to Gray’s letters—and his own letters—show. For example, in a 1755 letter, Mason makes a complicated reference to the recent Lauder affair, describing an opera performance and writing that a particular aria “is almost Notatim/verbatim the Air in Ariadne, but I think better. I am told tis a very old one of Scarlattis w^{ch} if true Handel is almost a musical Lauder.”⁹¹ William Lauder, who from 1747-50 had been accusing Milton of plagiarizing from modern Latin poets, had only recently been exposed as a fraud himself, having presented lines from a Latin translation of *Paradise Lost* as the work of other poets (from whom Milton had then allegedly plagiarized).

The Lauder affair was a critical event in the history of intellectual property in England. Goldgar writes that “the controversy . . . sharpen[ed] the focus on the tangled question of where

⁹¹ William Mason, letter 212 to Thomas Gray, 25 December 1755, in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, vol. 1 of 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935) 450-453, 451.

imitation leaves off and plagiarism begins.”⁹² While the breadth of studies and evidence suggests that this distinction continues to be an ongoing ‘tangled question,’⁹³ the Lauder affair marks a shift in discussion from ‘imitation’ to ‘plagiarism,’ and reveals the beginnings of a discourse of plagiarism that is not only about aesthetic, but also moral, transgression. Mason actually played a role in the discourse surrounding the Lauder affair: William Hurd’s *Letter to Mr. Mason; on the Marks of Imitation* (1757) preceded Young’s *Conjectures* by two years. It attempts to define, judge, and provide examples of different types of imitation, and it even accuses (though innocuously) Mason of borrowing from elsewhere in his own “Ode to Memory.”⁹⁴

Mason’s interest in plagiarism is also evident in his annotations to a letter from Gray, in which Gray reports “hav[ing] compared Helvetius and Elfrida, as you desired me*, and find[ing] thirteen parallel passages.”⁹⁵ While Gray does not use the word plagiarism here, Mason does, as he annotates this sentence with an explanatory note that goes on for pages, taking up the vast majority of the space on following pages and extending into the notes for the following letter. Mason writes, “As the plagiarism, to which Mr. Gray here alludes, is but little known, and, I think, for its singularity, is somewhat curious, I shall beg the reader’s patience while I dilate upon it; tho’ I am aware it will stretch this note to an unconscionable length.”⁹⁶ Mason had good

⁹² Goldgar, “Imitation and Plagiarism,” 7.

⁹³ See, among others, Paulina Kewes, ed., *Plagiarism in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Tilar Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Laura Rosenthal, *Playwrights and Plagiarists in Early Modern England: Gender, Authorship, Literary Property* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

⁹⁴ Richard Hurd, *A Letter to Mr. Mason; on the Marks of Imitation* (Cambridge, 1757), 36-37.
<<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW3310006363>>. Accessed 18 August 2014.

⁹⁵ “Letter 44 [Section 4]: Mr. Gray to Mr. Mason, February 8, 1763,” in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), 294-96, 296.

⁹⁶ “Letter 44 [Section 4]: Mr. Gray to Mr. Mason, February 8, 1763,” in *The Poems of Mr. Gray: To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Hughs, 1775), 294-96, 296n.

reason to bring to light this particular incident: the plagiarized work in question is Mason's own *Elfrida* (1752), which was used in French as a libretto, then reappeared in an English text without his consent.⁹⁷ But there seems to be a value to Mason in this 'dilation' beyond his own self-interest and literary aspirations: on the one hand, Mason suppresses letters in which Gray avows or is accused of over-borrowing; on the other, Mason has no qualms in drawing attention to plagiarism by other authors. In short, even though imitation (or plagiarism)—and the avowal thereof—does important work for Gray, his legacy in the years following his death depends on the denial of such interdependence.

Thirteen years after Gray confessed to Walpole that he had borrowed some main ideas of "Ode on the Spring," Mason (equivocally) accuses him of other plagiarisms in the same poem: "what better can I do," Mason writes,

living as I here do in almost absolute solitude, and in that state of life which my old friend Jeremy Taylor so well describes in his sermon aptly entitled the Marriage Ring. "Celibate life," says he, "like the flie in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined, and dies in singularity. But marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, gathers sweetness from every flower, labours, and unites into societys and republics," &c. If I survive you, and come to publish your works, I shall quote this passage, from whence you so evidently (without ever seeing it) took that thought, "Poor moralist, and what art thou," &c. But the plagiarism had been too glaring had you taken the heart of the apple, in which, however, the great beauty of the thought

⁹⁷ For a fuller account of Mason's practices and possible motives in editing, withholding, and destroying Gray's letters, see Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley's introduction to *The Correspondence of Thomas Gray* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935).

consists. After all, why will you not read Jeremy Taylor? Take my word and more for it, he is the Shakespeare of divines.⁹⁸

While Mason assumes that Gray has not actually read the Taylor passage in question, might it still be ‘plagiarism’? In writing that more material from the source text would make “the plagiarism . . . too glaring,” is Mason suggesting that the resemblance between the two texts is nevertheless “plagiarism,” albeit less “glaring”? Surely authorial intent—or at least the author’s having read the original—is necessary to make the resemblance “plagiarism”? Moreover, in claiming that Gray left out the best part—which would have both improved the poem and made the accusation of plagiarism more damning—Mason places Gray in a problematic relationship to Taylor. Most telling, however, is the fact that Mason expresses an intent to call attention to this borrowing after Gray’s death—which, of course, he does not do.

III. Conclusion

I wish to conclude by returning to that very passage in question that Gray may or may not have “plagiarized” from Taylor without reading him, and that may or may not be an allusion to Swift. Looking once more at this passage allows us to better understand the relationship between Gray’s attitude toward the market and his attitude toward originality and textual influence. While (as I showed earlier) the allusion to Swift resonates in a particular way with Gray’s ambivalence toward the market and its associations with productivity and mingling, Swift’s parable is also—in fact, principally—about textual influence.

⁹⁸ William Mason to Thomas Gray [letter LXII], 8 January 1761, in *The Correspondence of Thomas Gray and William Mason, with Letters to the Rev. James Brown, D.D.*, ed. by the Rev. John Mitford (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 240-44, 243-44.

In the *Battel of the Books*, the spider lambasts the bee for being “a Vagabond without House or Home, without Stock or Inheritance Born to no Possession of [its] own, but a Pair of Wings, and a Drone-Pipe.”⁹⁹ “Your Livelihood,” the spider continues, “is an universal Plunder upon Nature; a Freebooter over Fields and Gardens; and for the sake of Stealing, will rob a Nettle as readily as a Violet. Whereas I am a domestick Animal, furnisht with a Native Stock within my self. This large Castle . . . is all built with my own Hands, and the Materials extracted altogether out of my own Person.”¹⁰⁰ The bee responds by first of all establishing that the spider’s “Native Stock within [him]self” is in fact excrement, and then going on to point out that even that excrement had to have been obtained “to a little foreign Assistance”—that is, from all the flies he has eaten.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, the bee concludes, “the Question comes all to this; Whether is the nobler Being of the two, That which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an over-weening Pride, which feeding and engendering on it self, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at all, but Fly-bane and a Cobweb; Or That, which, by an universal Range, with long Search, much Study, true Judgment, and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax.”¹⁰²

Notwithstanding the fact that spiders *eat* flies, this extended metaphor translates problematically in “Ode on the Spring.” The key thing about this allusion is that for Swift in 1704, the spider is a menacing figure of modern authorship. For Gray in 1742, the *bees* symbolize not an ancient type of authorship, but a modern one, while the fly-like speaker himself is the holdover, removed from the hyperproductivity of the market. Strangely, Gray naturalizes

⁹⁹ Swift, *Battel*, 246.

¹⁰⁰ Swift, *Battel*, 246.

¹⁰¹ Swift, *Battel*, 247.

¹⁰² Swift, *Battel*, 247-48.

this hyperproductivity: for all their faults, the bees—and not the fly—are in tune with nature, the seasons, and the passage of time. In doing so, Gray paints himself not as merely a vestige of an earlier time but as at odds with time in general—though even this still resonates with his aligning himself with Shakespeare, Jacques, and elsewhere ancient Bards.

At the same time, however, it seems that Gray would like to be a bee in the Swiftian sense: my readings of Gray's letters and of *The Bard* indicate Gray's allegiance to earlier models of textual influence that allow for a porousness between texts. The problem is that such porousness (as Gray understands it) once took place within clearly defined contexts (not unlike the measured transgressions in the Eton ode): if everyone reading your poetry has read everything you have read, there is no danger that your borrowings will be perceived as attempts to deceive, and disclosing such borrowings is unnecessary. When the field of readers is broken wide open by the market, however, there is no shared lexicon, necessitating all these new gestures of originality on the one hand or disclosure on the other—each of which is unsatisfying. The fly in Gray's poem embodies solitude as a resistance to the market—to literary productivity, and to the selling of oneself—even as it simultaneously also suggests the solitary production of poetry without influence—critiqued by Swift *and* by Gray. In other words, Swift's allusion self-deconstructs in the 1740s. As masculinity becomes aligned with the market, Gray's career exemplifies a paradox: the only way to be a genius (of the kind that Gray values) is to be out of sync with time. But since the productivity of the market and forward movement of time (and, accordingly, the implied heterosexuality thereof) are increasingly the way that masculinity is coded, the only way to be a genius-poet in this new world is to be queer.

In his account of Gray's death, Mason includes excerpts from a "character" "published very soon after Mr. Gray's decease."¹⁰³ Though the anonymous writer asserts that "Perhaps [Gray] was the most learned man in Europe," he continues that "There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science."¹⁰⁴ In his own version of incorporation and disavowal, Mason stunningly attempts to recuperate this portrayal of Gray: "This is rightly put; it was rather an affectation in delicacy and effeminacy than the things themselves; and he chose to put on this appearance chiefly before persons whom he did not wish to please."¹⁰⁵ For Mason, the measure of Gray's character must be his self-possession, such that Mason has to contort the very terms by which that self-possession is measured: in this case, by making him a savvy performer. Gray, however, was increasingly difficult to fit into those models of authorship.

¹⁰³ Mason, 401-2.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Mason, 402 and 403.

¹⁰⁵ Mason, 403.

CHAPTER 2

'Perverted Genius,' Cannibals, and Crypts in Matthew Lewis

[Plagiarism <] classical Latin *plagiarius* person who abducts the child or slave of another, kidnapper, seducer, also a literary thief.¹

[We cannot] conceive what has been [Matthew Lewis's] bent of education that has led him into so uncommon a track of study. He certainly does not want abilities, or knowledge, but his talents are strangely perverted, and he seems even to be employed in throwing a ridicule upon himself.²

In the previous chapter I argued that the case of Thomas Gray demonstrates how the defining parameters of masculinity in authorship changed in the later part of the eighteenth century from one type of independence (self-possession) to another type (unique possession of one's texts). The rise of this latter type of independence occasioned greater emphasis on the paranoid homoerotic dynamics of authorship: claims to authorial independence were increasingly fraught with melancholy, disavowal, and blackmailability. In these structures of relationships between authors (and, by extension, between subjects) we can identify a model of proto-heterosexuality. In other words, by the end of the century, normative authorship was not only gendered masculine, but also constructed as heterosexual. This becomes particularly clear when

¹ "plagiarism, n." *OED Online*. March 2017. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/144939?redirectedFrom=plagiarism> (accessed May 21, 2017).

² Rev. of *Tales of Wonder*, *The Antijacobin Review* VIII (1801): 322-23, 323.

we look at “perverted” forms of authorship, especially the gothic, with its reputation for counterfeiting, plagiarism, and derivativeness.

The gothic is all about sexuality, and queer sexuality in particular: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes in *Between Men* that “the Gothic was the first novelistic form in England to have close, relatively visible links to male homosexuality.”³ George Haggerty uses a more capacious measure of ‘queer’ in arguing that “gothic fiction offered a testing ground for many unauthorized genders and sexualities, including sodomy, tribadism, romantic friendship (male and female), incest, pedophilia, sadism, masochism, necrophilia, cannibalism, masculinized females, feminized males, miscegenation, and so on.”⁴ Both Sedgwick and Haggerty emphasize the historical specificity of the gothic’s popularity, Haggerty claiming that while “these works predate sexuality’s codification . . . they also prepare the ground . . . for later developments in sexological studies.”⁵ As I will argue in this chapter and the next, one way in which the gothic prefigures later “modern” formations of sexuality is through its reliance on structures of incorporation, disavowal, and self-revelation, and through related motifs of closet, crypt, and bosom.

Paradoxically both unoriginal and hyper-productive, the gothic as a genre also concretized and incited anxiety about authorship. Maggie Kilgour emphasizes the derivative nature of the gothic, “a consciously literary genre that feeds on earlier traditions,” and argues more generally that “the gothic indicates the vulnerability of modern concepts of personal and

³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 91.

⁴ George Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 2.

⁵ Haggerty, *Queer Gothic*, 2.

textual autonomy.”⁶ Michael Gamer focuses on another aspect of the gothic’s self-consciousness, arguing that “no other genre plays so great a role in embodying and calling attention to the conflict between critical and popular reading audiences at the turn of the nineteenth century.”⁷ And Tilar Mazzeo writes that “As a genre, Gothic literature challenged the contemporary expectations regarding private authorship, and this often made these works particular targets for charges of plagiarism.”⁸ Lauren Fitzgerald goes one step further, arguing that debates about the gothic were a formative moment in the “critical codification of plagiarism” because reviewers actually took the terms by which they condemned plagiarism from the gothic itself.⁹ The gothic, perhaps more than any other Romantic-period genre, embodied a fundamental paradox in the value system used to evaluate literature. Given that masculine productivity provided critics with the terms by which to evaluate literature, how could hyper-productivity be a bad thing? How could a genre be unoriginal, even counterfeit, at the same time that it was hyper-productive? And how could critics begin to engage with a genre that actually relished its own unoriginality?¹⁰

⁶ Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 173.

⁷ Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 23.

⁸ Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 84.

⁹ Lauren Fitzgerald, “The Gothic Villain and the Vilification of the Plagiarist: The Case of The Castle Spectre,” *Gothic Studies* 7.1 (2005): 5-17, 6, 12.

¹⁰ As well as denying any stability of identity thematically either: As Lauren Fitzgerald argues in “The Sexuality of Authorship in *The Monk*,” unmaskings can actually be other maskings masquerading as unmaskings. For example, Rosario’s revelation that he is really a ‘she’—Matilda—obscures the fact that Matilda is only an incarnation of the devil, modeled after a painting, no less—or is the painting modeled after her (Fitzgerald “Sexuality” n.p.)? Onto this structure of unmaskings, Fitzgerald grafts a contemporary understanding of drag, quoting Judith Butler’s assertion that “gay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy” (qtd. Fitzgerald “Sexuality” n.p.). Admitting derivativeness or fakery sends one into something of a *mise en abîme*, in which every referent is already a representation of something else. Lauren Fitzgerald, “The Sexuality of Authorship in *The Monk*,” *Romanticism on the Net: An Electronic Journal Devoted to Romantic Studies* 36-37 (2004): n.p.

In short, the relationships between authorship, masculinity, and sexuality were being visibly worked out in the gothic. Not only does the gothic take up perverse sexuality as a theme at the same time that the genre is associated with non-normative authorial practice; these actually fold back on one another: the very ways in which gothic authorship was perceived and critiqued gave readers and critics another language with which to discuss perversions of sexuality, and vice versa.

Critics have begun to trace some of these interrelationships, and my reading of *The Monk* in particular is informed by theirs: the novel's depiction of a mentoring relationship between Raymond and his page-turned-aspiring-poet Theodore suggests Lewis uses pederasty and classicism as alternative models of relationships between authors and between men—a reading that corresponds with much of Haggerty's work on Gray. Fitzgerald argues that the performativity of gender in *The Monk* aligns with how Lewis's authorship is itself a play of surfaces, a series of imitations that give the lie to the original.¹¹ I, on the other hand, will focus on perverse incorporations—not only in Lewis's work but also in its reception—and how these tropes structure discussions of queer masculinity and its relationship to the 'norm.'

Taking caution from Judith Butler (see introduction), I am interested less in utopian alternatives and more in structures and processes of relation—in how these perversions and incorporations double back on themselves, revealing themselves to be infinitely reversible. In doing so, I depend neither on a sense of queerness as “special alternative” nor on the idea that “everything is queer, even the norm”—but rather, on a dynamic tracking back and forth between these two critical extremes. I steer the conversation away from the zero-sum games of “surface vs. depth” and “performance vs. essence,” suggesting that melancholic incorporation might offer

¹¹ Lauren Fitzgerald, “The Sexuality of Authorship in *The Monk*,” n.p.

a more nuanced method of articulating the relationship between a norm and its queer perversions.

In the second half of this chapter, I move from perversion in Lewis's reception to a focus on the closet and the crypt in *The Monk*. In this move from discourse analysis to the close reading of physical enclosures, I argue that beyond depicting non-normative sexualities and authorial practices thematically, gothic texts also offer up the tropes of perverse incorporation (imprisonment, closets, live burial) that continue to structure discussions of both authorship and sexuality. That is, a focus on these tropes allows us to recognize the role of incorporation in the modern masculine subject's construction, and to better describe and analyze the incorporative structure of perversion in modern Anglo-British culture more generally.

I. 'Perverted Genius': Sexuality, Cannibalism, and Romantic Authorship

There are any number of reasons why critics might attribute to Matthew Lewis, who first jumped into the public eye as the author of the scandalous *Monk* (1796), the label of "perverted." Many were appalled by Lewis's salacious and horrific plots: in *The Monk* alone, the titular character Ambrosio commits a trifecta of rape, murder, and incest, while even the novel's subplots abound with shocking images, such as (to choose only one) that of young Agnes, imprisoned by sadistic nuns, breastfeeding the worm-ridden corpse of her deceased newborn. Some readers, including Coleridge, were equally offended by Lewis's glib treatment of Christian hypocrisy in *The Monk*, while in subsequent years, others were displeased by seemingly radical statements made in his drama *The Castle Spectre*. And of course, Lewis's primary affective and social attachments were with men, and his interest in men was a subject of discussion among his

peers.¹² All of these potential ‘perversions’ worked in tandem with Lewis’s textual crimes, rendering him a flashpoint at a particular moment of convergence in the histories of masculinity, sexuality, and authorship.

Lewis was in many senses unoriginal, engaging in a variety of textual practices including borrowing, adaptation, and translation. In many instances, he acknowledged his source texts, but in many others, he did not. Lewis also evinced little anxiety about these practices or about the distinctions between them. In his preface to the (anonymous) first edition of *The Monk*, Lewis listed a variety of source materials for his work before concluding, “I have now made a full avowal of all the plagiarisms of which I am aware myself; but I doubt not many more may be found, of which I am at present totally unconscious.”¹³ In his afterword to the published version of *Castle Spectre*, Lewis openly admits, “To originality of character I make no pretence.”¹⁴ And Lewis’s 1801 miscellany-anthology *Tales of Wonder* troubles generic expectations while actually carefully admitting its (substantial) debts to other sources, with a level of concern that Lisa Wilson describes as “nearly obsessive.”¹⁵ Due to the variety of textual practices here—and to Lewis’s seeming intentionality about them—critics have divined a variety of possible authorial strategies from them, proposing that Lewis might be abdicating authorial responsibility to avoid

¹² D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 59-65.

¹³ M.G. Lewis [anon.], *The Monk: A Romance* (Waterford: Printed for J. Saunders, 1796), 11.

¹⁴ M.G. Lewis, *The Castle Spectre: A Drama in Five Acts. First performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane, on Thursday, December 14, 1797* (London: J. Bell, 1798), 102.

¹⁵ Lisa M. Wilson, “‘Monk’ Lewis as Literary Lion,” *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997).

political or legal trouble¹⁶ or revealing some literary relationships to conceal others (a dynamic I also discussed in the previous chapter on Gray).¹⁷

While we would not call all of Lewis's intertextual practices plagiarism, his critics (perhaps encouraged in part by Lewis's own backfiring 'avowals'¹⁸) did perceive him not only as 'perverted' but also as a plagiarist. For example, Coleridge wrote to Wordsworth in 1798 that *The Castle Spectre* was "a mere patchwork of plagiarisms,"¹⁹ and Irish poet Thomas Dermody (writing as "Mauritius Moonshine") accuses Lewis of "gut[ting]," "grub[b]ing," "glean[ing]," and "rob[b]ing" from other texts.²⁰ The definition of plagiarism was nebulous in the later eighteenth century, and like Mazzeo I maintain that plagiarism in the period was a moral, rather than a legal, category.²¹ Rather than attempting an objective definition of plagiarism, however, I suggest that we think of the practice as an "utterly confused category"²²—a loosely-defined term that was deployed, like accusations of sodomy, in the service of broader political power structures.²³ That is, alongside those accusations of sodomy, the category of plagiarism played a constitutive role in the histories of masculinity and sexuality.

¹⁶ Gamer, 844,

¹⁷ Wilson, n.p.

¹⁸ Wilson, n.p.. See also Lauren Fitzgerald, "The Gothic Villain and the Vilification of the Plagiarist."

¹⁹ Quoted in Michael Gamer, "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama," *ELH* 66.4 (1999): 831–61, 836.

²⁰ Thomas Dermody, "More Wonders!" in *The Harp of Erin: Containing the Poetical Works* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807) 1:108-24, 118.

²¹ Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period*.

²² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 101.

²³ See Jody Greene, "'You Must Eat Men': The Sodomitic Economy of Renaissance Patronage," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1.2 (1994): 163-97, 164; and the introduction to Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

Condemnations of *The Monk* really only appeared in full once Lewis, a new member of Parliament, appended his name to the second edition of the text. No longer imaginable as an anonymous, perhaps female, hack, the author of *Monk* exposed himself as an upper-class man (who, hostile critics asserted, should know better). Reviewers struggled to condemn Lewis in terms that both rehearsed the standard lament about gothic novels (as derivative and uninspired) and accorded Lewis enough responsibility for his own work.²⁴ Some scholars have suggested that Lewis took refuge from criticism by emphasizing the imitative (and therefore innocuous) nature of his work “as a queered alternative to the Romantic solitary genius.”²⁵

To me, however, this particular type of queer reading risks becoming descriptive and self-satisfied. Butler speaks to this problem in *Antigone's Claim* (2002) when she questions the value of supposedly ‘radical’ poststructuralist claims that “the norm cannot exist without perversion, and only through perversion can the norm be established. We are all supposed to be satisfied with this apparently generous gesture by which the perverse is announced to be essential to the norm. The problem as I see it is that the perverse remains entombed precisely there, as the essential and negative feature of the norm, and the relation between the two remains static, giving way to no rearticulation of the norm itself.”²⁶ My aim in this project is to reexamine the structure of perversion in the later eighteenth century and Romantic period, and in doing so rethink the parameters and aims of queer criticism more generally. I theorize a more dynamic model of perversion based on proximity rather than alterity.

²⁴ See Wilson, and Gamer, “Authors in Effect.”

²⁵ Lauren Fitzgerald, “The Sexuality of Authorship in *The Monk*.” See also Gamer, “Authors.”

²⁶ Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 75-76.

Again, Lewis did not simply abandon (straight) originality in favor of (queer) imitation. Rather, his example demonstrates how, in this particular moment, the concepts attached to ‘good’ and ‘bad’ authorship—including perversion, taste, and cannibalism—collapsed into themselves, revealing the standard of masculine originality to be itself a fantasy. Indeed, attending to the fractures and perversions at the heart of normative masculine authorship reveals the extent to which the modern masculine subject’s foundation in possessive individualism has always been a shaky one. Indeed, as I explore at greater length in my introduction, the Lockean theory of property and subjectivity based on incorporation actually opens up the Romantic-period author to an endless chain of paranoid-Gothic “blackmailability” (in Sedgwick’s well-known formulation²⁷) about his influences and borrowings.

Where does a masculine author end and his text begin? Where does one text end and another begin? The author’s body plays an essential—but paradoxical—role in this critical discussion. Romantic critics defined the boundaries of authorship and intertextuality in terms of generation and incorporation, yet these metaphors render the boundaries between authors and texts, and between related texts, more porous than Romantic-period reviewing culture would wish. And if those relationships are porous and invertible, and if authors’ bodies can be substituted for or contiguous with their texts, then it is a small jump from imagining intimacy between texts to imagining intimacy between male bodies. In short, the way masculine authorship is imagined in the period is always potentially sodomitical.

²⁷ Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 89.

The Structure of Perversion

The construction of masculine authorship in the later eighteenth century, therefore, was inherently perverse. And I mean “perverse” in a very historically-specific sense: eighteenth-century and Romantic-period Britons understood “perversion,” as its etymology suggests, to mean “a turning away” from what is right or good; in other words, perversion was dynamic and not static. Furthermore—and critically—examples from the later eighteenth-century indicate that categorically good things are those most open to perversion: “Justice,” “political reasoning,” “law,” “ancient British customs,” and “genius” (about which, more later), are among the most frequent objects of perversion in the period.²⁸ Moreover, the people accused of perversion were

²⁸ Auckland, William Eden, Baron. *Four letters to the Earl of Carlisle, from William Eden, Esq. On certain perversions of political reasoning; and on the Nature, Progress, and Effect of Party Spirit and of Parties. On the present Circumstances of the War between Great Britain and the combined Powers of France and Spain. On the Public Debts, on the Public Credit, and on the Means of raising Supplies. On the representations of Ireland respecting a free-trade.* The second edition. London, MDCCLXXIX. [1779]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale>

&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW104249635&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>; *Humanity oppressed, or, Justice perverted. Containing a faithful narrative of the persecutions, which have been most artfully concerted and carried on, by Francis Graham, Esq; against the Rev. J. M'Causland, A.M. To which are added, a sermon preached on the general fast. And a few necessary observations on the education of youth.* Dublin, 1779. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=>

ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CB131657341&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>; Irish farmer. *Administration convicted of high treason against King and people: Of having feloniously and traiterously excited disturbances, and disaffection against His Majesty's person and government, by overtuning and perverting law; by oppression against law, by violent outrages against persons and property, by levying war against His Majesty's subjects, &c. &c. in order to share among them and their accomplices a monopoly of usurped power, and through that usurped power divide the spoils of an insulted and oppressed nation. [T]he kingly dignity and authority must be rendered odious and insecure; he must be exhibited to his people in the shape of their butcher; the latter must be trampled under foot, ... burned, shot, transported, hanged, tortured, outlawed, and disarmed by whole provinces: and why? That a traiterous junto may fatten on the blood and sweat of a brave and loyal people. In a letter to the Marquis of Landsdowne, from an Irish farmer.* [Dublin?], Printed in the year 1798. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=>

uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CB127686190&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>; and Poole, T. *A treatise on strong beer, ale, &c. Fully explaining the art of brewing, in the best manner; interspersed with observations, introductory to national benefit; and shewing the absurdity of perverting the ancient British customs.* By T. Poole, butler to the Right Honourable Lady Jane and Sir Willoughby Aston, bart. London, 1783. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&>

overwhelmingly male.²⁹ In short, perversion indicated not alterity but proximity and permeability, not lack but misuse and misdirection, a warping of the norm rather than its polar opposite. In this sense, perversion functioned in the period much in the way that abjection does, cracking open the boundary between inside and outside: “It is . . . not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”³⁰ Perversion is thus a structure not of self and other but of an inside always being threatened with penetration by that which is adjacent to it. It is therefore a dynamic structure that is always threatening to annihilate itself—described, in fact, by Jonathan Dollimore as a “perverse dynamic [which] generates internal instabilities within repressive norms.”³¹ For Dollimore, such a model of perversion predates its sexual uses. In Augustinian Christian thought, he notes, perverts are those who “allegedly pervert their most divine attribute, free will, which then becomes the primary, or for Augustine, the only, source of evil.”³² This resonates with the contradictions found in criticisms

tabID=T001&docId=CB130333535&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>. See also the discussion of “perverted genius” below.

²⁹ *The unnatural father: or the dutiful son's reward. Shewing in the first part, how a rich merchant in Dorsetshire having two sons, the eldest which was the most dutifull, was seldom suffer'd in his presence and when he was, he was sure of being Kick'd & abused, and at last was turn'd out of Doors. How in the Second Part, the youngest Son, which was the most Stubborn, perverse and Wickedest youth, was the Fathers chiefest delight and Care, but for a Harlot's sake kill'd a Man, which oblig'd his father to Mortgage his whole Estate rather than suffer such disgrace in his family. In the last Part, how the poor forsaken Orphan trusting in God's goodness & Mercy, Cross'd the Seas, where he Married a fortune worth Ten Thousand Pounds, and just return'd at the critical Minute as to the succouring his distressed Parent in the time of his greatest affliction.* London, [1775?]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do>

?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CW107716017&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>. See also the discussion of “perverted genius” below.

³⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, reprint edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

³¹ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33.

of Lewis (phallic, threatening genius or pilfering, effeminate fop?): for Augustine, as for Lewis's critics, "Perversion becomes a main criterion of evil, mediating between evil as lack and evil as agency."³³

Reviewers often commented on Lewis's own 'perversion' in ways that correspond to this dynamic model of perversion: repeatedly, Lewis was condemned not for a lack of talent but for its misuse, not for effeminacy but for predatory, 'perverted' masculinity.³⁴ His 1801 miscellany *Tales of Wonder*, which borrowed liberally from other sources, earned the nickname "tales of plunder," and a reviewer at *The Antijacobin Review* suggests that "[Lewis's] talents are strangely perverted."³⁵ Thomas Dermody ("Mauritius Moonshine") pushes this same rhetoric a bit further, asking, "Did I discover the mysterious hole, / From whence your putrid carcasses [sic] you stole?"³⁶ Invoking the historical definition of plagiarism as kidnapping and seduction, Dermody

³² Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 184.

³³ Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 183.

³⁴ This study necessarily builds upon much great scholarship on the gendering of authorship. See

Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Miriam Brody, *Manly Writing: Gender, Rhetoric and the Rise of Composition* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993); Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Raymond Stephanson, *The Yard of Wit: Male Creativity and Sexuality, 1650-1750* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Laura J. Rosenthal, *Playwrights and Plagiarists in Early Modern England: Gender, Authorship, Literary Property* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); and Linda Zionkowski, *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660-1784* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). For a more extensive list of related texts, see Rosenthal, 1.n.1 and 2n.2. For more on eighteenth-century plagiarism in general, see Bertrand Goldgar, "Imitation and Plagiarism: The Lauder Affair and Its Critical Aftermath," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 34.1 (2001): 1-16; Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

³⁵ Louis F. Peck, "Southey and Tales of Wonder," *Modern Language Notes* 50.8 (1935): 513-14, 514; Rev. of *Tales of Wonder*, *The Antijacobin Review* VIII (1801): 323.

³⁶ Thomas Dermody, "More Wonders!" in *The Harp of Erin: Containing the Poetical Works* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807) 1:108-24, 116. Quoted in Fitzgerald, "The Gothic Villain and the Vilification of the Plagiarist," 13.

compares plagiarized texts to dead bodies, likening Lewis not only to a grave robber, but also potentially a cannibal or a necrophile (not unlike Ambrosio the monk himself). This passage demonstrates the beginnings of a deep analogy between plagiarism and sexual misbehavior, which follows upon the longstanding tradition of thinking of texts as bodies (and therefore both nominally autonomous and potentially penetrable). Although plagiarism is often associated with a lack of creative potential, and although women writers were likely often accused of plagiarism for this reason, plagiarism simultaneously (and paradoxically) contributes to the proliferation of texts, an illegitimate and masculine-coded hyperproductivity. In fact, as Rebecca Moore Howard has argued, plagiarism's origins in concepts of kidnapping and rape accord a great deal of (phallic) agency to the plagiarist, coding plagiarism in the cultural imagination as male-male rape.³⁷ Indeed, the phrase "mysterious hole" would have resonated differently with readers who were already familiar with Lewis's reputation as a lover of men.³⁸ Yet in the same document, Dermody still asserts that he "entertain[s] the most profound respect and veneration" for Lewis's skill and knowledge while "condemn[ing] their perversion and influenc[e]."³⁹ Acknowledging Lewis's "pert facility" and "quick conception," Dermody then asks, "But why to vice bestow a pander screen? / Why with thy monstrous births deform the scene?"⁴⁰ After all, Lewis isn't really sterile, engaging in servile imitation; rather, he produces "monstrous births."

³⁷ Rebecca Moore Howard, "Sexuality, Textuality: The Cultural Work of Plagiarism," *College English* 62.4 (March 2000): 473-84, 474.

³⁸ D. L. Macdonald gives a balanced account of Lewis's sexual sensibilities, as well as the methodological difficulties of doing so, in *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 59-94.

³⁹ Dermody, 109-10.

⁴⁰ Dermody, 113.

The “perverse dynamic” is critical to the cultural work done by the sodomite in the eighteenth century.⁴¹ Cameron McFarlane writes that “sodomy is always represented as a deviant or confused form of ‘heterosexuality’”; that is, sodomy is seen not as the lack or the opposite of heterosexuality but rather as a close variation upon it.⁴² Hence the power of the concept: “The sodomite,” McFarlane later writes, “through the continual introduction of what is ‘foreign,’ frustrates the very discursive structures through which one imposes order and sense on the world.”⁴³ Sodomy, then, is figured as bringing the outside in, thereby perpetuating itself. Alan Bray’s work on early modern homosexuality also suggests this structure: “[sodomy] was not conceived of as part of the created order at all; it was part of its dissolution.”⁴⁴ Sodomy was not simply effeminacy; rather, it was masculine generative powers gone awry.

This phobic and sexist construction of sodomy explains why Dermody has to give Lewis the power to beget texts—a power seemingly in conflict with Lewis’s alleged textual thefts—in order to accord enough influence to Lewis (or his texts) to justify his outrage (occasioned by Lewis’s gender and higher class status). In the model of perversion I have been articulating, sodomy is not merely unproblematically opposed to procreation; rather, it involves the squandering or misuse of generative capabilities, which sometimes produces ‘monstrous births.’ Hence the longstanding associations between sodomy and the financial transgressions of usury,

⁴¹ Jonathan Dollimore, “The Cultural Politics of Perversion: Augustine, Shakespeare, Freud, Foucault,” *Textual Practice* 4 (1990): 179-96, 182.

⁴² Cameron McFarlane, *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire, 1660-1750* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 44.

⁴³ McFarlane, 59.

⁴⁴ Quoted in McFarlane, 60.

fraud, and speculation.⁴⁵ To be sure, these associations predate the eighteenth century: see, for example, Aristotle’s “claim that both usury and sodomy constituted ‘unnatural breeding’” (i.e., intercourse based on sameness rather than difference)⁴⁶ or Renaissance understandings of sodomy as “*expenditure* without return.”⁴⁷ Nevertheless, given the rise of global capitalism and speculative economic systems, these associations grew stronger in the eighteenth century, as McFarlane has argued. McFarlane focuses on the South Sea Bubble of 1720 as a flashpoint: “The connection between the rise of a credit economy and sodomy lies in the fears which were expressed about each of these phenomena. It was feared that both speculation and sodomy would result in a thwarting of the proper circulation of industry on the one hand and of heterosexual desire on the other, both of which, ideally, should end in production—either of more English goods or of more English people.”⁴⁸ The economic dimensions of homophobic rhetoric in the period will be more thoroughly addressed in the following chapter on Charles Brockden Brown.

Eighteenth-century economic anxieties resonated with and reinforced a particular type of homophobic trope about excessive and misdirected generative power. This trope, in which the sodomite’s ‘perverted’ masculine abilities create monstrous pregnancies, also has a long tradition. Take, for example, “The Sodomite, or the Venison Doctor, with His Brace of Aldermen-stags” (1684), a ballad written in the wake of the Popish Plot.⁴⁹ This ballad satirically

⁴⁵ This group of associations, linked to the rise of mercantilist capitalism, also involved condemnations of masturbation. See McFarlane, 54; Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2004); and Richard C. Sha, “Medicalizing the Romantic Libido: Sexual Pleasure, Luxury, and the Public Sphere,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 27.1 (2005): 31–52.

⁴⁶ Greene, “‘You Must Eat Men’: The Sodomitic Economy of Renaissance Patronage,” 171.

⁴⁷ Will Fisher, “Queer Money,” *ELH* 66.1 (1999): 1-23, 7.

⁴⁸ McFarlane, 97-98.

⁴⁹ *The Sodomite, or the Venison Doctor ... To the Tune of, Sauny Shall Ne're Be My Loge Again* (London: 1684).

depicts Titus Oates's deception of government officials into taking seriously his accusations that Catholics were planning to assassinate Charles II. The entire conceit of the ballad is Oates's impregnation of the "Aldermen-Stags": "*Declaring how a Doctor had Defil'd / Two Aldermen, and got 'em both with Child // With two Abortive Births, & shapes as vary, / They fell in Labour, and of both Miscarry.*" Oates instigates the plots, but the aldermen incubate them; their gullibility renders them completely feminized until they deliver "Two pretty *Chits*, / The like were never hatcht in *Hell*." Thus, as in many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treatments of sodomy, Oates's alleged 'perversion' connotes both abjection and phallic masculinity. The trope of 'monstrous births' persists into the eighteenth century: Ned Ward's *Secret History of Clubs* (1709) describes a molly house in which the first sight depicted is a travesty of childbirth: a man dresses in women's clothing and "was to mimick the wry Faces of a groaning Woman, to be deliver'd of a joynted [wooden] Babie they had provided for that Purpose, and to undergo all the Formalities of a Lying in." The baby is then christened, and the 'birth' is celebrated by all.⁵⁰ Similarly, a 1710 poem by John Dunton exclaims that sodomites "get no Children!—but the *Devil*."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Edward Ward, *The secret history of clubs: particularly the Kit-Cat, Beef-Stake, Uertuosos, Quacks, Knights of the Golden-Fleece, Florists, Beaus, &c. with their original: and the characters of the Most Noted Members thereof* (London, 1709), 285-86. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 24 July 2014. Interestingly, this text makes direct reference to "Doctor Oates" as the quintessential sodomite (300).

⁵¹ John Dunton, "The HE-STRUMPETS: A Satyr on the Sodomite-Club," quoted in McFarlane, 53. Granted, the construction of same-sex male intimacy changed over the course of the eighteenth century. See, for example, Randolph Trumbach's account of "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750" in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 129-40. Trumbach traces the ways in which homosexual sex came to be associated less with power and libertinism (as in the case of the Earl of Rochester in the Restoration) and more with effeminacy and an inversion of gender roles. While this makes sense, I think that the writing about sodomy from the eighteenth century gives a more complicated account: the molly emerges as a potent negative figure in the eighteenth century, but part of what makes sodomites such a menace is not merely their effeminacy but their phallic potency—and in cases like Lewis or earlier Oates or Cibber, their squandering or misuse of that masculinity. Thus, I am more sympathetic to McFarlane's critique of Trumbach's argument: McFarlane emphasizes the continuity of a heterosexual framework over the course of the eighteenth century for thinking about sodomy, and he also draws attention to the (chaotic, incoherent) heterogeneity of representations of sodomites throughout the century. See also Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*

This ambivalent figure of the sodomite—begetter of monstrous births and squanderer of privilege and potency—haunted discussions of authorship.⁵² In her study of gender and authorship in the eighteenth century, Laura Rosenthal claims that “while the women satirized in [*The Royal Mischief* and *The Female Wits* (both 1696)] endured charges of plagiarism and impropriety, it was Colley Cibber who emerged as the cultural symbol for compromised authorship.”⁵³ Rosenthal argues male authors who “fritter away the potential masculine privilege of full social subjectivity and inalienable selfhood” faced much harsher criticism than their female contemporaries “since they embarrass other men and expose the vulnerability of masculine self-ownership.”⁵⁴ This perceived crime far exceeded embarrassment, and it only grew more threatening as the eighteenth century came to a close. Writing in 1751, William Hurd distinguishes between “base and abject spirits” who “creep servilely” and those who have genius and nevertheless are to some degree unoriginal, but he aims to exonerate that latter class of authors (though still privileging originality the highest of all).⁵⁵ In other words, for Hurd, originality occurred on a nuanced and unproblematic spectrum. By contrast, Lewis’s critics half a century later seem disturbed precisely because of his liminal role in this schema: neither wholly derivative nor wholly original, his existence (and his ‘perversion’ of his capabilities) rendered him most threatening of all.

(London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982); G.S. Rousseau, “The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: ‘Utterly Confused Category’ and/or Rich Repository?” in *‘Tis Nature’s Fault: Unauthorized Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Purks Maccubbin (Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Thomas Alan King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750: Queer Articulations*, vol. 2 of 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

⁵² See Battersby and Stephanson, among others.

⁵³ Rosenthal, 190.

⁵⁴ Rosenthal, 191.

⁵⁵ William Hurd, *Q. Horatii Flacci Epistola ad Augustum: With an English Commentary and Notes, To which is added, A Discourse Concerning Poetical Imitation* (London: 1751), 109-207, 189.

Lewis's ability to engender imitators exemplifies his liminal masculinity. "[F]orth step hundreds of novelists, who ape the perverted genius of the author of the Monk," writes one reviewer of *The Monk*. Another reviewer, writing of Lewis's drama *The Castle Spectre* (1797) in the *Monthly Review*, suggests, "Mr. Lewis . . . will draw after him a train of imitators."⁵⁶ As Gamer explains, in critiques like these, "Lewis's transgression lies in his producing an illegitimate, impure text; as authors will beget imitators, the review suggests, they have a duty to produce classifiable progeny. In arguing thus, the above review typifies a recurring theme in the reception of *Castle Spectre*: authors are like the heads of families, and because of their enhanced position they are expected to assume a greater share of social responsibility."⁵⁷ This was particularly true because of Lewis's class position and because of the ways in which both 'genius' and 'plagiarism' could upset existing class hierarchies. The difficulty that detractors faced, though, was that at the same time that they want to condemn both Lewis's derivativeness and his immorality, they must accord him, as in the first example above, a degree of "genius" in order to proclaim its 'perversion.'

One way of coping with this apparent contradiction was to invoke prodigiousness. A capacious (prodigious?) term itself, the word in Lewis's time could mean "portentous," "marvellous," "appalling," "precocious," "freakish," and "prolific."⁵⁸ The term, therefore, brings with it an association with the sublime, and a profoundly ambivalent attitude towards Lewis and other gothic writers' productivity and influence. The comment about "ap[ing] the perverted

⁵⁶ *Prodigious!!!, Or, Childe Paddie in London* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by W. Lindsell, 1818), 2:289; and Rev. of *Castle Spectre*, *The Monthly Review* XXVI (1798): 92. Quoted in Lisa M. Wilson, "'Monk' Lewis as Literary Lion," n.p.; and Michael Gamer, "Authors in Effect," 838.

⁵⁷ Gamer, "Authors in Effect," 838.

⁵⁸ "prodigious, adj. (and int.) and adv." OED Online. December 2013. Oxford University Press. 20 December 2013 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151951>>.

genius of the author of the Monk,” cited above, occurs in satirical three-volume *Prodigious!!! or, Childe Paddie in London* (1818). Something of a mixture between Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-18), Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas* (1759), and the Biblical allegory of the prodigal son (though the etymological relationship between “prodigal” and “prodigy”/“prodigious” is tenuous at best), this immense satire follows a young Irishman through fashionable London circles, mocking nearly everyone and everything. The text claims that “with respect to ‘Prodigious,’ [the book] has none of that caustic severity, which perhaps the very province of satire, and upon those who are *prodigious*, might justify. We have rather endeavoured to laugh these incurables (if possible) out of their maladies.”⁵⁹ Perhaps, in identifying the objects of satire as ‘prodigious,’ the author actually demeans them and makes them smaller. Be that as it may, the section on Lewis is more vitriolic than silly. Lewis (“from whose infernal brain, / Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train: / At whose command ‘grim women’ throng in crowds, / And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds;”⁶⁰) is given a great deal of power over his subject matter and his reputation. He is “disease[d],” and “Even Satan’s self with thee might dread to dwell.”⁶¹ *The Monk* “shews a sad perversion of talent,” and Lewis himself is a “perverted genius.”⁶² This satire’s invocation of the “prodigious,” oscillating in tone between mockery and fear, exemplifies the paradox of the ‘perverse dynamic.’

⁵⁹ *Prodigious!!!, Or, Childe Paddie in London* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by W. Lindsell, 1818), 1.vii.

⁶⁰ *Prodigious!!!, Or, Childe Paddie in London* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by W. Lindsell, 1818), 2:287.

⁶¹ *Prodigious!!!, Or, Childe Paddie in London* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by W. Lindsell, 1818), 2:287.

⁶² *Prodigious!!!, Or, Childe Paddie in London* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by W. Lindsell, 1818), 2:288, 289.

The form of *The Monk* itself seems to revel in queer excessive prodigiousness, undercutting heteronormativity and essentialism. While recounting his travels to Lorenzo, Raymond frequently focuses on his relationship with his page, Theodore. At one point, however, Raymond calls attention to this, apologizing for the “digression” from the supposed main story: his courtship of Agnes.⁶³ This rings strangely for a few reasons: first of all, Agnes actually has no personality and no character, while Theodore is engaging and charming (though basically a direct import from Sterne). Also, the Agnes-Raymond story is itself a digression from the real main story: Ambrosio’s increasingly sordid actions. This comment about ‘digression,’ paired with the text’s surprisingly heavy emphasis on Raymond’s adventures, throws into question the entire idea of priority: what’s the ‘real’ stuff of novels? The homoerotic relationship between a nobleman and his precocious servant? That nobleman’s pursuit of a beloved woman? Or the selling of one’s soul to Lucifer and the commission of unspeakable (actually, speakable) acts?

The structure of the third volume similarly undermines normative formal and thematic characteristics. The first volume has three chapters, the second volume has four, but the final volume is awkwardly longer. In volume three, at the end of chapter four, we have what looks like an ending: a double marriage right out of a comedy. But this conventional heterosexual ending is overshadowed by the fact that five pages previous to the happy double marriage, Agnes was clutching a worm-ridden baby-corpse. Clara Tuite has convincingly argued that Agnes and her dead baby, being buried alive, serve as a kind of stand-in for the homoerotic relationships in the novel, which also “undergo a form of live burial” in that the ‘revelation’ of Matilda’s ‘true’

⁶³ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 128. Subsequent citations will be parenthetical.

identity represses but fails to erase the homoerotic relationship between Ambrosio and Rosario.⁶⁴ Moreover, this is *not* the ending: the novel sends the happy couples on their way before turning to the excruciatingly protracted fifth chapter, which portrays Ambrosio's long final temptation by Lucifer, the revelation of his blood relations to Antonia and Elvira, and his long and gruesome death. In their articulation of Lewis's "prodigiousness" and "perversion," critics were picking up on the queer excess that both deviated from convention and helped to reify it by negative example.

The figure of the perverted genius appears to be almost an exclusively Romantic-period phenomenon, suggesting that genius, like other cultural constructions, produces not its other but its perversion. I have cited several instances of Lewis being called a "perverted genius" or having "perverted talents," but he is not alone: A search of several databases for 'perverted genius' turns up quite a number of hits.⁶⁵ Crucially, of these instances, most occur in the 1790s, and none occur before the 1770s, despite my searches' start date of 1700. Lewis is in surprisingly good company: Milton, Rochester, Byron, Shelley, Charles Maturin, and Edgar Allan Poe are all also 'perverted geniuses' (Cowper is cited as a rare example of an *unperverted* genius). So are the ancients—especially the Romans—and political radicals including atheists and Charles Fox. Some authors address themselves to 'Perverted Genius' as an abstract concept, or as embodied by an anonymous addressee.⁶⁶ One particularly representative early instance occurs in George

⁶⁴ Clara Tuite, "Cloistered Closets: Enlightenment Pornography, The Confessional State, Homosexual Persecution and The Monk," *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (1997): 16.

⁶⁵ Databases included *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, *Eighteenth-Century Journals*, *Early American Newspapers*, *Early American Newspapers*, and *C19*.

⁶⁶ See, for example, "A letter to the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, occasioned by his speech at the Shakespeare Tavern, On the 10th October, 1797. From a Yeoman of England" (London: 1797), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*; "Sonnet. Perverted Genius," *Monthly Magazine* 11.72 (May 1801): 329, *British Periodicals*; Truro [pseud.], "RELIGIOUS LIBERTY," *Royal Gazette* 33.42 (Oct. 1811): 4-5; Rev. of *The Lament of Tasso*

Richards's *Essay on the Characteristic Differences Between Ancient and Modern Poetry* (1789), which in many ways anticipates subsequent critiques of gothic writing: Richards describes "The decline of Roman Poetry" as a downward spiral of public taste brought on by prosperity: "the same causes, which vitiated the Taste of that People for public works, and even contaminated the purity of the senses and of the mind, communicated their contagion to the productions of the writer." Writers such as "Lucan, Seneca, Claudian, and Statius prostituted their Taste and Powers to false wit, unnatural sentiment, inflated style, and an uncontroled licentiousness of description." Richards continues, "It is melancholy to survey these labours of perverted Genius" in which writers are "wilfully deviating from the chastest models, and falling into meanness or turgidity."⁶⁷ In what would become a commonplace in the 1790s, Richards describes both the authors' and the general public's 'perversion' by equating the bodies of authors and readers with the body politic, subject to contagion, contamination, and a lack of chastity.

Dollimore and Dino Felluga both claim that the main meaning of 'perversion' shifted in the nineteenth century from 'political subversion' to 'sexual disorder,' but the above essay—like the particular critical furor incited by Lewis's work—shows us how perversion was already quite clearly linked to sexuality by the 1790s as a type of contamination affecting the body politic.⁶⁸ This emphasis on contamination reveals how perversion was imagined as a threat of the outside entering into a figurative body. By figuring the structure of norm and perversion as a (diseased,

(Byron), *The Lady's Magazine* 49 (1818): 7; and Luce [pseud.], "Perverted Genius," *The Yale Literary Magazine* 7.5 (Mar. 1842): 262, *American Periodicals Online*.

⁶⁷ Richards, George. *An essay on the characteristic differences between ancient and modern poetry, and the several causes from which they result* ([Oxford?]:[1789?]), 18-19. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. UC Los Angeles. 25 July 2014.

⁶⁸ Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*; and Dino Felluga, *The Perversity of Poetry: Romantic Ideology and the Popular Male Poet of Genius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

threatened) body, critics invited all kinds of corporeal metaphors, sexual and alimentary—metaphors that ultimately collapse into themselves.

Metaphors of Incorporation: Taste and Recipes

Metaphors of taste and eating are volatile, for two main reasons. First, although critics use them to articulate boundaries between authors, texts, and readers, these metaphors have a way of eliding those very distinctions. Secondly, although the language of consumption presupposes clear and unidirectional vectors of influence and incorporation (one either eats or is eaten), Romantic-period critics' use of that language ultimately belies how easily invertible those vectors are. Indeed, this contradictory dynamic I am describing in Lewis's reception—feminized object of consumption versus looming sodomitical-plagiaristic threat—also inheres in eighteenth-century ideas of eating and taste: we eat to reify and sustain ourselves, but there's always the risk that what we eat might change us.⁶⁹ This anxiety propels the metaphors of taste and appetite in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*—largely critiques of the gothic—such as “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation,”⁷⁰ and it turns up in subsequent responses as well. The popularity of these metaphors demonstrates at once their appositeness and their slipperiness; used to articulate troubling, dynamic relationships, the metaphors often evade their users' control.

The metaphors of taste and ingestion on which Wordsworth and Coleridge rely in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800, expanded in 1802) reveal the complex interpenetration

⁶⁹ See Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites: Foodsexidentities* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁷⁰ William Wordsworth and Samuel T. Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads: With Pastoral and Other Poems* (London: T.N. Longman and O. Rees, 1802), xvi.

between authors, texts, and readers.⁷¹ While the Preface criticizes the “gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers” and their “arbitrary and capricious habits of expression,” readers are just as much at fault, because they have sustained the market for authors who “furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites.”⁷² Because appetites both come from within and are honed by external matter, this alimentary rhetoric uniquely allows Wordsworth to blame both authors and the reading public in a cycle of degradation. Indeed, readers have “a craving for extraordinary incident [and thus] literature and theatrical exhibitions have conformed themselves [producing] frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.”⁷³ In protest, Wordsworth appeals to ideas of superior taste: “[T]he human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants.”⁷⁴

Subsequent—and contemporaneous—critics of the gothic picked up on the Preface’s metaphors of taste and appetite. Playwright George Colman (“the Younger”)’s 1797 poem on “Modern Novels,” addressed specifically to Lewis, records a conversation between “Tom, Dick, and Will,” who meet at the pub to discuss (and mostly bash) modern literature.⁷⁵ Dick delivers the apparent moral of the poem:

⁷¹ The authorship of those prefaces is itself complicated and at least partially collaborative. See Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 92-102; and Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 71-111.

⁷² Wordsworth and Coleridge, vi, ix, ix.

⁷³ Wordsworth and Coleridge, xvi.

⁷⁴ Wordsworth and Coleridge, xv.

⁷⁵ George Coleman, “MODERN NOVELS. INSCRIBED TO THE AUTHOR OF THE MONK.” *Spirit of the Public Journals for 1800*, 4 (1801): 257-61. First published in slightly different form under “Tales in Verse” in George Colman, *My Night-Gown and Slippers* (London: 1797): 5-11; as a sort of prologue to several sentimental and romantic ballads.

Taste, over-glutt'd, grows deprav'd, and sick,
And needs a stimulus.

“Time was—when honest Fielding writ—
Tales full of nature, character, and wit,
Were reckon'd most delicious boil'd and roast.
But stomachs are so cloy'd with novel-feeding
Folks get a vitiated taste in reading,
And want that strong provocative a ghost.”⁷⁶

Though clearly somewhat tongue-in-cheek, this poem incorporates the Wordsworthian critique of “gross and violent stimulants,” typically opposing healthy, moderate, simple, masculine, meaty Britishness to cloying, extreme (and by implication, imported) pleasures. This particular poem also exaggerates the analogy between literary taste and actual physical appetites (gustatory, to be sure, but perhaps also sexual). Once again, though, the author struggles to identify a source of the vitiation: certain types of fare produce certain types of appetites, creating a demand for certain types of fare, and so on.⁷⁷

Critics simultaneously articulate and confuse the relationships between author, text, and reader when they employ the recipe as a metaphor for literary conventionality. As an antidote to

⁷⁶ Coleman, “MODERN NOVELS,” 260.

⁷⁷ Even Lewis’s would-be fans used this language. An 1807 review of Lewis’s romance *Feudal Tyrants* (largely a translation of a German novel) opens by mocking Lewis for identifying himself on the title page as “The author of the Bravo of Venice. . . . Is he afraid to be remembered, or is he certain of not being forgotten as the parent of the lascivious Monk?” Although this critic laments the ways in which Lewis has toned down his act, he still uses the Wordsworthian language: “When a writer began to get dull, he had only to set a house on fire, and scorch a few damsels out of bed But the strongest stimuli at last lose their effect, and the stomach loaths [sic] the repeated dose.” The reviewer therefore counts himself among the readers who have been fed on stronger and stronger stimuli, only to be finally sated, disgusted, and bored. “Art. VI—*Feudal Tyrants*,” *Critical Review* XI (1807): 273-78, 278.

‘deprav’d’ tastes, Dick prescribes a “recipe”: “laughing it all away,”⁷⁸ but only after his comrade recites an actual recipe-like formula for the gothic novel:

“A novel, now,” says Will, “is nothing more
Than an old castle—and a creaking door—
A distant hovel—
Clanking of chains—a gallery—a light,
Old armour—and a phantom all in white—
And there ’s a novel.”⁷⁹

This “recipe” for the gothic novel crops up repeatedly in the period. A famous essay on “Terrorist Novel Writing” may have inaugurated the trend in 1797:

Take – An old castle, half of it ruinous
A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
An old woman hanging by the neck; with her throat cut.
Assassins and desperadoes, *quant. suff.*
Noises, whispers, and groans, threescore at least.

Mix them together in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering places before going to bed.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Coleman, “MODERN NOVELS,” 260.

⁷⁹ Coleman, “MODERN NOVELS,” 259.

⁸⁰ “Terrorist Novel Writing.” *Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797* 1 (1798): 227-29.

Gothic novels seemed written to recipe, to be reproduced ad infinitum, provided one has the interchangeable parts on hand. In fact, some years later Lewis would actually be turned into an ingredient himself: In a “*recipe for melodramas*,” we learn that the many required ingredients include “one quart of property-man’s *best* poison, two blunt stilettos and a dark lantern, banditti quantum suf. A mine, a broken bridge, three trumpets and a bugle, a prince or princess in disguise, an assassin and his whiskers, and peasants ad libitum, three fourths of the *Carmen Triumphale*, and the whole of *The Sorrows of the Heart*, or any modern circulating library novel; if this is not at hand, you may throw in Monk Lewis.”⁸¹ While this recipe mimics the earlier ones, it further flattens the distinctions between the author, the text, and the generic components of the text. The creator is confused with his creation; both are utterly conventional and reproducible.

This recourse to the recipe, then, ultimately degrades the boundary between author and text. Moreover, especially given that this form foregrounds the production and *consumption* of texts, the recipe also highlights some serious conceptual problems faced by anyone thinking about authorial influence. Romantic-period authors and critics frequently thought of not only reading but also intertextual influence as consumption—so how do writers establish rules for who can incorporate what? Cannibalism emerges as a fundamental, yet slippery, metaphor for textual appropriation.

Cannibalism and “Paranoid Gothic” Authorship

Ever since he acquired the popular moniker “Monk Lewis” in the 1790s, Lewis was closely associated with his work—a trend that perhaps reached its apex in the “recipe” above.

⁸¹ “Barometers, Melodramas, Pendulums, and Warming-Pans [From the Morning Chronicle, Feb. 17],” *Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814* 18 (1815): 81-84, 83-84.

Moreover, as Lewis's career continued, critics accused him of plagiarizing not only other authors, but also himself. And they were right: Lewis's literary productions often incorporated or adapted work he had previously published in a different form: for example, Lewis reprinted poems from *The Monk* in *Tales of Wonder* as well as authoring and publishing anonymous parodies of his own work—alongside the originals. Far from exhibiting clearly unidirectional vectors of generation and influence ('original author begets text'; 'predatory plagiarist incorporates innocent original'), the way critics discussed Lewis's career suggests an inchoate, cannibalistic mess. After all, charges of plagiarism presuppose a clear point of origin from which material is taken, and in Lewis's situation—and the Romantic-period print marketplace more generally—such an origin point was merely a fiction. This fiction informs the critics' frequent use of cannibalism as a metaphor for literary theft and 'perverse incorporation,' but once again, this metaphor is its own undoing.

The use of cannibalism as a metaphor for intertextuality and influence gained currency near the end of the eighteenth century and continues to this day. This metaphor has also been theorized in the twentieth century by critics including Harold Bloom, J. Hillis Miller, and Maggie Kilgour.⁸² Drawing on psychoanalytic theories of melancholy, cannibalistic models of influence and intertextuality typically require both the incorporation of outside material and the subsequent denial of that incorporation, resulting in an anxious (and fallacious) performance of self-sufficiency. I argue that we must re-examine these models through the lens of queer and feminist theory. More specifically, Sedgwick's "paranoid Gothic" mode—"in which a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure, in some respects his 'double,' to

⁸² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," *Critical Inquiry* 3 (1977): 439-47; and Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 168-225.

whom he seems to be mentally transparent”—aptly describes the ramifications of an authorship model based on disavowal.⁸³ In other words, this supposedly eminently masculine model of Romantic authorship might actually be characterized by paranoia and “blackmailability,” which Sedgwick has described as “vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail”⁸⁴:
Whose textual bodies have been intimate with whose? Who knows about it? And how does the insinuation of these intimacies affect one’s own claims to heterosexual masculinity? Certain areas of the world of print apparently did operate along these lines. For example, Felluga, writing about the early nineteenth century, observes that accusing someone of counterfeiting or quackery actually rendered the accuser more vulnerable to the same accusations.⁸⁵ Similarly, authorial cannibalism defies any clear chain of custody; anyone in the world of print is fair game, and the vector of incorporation is endlessly invertible.

Endlessly invertible, melancholy cannibalism is closely associated not only with the eating of one’s father and the taking of his power (as in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*⁸⁶), but also, paradoxically, with the eating of one’s offspring: Saturn—closely aligned with pre-Victorian concepts of melancholy—is said to have devoured his six children to avoid being overthrown by them as he had overthrown his own father.⁸⁷ Kristeva also makes these connections between melancholy and cannibalism explicit, writing that “Melancholy cannibalism, which was

⁸³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 186n.10.

⁸⁴ Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 89.

⁸⁵ Felluga, 27.

⁸⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo; Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (New York: Norton, 1952).

⁸⁷ See, for example, the writings of Marsilio Ficino, excerpted in Jennifer Radden, *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 87-93.

emphasized by Freud and Abraham and appears in many dreams and fantasies of depressed persons . . . accounts for this passion for holding within the mouth . . . the intolerable other that I crave to destroy so as to better possess it alive. Better fragmented, torn, cut up, swallowed, digested . . . than lost.”⁸⁸ Later, in a case study of a woman named Helen, Kristeva elaborates on this metaphor and links it to introjection (see the previous chapter of this dissertation): “Had [Helen] tried to lock me within herself instead of the mother we had flushed out? To confine me in her body so that, the one blended with the other, we could no longer meet, since she had for a time incorporated, ingested, buried me in her imaginary tomb-like body, as she had done with her mother?”⁸⁹

For these twentieth-century writers, the connections between melancholy and incorporation are more established than they were for writers in earlier centuries. Nevertheless, their accounts of melancholy resonate strongly with eighteenth-century treatments of literary influence as digestion, incorporation, and even cannibalism. Moreover, Giorgio Agamben claims that eighteenth-century writers actually *did* associate cannibalism and melancholy. He notes

the singular obstinacy with which eighteenth-century legal psychiatry classified as forms of melancholia the cases of cannibalism that fill with horrors the criminal chronicles of the period. The ambiguity of the melancholic relationship to the object was thus assimilated to the cannibalizing that destroys and also incorporates the object of libido. Behind the “melancholic ogres” of the legal archives of the nineteenth century, the sinister shadow of the god who devours his children rises again, that Chronos-Saturn whose traditional associations with

⁸⁸ Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 12.

⁸⁹ Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 76.

melancholy find here an additional basis in the identification of that phantasmatic incorporation of the melancholic libido with the homophagic meal made of that deposed monarch of the Golden Age.⁹⁰

The way in which Romantic-period writers understood literary influence and textual incorporation was not only ‘melancholy’ and cannibalistic but also paranoid, in Sedgwick’s sense of the term. That patriphagy, infantiphagy, and autophagy are all associated with literary relationships (as I will show in this final section) suggests a paranoid gothic structure where being a cannibal renders one susceptible to being cannibalized oneself. This is borne out in the satirical “More Wonders!” (1807) and “Printed By Mistake” (1823), in which the vectors of influence, appropriation, and incorporation are always reversible.

A few pages further into Dermody’s critique of Lewis, plagiarized works themselves exact their revenge on *Tales of Wonder*: one night, the speaker imagines he sees all the books pillaged by Lewis descend from their shelves and attack *Tales of Wonder*, tearing out what’s theirs. “Fierce they approach’d,” the speaker observes, “and (oh, extremest grief!) / Each from the stranger-volume tore a leaf.”⁹¹ He then investigates what’s left:

Curious to know what lucubration rare
Those vellum-vested knaves would deign to spare,
Thy tome, all tatter’d as it was, I took:
Good heav’n, how much unlike the former book!
For they had pick’d the meat, but spurn’d the bone;

⁹⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 21. See also *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse* 6 (1972); and Frank Lestringant’s chapter on “The Melancholy Cannibal” in *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁹¹ Dermody, “More Wonders!”, 120.

And left thee only Southey's and—thy own.⁹²

Whereas earlier Dermody compared Lewis's plagiarisms to sodomy and necrophilia, here cannibalism is the operative metaphor. Dermody indulges in a fantasy of literary origins, in which the provenance and ownership of material is very clear: the books attack in order to take back what's rightfully theirs. Here Dermody revises a fable of Aesop's—about a crow disguising himself as a peacock—long used to condemn plagiarism. Wordsworth, writing of Gray in 1816, refers to that fable: “if I were to pluck out of Grays tail all the feathers which, I know, belong to other Birds he would be left very bare indeed.”⁹³

Whereas the peacock fable leaves little doubt as to whose feathers are whose, Dermody's use of cannibalism actually undermines the presumed stability of literary origins by blurring the distinction between original and copy. Instead of using stolen feathers to ornament one's exterior, here the books wholly incorporate and assimilate material. When the books in Dermody's scene reincorporate their property from *Tales of Wonder*, we can only assume that Lewis (or *Tales of Wonder* itself) just as easily took the “meat” off *their* “bone[s]” as well. And if—as Dermody and others imply—authorial property is like human flesh in the voracious print market of the late eighteenth century, it is at once too easily co-opted *and* too closely aligned with the author's physical body. Rather than stabilizing authorial property, this conflation of the author's body and text renders him a potential object of cannibalism. Textual cannibalism incriminates by association: one who knows about cannibalism or has been cannibalized can easily become the cannibal himself. In this way, intertextuality in the late eighteenth century

⁹² Dermody, “More Wonders!”, 121.

⁹³ *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1812-1820*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1790), 301. Quoted in Roger Lonsdale, “Gray and ‘Allusion’: The Poet as Debtor,” *Studies in the Eighteenth Century IV* (1979): 31-55, 34.

operates in a “paranoid Gothic” mode, “in which,” Sedgwick writes, “a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure, in some respects his ‘double,’ to whom he seems to be mentally transparent.”⁹⁴

The 1823 invective “Printed by Mistake” takes these metaphors to a greater extreme and accordingly shows them to be totally absurd. Once again, when used to establish author-text and text-text relationships, cannibalism a) obscures the boundary between creative agent and creation and b) shows how infinitely invertible (and thus paranoid) the vectors of incorporation are. This humorous essay compares the literary marketplace to the famously homoerotic cannibal shipwreck scene in Canto II of Byron’s *Don Juan*.⁹⁵ The association between literature and food is apparent from the article’s beginning, when the author, having learned he has another piece due for the magazine, laments, “really there is no satisfying this monstrous maw of the Monthly Minotaur,—(I love alliteration;) I thought he was to demand but twelve sacrifices in the year, but his months spring up like mushrooms.”⁹⁶ Alluding to the Minotaur pushes the association between literature and food to include food as human flesh for the sacrifice; moreover, the Minotaur’s mixed-species status makes him human enough for the sacrifice to read as cannibalism.

Soon, all the barriers between authors and texts start to fail as cannibalism is much more than hinted at: the author laments that he cannot find new material and notes that “Like Saturn, I have devoured all my own children (of the brain;).”⁹⁷ The meat-frenzy escalates as the essayists move from consuming “the dead bodies of our predecessors” to “carv[ing] plagiaristic steaks

⁹⁴ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 186n.10.

⁹⁵ “Printed by Mistake.” *The New Monthly Magazine* VII (1823): 529-32.

⁹⁶ “Printed by Mistake,” 529.

⁹⁷ “Printed by Mistake,” 529.

from [one's] neighbour."⁹⁸ The relationships between predator and prey here are highly unstable: though the author himself has consumed all of his brain-children, "Magazines and Periodicals" are still 'multiplying prodigiously.'⁹⁹ What's more, the reviewers—who must themselves feed the magazines—consume "the other half of the literary crew."¹⁰⁰ It's not clear whether the essayists are consuming other writers themselves or cooking them up to be consumed by the magazines.

As the situation escalates further, the confusion of subject and object is complete:

Even this market of live food threatening to fail, in the extremity of our distress, we turn pelicans, tearing open our own bosoms to supply flesh and blood to the ravenous brood of the public. Nay, we even join in their repast. Autophagi that we are! in the voracity of our egotism, we find a perpetual feast in our own heart and head. There is hardly a single essayist that has not stuck his pen into his own person, and dished it up before the public with all its accidents, accompaniments, and collaterals.¹⁰¹

The essayist becomes both guest and host, serving himself up to the public, but also himself eating. In a travesty of the solitary Romantic author, the desperate essayist attempts to remain self-reliant by feeding on himself. Satires and reviews like these both construct and criticize an ideology of solitary masculine genius, characterized by a desire for complete autonomy mapped

⁹⁸ "Printed by Mistake," 530.

⁹⁹ "Printed by Mistake," 530.

¹⁰⁰ "Printed by Mistake," 530.

¹⁰¹ "Printed by Mistake," 530.

onto the author's body.¹⁰² The individual author appears in increasingly absurd forms—either as the one ingredient that will add the *je ne sais quoi* to your dish (“You may throw in Monk Lewis!”) or as the food source in a cannibal feeding frenzy.

The gag, of course, is that in ruminating on the lack of anything new to write about, the author has created the essay, which is then printed in the *Monthly Magazine* ‘by mistake.’ Yet despite the satirical slant of the essay, the image of authors feeding on everything around them while also feeding “the public with its myriad mouths grasping upwards in the hungry air, and roaring for blood”¹⁰³ reflects the spirit of the age. The conflation of the author's body and text, combined with an impossible ideal of solitary authorship, produces a system in which the consumption of literary material is a topsy-turvy cannibal orgy, but one with no future. And I mean ‘no future’ here quite seriously: eating one's offspring and/or oneself terminates bloodlines, futurity, progress. Rather than this confused cannibalism being an ‘alternative’ or ‘non-normative’ affect, however, it's at the heart of Romantic literary culture: think, for example, of the figure of the Ancient Mariner drinking his own blood in order to access his voice. The very concepts endemic to Romantic-period discussions of authorship (perversion, taste, cannibalism) prove to be their own undoing, showing us ultimately how the very process by which authorship became modern was itself melancholy, queer, and gothic. Moreover, tropes of closets, crypts, and bosoms *within* gothic novels anticipate and reproduce that same structure of incorporation.

¹⁰² This farcical terminus of individual Romantic authorship can be traced forward in time to Stephen King's 1982 short story, “Survivor Type,” in which the narrator (perversely echoing Crusoe's ‘economic man’) is stranded on a desert island, slowly eating himself while continuing to narrate. Maggie Kilgour notes, “As King's story cleverly illustrates, the desire for absolute self-reliance and independence from all external influences would be best satisfied by self-cannibalism, in which one doesn't even need to rely on the world outside for food.” Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 150; Stephen King, “Survivor Type,” in *Skeleton Crew* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 407-26.

¹⁰³ “Printed by Mistake,” 530.

II. Closets; or, is the Bosom a Crypt?

The most persistent tropes in gothic literature anticipate and reproduce the structure of perverse incorporation described in the first half of this chapter. By focusing on these structures as they occur within *The Monk*, I demonstrate that the gothic played yet another role in the histories of authorship and sexuality. Not only was the gothic thematically invested in nonnormative sexualities and generically unoriginal (as I argued in the first half of this chapter); it also supplied the tropes that structured conversations about it. Moreover, by looking more closely at those tropes of bosom, crypt, and closet, we gain a clearer picture of the emergent model of the blackmailable self exemplified by the author in this period. This self, constituted at the moment of its self-exposure, anticipates the Foucauldian sexual subject of the later nineteenth century.

While I have argued against readings that posit Lewis as exemplifying an essential queer ‘alternative’ to normative authorship and sexuality, I am equally skeptical of readings in which one throws up one’s hands and insists on an endless play of surfaces whose only meaning is a kind of meaninglessness. Gamer argues that Lewis sought refuge from scandal and authorial responsibility by turning to a successful career writing for the theater, where any blame could be distributed between text and performance, and among the many people involved in producing a play.¹⁰⁴ Moreover (as in Rosenthal’s reading of Cibber), Lewis appears to have *embraced* a foppish identity to escape charges of plagiarism, emphasizing “the derivative, constructed nature

¹⁰⁴ Gamer, “Authors in Effect.”

of his authorship”¹⁰⁵ and publishing self-parodies along with his original texts—something like camp, or drag.

The biggest open secret in *The Monk*, of course, is homosexuality. But the novel’s homoeroticism goes beyond the close pederastic relationships between men (Theodore and Raymond, Rosario and Ambrosio) that have received so much critical attention. *The Monk* queries the role of sex and gender in relationships at all: Ambrosio and Matilda talk at length about sexless love, and the porosity of the boundaries between platonic love and sexual lust. In fact, I think the novel is rather queer in that it ultimately shows there’s no clear defining line between these kinds of love. It’s also queer in the way that it shows gender to be relational rather than fixed: 1) it’s performative: Matilda is no more ‘essential’ woman than Rosario is an ‘essential’ man and 2) it’s relational, based on age, power, and experience: “what [Matilda] gained in the opinion of the Man, She lost with interest in the affection of the Lover. He regretted Rosario, the fond, the gentle, and submissive” (232).

Whereas this previous scholarship on authorship and sexuality in *The Monk* has focused on surfaces and performativity, I focus on the (paranoid) dynamics of incorporation and disavowal. To be sure, this seems like something of a theoretical step backwards until one realizes that this is not about rejecting surface reading for a revaluation of true, essential queerness or interiority, but rather focusing on a dynamic that reconfigures the entire model, constituting both interiority and performance at the impossible moment where one becomes the other. I am interested in structures in *The Monk* that suggest a mismatch between interior and surface without endorsing one over the other: the bosom, the crypt, and the closet.

¹⁰⁵ Fitzgerald, “The Sexuality of Authorship in *The Monk*.”

Bosoms and Crypts

Throughout *The Monk*, Lewis leans heavily on the term “bosom” as an equivocally gendered placeholder for both interiority and the physical body. Lewis’s varied use of the bosom in the novel begs the question of whether secrets are legible on the body or not. The question of the secret’s physicality and/or legibility allows us to see how the novel is actually exploring the difference between actions and identities. Moreover, as a reading of several examples will show, Lewis’s preoccupation with this term suggests the danger and absurdity of using the body as a metaphor for interiority, due to the mismatch between insides and outsides that ensues. This mismatch between interior and exterior provides discussions of gothic authorship with their defining structure, which in turn informs an emergent model of the self.

Emotions in *The Monk* frequently reside in the bosom, a sort of quasi-material container. For example, when Lorenzo stops coming by to visit, Antonia gives up having “interest in his bosom” (309). This odd phrasing (Antonia is imagining Lorenzo’s feelings for her but she is the subject of the verb) emphasizes the way the bosom acts as an intermediary between people—and between physical and nonphysical forms of investment. That division between physical and nonphysical is grotesquely ellided in “Durandarte and Belerma,” a ballad sung by Matilda while Ambrosio lies poisoned and near death. In this ballad, the Chieftain Durandarte falls in battle, uttering his dying wish to his comrade Montesinos that he “From my breast the cold heart taking, / Give it to Belerma's care” (76). Montesinos obliges, and once he has dug a grave for Durandarte, he

To perform his promise made, He
Cut the heart from out the breast,
That Belerma, wretched Lady!

Might receive the last bequest. (77)

Interestingly, the poem ends with Montesinos's reaction:

Sad was Montesinos' heart, He
Felt distress his bosom rend.
'Oh! my Cousin Durandarte,
Woe is me to view thy end!
.....
'Cousin, Lo! my tears bedew thee!
How shall I thy loss survive!
Durandarte, He who slew thee,
Wherefore left He me alive!' (77)

The ballad grotesquely literalizes the heart/bosom as site of emotions. In the same breath as Montesinos "Felt distress his bosom rend," he literally cuts out the heart of his friend to bring it back to the beloved, presumably as proof of his friend's undying love. While the novel does not comment on the song at all, presenting it as mere pretext for Ambrosio to ogle Matilda, the ballad is clearly preoccupied with the absurdity of using the body—even an organ like the heart—as a stand-in for interiority.

To be sure, Lewis is to some extent playing on a trope with a long and rich history. As Ann Jessie van Sant notes in *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (1993), eighteenth-century figures from Pope to Sterne, Boswell, and Richardson were interested in Lucian's trope of the "window on the breast," which "makes the soul, or interior

being, anatomically accessible.”¹⁰⁶ But whereas van Sant focuses on Richardson’s use of the trope as “a means of revelation,” Lewis shows both the window on the breast and revelation itself to be absurd. Lewis might be taking a page from Swift’s flayed woman in *Tale of a Tub* here.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Lewis specifically uses the word “bosom,” rather than “heart” or “breast.” While all three terms connote both the physical and the psychological, “bosom” is more external than “heart,” and less gendered than “breast.” Google Books Ngram shows that “breast” was far more commonly used than “bosom” in the 1790s,¹⁰⁸ yet in *The Monk* “breast” appears only thirty-one times, while “bosom” appears 136 times (or once every three pages). While this could be seen simply as a sign of uninspired writing (one particularly amazing usage is in “Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene,” when Alonzo’s ghastly appearance from beyond the grave at Imogene’s wedding “all bosoms appeared to dismay” [314]), I argue that Lewis’s nearly obsessive use of the word “bosom” actually exemplifies a broader concern throughout the novel: the insufficiency of language to articulate the relationship between interiority and surface in the subject.

A look at one scene will illustrate some of the range of the word “bosom,” which Lewis uses four times on one page late in the novel when Ambrosio attempts to seduce or assault Antonia at home. Ambrosio has gained access to Antonia on the pretext of being a spiritual counselor, visiting Antonia’s mother, who is unwell. When Ambrosio turns the topic to love, he

¹⁰⁶ Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 60-61. See also Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Breast* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub. Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind*, in *The Basic Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Claude Rawson (New York: Modern Library, 2002), pp. 1-114, 93.

¹⁰⁸

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=bosom%2Cbreast&case_insensitive=on&year_start=1700&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t4%3B%2Cbosom%3B%2Cc0%3B%2Cs0%3B%3Bbosom%3B%2Cc0%3B%3BBosom%3B%2Cc0%3B.t4%3B%2Cbreast%3B%2Cc0%3B%2Cs0%3B%3Bbreast%3B%2Cc0%3B%3BBreast%3B%2Cc0

suggests to Antonia that perhaps “a thousand new wishes, new ideas, new sensations, have sprang *in your bosom*, only to be felt, never to be described” (261, emphasis added). When she protests innocence, he continues, “Have you seen no Man, Antonia, whom though never seen before, you seemed long to have sought? Whose form, though a Stranger's, was familiar to your eyes? The sound of whose voice soothed you, pleased you, penetrated to your very soul? In whose presence you rejoiced, for whose absence you lamented? With whom your heart seemed to expand, and *in whose bosom* with confidence unbounded you reposed the cares of your own? Have you not felt all this, Antonia?” (261, emphasis added). Antonia innocently responds in the affirmative, that yes, in fact, she has felt that about Ambrosio. Daring to hope, Ambrosio seizes upon the moment:

“Antonia! my charming Antonia!” exclaimed the Monk, and caught her *to his bosom*; “Can I believe my senses? Repeat it to me, my sweet Girl! Tell me again that you love me, that you love me truly and tenderly!” “Indeed, I do: Let my Mother be excepted, and the world holds no one more dear to me!” At this frank avowal Ambrosio no longer possessed himself; Wild with desire, He clasped the blushing Trembler in his arms. He fastened his lips greedily upon hers, sucked in her pure delicious breath, violated with his bold hand the *treasures of her bosom*, and wound around him her soft and yielding limbs. Startled, alarmed, and confused at his action, surprize at first deprived her of the power of resistance. At length recovering herself, She strove to escape from his embrace. (262, emphasis added)

At this point Antonia finally understands Ambrosio's intentions, and Elvira walks in on them just in time. Yet besides illustrating Antonia's helplessness and her innocence, this unpleasant

episode hinges on the ambiguity of the word “bosom”: from seat of the emotions, to gender-neutral torso, to sexualized body part, the relationship between these meanings is intentionally obscured.

Indeed, throughout the novel, bosom means a variety of things, which I have anatomized thus: first, Lewis employs “bosom” as a near-synonym for “woman’s breast(s)”; for example, when Ambrosio opines of the portrait of Matilda posing as the Virgin Mary: “Were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom!” (41). Elsewhere, “bosom” clearly denotes “womb,” as when Agnes refers to her unborn child as “the innocent Creature, who still lived within my bosom” (404). In other moments, however, Lewis’s use of “bosom” to refer to the physical body is not explicitly gendered; for example, both Ambrosio and the Prioress are described as “cross[ing their] hands upon [their] bosom[s]” as a gesture of piety (19, 31). Indeed, when describing physical bodies with “bosoms,” Lewis most frequently uses the word in this non-gendered sense: the bosom is an object of stabbing, a place to hide small weapons and letters, and the body part most commonly involved in embraces by men and women alike.

“Bosoms” are also frequently used figuratively in the novel; for example, as a metaphor for the center or interior of something (‘bosom of a grove’ [50], ‘bosom of the Church’ [46, 301]). And finally, very frequently, the bosom is the immaterial, ungendered site of the emotions. The passions act out on the stage of the bosom: “the different sentiments with which Education and Nature had inspired him were combating in his bosom” (238). Emotions can be concealed in the bosom: “I have read the emotions of your bosom; you are yet ill skilled in concealing them, and they could not escape my attentive eye” (206). And, accordingly, emotions are also revealed from the bosom as when Elvira “unbosomed to [Ambrosio] without hesitation

her cares and apprehensions” (247). In short, the bosom is a place in which to hide emotions, a place that emotions can penetrate, a stage on which emotions riot, and place from which to reveal (or “unbosom”) emotions. Lewis thoroughly avails himself of the possible uses of this term.

Etymologically speaking, a “bosom” is both a protrusion and a cavity. It is, variously, the space created by two arms, a curved recess, a receptacle, and an interior; but it is also an object, a protrusion, something that is of the self and also apart. Finally, the bosom is also physical but also (always) metaphorical. A protruding cavity, both obvious and secret, the bosom is physically circumscribable while also gesturing beyond that physical delimitation. Like a magic wardrobe to another land, the exterior and the interior fail to align while nevertheless remaining closely linked. The bosom is a highly-visible, even tangible, hiding place, perfect for open secrets and live burials.

The bosom, in short, closely resembles “the crypt” described by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (and later, by Derrida).¹⁰⁹ Throughout this dissertation, I have been arguing that melancholy should be considered as a unique, transhistorical, and queer critical concept. A focus on melancholic incorporation disavowal sheds light onto a variety of illicit and disavowed intimacies: between individuals, between authors and/or texts, between readers or critics and texts, and now between a norm and its perversions. Moreover, in light of *The Monk’s* preoccupation with bosoms, confined spaces, and other “open secrets,” we need to also consider that melancholic indigestion is best illustrated by Abraham and Torok’s argument that incorporation creates a crypt within the subject. The lost object is incorporated but not assimilated, kept alive and kept apart from the self, albeit within the self. This is, of course, a

¹⁰⁹ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and Derrida’s introduction to the same, entitled “Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.”

deconstructionist's fantasy—an outside, kept aside, within the inside—but it is also a live burial—a theme that Sedgwick and Jodey Castricano have both noted has a particularly queer and eighteenth-century heritage.¹¹⁰ In fact, I suggest that this trope of live burial or “encryption” closely inverts the contours of the closet—an inside-out double. Abraham, Torok, and Derrida describe this crypt as (variously): a mortgage with the dead, a blood bond, a parasite, and, finally, “a cystic pocket both visible (blatant) and secret.”¹¹¹ A secret that is visible as a secret, in “in accessible and impossible reserve,”¹¹² the crypt constantly “blackmail[s]” the subject, who has taken a bite and is unable to digest: “the cryptophore . . . must constantly betray the cipher that seals and conceals [the incorporated material].”¹¹³ In other words, the crypt looks a lot like Sedgwick's closet, but inverted—within, rather than enclosing, the subject. Moreover, as Denise Gigante notes, “Originally, tomb or sepulcher meant ‘flesh-eater,’” and the word ‘sarcophagus’ is itself a pun meaning both ‘tomb’ and ‘carnivorous.’¹¹⁴

“Live burial” also preoccupies Daniel Tiffany's work on kitsch, which he describes as “a foreign body outside of history: the slumbering ‘imp’ of popular culture.”¹¹⁵ Focusing on the idea of “an alien artifact *buried alive* in the dominant ‘system’ of art of literature,” Tiffany notes that “the image and trope of *live burial* must be traced more precisely to the Gothic

¹¹⁰ Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York: Methuen, 1986); and C. Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

¹¹¹ Derrida, “Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok,” in Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xxxviii-xxxix.

¹¹² Derrida, xxxix.

¹¹³ Derrida, xxxix.

¹¹⁴ Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 113.

¹¹⁵ Daniel Tiffany, *My Silver Planet: A Secret History of Poetry and Kitsch* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 69.

imagination.”¹¹⁶ As an example of Sedgwick’s persistent attention in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* to the trope of live burial, he quotes: “a darkness within darkness, a tempest within a tempest . . . in each case the distinctness of the inner event, the way it resists assimilation to the outer, is the focus of attention.”¹¹⁷ It is precisely this incommensurability between inside and out that links Sedgwick and Tiffany’s work to that of the psychoanalytic critics. Tiffany coins such paradoxical phrases as “spectacle of obscurity” and “The epistemology of ‘privacy turned inside out’” to describe a structure closely related to the closet: a secret that is all too visible *as a secret*.¹¹⁸ This ‘spectacle of obscurity,’ Tiffany continues, is “sustained in part by what Walpole calls the ‘animated prospect,’ by the stratified experience of melodrama.”¹¹⁹ Incommensurability also characterizes Butler’s concept of “political catachresis,” in which Antigone speaks the language of the human without being human, thereby requiring two incommensurable things to be true simultaneously.¹²⁰ For Butler as well, this incommensurability—political catachresis—is linked to live burial, “a socially instituted melancholia in which the unintelligible life emerges in language as a living body might be interred into a tomb.”¹²¹ From this perspective, the bosoms (and closets, and tombs) in *The Monk* are not a hamfisted attempt at depicting interiority, but

¹¹⁶ Tiffany, 70.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Tiffany, 70.

¹¹⁸ Tiffany, 113-14.

¹¹⁹ Tiffany, 114. Julian Yates has also noted the paradoxical nature of the priest-hole (used to hide Catholic priests in private homes) in the English psyche, writing that “The essence of the priest-hole lies not in the desire to break it open and expose its contents, but in the very lack or loss of knowledge that its design induces” (145). Noting how in literature priest-holes assume both material and narrative functions (149), Yates emphasizes how these spaces collapse the distinction between inside and outside (157). In other words, the priest-hole thwarts a conventional understanding of the relationship between secrecy and disclosure, or privacy and publicity. Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

¹²⁰ Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 82.

¹²¹ Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, 80-81.

rather a registering of incommensurability between the interior and outer. This is “the epistemology of secrecy” as Tiffany calls it—we know it’s there, and yet we can’t know it, can’t assimilate it to what’s around it.¹²²

A series of unassimilable bosoms structures one of the pivotal scenes in *The Monk*, setting the plot (and Ambrosio’s downfall) in motion. Having condemned the pregnant Agnes to severe punishment at the hands of the Prioress, Ambrosio retreats to a grove on the Abbey grounds. The description of the scene strongly (one might say ludicrously) establishes the primary meaning of “bosom” as metaphorical:

In the bosom of this little Grove stood a rustic Grotto, formed in imitation of an Hermitage. The walls were constructed of roots of trees, and the interstices filled up with Moss and Ivy. Seats of Turf were placed on either side, and a natural Cascade fell from the Rock above. Buried in himself the Monk approached the spot. The universal calm had communicated itself to his bosom, and a voluptuous tranquillity spread languor through his soul. (50)

Here, Lewis uses “bosom” twice, first to refer to the metaphorical heart or interior of the grove, and secondly to refer to Ambrosio’s internal mental and emotional state. Despite all its protestations of tranquility, however, the scene evinces anxiety about the relationship between the literal and the metaphorical, and between the natural and the artificial. The entire milieu, although constructed of natural materials such as moss, ivy, rock, and water, is completely

¹²² Another line of analysis would consider the relationship between breast and crypt in destabilizing language. See Spivak’s introduction to *Of Grammatology*; Derrida’s introduction to *Wolf Man’s Magic Word*; Abraham and Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection vs. Incorporation,” in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 125-38; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York: Methuen, 1986); C. Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida’s Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001); and Maria Christou, “I Eat Therefore I am: An Essay on Human and Animal Mutuality,” *Angelaki* 18.4 (2013): 63-79.

artificial, an “imitation” at best (as Ambrosio himself notes [53]). Perhaps this accounts for the strangeness of Ambrosio’s response to the setting: “universal calm,” sure, but also “voluptuous . . . languor.” More than anything, this passage foreshadows the trajectory of the rest of the chapter, as the way Lewis uses the word “bosom” transforms completely from metaphorical (emotional, internal) to literal (external, and often—though ambivalently—gendered). The poem on the hermitage wall claims, “No thought of guilt my bosom sows” (51), and when the novice Rosario appears, his conversation with Ambrosio centers on misanthropy, when “Hate inflames [one’s] bosom” and when the “love of society revives in [one’s] bosom” (53). Rosario then speaks of a man whose “noble form, his spotless character, his various talents, his wisdom solid, wonderful, and glorious, might have warmed the bosom of the most insensible” (56). When Rosario evinces distress, Ambrosio comforts him by adjuring, “From the moment in which I first beheld you, I perceived sensations in my bosom, till then unknown to me” (58). This of course, provides Rosario with the encouragement to “unveil to you my heart” and admit to Ambrosio, “I am a Woman!” (58). When Ambrosio firmly, yet compassionately, rejects Matilda, in despair Matilda LITERALLY unveils her bosom: “She suddenly drew a poignard: She rent open her garment, and placed the weapon’s point against her bosom” (65). As Matilda threatens to stab herself, Ambrosio glimpses her exposed breast in the moonlight:

As She uttered these last words, She lifted her arm, and made a motion as if to stab herself. The Friar’s eyes followed with dread the course of the dagger. She had torn open her habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon’s point rested upon her left breast: And Oh! that was such a breast! The Moon-beams darting full upon it, enabled the Monk to observe its dazzling whiteness. His eye dwelt with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous Orb. A sensation till then

unknown filled his heart with a mixture of anxiety and delight: A raging fire shot through every limb; The blood boiled in his veins, and a thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination.

‘Hold!’ He cried in an hurried faltering voice; ‘I can resist no longer! Stay, then, Enchantress; Stay for my destruction!’ (65)

Until this point in the novel the “bosom” has been a largely genderless entity, rarely sexualized and often metaphorical (i.e., the bosom as the seat of interiority and the emotions). From this point onward, over the course of the novel, Lewis’s usage shifts from that type of bosom to more material and gendered bosoms: the bosom as female breast, the bosom as the womb, the bosom as a physical and literal container (for secret letters, tokens of love, etc.), and the bosom as an object of stabbing (see: Matilda, the Bleeding Nun, guests in the murder inn, and finally, Antonia). This shift becomes complete when Ambrosio, after raping Antonia, stabs her in the heart to prevent her from ruining his reputation. Rather than completely deflating the more abstract connotations of “bosom” by rendering them grossly material, Lewis’s varied use of the term requires that the reader maintain incommensurable meanings simultaneously. For Sedgwick, this incommensurability between interior and exterior in the gothic—exemplified, I would argue, by the bosom in *The Monk*—informs the construction of the self, which is “spatialized” through boundaries.¹²³ Castricano builds on Sedgwick’s work on the gothic, observing that “Because the spatial conventions determine the division between inside and outside, they also draw attention to the dividing line itself as a border or a space that is neither

¹²³ Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, 12.

inside nor outside.”¹²⁴ It is at that line, and the dynamic of transgressing it, that we find the modern closeted self.

Coming out of the Closet?

Both authorship and sexuality are constructed through disclosure and concealment because this is true of emergent private subjectivity more broadly. In “Roderick Random’s Closet,” Steven Bruhm argues that “the appearance and persecution of a gay subculture in London” coincides with the emergence of the self in philosophy: “This reification of the self, begun in Descartes and intensified in Locke, arises at the same time as [a proto-gay identity], and is inseparable from it. The private, inviolable space of the self that constitutes an identity we call modern is also the private space of the gay closet—a space that hides the self from the outside world, a space that that outside world can never fully know.”¹²⁵ In other words, “the individual subjectivity . . . made possible the development of the gay closet.”¹²⁶ Bruhm concludes his reading of sexual secrets and identity in Smollett’s novel by asserting that “In the mapping of the closet through representations of homosexual desire, *Roderick Random* also maps the development of a disjuncture that troubles the burgeoning heterosexual male at the beginning of the eighteenth century. That disjuncture, effected by the closet, is the recognition that performance is necessary to the solidifying of identity, but that performance also displaces identity, that it renders the self something other than the self.”¹²⁷ In some ways, Bruhm’s argument resembles Habermas’s account of the bourgeois public sphere in which subjects are—

¹²⁴ Castricano, *Cryptomimesis*, 122.

¹²⁵ Steven Bruhm, “Roderick Random’s Closet,” *English Studies in Canada* 19.4 (1993): 401-15, 406-7.

¹²⁶ Bruhm, 407.

¹²⁷ Bruhm, 411.

paradoxically—privately formed but publicly reified. In both of these critics’ logic, the public self is already a performance of some other, more authentic self.¹²⁸ This resonates with Raymond Stephanson’s account of eighteenth-century masculine authorship as sexualized self-exposure that renders the author vulnerable (see chapter 1).

While these conceptions of an inviolable private self are widespread, they do not quite align with the models of sexualized authorship we see in and around *The Monk*. However, neither does *The Monk* turn out to be such an endless play of surfaces that everything is meaningless performance. Rather, the topoi of open secrets, blackmail, and live burials in *The Monk* suggest a much more dynamic and mutually imbricated relationship between private and public selves. Lewis illustrates this in a scene where Raymond coerces his page, Theodore, into sharing a personal composition. Theodore’s poem is about Cupid goading the old Anacreon into writing love poetry again. Their relationship is not unlike Theodore and Raymond’s. After Raymond reads the poem, he gives Theodore feedback: first off, he advises him against circulating his work too widely: bad and good poems are punished in different ways, but they are all punished (198). Even good poems attract “partial and ill-humoured Criticism . . . and they who cannot succeed in finding fault with the Book, employ themselves in stigmatizing its Author. They maliciously rake out from obscurity every little circumstance, which may throw ridicule upon his private character or conduct, and aim at wounding the Man, since They cannot hurt the Writer. In short to enter the lists of literature is wilfully to expose yourself to the arows of neglect, ridicule, envy, and disappointment” (199). Raymond concludes, “take at least the

¹²⁸ See also Andrew Elfenbein, “Stricken Deer: Secrecy, Homophobia, and the Rise of the Suburban Man,” *Genders* (University of Colorado, 1998), n.p.; and two other essays that explore the philosophical and literary emergence of interiority by looking at actual closet spaces: J.W. Fisher, “‘Closet-work’: The Relationship between Physical and Psychological Spaces in *Pamela*,” in *Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence*, ed. Valerie Grosvenor Myer. London: Vision, 1986), 21-35; and Diane Berrett Brown, “The Female ‘Philosophe’ in the Closet: The Cabinet and the Senses in French Erotic Novels, 1740-1800,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9.2 (2009): 96-123.

precaution of communicating your verses to none but those, whose partiality for you secures their approbation” (199). Having made this disclaimer, Raymond goes on to critique the rhyme, the triteness, and also “most of the best ideas are borrowed from other Poets, though possibly you are unconscious of the theft yourself” (200). Moreover, such faults would only be excusable, he says, in someone who needs to write for money, “obliged to compleat a given task in a given time, and [is] paid according to the bulk, not value of their productions. But in those whom no necessity forces to turn Author, who merely write for fame, and have full leisure to polish their compositions, faults are impardonable, and merit the sharpest arrows of criticism” (200). In this passage, Lewis anticipates a whole array of criticisms that would, upon publishing this text, be leveled at him, indicating that he is aware of his ‘blackmailability’ both as an original author and as a private subject with sexual secrets.

Critics have suggested a variety of lenses for the frustratingly elusive versions of the self—neither essential nor performative—in *The Monk*. Tuite argues that *The Monk* employs a Foucauldian understanding of disclosure, in which disclosure itself produces knowledge.¹²⁹ Fitzgerald argues for a relationship between literary “drag” and literary “closeting” in *The Monk*, a relationship that she never makes explicit. It seems as though “closeting” has to do with hiding what is essential, while “drag” has to do with exposure that exposes the artificiality of the thing being copied. Fitzgerald stresses that the homoeroticism being “closeted” is itself a sort of false positive, invoking Butler’s assertion in *Gender Trouble* that “gay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy.”¹³⁰ While both Tuite and Fitzgerald’s readings are compelling, they do not take into account the persistently perverse and incommensurable

¹²⁹ Tuite, “Cloistered Closets,” n.p.

¹³⁰ Fitzgerald, “Sexuality of Authorship,” n.p.

structures of open secret and live burial that permeate the novel. In light of these structures, I suggest we think of the self in *The Monk* as constituted at the moment of “political catachresis”: entry into the public sphere changes both the self and the public. This resonates with Paul Kelleher’s study of madness, sexuality, and the public sphere in eighteenth-century Britain. Kelleher highlights a “dimension of publicity that Habermas leaves unexplored: the power of publicity to turn against and undo itself, to radically question and ironize the ‘reason’ and ‘rationality’ that are presumed to underwrite the public sphere.”¹³¹ That is, “As images that ideologically align reason with heterosexuality, and unreason with homosexuality, are publicly disseminated, a critical space opens for contesting the authority of heteronormative ideology and imagining queer forms of expression, sociability, and freedom.”¹³² In short, the open-secret structure of the self in *The Monk* suggests a more dynamic relationship between private self and public self-revelation or performance in the Romantic period, which I will explore at greater length in the next chapter.

III. Coda: The Gothic Ideology?

Authorship and sexuality in *The Monk*, and in Romantic literary culture more broadly, are both constructed through disclosure and concealment, indicating the emergence of a particular kind of private subjectivity more generally. This model of subjectivity is neither essential and private nor performative and public, but is instead the product of a tracking back and forth between interior and exterior, a system reflected by the gothic tropes of crypt, live burial, open secret, and perverse incorporation. In observing this, I am building upon arguments by Fitzgerald

¹³¹ Paul Kelleher, “Reason, Madness, and Sexuality in the British Public Sphere,” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 53.3 (2012): 291-315, 309.

¹³² Kelleher, “Reason,” 292-93.

and Castricano that some of the most influential tropes informing our understanding of sexuality, authorship, and language itself derive from the gothic.¹³³

In *The Monk*, Ambrosio himself is described as having “in-born genius” that has been perverted by repression (238), a portrayal that doubtless influenced critics’ portrayal of Lewis himself. Indeed, there is nothing more gothic than the rhetoric critics use to condemn the gothic. Dermody’s satire opens by compares Lewis to his ghastly creations with an epigraph from Macbeth:

The times have been,
That when the brains were out the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
To push us from our stools. (108)

An excellent example of how critics of the gothic borrowed their vocabulary from the gothic itself, the placement of this quotation at the opening of the satire addressed to Lewis invites the reader to read the brainless ghouls who won’t stay dead not just as elements of Lewis’s writings, but as a commentary on gothic authors like Lewis himself. In policing what they perceived to be “perversions” of authorship and masculinity, critics of the gothic used tropes taken from the gothic itself. Thus, critics incorporated and disavowed the terms they used to distance good writing from bad writing. The very tropes used to enforce normative masculinity are themselves drawn from the gothic. Perhaps this is why they fall apart upon closer scrutiny.

¹³³ Fitzgerald, “The Gothic Villain and the Vilification of the Plagiarist”; and Castricano, *Cryptomimesis*, 6.

CHAPTER 3

“The Perilous Precincts of Private Property”:

Closets, Circulation, and Sterility in Charles Brockden Brown’s 1799-1800 Novels

In *Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799-1800), the eponymous protagonist spends his first night in Philadelphia trapped in a closet by a charming stranger, witness to a strange scene: the master of the house replaces his own lost child with a foundling. In *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799), the eponymous protagonist struggles with grief for a lost friend while following a mysterious stranger through the wilds of Pennsylvania. He sleepwalks, kills and drinks the blood of a panther that has been stalking him, and ultimately goes on a rampage, murdering countless members of the Delaware Indian nation. Charles Brockden Brown’s novels from this short period are two sides of the same coin: whereas *Arthur Mervyn* is preoccupied with sameness and the interchangeability of male bodies, *Edgar Huntly* takes on illicit and violent intimacy between dissimilar beings. Whereas *Arthur Mervyn* concerns itself with the pleasures and anxieties of modernity and the market, *Edgar Huntly* treats the archaic, the belated, and the spectral with equal amounts of attraction and revulsion.¹

While Michael Warner and others have begun to address the questions surrounding publication and the public sphere in *Arthur Mervyn*, these readings by and large ignore the elephant in the room—or rather, the handsome young man hiding in the closet.² By contrast,

¹ Charles Brockden Brown, *Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008); and Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleepwalker*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009). Subsequent references to the texts will be cited parenthetically.

² Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (University Park: Pennsylvania State

critics have liberally (even pruriently) delved into the homoeroticism in *Edgar Huntly* while neglecting publicity and authorship, despite *Edgar Huntly*'s consistent thematization of these topics.³ This chapter, then, attempts to bring together the two related novels and the two related critical endeavors in order to flesh out the relationship between authorship and sexuality in Brown's work. While *Arthur Mervyn* attempts to police or discipline perceived aberrations of sexuality and authorship, *Edgar Huntly* revels in its own failures and ugly feelings.

The first half of this chapter examines how Brown's treatment of authorial closeting and self-revelation anticipates subsequent sexual subject formations—that is, how sexuality is mapped onto understandings of authorship. In contrast, the second half of this chapter analyzes how anxieties about authorship in Brown's novels are mapped onto pre-existing homophobic tropes of prodigiousness and sterility. Throughout both halves of this chapter, I demonstrate how culture in the early republic used crypt-like incommensurability as a structuring logic for anxiety about authorship and sexuality.

I. Open Secrets: Privacy and Publication

While *Arthur Mervyn* and *Edgar Huntly* repeatedly attempt to endorse an earnest, Godwinian policy of self-disclosure—a policy with important implications for both authorship and sexuality—the novels continually confound that alleged value. Self-disclosure in the novels

University Press, 2008); Louis Kirk McAuley, "'Periodical Visitations': Yellow Fever as Yellow Journalism in Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19.3 (2007): 307-40; Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds, *Private Property: Charles Brockden Brown's Gendered Economics of Virtue* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997).

³ Dana Luciano, "'Perverse Nature': *Edgar Huntly* and the Novel's Reproductive Disorders," *American Literature* 70.1 (1998): 1-27; and Stephen Shapiro, "'Man to Man I Needed Not to Dread His Encounter': *Edgar Huntly*'s End of Erotic Pessimism," in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*, ed. Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 216-51.

repeatedly puts characters in danger and creates formal problems as well. As I argued in the previous chapter, an incommensurability between insides and outsides results in a gothic model of the self based in paranoia and transgression. For Brown, these contradictions can be attributed to the unclear role played by the body in republican ideology.

“Now I was once more on public ground. By so many anxious efforts had I disengaged myself from the perilous precincts of private property,” Arthur Mervyn reflects after his first disastrous attempt at connecting sympathetically with his fellow man in Philadelphia (36). Having been picked up at a pub by the young Wallace, “expensively and fashionably dressed, whose mien was considerably prepossessing, and whose countenance bespoke some portion of discernment,” Mervyn “reluctantly . . . yield[s]” to Wallace’s invitations of dinner and shared lodging (26). Wallace then proceeds to lock Mervyn in his employer Thetford’s bedroom, alone with the foundling that Thetford intends to present to his unknowing wife as a replacement for their dead baby. Mervyn, who is about to play a similar role as a body double for multiple dead young men, opens a door in hopes of escaping but finds only a closet of “considerable space” (30). Mervyn then “immure[s]” himself, citing cowardice about meeting “a stranger” in the bedroom (30). Mr. and Mrs. Thetford soon enter the bedroom, and Mervyn finds himself unable to leave, fearing that his self-exposure to the Thetfords will be misinterpreted.

As naïve as Joseph Andrews, Mervyn insists on telling the truth even when inconvenient, reflecting at length on the immorality and deadliness of secrecy. Realizing that his shadiness about his intentions to return to Philadelphia in pursuit of Wallace has caused Mr. Hadwin also to come to the city and thus put himself at risk, Mervyn exclaims, “Secrecy may seldom be a crime. A virtuous intention may produce it; but surely it is always erroneous and pernicious” (124). Warner takes this second, more frequently-expressed sentiment at face value. He insists on

an unironic reading of the novel, writing that “For Mervyn, being the novel’s hero entails the adoption of disclosure as a principle of conduct.”⁴ To this end, Warner cites Doctor Stevens’s involvement both in Mervyn’s telling of his story and his writing of it, essentially claiming that in early America “writing could produce effects on the public comparable to the benefits of medicine.”⁵ Caleb Crain echoes this endorsement, citing Godwin’s vast influence on Brown’s writing: “Godwin claimed . . . narration was a moral tonic . . . Godwinian sincerity gave license to Brown’s narrative impulse.”⁶

Crain’s and Warner’s readings, however, neglect the many ways in which self-disclosure is made impossible for Mervyn. Mervyn finds himself repeatedly imprisoned over the course of the novel: in a closet, in a coffin, and in an attic. When Mervyn is in these private, secret places he has little control over his body, his actions, and himself, but neither is he free to reveal or expose himself without fear of harm. The text suggests that the privacy and self-possession that underwrite an Enlightenment idea of the individual are mere fictions, and that the connection between privacy, agency, and subjectivity so central to much of the tradition of the eighteenth-century novel (*Clarissa* would be a prime example here) are also suspect. The novel, moreover, also demonstrates the extent to which the very idea of private subjectivity is publicly constructed. To be sure, characters in Brown’s novels often have good reason to fear disclosure: death, infamy, and more await them. More important, however, is the novels’ suggestion that there are deeper problems with the policy of disclosure: what if the very idea that you have

⁴ Warner, 166.

⁵ Warner, 160.

⁶ Caleb Crain, *American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 87.

something ‘private’ to ‘disclose’ is itself a fiction or—at best—only an emerging cultural concept?

Arthur Mervyn shows serious problems with this policy—problems that go beyond the immediate physical harm Mervyn risks by revealing his presence, or later his infected status. Ultimately, the novel suggests a very different model of selfhood than either an essential self that needs to be ‘revealed’ or a play of surfaces.⁷ When Mervyn finds himself literally entrapped in a closet, the neutral “considerable space” of the closet becomes “palpable darkness! . . . this unknown recess!” (30). Something about withdrawing to privacy creates a sense of shame; he notes that “By withdrawing myself from view I had lost the privilege of an upright deportment” (31). That is, once within the closet, his shame determines his conduct completely. Moreover, a secrecy that seemed relatively benign and straightforward (i.e., the Thetfords do not know that Mervyn is in their closet) becomes freighted with the weight of *sexual* knowledge, due not only to the fact that he is in a married couple’s bedroom, but also to the strange circumstances by which Wallace has coaxed him into the room.

Brown soon invites the reader to connect sexual secrecy with another kind of secrecy about the body and its relation to other bodies: contagion. Upon his second visit to the Thetfords’, Mervyn manages to avoid “immur[ing] myself in this closet” (30). Nevertheless, he finds himself in much the same situation, albeit figuratively: “Immured” again, though this time “in . . . dreary meditations” (118). Just as his own penetration into a private space in the

⁷ Crain alternates between stressing Brown’s Godwinian “wish to reveal himself as he really was” (*American* 87) and the extreme performativity of Brown’s letters (*American* 58-61). On Brown’s performativity, see also Peter Kafer, *Charles Brockden Brown’s Revolution and the Birth of the American Gothic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 54-72. For broader studies of the self in relationship to publication, see Warner; Grantland Rice, *The Transformation of Authorship in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Laura Langer Cohen, *The Fabrication of American Literature: Fraudulence and Antebellum Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); and Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

beginning placed him in a closet, this time the ‘immuring’ is due to an intrusion on what should be his own (private) body: Mervyn believes that upon entering the Thetfords’ house he has just contracted the fever.

Contagion is both universalizing and minoritizing: it stigmatizes the sick person as “other,” while threatening to dissolve the boundary separating those “others” from the mainstream via further infection. Mervyn portrays his own infection with yellow fever as a passive incorporation of external material: “a vapour, infectious and deadly, assailed my senses . . . I felt as if I had inhaled a poisonous and subtle fluid, whose power instantly bereft my stomach of all vigour” (111). In Mervyn’s understanding, at least, the fever feminizes those it infects, at the same time that it makes others perceive him as a threat: “My sickness being suspected, I should be dragged in a cart to the hospital; where I should, indeed die; but not with the consolation of loneliness and silence. Dying groans were the only music, and livid corpses were the only spectacle to which I should there be introduced” (118). He must stay completely closeted about having been infected, or death is even more certain.

Brown’s novels not only thematize disclosure and authorship, they also formalize it: *Edgar Huntly* consists mainly of one long explanatory account by Huntly addressed to his fiancée, collated (by an unknown editor) with a few letters between Sarsefield and Huntly. The shift to letters at the end is a shift away from (what feels like) a more general, public audience; moreover, these letters explicitly discuss the virtues of non-disclosure in writing. *Arthur Mervyn* is a sort of vindicating biography, composed in first part by Dr. Stevens to help clear Mervyn’s name to the public, but finished by Mervyn himself. As it progresses, the novel becomes more attentive and explicit about how and when it is being written, but it also becomes less publically-oriented. On the level of form, too, the novel seems to belie its own explicit agenda. As Teresa

Goddu has shown, the more that Mervyn adopts this policy of disclosure, the more complicated the novel's form becomes: the proliferation of embedded and conflicting narratives, she argues, call into doubt this value of publicity and disclosure.⁸ Indeed, the world of Brown's novels is characterized by competing and irreconcilable models of the self. While *Arthur Mervyn* seems to yearn for a nation in which these different selves could be one, *Edgar Huntly* discloses the perils, and the impossibilities, of that collapsing of public and private selves.

In *Edgar Huntly*, as in *Arthur Mervyn*, the double threat of physical harm to characters and formal confusion evinces ambivalence about disclosure as an ethical imperative. Throughout the novel, the disclosure of secrets—particularly in written documents—produces anarchy. The form of *Edgar Huntly*'s conclusion gestures towards openness and 'failure': though the pretext of the entire novel is communication between Edgar and Mary, that communication is abandoned in the novel's final pages, replaced by shorter and more urgent letters between Edgar and Sarsefield. A novel that is ostensibly about finding Waldegrave's murderer and uniting two betrothed lovers takes a crazy turn into chaos, suicide, and ultimately a lecture on authorship.

Indeed, the form of the conclusion draws further attention to what has been a consistent theme throughout *Edgar Huntly*: narrative, in the wrong hands, is dangerous. In the meeting that sets off the final events of the novel, Edgar narrates Clithero's own history to him (bizarrely, in the third person). Edgar changes the ending, sharing that Sarsefield and Lorimer are not only alive but in America. Clithero turns "maniac" again and sets off for New York (192). The most striking caution, however, is yet to come: Euphemia Lorimer reads Edgar's letter to Sarsefield, learns of Clithero's impending arrival, and immediately miscarries her unborn child. Some of the final paragraphs of the novel are devoted by Sarsefield to lecturing Edgar to "Be more

⁸ Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 47-48.

circumspect and more obsequious for the future” (194). That the novel is concerned with women intercepting letters calls attention to the reader’s similar relationship to the novel itself.

The importance and circulation of narratives, especially manuscripts, throughout *Edgar Huntly* suggests a preoccupation with questions of authorial intent, truth value, and control over the circulation and interpretation of writing. To say that *Edgar Huntly* (as well as *Arthur Mervyn*) feature unreliable narrators would be an understatement. Consider the lack of quotation marks, the concentricity of narratives (for example, when the rescued girl’s story is embedded within Sarsefield’s, which is retold within Huntly’s letter [254]), the great power of Clithero’s narrative only when retold by Huntly (273), the menace of gossip, and the ultimate unreliability of all the narrators, *especially* Huntly, on whom we have to rely: characters’ narratives are tainted by madness, guilt, and misapprehension of their own rectitude (83, 92, 142, 145-46, 226).

The fight for control over narrative, though never resolved, drives the novel’s plot. Clithero’s manuscript is hidden in a box, which Clithero unconsciously buries outdoors (77) and which Edgar violently destroys in order to satisfy his curiosity (81). We then find Edgar in a quintessential scene of reading: “I read this copious tale with unspeakable eagerness The perusal of this volume ended not but with the night” (82). Edgar soon leaves the manuscript under a rock near Clithero’s abode for safe keeping (84), and, of course, Clithero eventually recovers it by accident (181). The second manuscript—Edgar’s collection of Waldegrave’s letters—also has a life of its own. Waldegrave desired that the letters be destroyed, but Edgar has held onto them; what’s more, he intends to copy and distribute them (89-90)! Edgar, too, keeps these papers in an intricate locked box, but he, too, displaces the letters while sleepwalking (91).

Sarsefield has no qualms about reading the letters after he recovers them, and nothing but Edgar's arrival prevents him from doing so (174).⁹

The possession (or control) of these manuscripts is frighteningly important to Clithero and Edgar. Clithero only reconsiders suicide upon finding his manuscript in the wilderness (181), and for Edgar, the loss of the letters is tantamount to a complete loss of self-control: "A whispering intimation that a relique which I valued more than life was torn forever away by some malignant and inscrutable destiny" (91). Finally, Edgar's unexpected recovery of the letters produces perhaps the strangest bit of prose in the entire novel: "Passage into new forms, overleaping the bars of time and space, reversal of the laws of inanimate and intelligent existence had been mine to perform and to witness" (158).

Publication (or at least publicization) is figured as a kind of self-exposure to be simultaneously dreaded and desired. It is true that an actual loss of self-control (sleepwalking) precipitates the loss of these documents; however, losing the documents also causes Clithero and Edgar (who do not yet know of their somnambulism) to feel powerless. In Edgar's case this comes from a desire to control his friend's legacy, but that legacy ultimately reflects upon Edgar himself. Clithero's case is more straightforward: he fears the publicization of his personal history. In unconsciously renouncing control over these manuscripts, each man essentially 'outs' himself. As Shapiro notes, Clithero's "compulsive declarations of innocence . . . fix him in the defile between disclosure and disappearance, a gap that simultaneously functions as his protective camouflage and lingering accusation about being abnormal."¹⁰ Clithero is

⁹ Huntly's musket also circulates against his will, signifying the wrong things to the wrong people (185).

¹⁰ Shapiro, "Man," 232. See also readings which emphasize the way Brown plays with formal surface and depth: Luciano argues that *Edgar Huntly* thematizes readerly absorption by linking literary form and bodily sensation, and Burgett argues that the focus on dialogue in *Alcuin* "makes Brown seem 'queerer' because it highlights the "rhetoricity" of the normal. Burgett, "Between Speculation and Population: The Problem of 'Sex' in Thomas

blackmailable, and neither silence nor protestations of innocence can remove him from that predicament.

In Brown's novels, as in *The Monk*, the body seems to be called upon when other kinds of disclosure fail. Louis Kirk McAuley claims that "In volume 2 . . . Brown's attention turns to the medium of body language to assert its value in forging stable social bonds," and Warner argues that "the novel's exorbitant but repressed erotics . . . return to trouble the ideal of the citizen's literate transcendence of his unacknowledged male body."¹¹ Words alone cannot convince others of Mervyn's innocence; they need to be supplemented by bodily presence: "Nothing but his own narrative," Dr. Stevens writes, "repeated with that simple but nervous eloquence, *which we had witnessed*, could rescue him from the most heinous charges. Was there any tribunal that would not acquit him on merely hearing his defence?" (175, emphasis added).

The ways in which the body supplements other kinds of disclosure should trouble any sense of publicity-is-the-best-policy, particularly since dominant models of the public sphere in early American studies depend on a disembodied and abstracted subject.¹² While McAuley suggests that *Arthur Mervyn* registers anxiety about the disembodied nature of the public sphere in early America, the novel actually continues to insert the body back into the public sphere when it is least convenient.¹³ Brown repeatedly suggests that the body discloses its own truths—and that these truths might be different from the truth of one's (disembodied) self. Arthur Mervyn often conflates bodies and texts, opining, "There is no book in which I read with more

Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* and Charles Brockden Brown's *Alcuin*," in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown*, 122-49.

¹¹ McAuley, 331; Warner, 170.

¹² See Burgett, *Sentimental*, 14, 123-27. See also Warner and Habermas.

¹³ McAuley, 329-32.

pleasure, than the face of woman” (297), and similarly, Edgar Huntly “confesses to reading novels and bodies, and the perusal of each seems to supply him with something more than he can convert to rational use.”¹⁴ Often, the readability of the body frightens characters, as an inability to control one’s actions means a kind of involuntary self-exposure. Such is the case with sleepwalking in *Edgar Huntly*: just as Edgar observes Clithero sleepwalking, so Sarsefield observes Edgar. To be devoid of consciousness in the presence of another exemplifies a fear of being made into an object, a body, feminized. The body intrudes in a self-disclosure over which one has no control.

The novels’ dense thematization of authorship, embodiment, and disclosure congeals in Brown’s shockingly persistent use of the word “token,” particularly in *Arthur Mervyn*. Given the novel’s focus on the pervasiveness of commerce into every level of urban life, it seems fitting that Brown might take some of its vocabulary. Token, of course, could mean a physical object standing in for a financial transaction—a uniquely material instance of the city’s ‘floating wealth.’¹⁵ Yet Brown uses it almost exclusively in another sense:

The indignation that flashed from the eyes of Wortley, and the trembling consciousness of Mervyn, were unwelcome tokens. (10)

What effects will my appearance produce on the spectator? Terrified by phantoms and stained with blood, shall I not exhibit the tokens of a maniac as well as an assassin? (87)

¹⁴ Luciano, 9-10

¹⁵ “token, n.” *OED Online*. March 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/202947?rskey=SZp1Xz&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed May 21, 2017). N.b.: the word for usury (and childbirth) in Greek is ‘tokos.’

[Welbeck's] countenance betokened a mind engrossed by a single purpose, in some degree foreign to the scene before him. An intensity and fixedness of features were conspicuous, that led me to suspect the subversion of his reason. (88)

A digital search reveals fifty-four uses of the word “token” in *Arthur Mervyn*, almost all of which refer to the reading of faces or body language.¹⁶ As the language implies, in most of these situations the narrator gestures towards some kind of prior exchange, especially those which have contaminated the bearer of the token and which cannot be hidden. It is no accident, then, that a third eighteenth-century usage of the word “token” is the tell-tale signs of illness, be it the black spots of syphilis on faces in William Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* (1735) or the unmistakable signs of yellow fever: “that substance which is said to be characteristic of this disease, the gangrenous or black vomit” (*Arthur* 127). When Mervyn visits the dying Welbeck in debtor's prison, he implies that Welbeck, too, might be exhibiting certain tale-tale ‘tokens’: “I had observed tokens of a kind very different from those which used to be visible. The gloomy and malignant were more conspicuous. Health had forsaken his cheeks, and taken along with it those flexible parts, which formerly enabled him to cover his secret torments and insidious purposes, beneath a veil of benevolence and cheerfulness” (250). Welbeck metaphorizes his illness, claiming that his physical sickness somehow mirrors his moral shortcomings: “My disease lies deeper than [Stevens's] scrutiny will ever reach” (197). Yet this connection only ever reads as metaphorical, and indeed, it is not my aim in this chapter to ‘decode’ what the yellow fever ‘means,’ be it commerce, slavery, or something else. After all, for most of the novel, Welbeck has been a prime example of why *not* to trust in body language.

¹⁶ There are nearly as many occurrences in *Edgar Huntly*, most likely a symptom of the novels' concurrent composition.

Body language in these novels is ultimately highly suspect. Mervyn consistently misreads people's intentions, often as a direct result of his relying on body language. He misreads Wallace's seemingly benevolent 'countenance' (26) and Welbeck's sparkling party eyes (57), and he finds himself unable to decipher the relationship between Welbeck and Clemenza Lodi (42). Most damning is Welbeck's own avowal of "The facility with which mankind are misled in their estimate of characters, their proneness to multiply inferences and conjectures" (75).

The body is therefore no guarantor of authenticity—as further evidenced by the preponderance of wayward bodies: live burials, missing corpses, and seeming resurrections. As mentioned above, Mervyn is repeatedly entombed in claustrophobic domestic spaces, from a closet (30) to an attic (161); he is also nearly buried alive when taken as a victim of the fever (114). The novel also suggests that Watson is not actually dead when Mervyn and Welbeck bury his body, and of course Wallace is taken to the hospital as one who is as good as dead (131). These incidents are followed by numerous resurrections: Wallace awakes in the hospital in his neighbor's vomit and surrounded by corpses (132), Welbeck attempts suicide by drowning but washes up on the Jersey shore ("Welbeck had escaped from the stream alive; or had, by some inconceivable means, been restored to life" [146]), Watson's currency-laden corpse is exhumed, and Mervyn himself is reborn from fever with Stevens's care. Similarly, in *Edgar Huntly*, Sarsefield and Wiatte, as well as Edgar himself, are all presumed dead, only to return, and a forlorn Clithero is nursed back to (physical, if not mental) health.

Brown's novels long for a world in which the body would underwrite authentic relationships and disclosure of an authentic self, but they ultimately admit that such a world is not possible. Welbeck is but one prime example; in *Ormond*, Brown provides several more.¹⁷

¹⁷ Charles Brockden Brown, *Ormond; or, the Secret Witness*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006).

The inscrutable character and appearance of Martinette (if that is even her real name) totally baffle Constantia's reliance upon physiognomy, as Barnard and Shapiro have noted.¹⁸ And the most powerful dissimulator of all Brown's novels (except perhaps Carwin in *Wieland*), the aristocratic and (more or less) white Ormond successfully impersonates a black chimney sweep and infiltrates Constantia's home. To be sure, the text condemns this kind of dissimulation—in forging not only texts but also entire personalities, Ormond is portrayed as an intensification of his minion Craig's worst aspects (Craig only lies and forges writing and currency). Still, Brown seems to warn that the seemingly self-evident nature of bodies is ripe for abuse. Moreover, as Peter Kafer has argued, Ormond's character is itself an indictment of Godwinian rational disclosure—in Ormond, pure rational argument is shown to underwrite egoism, sadism, and ultimately just a sneakier kind of dissimulation.¹⁹ Ultimately, thinking of bodies as texts only sets one up to be deceived, but it may also be unavoidable.

Arthur Mervyn and *Edgar Huntly* explicitly endorse unilateral self-disclosure while thematically and formally undermining that same policy. This contradiction, I suggest, is due to the inconsistent role of the body in early republican culture's ideas of the public sphere. In these novels Brown implies that there are a variety of different selves—public and private, embodied and disembodied—and that they may indeed be incommensurable with one another. This next section suggests another reason for such incommensurability: the contaminating influence of the market. Moreover, Brown's novels map anxiety about the literary marketplace onto the same

¹⁸ *Ormond*, 59n.4. For more on the status of physiognomy in the 1790s, see Christopher Rivers, *Face Value: Physiognomical Thought and the Legible Body in Marivaux, Lavater, Balzac, Gautier, and Zola* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); Adam Potkay, *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994); Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Christopher Lukasik, *Discerning Characters: The Culture of Appearance in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Kafer, 66-90.

pre-existing (and diametrically opposed) homophobic tropes discussed in the previous chapter: prodigious over-productivity and stubborn anti-productivity.

II. Sexualizing Anxieties of Authorship

Fungibility, Prodigious Production, and Circulation

In the passage from *Arthur Mervyn* with which I opened, Thetford—exemplar of the corrupt business world of Philadelphia—succeeds in replacing his dead infant with a foundling. Though Brown elsewhere endorses familial bonds based on affection rather than blood, this particular substitution is clearly pernicious. Perhaps it is the way in which Thetford deceives his wife, feigning surprise at the discovery of the child in their bed. Or, perhaps it is the way in which the couple’s conversation shifts from the child to Thetford’s scheme to defraud another man out of his (nonexistent) fortune. Most of all, it is that identities seem to circulate far too freely in *Arthur Mervyn*. In fact, as in many of Brown’s novels from this period (young, male) bodies are essentially interchangeable. Mervyn finds himself mistaken for or standing in for at least three other handsome young men (Lodi, Clavering, Maravegli) over the course of the novel. This vertiginous fungibility derives from Brown’s anxieties about the literary marketplace, in which capital is increasingly detached from objects of value and the literary public sphere is increasingly disembodied.²⁰ Brown’s novels map this anxiety about interchangeability in capitalism onto homoerotic structures of relation that trade on a fear of sameness, linking sensibility with the paranoid gothic.

²⁰ See Michael Gilmore, *American Romanticism and the Marketplace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Andrea Henderson, “‘An Embarrassing Subject’: Use Value and Exchange Value in Early Gothic Characterization,” in *At the Limits of Romanticism: Essays in Cultural, Feminist, and Materialist Criticism*, ed. Mary Favret and Nicola Watson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 225-45; and David Anthony, *Paper Money Men: Commerce, Manhood, and the Sensational Public Sphere in Antebellum America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009).

The character of Welbeck in *Arthur Mervyn* provides a whole host of cautionary examples of intervening in the literary marketplace. Welbeck considers forging currency (69, 158) before turning to plagiarism; having stolen the dead Vincenzo Lodi's wealth and impregnated his sister, Welbeck also intends to translate an original text that Lodi wrote in Italian and pass it off as his own (79). Given that, as Crain has noted, Brown was harshly critical of plagiarism in his nonfiction writing, it stands to reason that Welbeck's textual and financial crimes are meant to further vilify him.²¹ It is worth noting that Welbeck, while embodying the ills of the American literary market, is quite Europeanized. At times he seems racially other ("His face was cast" Mervyn later reflects, "in a foreign mould" [41]), and his origins are quite murky, only with ties to the English port city of Liverpool (67). Then again, in the logic of the novel, corruption has to come from somewhere. The yellow fever is rumored in the novel to come from the West Indies, and (as Clare Lyons has argued²²), early Americans saw sodomy and other homoerotic practices as imports from Europe.

Welbeck's crimes originate in but often exceed the literary, and the text clearly connects his textual crimes with his sexual ones: his manipulation and impregnation of Clemenza and his intention to plagiarize her brother's work are presented as two pieces of the same betrayal of Lodi's dying wishes.²³ For Welbeck, bodies and texts are manipulable sources of capital, and little else: the novel repeatedly draws attention to Welbeck's "sparkl[ing]" eyes, indicative of the way in which he can morph himself to fit a given social situation (57). Welbeck realizes that every aspect of his life in Philadelphia is a business opportunity, and he attempts to beat the

²¹ Crain, *American Sympathy*, 107.

²² Clare Lyons, "Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture: Homoeroticism in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60.1 (2003): 119-54.

²³ Shapiro has also noted "The overdetermination of counterfeit business and familial relations" in the novel (*Culture* 277).

game, literally trading on the “credit” that others give him in assuming him to be wealthy and benevolent. This, of course, backfires when Thetford conspires to defraud him, assuming that Welbeck won’t even miss the money taken from him when in fact Welbeck is completely broke (32-33). Welbeck attempts to function on credit alone, but fails repeatedly, digging himself ever deeper into a laundry list of crimes.²⁴

The “perverseness of my nature,” Welbeck claims, “led me on from one guilty thought to another” (69). Having impregnated Clemenza, Welbeck turns to forgery. Sexual crimes have long been linked with literary and financial ones. Will Fisher identifies a longstanding association between counterfeiting and sodomy, noting that “queer” has historically been used as a slang term for both types of activity, and suggesting that “The modern usage might be traced to early sexological formulations in which homosexuality was seen as an illegitimate, or counterfeit, imitation of heterosexuality” or a kind of “*expenditure* without return.”²⁵ Fisher also reads texts in which “The act of sodomy is . . . figured as an inappropriate form of hospitality. Hospitality is, of course, one of the rudimentary types of economy, going back to the sense contained within the Greek word *oikonomia*: pertaining to ‘management of the household.’ Sodomy, in other words, is associated with inhospitality not only because they both involve purportedly improper relations between individuals, but also because they are both considered

²⁴ Welbeck’s attempts (and ultimate failure) to function on credit recall Catherine Ingrassia’s discussion of Eliza Haywood’s career—initially propelled on the “credit” of her name in the marketplace, but eventually stymied by that same “notori[ous]” reputation. *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12, 137. See also Cohen’s discussion of Fanny Fern’s “ambiguous legitimacy” and the way that counterfeiting, both literally and functionally, provides a kind of “currency” (161). In her reading of *Arthur Mervyn*, Teresa Goddu identifies Welbeck as exemplifying a “market-based model of identity” that so contaminates its world that most ethical or behavioral directives have little effect (36). Goddu underemphasizes the extent to which eighteenth-century writers (for example, Adam Smith) also saw the market as ethical and based on sympathy.

²⁵ Will Fisher, “Queer Money,” *ELH* 66.1 (1999): 1-23, 1, 7.

improper forms of economy.”²⁶ Welbeck’s forays into forgery and plagiarism, in other words, have a prehistory of being associated with the sodomitical, as discussed in the previous chapter.

More explicitly, the text places Mervyn and Welbeck in a classic “paranoid gothic” relationship, which, as Sedgwick describes, is a situation “in which a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure, in some respects his ‘double,’ to whom he seems to be mentally transparent.”²⁷ One of the crucial features of this relationship is the frightening lack of boundaries between the two men. Mervyn becomes deeply implicated in Welbeck’s crimes. When Welbeck asks for a sample of Mervyn’s penmanship, Mervyn writes, “My poverty, but not my will consents” (39). Thus, despite all of Mervyn’s good intentions, just by virtue of his participation in this economy, he, too, is compromised. The two men share very similar backstories: both begin adulthood fatherless and in poverty, both are too lazy or snobbish to take most kinds of work available to them, and both, therefore, wind up in Philadelphia pursuing a life of crime (67-70). Welbeck may appear to be Mervyn’s nemesis, a clear villain to Mervyn’s naïve virtue, but the relationship between the two men is never so stable.

The lack of clear boundaries in Welbeck and Mervyn’s paranoid gothic relationship points to the novel’s greater concern: in a literary marketplace where texts and wealth are interchangeable and circulate freely, it is frightening to imagine that subjects, too, could be fungible—and that the boundaries between subjects might be completely porous. In short, Brown’s novels link the modern literary marketplace to sensibility, but in doing so, they highlight the paranoid gothic quality implicit within sensibility.

²⁶ Fisher, 8.

²⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 186n.10.

Arthur Mervyn foregrounds sympathetic and eroticized relationships between men.²⁸ At the height of the yellow fever epidemic, some months after his first arrival in Philadelphia, Mervyn returns to the Thetfords' bedroom; his two parallel visits structure Part One of the novel. Whereas in the first incident Mervyn observes one infant being substituted for another, in his second visit, he is not only an observer: in the very bed where Mervyn observed the married couple and the foundling earlier, there is now an impossibly handsome near-corpse of a young man (113). Mervyn barely has time to describe Maravegli (before being knocked on the head by a mysterious black man), but he immediately exclaims, "Was he not one in whose place I would willingly have died?" (113). Mervyn's eagerness to exchange places (or jump into bed?) with a man he does not even know contrasts starkly with his tepid and patronizing accounts of his attractions to women.

Indeed, the novel presents a series of strange and dynamic relationships between men (though often triangulated through virginal women). Mervyn braves death, returning to Philadelphia to find Wallace, a man (he thinks) he has never even met, to please Susan, a

²⁸ The relationship between sensibility and male homoeroticism late eighteenth-century Britain and America is only beginning to be understood. Stephen Shapiro has argued that we approach this period as an interim between Foucault's "sodomite" and "homosexual" ("Man" 219). In this less-defined moment in the history of sexuality, Shapiro writes, "gendered sentiment . . . offered a wide range of positions" ("Man" 221). Burgett, attempting to write "the queer (prehistory) of sexuality," makes a similar point, coining the term "heterosensuality" where hetero means different or varied, and suggesting that only in the nineteenth century did the "distinction between sexual and nonsexual sensations" become clearer ("Between" 124, 141; *Sentimental* 156). Burgett emphasizes alternatives to genital sexuality as an object of study, suggesting that there are "less familiar ways of talking about the relationships among bodies, politics, and pleasure," and arguing that "Our inability, here and elsewhere, to pin down the meaning and nature of sex ought to be understood not as an epistemological or political failure but as an opportunity to archive, write, and imagine queerer histories of sexuality, in both the past and the present tense" (Burgett "Between" 142). Sian Silyn Roberts, while not undertaking an explicitly 'queer' reading, also finds evidence of a sort of 'third way' in Brown's writing. Finding fault with both sympathy (as she defines it) and rational contract theory, Roberts argues that gothic ideas of personhood (or lack thereof) are more effective models for subjectivity in Brown's writing, "displac[ing] the Enlightenment individual with one that is porous, fluid, and projected beyond the metaphysical boundaries of the body." Roberts, "Gothic Enlightenment: Contagion and Community in Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*," *Early American Literature* 44.2 (2009): 307-32, 308. This idea seems to recall Shapiro's argument that "*Edgar Huntly* investigates the cultural politics surrounding the potential formation in the 1790s of an erotic based collective" (Shapiro "Man" 217). While Roberts's reading is helpful in identifying the problems of both sensibility and rational individualism, the "gothic model" she proposes instead seems to be not very divorced from sensibility as such.

character so unimportant that she barely speaks (and who promptly dies). Mr. Hadwin's journey to Philadelphia, in pursuit of both Wallace and Mervyn, causes his death, while Stevens anxiously seeks news of Mervyn's return from the country, moderating his "burning . . . curiosity" about Mervyn with his duty toward women like Miss Carlton (199). When Mervyn and Stevens are reunited, "[Mervyn] postponed his own gratification to mine," telling his story first (201).

Brown's novels register anxiety about identity and fungibility by tapping into current concerns about sensibility. If you do not know who you are—if you "would willingly have died" for someone you don't even know (113)—how can you possibly participate in a rational, contractual relationship with the government and with your fellow citizens? It's worth noting, too, that despite the considerable proportion of women in the novel in Philadelphia during the epidemic, all but one of the characters who contracts the fever are male. This, too, suggests that the novel is concerned with the ways in which sympathetic identification between men might break down the very notions of identity/subjectivity needed for full citizenship in the early republic.²⁹ Brown's gothicism derives in large part from the potentially terrifying effects of sympathetic identification. In *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith writes that when we sympathize with a dead friend, "we enter, as it were, into his body, and in our imaginations, in some measure, animate anew the deformed and mangled carcass of the slain."³⁰ Indeed, as Crain writes, "Brown experienced sympathy as a seduction into horror."³¹

²⁹ N.b.: Carla Tuite argues that negative representations of Edmund Burke in Britain traded on associations between his progressive stances on both "Catholic Emancipation and homosexual toleration" and the "suspicion of the contamination that attached itself to the 'sympathizer'" (n.p.). "Cloistered Closets: Enlightenment Pornography, The Confessional State, Homosexual Persecution and *The Monk*." *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997): n.p.

³⁰ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1984), 71.

³¹ Crain, *American*, 53.

In their treatment of homoerotic relationships, both *Arthur Mervyn* and *Edgar Huntly* express considerable anxiety about the ethical imperatives associated with sensibility. In particular, it is this question of *sameness* that raises problems. Crain argues that the universal fraternity that sympathy seemed to promise—transcending boundaries of the body and other particularities—could be viewed as a threat to nation-building in the early republic.³² And Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, emphasizing that *heterosexual* desire in this period was based on difference rather than similarity, outlines the ways in which this potentially boundless sensibility had to be trained and limited.³³ Brown continually wavers between endorsing a dangerously homoerotic sympathy and rejecting it in favor of more rational (and heterosexual) individualism.

In *Edgar Huntly* as in *Arthur Mervyn*, sympathetic identification causes protagonists to shirk their responsibilities and chase after (or exchange places with) men they hardly know. However, whereas *Arthur Mervyn* denies any lasting value to this kind of heterosensuality/homosensibility, in *Edgar Huntly* Brown attempts to salvage it as an alternative model for relationships between men.

The most important relationships between characters in *Edgar Huntly* are homoerotic and based on sensibility. Edgar fancies himself a mentor to Clithero much in the same way that Sarsefield is a mentor to Edgar, and these two relationships are by far the most emotionally and erotically charged: Edgar's first recorded glimpse of Clithero—at the phallic Treaty Elm which makes Edgar's "pulse throb... as I approached it" (8)—is of "A figure, robust and strange, and half naked" (9); from this point in the novel onwards, Edgar's daily life is planned around

³² Crain, *American*, 2.

³³ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 43-46, 118-37.

stalking Clithero and getting closer to him. Edgar's reunion with Sarsefield, near the end of the novel, is still more intense:

My deportment, at an interview so much desired and so wholly unforeseen, was that of a maniac. The petrifying influence of surprise, yielded to the impetuositities of passion. I held him in my arms: I wept upon his bosom, I sobbed with emotions which, had it not found passage at my eyes, would have burst my heart-strings. Thus I who had escaped the deaths that had previously assailed me in so many forms, should have been reserved to solemnize a scene like this by . . . *dying for joy!* (160)

In his account of this reunion, Edgar draws upon the standard vocabulary of sympathetic excess: his exaggerated emotions are clearly visible in his physical comportment. Yet, by 1799, this language seems strikingly inappropriate: Sarah Knott and Maureen Harkin, among others, have accounted for the decline in popularity of the sentimental novel by the 1790s.³⁴ Indeed, Brown's use of the words "maniac" and "petrifying" highlight the potentially frightening effects of sympathy—especially, as in this case, between men.

Given that sympathy in *Edgar Huntly* precipitates a frightening breakdown of boundaries between men, it is fitting that Brown links sympathy in the novel with the alimentary. As explained in the introduction to this dissertation and elsewhere, incorporation and cannibalism are the most extreme and literalized threats to a masculine Lockean subject grounded in autonomy and property. Edgar realizes that Clithero is starving himself to death while living

³⁴ Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 266-322; and Maureen Harkin, introduction to Henry MacKenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2005), 19-21. See also John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

isolated in the wilderness. Determined to win Clithero back, Edgar returns to Clithero's haunts, acknowledging that "All that I could do was to offer him food" (76). Since Clithero's self-starvation is apparently a symptom of his complete physical and spiritual isolation, Edgar's resolution to feed Clithero suggests that (in the logic of the novel) feeding is the most primary act of sympathy. This notion is further supported by the text's emphasis on Christological (and particularly communion) imagery, and the importance of the maternal-filial bond between Euphemia Lorimer and Clithero.³⁵ Though Edgar does not actually feed Clithero from his own body, the fact that his mission to nurse Clithero takes shape alongside these other relationships (Eucharistic, maternal, etc.) reinforces a link between feeding and sympathy, sympathy here meaning quite literally 'feeling with someone'—again, a breakdown of boundaries.

Of course, *Edgar Huntly* deals in perverse intimacy not only between those who are too similar (i.e., male-male sodomy), but also between those who are too different. In the most memorable scene, Edgar awakens in a dark cave in the company of the panther who has been stalking him throughout the novel. Knowing that only one of them will leave the cave alive, Edgar "penetrate[s] the scull" of the panther, killing it, before feeding on the "yet warm blood and reeking fibres of the brute" (112). Edgar repeatedly disavows his "inordinate avidity," "look[ing] back upon it as on some hideous dream . . . some freak of insanity . . . detestable" (112). The meal of panther blood produces extreme indigestion in Edgar, who for a time believes

³⁵ The emphasis on blood runs, if you will, through the entire text. It, too, suggests a link between the homoerotic and sympathetic bonds of the book, and the cannibalistic ones: Edgar frequently observes the state of his pulse and beating heart when he is around Clithero (8, 16). And, as I suggested above, the emphasis on blood also has Christological and Eucharistic resonances. To begin, Edgar's experience in the cave with the panther is communion, initiation, *and* conception: initiation because Edgar's first metaphorical 'taste of blood' (killing an Indian) follows quickly on his first literal one (cannibalizing a panther), and conception because of "the pangs to which my ravenous and bloody meal would give birth" (113): some new creature is born in the cave, and whether it's a savior or a rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem seems patently uncertain. For the remainder of the novel, Edgar acts as a Christ figure: his body is abused, and he is abandoned in Old Deb's cabin (130); when Sarsefield comes back for Edgar's body, he finds that it has vanished: "Edgar had risen and flown! . . . You had risen from the dead" (171). See also 174. Nearly every male character dies and is resurrected over the course of the novel: Sarsefield and Wiatte are both also presumed dead, only to return, and Clithero is nursed back to (physical, if not mental) health.

that “The excruciations of famine were better than the agonies which this abhorred meal had produced” (112). The indigestion passes, however, and seems to have an inoculating effect on Edgar, who proceeds to commit a slew of violent acts for the remainder of the novel. In this violent encounter with the “Other,” the novel summons the specter of bestiality.

Yet how different is the panther from Edgar? He is unambiguously gendered male, and he has been stalking Edgar and Clithero throughout the novel just as the two men have been following each other. Indeed, it should come as no surprise that illicit intimacies between those who are too different and those who are too similar are often policed via the same vehicles. In the introduction to this dissertation, I cited numerous early modern examples condemning both bestiality and male-male sodomy in the same breath as a way of enforcing a heterosexual “juste milieu.” Moreover, as Doron S. Ben-Atar and Richard D. Brown have noted, bestiality was often prosecuted under more capacious anti-sodomy laws in the eighteenth century.³⁶ Finally, this vertiginous swinging between “too similar” and “too different” corresponds to the structure of Dollimore’s “perverse dynamic,” discussed in previous chapters, in which “As we shall see, the proximate is often constructed as the other But the proximate is also what enables a tracking-back of the ‘other’ into the ‘same.’”³⁷ Moreover, the policing of intimacy in Brown’s novels operates along the logic of Sedgwick’s “minoritizing and universalizing views” of perversion.³⁸ At the same time that a group is seen as radically other, certain actions are seen as doable by anyone. As I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, cannibalism (as well as contagion) is a prime example of this paradoxical cultural logic: at the same time as it marks

³⁶ Doron S. Ben-Atar and Richard D. Brown, *Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 1-9.

³⁷ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33.

³⁸ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 85-86.

someone as wholly other, it also threatens to break down the very structures by which subjects can be categorized at all.

Throughout *Edgar Huntly*, feeding, eating, biting, and drinking are closely tied to the breakdown of boundaries between subjects and bodies. The panther's hunger makes no distinction between "the man and the deer" (85), and when Edgar himself is about to die from hunger, he "[feels] a strong propensity to bite the flesh from my arm" (110) only moments before considering that "this appetite has sometimes subdued the sentiments of nature, and compelled the mother to feed upon the flesh of her offspring" (112), and then, finally killing and eating the panther (112). Thus, the indiscriminate nature of hunger heralds the complete confusion between man and animal: the panther-eating incident precedes Edgar's violent Indian-killing rampage, but it also introduces the confusion and frightening *lack* of difference that accompany those episodes. After all, Edgar's first impression as he leaves the cave is of a "fire...kindled by *men*" (114, emphasis added); from this point onward, Edgar becomes less and less certain about which Indians were which, whether his family is really dead, who is an enemy and who is a friend (142-46). This is, of course, even more true of Edgar and Clithero: if the novel finds the boundaries between predator and prey, and between human and animal, to be tenuous, then it finds those finer distinctions—Indian and European, Quaker and Catholic—still more arbitrary. "Edgar progressively *doubles* Clithero;"³⁹ an important element of this doubling is their shared experience of starvation.

Incorporation in *Edgar Huntly* consistently veers towards cannibalism. If eating breaks down the boundaries of self and species, it then follows that one could view every act of eating in the novel as an act of cannibalism. Moreover, Edgar's narration presents different beings—

³⁹ Barnard and Shapiro, "Introduction," *Edgar Huntly*, ix-xlii, xxvii.

panthers, Indians, and himself—as all being cannibalistic, thereby implying that the interracial and interspecies interactions between them are somehow cannibalistic. While Edgar’s description of the panther’s indiscriminate desire for a “banquet of blood” merely hints at the possibility of cannibalism (85), his conceptualization of the Indian’s “sanguinary trade; to drink the blood and exult in the laments of his unhappy foes,” renders it explicit (133). It is in this light, then, that we are encouraged to read Edgar’s descriptions of himself being “satiated and gorged with slaughter” (132). In *Edgar Huntly* nearly everyone is a cannibal, be he panther, Indian, Edgar himself, or the drunk Irishman who threatens to “bar[e] [his spouse’s] bones” (151). Thus, everyone is potentially both predator and prey, and everyone is open to blackmail.

Edgar Huntly suggests that sympathetic bonds between men can be as dangerous and anarchic as cannibalism. Crain observes that both cannibalism and homosexuality “violate the distinctions between identity and desire; between self and other; between what we want, what we want to be, and what we are.”⁴⁰ Yet, as Crain continues, writing about Melville’s *Typee*, each of these violations comes at great cost:

Cannibals would tear [Tommo’s] body to shreds, like Pentheus’s; intimacy with a man would threaten him with a mutilation only slightly more abstract. It would compromise both his spiritual and bodily integrity. He would not be his own man. He would no longer be free; he would be as subject as a woman; and he would therefore no longer be fit for the role of citizen in a democracy.⁴¹

Given these risks, then, *Edgar Huntly* forecloses the frightening possibilities that it has entertained. Barnard and Shapiro write, “The implication [of the novel’s conclusion] is that any

⁴⁰ Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels,” *American Literature* 66.1 (1994): 25-53, 34.

⁴¹ Crain, “Lovers,” 34.

new models and opportunities for male companionship that may have opened up at the end of the eighteenth century are closing back down again.”⁴²

Indeed, all of the potentially liberatory or redemptive moments in the novel already contain their antidote. Eating the panther makes Huntly violently ill, and it’s hard to imagine that his discomfort at this ‘unspeakable’ act is due only to societally-programmed self-loathing. Moreover, the race-blurring moment when Huntly faints on a pile of Indian men’s bodies is hardly the ideal “communal body politic” Shapiro suggests it is: although the lack of differentiation between Huntly’s and the Indians’ bodies might gesture towards the transcendence of race, the fact remains that Huntly has killed all of those men. The Delaware Indians become a convenient stand-in for the novel’s abandoned revolution in sympathy, as Shapiro notes. An “army of warrior drones” subservient to “Old Deb, the . . . queen bee,” the Indians in the novel are portrayed as a very “nonheteronormative community” that has itself been forcibly forgotten, with violent consequences.⁴³ But Shapiro claims that it’s neither he nor Brown making this connection, but rather “antisensual regimes, which are anxious to place a *cordon sanitaire* around male relations and delimit its transgression [as portrayed in the novel] as . . . preliterate savage phantasm and primordial madness.”⁴⁴

Paradoxically, the homoerotic stands in both for what is already on its way out—an alternate system of relationships based on sympathetic identification—and for what seems (threateningly) on the upswing—a too-modern, market-driven model of identity and authorship. Indeed, homosexuality (and cannibalism) are often called upon to bear all kinds of historical

⁴² Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction,” *Edgar Huntly*, xxxvii.

⁴³ Shapiro, “Man,” 236.

⁴⁴ Shapiro, “Man,” 238.

weight—either too old or too new. Crain shows how both homosexuality and cannibalism are portrayed as “founding act[s] of crime and sharing that bind . . . society,” as in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*, or as in attitudes to love between men in ancient Greece.⁴⁵ The bogey-man that threatens the modern subject is actually integral to it, at the same time that it is constructed as a remnant of the past. In *Edgar Huntly*, sympathy as a way of relating between men is shown to be already on its way out; in *Arthur Mervyn*, love between men appears only as a phobic perversion associated with the newfangled, ‘depraved’ demands of the market. These novels associate anxieties of authorship with perverse masculinity by locating them both in the hyper-productive future and the sterile, backward-looking past.

Sterility and Melancholy

As in the cases of Gray and Lewis, the cultural tendency to associate perverse authorship with perverse reproduction played out not only in homophobic tropes of prodigiousness and hyper-productivity in Brown’s writing, but also their reverse. In Brown’s novels, non-normative authorship and sexuality are both figured in terms of abortions, truncations, deformity, and sterility—in short, resistance to normative time or reproductivity. At times, this metaphorical cluster seems deeply normative and/or homophobic, but at other times, Brown seems to carve out a space for a different kind of authorial and sexual sensibility—one rooted in loss and temporal disjunction.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Crain, “Lovers,” 38.

⁴⁶ In thinking about the implications of time and teleology for sexuality, I follow critics like Heather Love and Elizabeth Freeman whose work emphasizes untimeliness, melancholy, and resistance as valuable ‘queer’ affects. There is a political dimension to such work: in rejecting criticism dedicated solely to teleological narratives of liberation, resignification, and assimilation, one might avoid erasing marginalized groups within a queer community. Moreover, that which Love criticizes as the “premium on strategic response in queer studies” requires ignoring important elements of the actual picture suggested by representations of queer experience, elements that do not simply reflect an internalized dominant ideology (3). Nevertheless, it’s possible to take this line of reasoning too far.

Of the handful of stillbirths and miscarriages in *Edgar Huntly* and *Arthur Mervyn*, two are the direct result of textual malfeasance. In *Edgar Huntly*, the writing and circulation of texts actually brings about the novel's tragic denouement: Euphemia Lorimer's psychological anguish causes her to miscarry her only legitimate heir.⁴⁷ This is a rather oblique relationship, but the sexual and the authorial are certainly related, if in complicated ways. I argued in a previous section that the authorial closet not only resembles, but also contains and defines, the sexual closet: sexual transgression necessitates the authoring of manuscripts as a way of revealing *and* containing terrible (sexual) secrets—Clithero's manuscript about the Lorimers, Edgar's letter to the Lorimers, and Edgar's own letter to his betrothed. In the novel's final moments, the opposite is also true: revelation of (sexualized?) knowledge about Clithero in the form of authorship causes more sexual failure: a dead baby (as well as aborted marriages and truncated bloodlines).

In *Arthur Mervyn*, the connection between perverse writing and perverse birthing is even stronger. Taking a cue from Godwin, Mervyn repeatedly confuses texts with aborted bodies: swearing to find out the potentially gruesome truth of Wallace's supposed death from the fever, he resolves to "carry to the Hadwins no mangled and defective tale" (205).⁴⁸ And Clemenza's

Valerie Traub's scathing article, "The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies" (2013), castigates certain other queer studies scholars for assuming that linearity or even history itself are necessarily heteronormative. More specifically, Traub expresses extreme doubt that such a heterogeneous body of 'teleoskeptical' work (represented by Carla Freccero, Jonathan Goldberg, and Madhavi Menon) actually has a real payoff (22-23). Traub suggests that Sedgwick's critique (in *Epistemology of the Closet*) of Foucauldian work (done by scholars such as Halperin) has been somewhat misinterpreted (25). She continues that while the work of Sedgwick and more recent scholars has helpfully increased awareness of some of the potential pitfalls of historicizing sexuality, in no way does this mean historicism should be abandoned altogether. Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010); and Valerie Traub, "The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies," *PMLA* 128.1 (2013): 21-39.

⁴⁷ As for other options, her son is disowned, her adoptive son Clithero commits suicide (and is also disowned), and Clarice is an illegitimate niece.

⁴⁸ Brown's debt to Godwin is evident in this line: compare Caleb Williams's own phrase, "I should have but an imperfect and *mutilated* story to tell" (316, emphasis added). Williams repeats this trope in the novel's final lines, when he asserts that he actually writes to vindicate his former employer Falkland, so "that . . . the world may at least not hear and repeat a half-told and *mangled* tale" (337). See also Clemit.

baby—the product of Welbeck’s sexual abuse—dies at birth, or perhaps shortly thereafter: when Mervyn finds Clemenza in the debtors’ prison, “The child, like its mother, was meagre and cadaverous. Either it was dead, or could not be very distant from death” (243). Again, Brown links the baby’s death with Welbeck’s textual, as well as sexual, crimes.

In all, then, these novels seem to turn away from models of authorship and male-male intimacy that were beginning to seem non-normative.⁴⁹ It is tempting to read the relationship between the two parts of *Arthur Mervyn* (written just over a year apart) as one of sickness replaced by health; of secrecy, plagiarism, and dissimulation replaced by earnest self-exposure and readability; and of intense, paranoid homoerotic relationships and doublings replaced by nurturing and stable heterosexual marriage. Many of the things which the yellow fever might represent—secrecy, slavery, print culture—seem to have been dismissed or resolved by the end of Part Two; the retreat of the fever maps onto a broader turn towards public ‘health’ in the moral sense as well.⁵⁰ As he approaches marriage with Achsa, Mervyn even appear to forswear writing in favor of his procreative penis: “But why am I indulging this pen-prattle? . . . take thyself away, quill. Lie there, snug in thy leathern case” (330). In this Sterne-like passage,

⁴⁹ Many have recounted how the polymorphous sensibility of the 1790s had to be heterosexualized. See Burgett, Shapiro, and Dillon. Burgett’s model of a more flexible heterosensuality (not just gay, but more polymorphously perverse) was on its way out, according to Dillon: for example, in several of her readings from this period, Dillon focuses on male characters whose failings seem specific to the fact that they are more interested in food than in heterosexual relations (131). And this largely squares with others’ readings of Brown’s work, such as Shapiro’s statement that “a newly insurgent cultural conservatism had eviscerated the potential space for alternative [cultural ideals]” (“Man” 243).

⁵⁰ Readings of the yellow fever in *Arthur Mervyn* include print culture (McAuley), revolutionary principles (Shirley Samuels), and a more generic “multifaceted experience of social crisis and transformation” (Barnard and Shapiro “Introduction” *Arthur* xxi). Given that the fever’s purported origin is the West Indies, slavery and its role in global commerce seems another compelling referent as well. Shirley Samuels, “Plague and Politics in 1793: *Arthur Mervyn*,” *Criticism* 27.3 (1985): 225-46, 225; and Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction,” *Arthur Mervyn*, ix-xliv.

writing is replaced by the body, and textual creation is replaced by (implied) sexual reproduction.⁵¹

Yet Brown does not make things quite so simple. Percy Shelley, according to Thomas Love Peacock, was offended by the ending of *Arthur Mervyn*: “The transfer of the hero’s affections from a simple peasant girl [Eliza Hadwin] to a rich Jewess [Achsa Fielding], displeased Shelley extremely, and he could only account for it on the ground that it was the only way in which Brown could bring his story to an uncomfortable conclusion.”⁵² That Brown’s decision to wed Mervyn to “a dark-skinned and decidedly nonvirginal ethno-racial other” disturbed Shelley is matter more for amusement than for analysis; nevertheless, even Peacock’s comment captures something of the forcedness of the novel’s ending.⁵³

Achsa does help tie up some loose ends. Barnard and Shapiro emphasize her racial otherness—in particular, “her ‘tawny’ skin, a period codeword for black or mixed-race persons.”⁵⁴ And it is true, insofar as we can read the assimilated, secular, anti-Semitic⁵⁵ Fielding as a “powerful black figure of intellectualized desire,” her impending union with Mervyn does seem like a radical choice, an “enact[ment of] the kinds of innovative relations that Brown’s closest friends in abolitionist circles were arguing for: interracial sexual union and miscegenation as a means for overcoming phobic responses to ethno-racial others.”⁵⁶ The extent to which this

⁵¹ See also Shapiro, *Culture and Commerce*, 265.

⁵² Quoted in Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction” to *Arthur Mervyn*, xxxviii n.43.

⁵³ Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction” to *Arthur Mervyn*, xxxviii.

⁵⁴ Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction” to *Arthur Mervyn*, xxxix.

⁵⁵ In revealing her history to Mervyn, Fielding goes to great lengths to distance herself from other Jews: her father “had few of the moral or external qualities of Jews” (307), and he gives Achsa a secular education “No pains were taken to fill me with scruples and antipathies” (308).

⁵⁶ Barnard and Shapiro, “Introduction” to *Arthur Mervyn*, xl.

solution-by-marriage is effective seems highly debatable. But more pressing for this inquiry seems the fact that the racial problems of *Arthur Mervyn* are only resolved (if they are resolved) by eliding the novel's other questions about sexuality. Arthur and Achsa's union is politically radical only insofar as it is heterosexual and reproductive.

Yet the closure of Part Two is far from convincing. Goddu (who barely mentions sexuality at all) points to the increasingly messy textuality of Part Two: the proliferation of counternarratives only further calls into doubt Mervyn and Stevens's prized value of publicity and disclosure.⁵⁷ The only real solution, Goddu says, is "Silence, not storytelling."⁵⁸ Similarly, Shirley Samuels points out the strange wording of the novel's last two sentences: "*till* all is settled with my love . . . *till* Mervyn has been made the happiest of men" (330), as if there were still some doubt about the story's final outcome.⁵⁹

And, of course, Mervyn presents his union with Achsa Fielding as anything but an assertion of self-possession. Though (due to sexual difference) the dynamics of his relationship with Fielding are seemingly more fixed than those with Welbeck or other men, Mervyn consistently depicts himself as the feminine member of the relationship—"I was wax in her hand," he gushes (317). Moreover, "Mamma," as Mervyn calls her, adopts Eliza as her daughter, forming the most unconventional of family units.⁶⁰ In the lingering incestuousness of the novel's closure, we can identify a struggle between sympathy and sameness on the one hand, and heterosexual desire and difference on the other.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Goddu, 47-48.

⁵⁸ Goddu, 50.

⁵⁹ Emphasis added; Samuels, 242.

⁶⁰ Also, previously, Welbeck has been having sex with a woman he calls his daughter.

⁶¹ See Dillon's reading of incest in *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) (36).

If *Arthur Mervyn* stumbles while attempting to shoehorn its protagonist into a happy hetero ending, *Edgar Huntly* doesn't even try. Despite critics' recent attempts to reclaim *Edgar Huntly* as a gay utopian vision, however, the novel's ending is very bleak, suggesting doubt as to the sustainability of *either* rational, heterosexual companionate relationships *or* radical man-loving sympathy. Ultimately, the novel embraces a backward-looking, melancholic poetics. *Edgar Huntly*'s utopian imagining of alternative kinds of sympathetic bonds largely takes place in the wild expanses of Norwalk. To be sure, it makes sense for a European-American in the 1790s to imagine the frontier as a sort of blank slate where new communities can be imagined (of course, Brown is a bit more knowing about this—Edgar's family's farm is built on the ruins of an Indian village). However, Edgar's descriptions of Norwalk are decidedly ambivalent: the land is not only uncultivated, "admit[ting] neither of plough nor spade;" it is also out of sync with the normal passage of time and seasons: "Winter's snow is frequently found in these cavities at midsummer" (67). This is not just the typical sublime; rather, it is markedly queer in its rejection of reproduction, cyclicity, and agriculture: as Edgar remarks repeatedly, Norwalk is a "desert"—due precisely to the lack of food there (66, 185).⁶²

Even when Edgar compares the landscape to a body ("in the bowels of this mountain"), potentially suggesting associations with nature as a womb, it is also, in the same breath, a "tomb" (185). Similarly, the rock opening that Edgar chooses for a bed "somewhat resembl[es] a coffin in shape, and not much larger in dimensions" (144). Thus, though Edgar's talk of "immers[ing]" himself in Norwalk's darkness, "gloom," "shade," and "secrecies" (66) gestures towards a vocabulary of fertile but mysterious wilderness, Brown surprises us by then emphasizing the

⁶² See also Crain, *American Sympathy*. Crain calls it "a kind of masculine sublime" (140).

sterility of the place. Thus the paradox in Edgar's description of the area in which Old Deb now lives: "a spot *abundantly sterile* and rude" (139, emphasis added).

Though Norwalk is often marked by a frightening blankness—"mountain ridges which had no peculiarity enabling me to ascertain whether I had ever before seen them" (135)—the novel tries at times to recuperate that sameness and sterility. The best example of this is Edgar's positive recollection of roaming Norwalk with Sarsefield when he was Edgar's tutor (67). And the penetration of new spaces often seems an attainable, and desirable, goal: for example, in exploring with Sarsefield (68) or in digging in the earth to discover Clithero's secret (77). Perhaps the most interesting part of Brown's metaphorical landscape is the tunnel, simultaneously womb-like and anal, through which Edgar passes several times (70, 114): sometimes this passage seems to signal new birth, as when Edgar first sees sky on the other side and experiences "such exquisite sensations in my bosom" (70). At other times, it is nothing but death, a "tomb." Ultimately, if the tunnel is an agent or location of birth, that birth is a painful one, as in Edgar's panther food-poisoning and initiation into violence.⁶³

If there is a queer poetics in Brown's writing, it is an avowedly melancholic one. While Crain reads *Edgar Huntly* as a book about mourning and digesting the dead (both Edgar's friend Waldegrave and Brown's friend Elihu Hubbard Smith),⁶⁴ Edgar fails to move on, remaining instead in the role of the melancholic with indigestion. His repeated assertions that everything about Waldegrave's death is resolved (187-88) ring false, like Clithero's earlier protestations of innocence. The novel's stubborn insistence on sterility, indigestion, and grief suggest that melancholic incorporation is the only substantive option available to Brown.

⁶³ See also Crain, *American Sympathy*, 140.

⁶⁴ Crain, *American*, 133-35, 142. See also Shapiro, "Man," 243.

III. Conclusion

Chapters 1 and 2 showed many of the ways in which a cultural predisposition to analogize authorship with birth and begetting could be infused with extra power by drawing on pre-existing homophobic tropes. These tropes paradoxically associated sodomy both with over-production and prodigiousness, and with sterility. Gray ultimately came to embrace the latter set of associations, while Lewis reveled in the former. Brown, by contrast, seems to have been deeply affected by both ends of this rhetorical spectrum, allowing them to infuse his work at the same time he attempted to recuperate them.

CODA AND CONCLUSION

“An Appetite for Being Buried”: Consumption, Contagion, and the Thingness of the Body

in Matthew Lewis’s *Journal of a West India Proprietor*

I never met with a worse article in my life; the pulp is of a faint greenish yellow, stained here and there with spots of moist red, so that it looks exactly as if the servant in slicing it had cut his finger, and suffered it to bleed over the fruit. Then the seeds, being of a dark purple, present the happiest imitation of drops of clotted gore; and altogether (prejudiced as I was by its appearance), when I had put a single bit into my mouth it had such a kind of Shylocky taste of raw flesh about it (not that I recollect having ever eaten a bit of raw flesh itself), that I sent away my plate, and was perfectly satisfied as to the merits of the fruit.¹

Upon his father’s death in 1812, Matthew Lewis inherited two Jamaican slave plantations, and in 1814 he traveled to Jamaica to manage them. The *Journal* records his experiences in Jamaica from late 1814 until his death on his second return trip in 1818. In this final chapter of his life, after a prolific twenty-year career, Lewis stopped publishing or promoting his poetry, novels, and dramas. He lived almost exclusively abroad, traveling through Europe for most of the interim between his two Jamaican residences. His journal, though not published until 1834, appears to be his last intended contribution to both the literary world and his own literary persona.²

¹ Matthew G. Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor*, ed. Judith Terry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

² For more on the *Journal*’s composition and publication, see Ellen Malenas Ledoux, *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 176-79.

Lewis opens the account of his arrival in Jamaica in 1815 by describing his first encounter with a watermelon. When Lewis compares the sight and taste of the foreign fruit to that of human flesh, he registers his encounter with his environment on a very concrete level, with a hearty serving of ambivalence: on the one hand, in the *Journal* Lewis often approaches eating as a Lockean way of owning Jamaica, turning the food (and metonymically, the land and everything on it) into a ‘property in his own person.’ Indeed, as Paul Youngquist asserts, “liberal political theory [makes] eating the epitome of human agency,” and Alan Bewell notes that “From the classical period onward, the power of an empire has been symbolically conveyed in its rulers’ ability to go beyond a local diet by eating, at a single sitting, foods from all the regions that lie within their control.”³ However, at the same time that Lewis might view eating as an assertion of the self and its proprietorship, in passages like this one, his horrified rejection of the fruit suggests a different relationship: eating can function not only as an act of domination and appropriation, but also as a radically destabilizing and frightening experience. Eating erases the boundary between the embodied self and its environment, changing—and potentially damaging—the eater. It is to these dangers that Maggie Kilgour refers when she writes, “feasting—eating and drinking—is an indication of openness. But this openness in turn is a sign of vulnerability, as the reception of external influences can in different ways endanger the self, so that a certain caution on a host’s part is perhaps sensible.”⁴

This is particularly true where cannibalism is involved. Like any Briton of his time, Lewis has heard a variety of reports and rumors of the West Indies, and at this point in the

³ Paul Youngquist, “Romantic Dietetics! Or, Eating Your Way to a New You,” in *Cultures of Taste / Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism*, ed. Timothy Morton (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 241; and Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 143-44.

⁴ Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 89.

journal he has already expressed concern about cannibalistic practices among his slaves. In rejecting the ‘Shylocky taste’ of the watermelon, Lewis may be distancing himself from a group of people he perceives as having wholly Other tastes than his own, and he may be disavowing the complex transatlantic networks that have brought African slaves, a fruit originally from Africa, and himself all together in Jamaica.⁵ At the same time, however, the excessive attention to gruesome detail in the passage suggests some vicarious pleasure in imagining himself as the Other. In other words, cannibalism is both a marker used to distinguish Others, *and* an embodied relation that always threatens to dissolve the boundary between self and Other. That cannibalism so preoccupies Lewis in this passage (and throughout the text) suggests how fragile such structures of alterity actually are.

Throughout this dissertation I have examined the ways in which the trope of incorporation was brought to bear on discussions of authorship and masculinity, particularly when the two were discussed together, and particularly when the aim was to police aberrant forms of either. I have argued that when we put pressure on this idea of a self-possessed and acquisitive masculine subject—whether in Locke’s *Second Treatise*⁶ or in early nineteenth-century reviews of Lewis’s work—it falls apart at the seams. Grounding a theory of property in the body seems to lend it a natural legitimacy, but bodies are unreliable, and they are not, ultimately, metaphors. The very possibility of food poisoning, parasites, or cannibals complicates Locke’s account of unidirectional acquisition through incorporation. Moreover, when authors and critics attempt to use negative tropes such as plagiarism, sodomy, cannibalism, and

⁵ There is much more to be said here about the role played by representations of Jewish people in relation to these questions. See Carol Margaret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Stephen Andrew Silverstein, “The Jewish Slave Trader Trope in Abolitionist Discourses of the Caribbean, 1839-1882” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2012).

⁶ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. (London; New York: Dent; Dutton, 1953), 130.

contagion to “other” people, these tropes also malfunction, due to the fact that they operate structurally not only as “minoritizing” tropes but also as “universalizing” ones:⁷ the very thing intended to ostracize others has the ability to break down the boundary between those others and oneself.

In the coda to this dissertation, I explore how Lewis’s *Journal of a West India Proprietor*—written over two decades after the publication of *The Monk*—complicates the narrative of his life-long self-commodification and self-marketing. Lewis was a man-loving man⁸ who was nearly disinherited, and an object of scandal, gossip, sale, and circulation in the literary marketplace and in London social circles. In the last four years of his life, Lewis attempts to use this new position of ownership and authority to present himself as a more masculine and patriarchal being in order to legitimate his claims to authorship.

Lewis’s *Journal* records in great detail his interactions with the people, landscapes, foods, and wildlife of Jamaica, but in narrating these experiences, Lewis struggles to occupy the positions of author and owner. In continually returning to the body as his epistemological anchor, he ultimately erodes the very subject-object distinctions (master rather than slave, father rather than child, eater rather than eaten) that he attempts to set up and occupy. Lewis’s text therefore exposes the fissures and paradoxes of the dominant discourse to which he had always had an ambivalent relationship.

⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 85-86.

⁸ In other dissertation chapters, I have written at length about the historiographical difficulties of writing about sexuality in this period. One can at least say that Lewis was perceived as effeminate and as primarily oriented towards other men (socially, emotionally, and potentially physically). For the most intelligent and well-researched discussion of Lewis’s sexuality, see D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 59-92.

Rather than simply presenting another example of how these discourses ultimately undo the ends for which they were deployed, however, this coda ends by attending to one very significant difference between the *Journal* and the criticism, fiction, and poetry of the previous chapters: aestheticized as the *Journal* may be, it purports to represent the real, embodied experience of Lewis and the enslaved people he encounters in Jamaica. Jamaica is ontologically different from the imagined islands in *Robinson Crusoe* and “Survivor Type”; the consumption and contagion that Lewis describes (however fancifully) are categorically different from the metaphors in Gray’s correspondence, the hyperbole in reviews of Lewis, and the fictional versions in Brown’s novels. This coda concludes, therefore, by considering the ethics of using such figures as metaphor, and by finding that no matter how spectacularly Lewis’s attempts at self-assertion fail, this failure does little to change the material reality of Lewis’s privileged position.

I. Colonial Mouth

Lewis’s journal exemplifies colonial pathology (as well as the specificity of his historical moment—the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution and the British Slave Trade Act of 1807). Lewis’s writings about Jamaica exemplify what Valerie Loichot calls the “colonial mouth” (a variation on ‘colonial gaze’) of European discourse about the Caribbean:

Metastasizing from [Columbus’s] linguistic error [hearing *caníbal* for *carib*], Europeans and other Western colonizers, tourists, and readers have associated the Antilles with the primal act of eating, whether in the figure of the cannibal, or in that of its tamed counterpart, the Caribbean itself—its land, people, and

language—all reduced to delectable objects: “Cannibal islands,” “spice islands,” “succulent women,” “luscious beaches,” “peppery language.”⁹

As authors from Montaigne have shown, the trope of the edible Caribbean cuts two ways: as an aspect of colonial discourse, the trope objectifies, dehumanizes, and commodifies. As an aspect of anti-colonial discourse, the same trope highlights consumers’ vulnerability to that which they consume (as in the watermelon passage above): abolitionist sugar boycotts in England traded on the image of blood-soaked sugar to render more vividly the purported impact of slave labor on consumers themselves.¹⁰ But these critiques of colonial appetite still reify colonial power structures: it is the threat of cannibalism, of assimilation or mixing—rather than outrage at the treatment of slaves—that proves effective. “Anti-slavery discourse,” Lynn Festa observes, “wavers on a knife-edge between sympathy and revulsion, between the fusion of bodies and the desire for differentiation.”¹¹ Whether used to express or to indict European appetites, these images of the colonial mouth highlight that initial paradox of consumption: we eat to reify and sustain ourselves, but there’s always the risk that what we eat might change us.¹² As Mimi Sheller writes, “Contrary to the assumption that it was only the pursuit of gold and other precious

⁹ Valerie Loichot, *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), vii. See also Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986); and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2012). For more on the colonial-etymological history of the word “cannibal,” see the first two chapters of Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986). See also bell hooks, “Eating the Other,” in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 21-39.

¹⁰ See Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (London: Routledge, 2003); Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); and Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

¹¹ Festa, 126.

¹² See Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites: Foodsexidentities* (London: Routledge, 2000).

metals that drove European exploration, it was as much the desire to acquire new edible, pleasurable, and pharmaceutical substances, *things that had direct and powerful effects on the bodies of those empowered to consume them.*¹³ This discourse surely informs much of the *Journal*, particularly Lewis's anxiety about his appetites and his fears that what he consumes might kill him. For example, Lewis relates at least *six* separate instances in which slaves poison their masters' food, coffee, or alcohol. In another passage, just after praising the excellence and variety of fish in Jamaica, Lewis mentions that many fish are contaminated before noting that "more than one of our English sovereigns died of eating too many lampreys; though, to own the truth, it was suspected that the monks, in an instance of two, improved the same by the addition of a little ratsbane" (67). Lewis thus leaves open the question of whether it is poison or uninhibited appetite that causes deaths like these. In the same passage, Lewis draws one more connection between eating and death, alluding to "Queen Atygatis of Scythia, who was so particularly fond of fish, that she prohibited all her subjects from eating it on pain of death, through fear that there might not be enough left for her majesty" (67). Lewis seems not to register the fact that the relationship between this ruler's appetites and her subjects' deaths recalls the relationship between European appetites for sugar and tobacco, and the violence of slavery and empire.

Lewis presents himself as an omnivorous gourmande, eating every animal that comes his way in Jamaica. At a dinner party he throws, the menu includes "Land and sea turtle, quails, snipes, plovers, and pigeons and doves of all descriptions . . . excellent pork, barbecued [sic] pigs" as well as "geese and turkies" so large, they might be mistaken "for houses and churches" (66-67). Lewis's voracious and adventurous appetite extends further: he samples alligator (120),

¹³ Sheller, 77, emphasis original.

manatee (122), and possibly dolphin (21). In the case of the alligator, Lewis again contrasts his tastes and culinary knowledge with that of his slaves: they beg Lewis not to eat the alligator, “for it was poisonous. However, I was obstinate, and found the taste of the flesh, when broiled with pepper and salt, and assisted by an onion sauce, by no means to be despised” (120). Lewis’s lavish and condescending accounts of his feasts in Jamaica attempt to establish him as a powerful colonial force, incorporating and thereby acquiring Jamaica through its food. His passages on local food also serve to distinguish between him and the slaves, whose eating he characterizes as either ignorant or pathological.¹⁴

Early in the *Journal*, in a feat of extreme mental gymnastics, Lewis asserts that “many of the Africans cannot endure animal food of any kind”; for example, “most of the Eboes in particular are made ill by eating turtle” (64). He implies that this is a bodily predisposition, rather than an economic necessity of living off yams, plantains, and rice, and *still* he is able to assert that he knows what is best for his slaves, writing, “I find that feeding the sick upon stewed fish and pork, highly seasoned, produces the very best effects possible” (95). Lewis, then, attempts to present meat-eating as a healthier, more masculine, and, interestingly, more *civilized* practice than the more vegetarian diets of his slaves.¹⁵

This “colonial mouth” discourse projects itself on to the body of the colonized or enslaved subject by pathologizing eating that subject’s eating in every way available. Loichot writes:

¹⁴ See Bewell, 131-60; and Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ While some in the period such as Lord Monboddo were arguing that vegetarianism was associated with a more advanced stage of civilization, most then—as today—felt that “Meat was an enclaved marker of cultural value, used in the ideology of John Bull and the Roast Beef of Old England.” Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 34, 155.

African, Caribbean, or Tropical eaters have been systematically presented as less than human through their relationship to food in order to mask the responsibility of the colonial or imperial power for the hunger of the slavery or the postslavery subject, whether it is forced hunger or force-feeding by the dumping of goods onto consumers to maintain a desire for dependency. The two dominant images are that of an insatiable hunger and of a lack of a need to eat. These twin images, despite their apparent contradiction, work hand in hand.¹⁶

In another set of seemingly contradictory twin images, the *Journal* pairs the slaves' purported vegetarianism with a series of implied instances of cannibalism. One girl has her hands bitten by "two friends . . . so severely, that we greatly fear her losing the use of both of them" (112), and another bizarre entry records one slave biting off another's nose (140). Whites, too, are at risk: Lewis relates the history of Mr. Dunbar, whose principal driver ambushed and killed him, taking with him "one of his ears, which the villain had carried away, from a negro belief that, as long as the murderer possesses one of the ears of his victim, he will never be haunted by his spectre" (113). That dominant discourse might "other" a group of people through paired contradictory images should not be too surprising: think of racist stereotypes of Black Americans as threatening or hypersexual on the one hand and lazy and harmless on the other. These paired images serve to construct a norm or a dominant group of people as inhabiting a "juste milieu."¹⁷

Cannibalism, however, is an unreliable metaphor. Rather than simply connoting absolute otherness, the cannibal operates along the lines of Jonathan Dollimore's "perverse dynamic,"

¹⁶ Loichot, xvi.

¹⁷ See chapter three on the discursive relationship between bestiality and male-male sodomy.

destabilizing the relationship between self and other.¹⁸ In the Western imagination, the cannibal is at once wholly other and not other enough. After all, in order to *be* a cannibal, one must be human. Thus the cannibal (and, I would argue, the ‘pervert’) embodies Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection: “It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”¹⁹ Lewis’s attempts to differentiate himself as a consumer from his slaves ultimately fall flat. One is left with the impression that in Jamaica, anyone or anything is capable of poisoning and/or consuming anyone or anything else. That these vectors of consumption might be so easily inverted, I argue, mirrors the inherent contradiction of the cannibalism-plagiarism metaphor.

II. Things Fall Apart

The rhetoric of contagious disease serves similar functions to those of cannibalism. Fears of Caribbean or African ‘infection’ continue from the early modern period through to today in the forms of cultural obsession with zombies and recent news coverage of AIDS and Ebola.²⁰ As with cannibalism, disease often reads both as a marker of difference (‘Only Africans get Ebola’) and as that which threatens to obliterate difference (‘Ebola is very easy to catch, and I’m terrified of getting it’).²¹ As I have argued in a previous chapter on Charles Brockden Brown’s writing

¹⁸ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33.

¹⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, reprint edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

²⁰ See also Sheller, 146-47.

²¹ See Bewell; and Sander Gilman, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

about the 1793 Philadelphia yellow fever outbreak, when the rhetoric of contagious disease is applied to questions of authorship, it—like cannibalism—works by eliding body and text, and by upending and inverting “proper” routes of influence (transmission or consumption). In doing so, it also illustrates the paranoia and Sedgwickian blackmailability in Romantic-period discussions of influence: no one is immune, anyone can be a giver or a receiver, and just acknowledging the existence of such a system opens one up to charges of participation in that system. The “sodomitical” undertones of both these rhetorics should be clear.

Lewis’s constant attention to the vulnerability of his body in Jamaica highlights the way that minoritizing tropes of cannibalism, parasitism, and contagion (i.e., things that are ‘of the Other’) easily become universalizing (that that not only can affect anyone, but in doing so, erode the distinctions between oneself and the ‘Other’). In addition to several considerable catalogues of “negro diseases” (127-28, 132) in the *Journal*, Lewis documents many of the insects, parasites, and other animals that threaten the body’s integrity in Jamaica: chiggers and galliwasps, lizards’ bites cause permanent damage, and one can die from eating alligator gall or contaminated fish. In Jamaica, one must always eat with caution: Lewis is horrified to find that he nearly ate a cockroach, mistaking it for a gum wafer used to seal a letter (124). And he claims that many slaves and free blacks refuse to eat vegetables that grow near a white burial ground, fearing that the white bodies have somehow cursed or contaminated the food (64). All in all, one is at risk both of being bitten, and of biting into the wrong things. Moreover, in the case of the contaminated fish and the white burial ground, those things which one consumes may be dangerous precisely because of the things that *they* have themselves consumed. The separation between subject and object is therefore dramatically destabilized. This topsy-turvy portrayal, in which any vector of consumption can be inverted, resonates strongly with the rhetoric that critics

used to condemn Lewis's plagiarisms: anyone can be prey to anyone else; there is no way of establishing a cannibalistic chain of custody.

This unintended flattening effect of Lewis's rhetoric seems borne out in the form of the *Journal*, in which Lewis's tale appears as a type of it-narrative among and encompassing other it-narratives. Lewis frequently focuses an entry on a particular black resident of Jamaica, retelling his or her story, which is signposted by his or her movement between different owners and (if applicable) manumission. It is not so difficult to read the *Journal* itself as an it-narrative (though of a clearly different kind): Lewis hardly seems to *choose* to go to Jamaica; rather, his travels are thrust upon him (he would have us believe) by an inheritance and a sense of duty. Moreover, his active self-presentation is somewhat analogous to the personification of a passive object. To be sure, all of this destabilization and play occurs from a position of extreme privilege. Ellen Malenas Ledoux argues that this very fragmentary aspect of the *Journal* is strategic on Lewis's part, allowing him to "advocate a fractured position—that slavery is neither morally wrong nor dehumanizing when properly managed—and to contain the anxieties concomitant with that position."²² The confessional mode of the *Journal*, too—"suggest[ing] 'private' thoughts exposed for public view" is, after all, a conscious choice, a taking ownership of his own story when for much of his life he has been maligned and scrutinized by the press.²³ Yet despite the fact that Lewis indulges in a kind of play unavailable to the slaves he depicts, the text nevertheless succeeds, at least conditionally and temporarily, in flattening some of its primary structuring distinctions.

²² Ledoux, 177.

²³ Ledoux, 178.

This flattening effect is further achieved by the appearance of two actual it-narratives within the journal: first, en route to Jamaica for the first time, Lewis asks the cabin boy what he has brought on board for reading. In addition to *Sorrows of a Young Werther*, some Gothic novels, and a prayer-book, the cabin boy tells him, he has brought along “The Adventures of a Louse,” which he prefers most of all (20).²⁴ Secondly, during Lewis’s final visit to Jamaica, a centipede appears at dinner and is cut in half (210). Lewis has the two still-wriggling halves saved under a glass lid in order to see what will happen to them, but after several days, both halves disappear. Lewis quips, “I am disappointed beyond measure at being deprived of this opportunity of reading the last volume of ‘The Life and Adventures of a Centipede’s Tail’” (210). It is fascinating that Lewis not only chooses to note the presence of an actual it-narrative and record slave narratives within his own text, but that he should also playfully imply that other objects he encounters possess similar narratives driven by fate or circumstance. By nesting similar narratives about himself, his slaves, and insects in the same text, Lewis erodes the distinctions between the categories of English male proprietor, slave, and object. Of course, the extent to which Lewis’s own authorial voice authorizes and contains the other stories somewhat weakens this effect.

Lewis’s focus on the thingness of bodies is paralleled by a sustained interest in surprisingly animated ones. The two titled it-narratives in Lewis’s journal concern insects: one, a parasite (a body that is nothing but appetite), and the other, a still-animate corpse (a body that should no longer be animated). Insects, parasites, corpses, and animation figure overwhelmingly

²⁴ Although Mona Wilson, in the 1929 edition of the *Journal*, suggests a 1780 translation of a French text, it seems highly likely that the text is actually the 1753 “Adventures of a Louse” printed in *The Adventurer*. The book-length French text is actually a hybrid between an it-narrative, spy-story, and satire criticizing Benjamin Franklin. The 1753 “Adventures,” on the other hand, is a light-hearted it-narrative tracing a louse’s peregrinations from the dirty head of a young boy, to a “celebrated toast,” to “the toupee of a battered beau,” and then to his valet, before being trapped by a “philosopher” who subjects him to scientific experiments in breeding, then a doctor, then the doctor’s patient, etc. “The Adventures of a Louse,” *The Adventurer* 2 (London, 1753): 301-6.

in the *Journal*, and the blood-sucking yet amiable louse who stars in the cabin boy's reading bears a striking resemblance to contemporary representations of Lewis himself, the derivative, parasitic plagiarist who was nevertheless relatively harmless and sometimes even rather entertaining.

Lewis's interest in animated corpses exceeds the it-narratives in the *Journal*. Not long after the incident of the bisected but still-wriggling centipede, Lewis records several Afro-Caribbean rituals in which : for one, he describes an Obeah "Myal dance" in which the Obeah practitioner "poisons" a victim (or a volunteer?), who then "falls on the ground to all appearance and the belief of the spectators a perfect corpse" (222). The practitioner later reanimates the corpse as a proof of his power, while others obtain the substance used and confirm that it truly does kill people (223). Although Lewis's tone in describing this event, which seems half-ritual and half product demonstration, remains skeptical ("to all appearance and the belief of the spectators"), his earlier account of a burial ceremony appears more credulous. This practice requires a sort of divination as to where to bury the body:

If the corpse be that of a grown person, they consult it as to which way it pleases to be carried; and they make attempts upon various roads without success, before they can hit upon the right one. Till that it accomplished, they stagger under the weight of the coffin, struggle against its force, which draws them in a different direction from that in which they had settled to go; and sometimes in the contest the corpse and the coffin jump off the shoulders of the bearers. But if, as is frequently the case, any person is suspected of having hastened the catastrophe, the corpse will then refuse to go any road but the one which passes by the

habitation of the suspected person, and as soon as it approaches his house, no human power is equal to persuading it to pass. (63-64)

In this account, the corpse clearly has an agency of its own: not only does it “draw them,” “contest,” and “jump,” which might be mechanical operations, it also more affectively “pleases” and “refuses,” and it is useless to “persuade” it.

This incident is almost immediately followed by a parallel one, in which Lewis describes the family mausoleum on the island:

the building . . . stands in the very heart of an orange grove, now in full bearing; and the whole scene this morning looked so cool, so tranquil, and so gay, and is so perfectly divested of all vestiges of dissolution, that the sight of it quite gave me an appetite for being buried. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what becomes of this little ugly husk of mine . . . or else I should certainly . . . die where I might, order my body to be sent over for burial to Cornwall [the estate in Jamaica]. (66)

At the same moment that Lewis denigrates and denies his body—i.e., it is a “husk” and he is “perfectly indifferen[t]”—he gives it an eerie gothic agency of itself: for a body to have an “appetite for being buried,” it must have an unconscious agency of its own. In moments like these, Lewis gestures towards a world in which all bodies, even all objects, have drives of their own that precede or override human consciousness.

Even before the publication of the *Journal*, this gothic flattening impulse (contagion, entombment, and animated corpses) influenced the way others wrote about Lewis as well (see chapter 2): Lewis’s death had an afterlife of its own. Early accounts of Lewis’s death were

reprinted frequently, and on both sides of the Atlantic, throughout the nineteenth century.²⁵ Just days before setting sail for England, Lewis contracted yellow fever, and after a week at sea, he died. Due to the risk of Lewis's body infecting others, the captain ordered that it be thrown overboard.²⁶ Sir Godfrey Webster, who wrote one of the two existing accounts of Lewis's death, describes how Lewis's corpse was "rolled up in the ship's colours [and] laid on the stern, where it remained until a slight shell of deal boards was nailed together by one of the carpenters."²⁷ Lewis's body was then placed into the coffin, weights were attached to the outside, and the entire thing was wrapped in a sheet.²⁸ Yet, as both existing accounts of Lewis's death corroborate, the weights attached to his coffin came off. The other recorder, "a lady," reports, "The coffin, encased in its shroud-like hammock, rose again almost immediately."²⁹ Godfrey's account is more sensational:

[Several passengers,] to their surprise and terror . . . beheld this novel and spectre-like object borne up by the swell of the sea, almost on a level with themselves. Never shall I forget the thrilling sensation caused by so appalling an apparition! Imagination can scarcely picture any thing more horrible, coming as it did so unexpectedly Around the vessel that coffin-bark danced like a fearful mockery; then, heaving heavily over the surf, as if unwilling still to part from the living world, it bent its course towards the shores of Havanna, and was soon lost

²⁵ See, for example, "The Death of Monk Lewis," *The Philadelphia Album and Ladies' Literary Portfolio* 8 no. 28 (12 July 1834): 221; and "'Monk' Lewis," *The Southern Literary Messenger* 15 no. 4 (April 1849): 230-35, 234.

²⁶ Margaret Baron-Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M.G. Lewis, Author of "The Monk," "Castle Spectre," &c. : With Many Pieces in Prose and Verse, Never before Published* (London: H. Colburn, 1839), 231-34.

²⁷ Quoted in Baron-Wilson, 370.

²⁸ Baron-Wilson, 370.

²⁹ Quoted in Baron-Wilson, 234.

to the straining sight of the awe-stricken spectators: whether it arrived at those shores, or was swallowed up in the whelming waves, we have never been able to ascertain.³⁰

Godfrey, of course, is pandering to the public's desire for scandal and sensation regarding Lewis. Nevertheless, it seems fitting that the last anyone sees of Lewis (or at least his coffin) is a personified, animated object: he is a corpse in a shoddy coffin that "dance[s]" and "heav[es] heavily," a "spectre"-like object and an "apparition" that is "unwilling still to part from the living world." Lewis's body, in other words, is last seen as an animated thing, returning to that place where it was (as Lewis imagined, anyway) merely a body among other bodies. One might read this as evidence of a radically democratic impulse—but one would be mistaken.

III. But Not That Much

Lewis's interest in playing with the boundaries between different types of beings leads him to wallow in personification repeatedly. Advancing the 'juste milieu' critique of slave diets discussed above, Lewis describes undesirable vegetables as if they were human flesh in order to render them disgusting by implying that eating them is tantamount to cannibalism. One stunning instance of this (in which, admittedly, Lewis must have been aware of his literary conceit) is watermelon passage above. Besides the gory watermelon, Lewis tries other 'meatified' fruits, including "the Avogada pear, sometimes called 'the vegetable marrow,' . . . an insipid kind of melon" (147), and the Granadillo, a type of passion-fruit, which "grows upon a species of vine . . . It must be suffered to hang till it is dead ripe, when it is scarcely any thing except juice and seeds" (67).

³⁰ Quoted in Baron-Wilson, 371.

The interplay of personification and cannibalism is perhaps best seen in another strange episode about animals, where Lewis re-narrates a strange event told to him by the ship's captain. Recently, off the coast of Jamaica, two sharks were seen; the female was killed, and the resultant "desolation of the male was excessive" (24). Lewis compares the male shark to Orpheus, even when the shark begins to eat the dead female's body: "scarce was the breath out of his Eurydice's body, when he stuck his teeth in her, and began to eat her up with all possible expedition. Even the sailors felt their sensibility excited by so peculiar a mark of posthumous attachment" (25). The moment at which the male starts to devour his dead mate might seem like an appropriate moment to abandon personification and classical allusion, yet Lewis persists. Would the sailors really have "felt their sensibility excited" by the spectacle of one shark eating another, or is it not rather the fact of the sharks' personification that transforms the incident from one of natural cycles into one sensational cannibalism, an incident which in turn transforms even the roughest of sailors into men of sensibility? Perversely, the sailors *assist* the male shark by feeding it its mate in pieces; Lewis's personification continues:

the widower opened his jaws as wide as possible, and gulped down pounds upon pounds of the dear departed as fast as they were thrown to him, with the greatest delight and all the avidity imaginable. I make no doubt that all the while he was eating, he was thoroughly persuaded that every morsel which went into his stomach would make its way to his heart directly! "She was perfectly consistent," he said to himself; "she was excellent through life, and really she's extremely good now she's dead!" (25)

The language in this passage is highly contrived: the dismembered female shark is "the dear departed," and the male shark experiences "delight" and "avidity" and speaks. The male shark

thus is not merely personified; he actually becomes an exemplary super-human. Lewis writes, “I doubt, whether the annals of Hymen can produce a similar instance of post-obituaal affection”;³¹ indeed, the only human who comes close to the shark is “Cambletes, King of Lydia,” who accidentally eats his wife in his sleep (25). In this episode, it seems, personification can make an animal into more of a person than people themselves. Finally, however, Lewis admits that the shark appeared so hungry, that “if Madam Shark had not died first, Monsieur must have died himself for want of a dinner” (26). Thus, he ultimately deflates his personification-conceit by returning to the body: love, devotion, and personhood, Lewis implies, are all very well to play with, but hunger—i.e., the body—is the bottom line.

After all, the mere fact of making the shark ‘speak’ in his *Journal* hardly affords any real personhood or agency to that shark; in fact, it may very well do the opposite. Sianne Ngai writes in *Ugly Feelings* about the cultural work of “animatedness” and “the exaggeratedly emotional, hyperexpressive, and even ‘overscrutable’ image of most racially or ethnically marked subjects in American culture.”³¹ Ngai argues that racialization works through animatedness precisely because “the affective ideologeme of animatedness foregrounds the degree to which emotional qualities seem especially prone to sliding into *corporeal* qualities where the African-American subject is concerned, reinforcing the notion of race as a truth located, quite naturally, in the always obvious, highly visible body.”³² In other words, the ‘animator’ doth protest too much: what seems like a departure from the body’s objectification only reinscribes it.

Lynn Festa’s work on personification in eighteenth-century it-narratives and slave autobiographies also suggests that we should view these passages in the *Journal* with

³¹ Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 93.

³² Ngai, 95.

circumspection. It-narratives, Festa writes, “bestow characteristics like language, thought, life history, and personality upon things, producing the *effect* of subjectivity in a thing that does not ‘really’ possess personality, selfhood, a Christian soul.”³³ It is through this framework that Festa then reads Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* (1789) as a related type of text that also “display[s] and enact[s] a disturbing confusion of subject and object, person and thing”; it, too, personifies an apparently nonagential entity that is able to narrate its own history.³⁴ As Festa writes, “slave autobiographies are grotesque because they labor to lay claim to human traits that the slave already possesses.”³⁵ In short, “The trope of personification in the slave autobiography demonstrates the need to *make* the slave into a person . . . to be personified is *emphatically* not to be a person.”³⁶ We might also think of the frequency with which slaveholders assigned fanciful, regal, or classical names to enslaved people as a way of mocking them through the sheer excess of the name.

Lewis’s text alternately attempts to flatten all beings into bodies with appetites, and to elevate and animate some presumably ‘lower’ bodies by way of personification. On first glance, both of these strategies seem to produce a radically democratizing effect, smoothing over differences between object and subject, animal and human, and enslaved African and privileged European. Ultimately, however, all of this work is contained within Lewis’s voice, experience, and text. He alone has the privilege to ‘play’ at imagining himself. Much as sympathy can

³³ Festa, 128

³⁴ Festa, 132.

³⁵ Festa, 132.

³⁶ Festa, 134.

actually serve to reify the presumed superiority of the one sympathizing,³⁷ Lewis's follies do little to dispute the material reality of slavery in the Caribbean. And this is despite the fact that the metaphors he uses—incorporation, cannibalism, and contagion—*do* fall apart at the seams, as I have been arguing throughout this dissertation.

The phobic constellation of associations that this dissertation has explored was surely enriched (if one can use the word) by the transatlantic slave trade. The complex and vertiginous networks of the Atlantic world in the seventeenth through the nineteenth century provided the most potent metaphors—cannibalism and contagion—through which British and American writers articulated the anxieties and paradoxes at the heart of concepts like property, authorship, and later, sexuality. However, these metaphors came at great ethical and psychic cost, particularly because they are metaphors that draw their power from their 'reality' as actual embodied experiences. We might conclude by considering Susan Sontag's famous project in *Illness as Metaphor*: "It is toward an elucidation of those metaphors, and a liberation from them, that I dedicate this inquiry."³⁸

³⁷ Markman Ellis, "Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 92-116; and Sarah Mesle, "Sentimental Literature in Proslavery America," PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2010, Proquest (852539010).

³⁸ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (London: MacMillan, 2001), 4.

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